

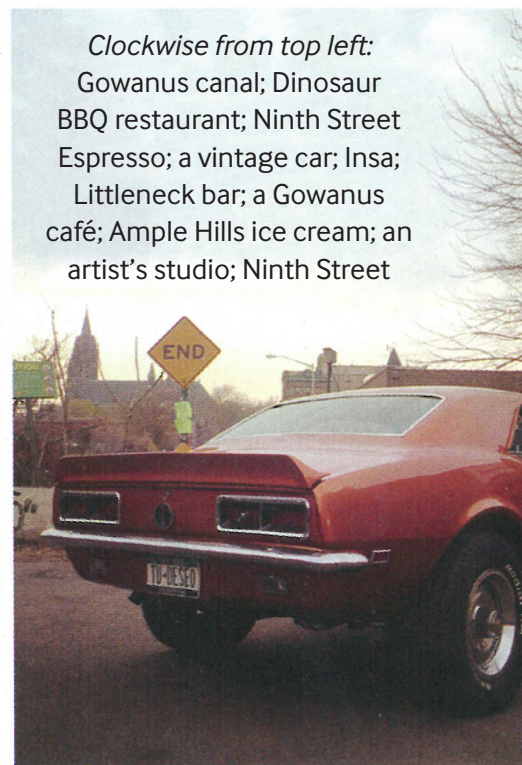
# Condé Nast Traveler

JULY/AUGUST 2016

THE URBAN HIT

## THE WORLD'S HIPPEST HOODS

Words by Willem Marx



*Clockwise from top left:*  
Gowanus canal; Dinosaur  
BBQ restaurant; Ninth Street  
Espresso; a vintage car; Insa;  
Little Neck bar; a Gowanus  
café; Ample Hills ice cream; an  
artist's studio; Ninth Street

### NEW YORK: GOWANUS

Williamsburg has had its moment so the focus has turned to this about-to-be-gentrified, still respectably rough-edged area. Hot on the heels of a 2016 Oscar nomination for the film adaptation of Colm Tóibín's novel *Brooklyn*, Gowanus is the borough's latest beneficiary of New York's relentless cycle in which artists looking for lower rents transform formerly run-down neighbourhoods into a hub of pop-up galleries, food trucks serving gluten-free food and abstruse concept stores. Squeezed between the historic red-brick homes of Carroll Gardens and Park Slope, the old industrial Gowanus canal endured decades of being a punchline for the city's pollution jokes, but these days the derelict warehouses that crowded its banks are humming with some of NYC's hottest restaurants. The latest addition is Freek's Mill, named after an 18th-century Dutch building beside a nearby pond, where the owners have taken cues from the most prolific Brooklyn dining trends: blackened, grilled kohlrabi, dandelion salads and rabbit in a jar, alongside complex cocktails based on bourbons and amaros. Some of the city's best Italian coffee is now available around the corner at the latest outpost of Ninth Street Espresso. In the evening, after plates of kimchi and mung-bean pancakes, there are sing-offs in the five private karaoke rooms at Korean barbecue joint Insa. And at the Royal Palms Shuffleboard club, a huge space centred around a sport usually associated with Florida's retirement homes, a trilby-wearing crowd push biscuits (pucks) long into the night.

