

The Washington Post
TRAVEL

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 2019 · SECTION F

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PHOTOS BY KC MCGINNIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Do feline-family getaways invite catastrophe?

BY DAVID GRIMM

My wife and I are crazy cat people. Our phones are overflowing with pictures of our two felines, Jasper and Jezebel. We've spent thousands of dollars on their veterinary care. We even take them for walks. But we never considered bringing them on vacation — until this summer.

It wasn't our initial plan. My family, including my 6-year-old twin daughters, had decided to visit my brother in the Pacific Northwest. As usual, we were going to drop the cats off at my in-laws' home in Delaware. They're the only people we trust to care for two 14-year-old felines who require a lot of attention — and almost as much medication. But they were unavailable, and we had already blocked out the week.

After nixing a staycation in Baltimore, we ultimately decided to head to the beach, a not-too-long drive that we figured Jasper and Jezebel could handle. The girls were especially excited, glee-

SEE CATS ON F5

YOU'RE GOING WHERE?

Des Moines

Iowa's land of corn and caucuses also fields a vibrant food, cocktail and shopping scene

BY MELANIE D.G. KAPLAN

I didn't exactly go to Des Moines expecting cornfields, but I didn't want to miss them, either. One night in the capital city this summer, I drove 30 minutes northeast of Des Moines and joined a weekly bike ride in the rural town of Maxwell. Our small group pedaled along quiet farm roads, past corn and soybean fields and over idyllic rolling hills, just as I had pictured. A small plane buzzed overhead, playfully looping and rolling, and I slowed to see grazing cows and a small cemetery. We finished our ride as the fiery sun set. Only then was I ready for the big city. ¶ Des Moines, or DSM to locals, is a laid-back, easily navigable city with an impressive network of bike trails, one of the most beautiful and interesting capitol buildings I've toured and an emerging food and cocktail scene. Locals I met were kind and welcoming, probably more informed about presidential candidates than many of my D.C. neighbors and proud to host the country's first caucuses during election season. Next year, the city will unveil the largest skate park in the country (with an 80-foot-long, totally skatable "WOW" sculpture) and host its first Ironman competition. It also plans to create a white-water destination on the river with a surfing simulator for extreme paddlers. ¶ Des Moines is on the move. Go now, while it still enjoys the charms and convenience of a small town. Go before winter hits. Go while there's still corn.

SEE DES MOINES ON F3

TOP: The High Trestle Trail Bridge extends a half-mile and sits 13 stories above the Des Moines River. Its main attraction is the display of 41 artistic steel frames rising over the path, lit a brilliant blue at sunset.
ABOVE LEFT: The Des Lux Hotel is a lush establishment that is a favorite among locals and guests because of its martinis and proximity to some of the city's most upscale restaurants.
ABOVE RIGHT: Dishes line a cooling rack at Harbinger, a popular Ingersoll neighborhood dinner and brunch spot.

Venice's Carnival: A time traveler's petticoat function

BY KINSEY GIDICK

With suitcases full of hand-made dresses, skirt supports, petticoats, corsets and wigs, Taylor Shelby and a group of five friends flew to Venice's Carnival in February with one goal in mind: to live like 18th-century women of means.

Shelby, a 36-year-old reproduction jewelry designer who lives on Capitol Hill and runs the website Dames a la Mode, is part of a growing number of would-be time travelers, people who plan their vacations around the past. Festivals in cities such as Versailles and Venice are giving international travelers like her the opportunity to don period-specific clothing and frolic as if in another age.

Recent viral sensation Zack MacLeod Pinsent, a 25-year-old bespoke period tailor in Brighton, England, who wears only Regency, Edwardian and late Victorian clothing (he burned his last pair of jeans when he was 14), frequently travels for historic getaways.

"I've gone to historical events
SEE PETTICOATS ON F6

VIRGINIA

On the Eastern Shore, Cape Charles is an unexpected gem. F5

NAVIGATOR

A variety of apps and gadgets can help keep travelers safe. F2

Iowa's capital city is on the move

DES MOINES FROM F1

Go

Local faves

The colder the winter in a city, the more joyful the summer market-goers. I haven't substantiated this claim, but in Des Moines, folks are downright gleeful about the **Downtown Farmers Market**, which attracts 25,000 to 40,000 people each weekend through October with 300 vendors, live music, street performers and a bike valet. The Saturday market, criticized by some for selling too much nonlocal produce and Wisconsin cheeses, still sells plenty of Iowa sweet corn, local jam and hot sauce. But the scene itself is the biggest draw. Go for people-watching, and eat your way through the market (pupusas, juices) or hit a nearby brunch spot.

If you're fired up for the 2020 Olympic Games but don't have the coin for Tokyo, preview the competition at the **Drake Relays**. Track and field is to Iowa what college football is to the South, and nowhere are the contests more exciting than around the blue oval at Drake Stadium. Next April, Drake will host the 111th annual relays, one of the country's most celebrated high school, college and elite track and field events. It's a week-long celebration, including pole vaulting in a downtown office building and one of the nation's largest one-mile road races. Past competitors include Wilma Rudolph, Bruce (now Caitlyn) Jenner, Michael Johnson, Carl Lewis, Jesse Owens, Frank Shorter and Gwen Torrence. Drake recently hosted the USA Track & Field Outdoor Championship and next May will host the Iowa high school state championship.

Guidebook musts

Driving into town with the majestic five-domed **Iowa State Capitol** on the horizon, I thought I was approaching a kingdom. Come to find out, this kingdom is magical, with free parking and free temporary tattoos. On a tour, I learned that the ornate building was completed in 1886, constructed over 15 years by day laborers. It originally housed all three branches of government and was built without electricity — which was thought to be a fad. The gold leaf on the dome, the guide told us, is as thin as ash. The highlight was a marble-walled, five-level law library with white wrought iron railings, spiral staircases and a spectacular view of downtown. It houses more than 100,000 books, including titles on the state's railroad, prairie plants and baseball. When the secretary of state is in town, he invites visitors into his office to see his model car collection and the Iowa constitution.

"You might hear people say, 'Des Moines punches above its weight,'" a local told me. "The **Des Moines Art Center** is a big example of how." For starters, the museum — a complex of three designer buildings (Eliel Saarinen, 1948; I.M. Pei, 1968; Richard Meir, 1985) — is showing "Queer Abstraction" (until Sept. 8), the first exhibition in the center's 70-year history to focus exclusively on queer sexuality and gender identity. The permanent collection includes modern and contemporary masterpieces by Francis Bacon, Alberto Giacometti, Henri Matisse, Georgia O'Keeffe, Mark Rothko and Andy Warhol and the "New Shelton Wet/Dry Triple Decker" from Jeff Koons's hermetically sealed vacuum series. Stop at the restaurant, Tangerine, and the museum's fantastic four-acre sculpture garden park downtown. Museum and park admission are free.

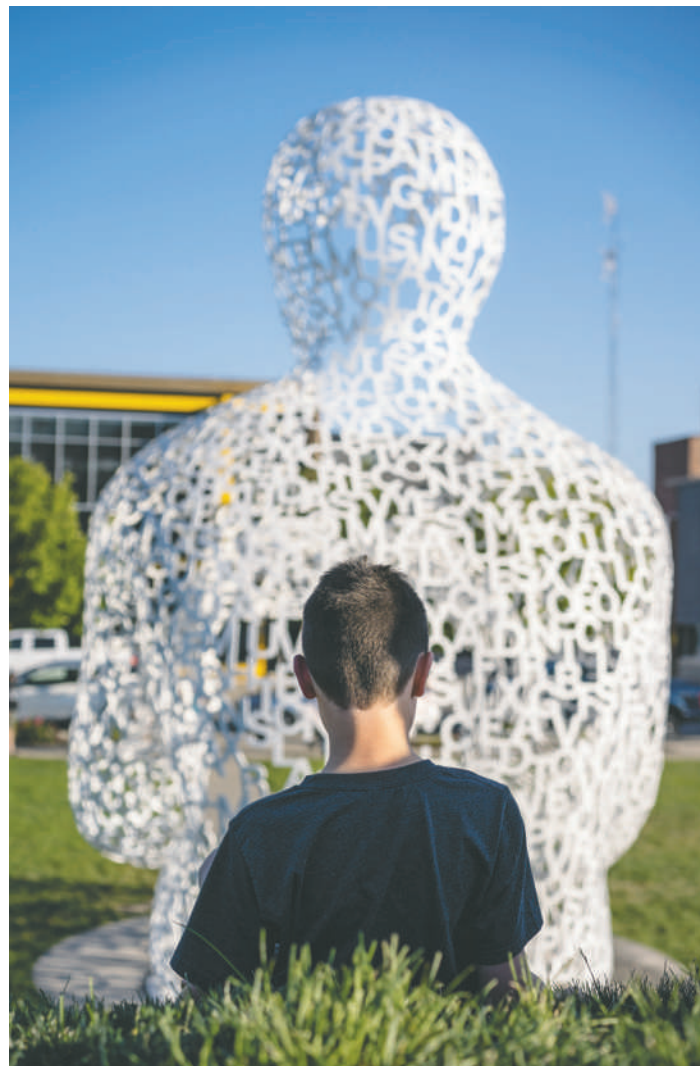
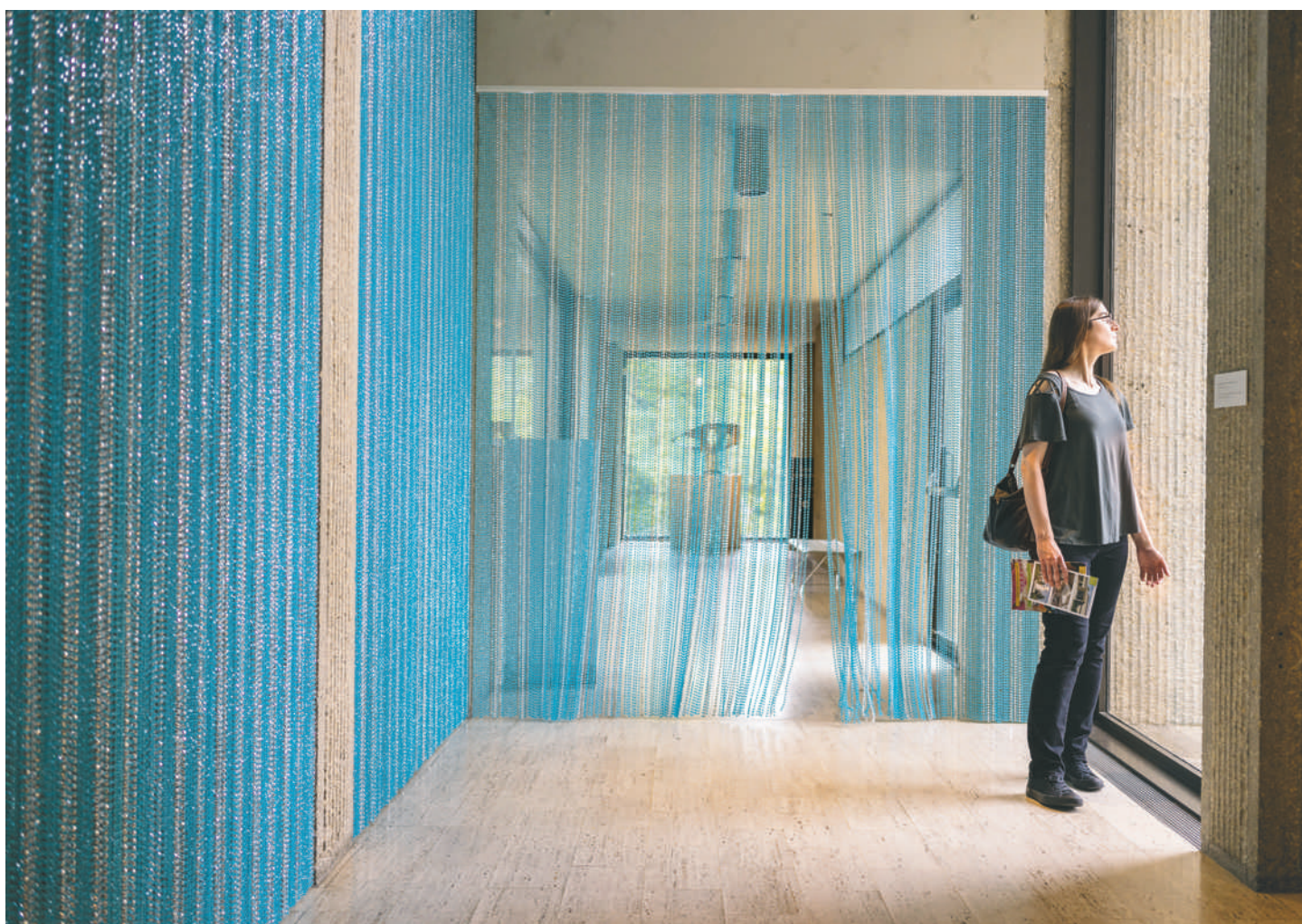
Eat

Local faves

The avocado toast craze has hit Des Moines, and judging from the orders at **St. Kilda**, locals are all in. The small, two-year-old cafe offers breakfast, lunch, coffee and cocktails with full table service. It looks a little Brooklyn, with its industrial vibe, and tastes a little Aussie, with fresh, colorful and creatively blended ingredients. The avo toast rocks charred corn and tomato salsa, the salmon and eggs come with roasted zucchini, and the stone fruit and fresh burrata salad is as good as summer gets. Top it off with a blueberry coconut smoothie or take it up a notch with a raspberry mimosa.



PHOTOS BY KC MCGINNIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



TOP: Zaida Tweedy, 3, sits on a couch while her father, Adam Tweedy, tends to business at Fontenelle Supply Co., a shop that he opened three years ago. Leather wallets and totes are crafted on-site, as well as candles in scents such as timber and coffee. **MIDDLE:** Felix Gonzalez-Torres's hanging sculpture, "Untitled (Water)," is part of the "Queer Abstraction" exhibition at the Des Moines Art Center, the facility's first to focus exclusively on queer sexuality and gender identity. **ABOVE LEFT:** St. Kilda's, a two-year-old cafe known for its avocado toast, offers breakfast, lunch, coffee and cocktails. It looks a little like Brooklyn and tastes a little Aussie, with fresh, colorful and creatively blended ingredients. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Jaxon Rinehart, 9, studies one of the installations at the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park, which is part of the Des Moines Art Center. The outdoor venue features work by 24 artists.

For more photos and an interactive map, visit wapo.st/Des-Moines

Aussie restaurateur Alexander Hall and his wife, Whitney, recently opened a second location downtown and a surf and turf spot in East Village (where the tacos are topped with house-pickled radishes and fish and chips means fish grilled, not fried) and will open a large farm to table restaurant in Valley Junction next spring.

I loved **Hello, Marjorie** even before I learned it was named after one of the owner's grandmothers, who drank sloe gin by the glass and smoked cigarettes by the pack. My own 99-year-old Grandma Marjorie enjoys her cocktails and would feel right at home amid the bar's mid-century mod furniture. Located in the former Des Moines Register building and designed to look like your great aunt's house (gold velvet curtains, brass clock collection), Hello, Marjorie is the city's go-to cocktail bar. Liquor is stored in mirrored cabinets, and the 10-item cocktail menu includes the Editor's Note, a riff on an Old-Fashioned, and the Dinner Party, a tequila drink with mascarpone cream cheese. Tuesdays, old-fashioned, martinis and Manhattans are \$6. Get a selfie by the giant neon Jack Kerouac quote, "The prettiest girls in the world live in Des Moines." For other themed watering holes, try El Bait Shop, with hundreds of craft beers on tap; Iowa Tap Room, which specializes in Iowa beers; and High Life Lounge, a doppelganger of your '60s rec room, where patrons inexplicably enjoy Spam and egg sandwiches with Miller High Life and Schlitz.

Guidebook musts

"Locals' palates are getting more adventurous," said Joe Tripp, co-owner and chef at **Harbinger**, and that's good news for the rest of us. The popular Ingersoll neighborhood dinner and brunch spot is the anti-meat-and-potatoes restaurant, focusing on Southeast Asian flavors and vegetable-based small plates like steamed buns (also available with pork or chicken), locally grown shiitake mushroom tempura, buckwheat, kale and popped groats tarts and Hakurei turnips with local chevre. Tripp, a four-time James Beard Award nominee who ran the kitchen at Alba, shops at the Downtown Farmers Market and preserves massive amounts of produce so winter diners can enjoy treats like fermented ramps and strawberry relish. Nearby: Cheese Bar, dive bar Greenwood Lounge and Eatery A, the city's best happy hour if you dig pizza and wine.

If you love greasy spoon diners, politics and servers who call you "Sweetie," **Waveland Cafe** will make your ticker tick just a little faster. One morning, I sat at the bar with a bowl of oatmeal and savored the squeak of the swinging doors to the kitchen. A child-like painting on the front window reads, "Eggsellent as Always," and the diner next to me attacked an omelet that draped over the sides of his plate. Owner David Stone likes to reminisce about when CNN and Tom Brokaw hosted shows from the diner during primary season and pointed out signatures on the wall — Ron Paul, Joe Biden and John Edwards. If Waveland's not your jam, you can't go wrong at beloved La Mie, where the spread of house-baked

SEE DES MOINES ON F4



PHOTOS BY KC MCGINNIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

DES MOINES FROM F3

bread and pastries is so vast it'll force your calorie-counter app into submission.

Shop

Local faves

Men who hate shopping, **Fontenelle Supply Co.** may turn you. Built by guys who blog about camping and motorcycle trips and made for guys who appreciate well-made (read: pricey) items that they'll never KonMari out of their lives, the shop opened three years ago with an in-house custom leather shop. The owners craft leather wallets and totes with a lifetime guarantee and make their own candles (in Marlboro Man scents like whiskey and leather, timber and coffee). You can also find Japanese selva denim, Filson shirts and jackets, work boots that look like they'll last a generation, safety glasses for hazardous manly activities, restored and hand-sharpened vintage axes and motorcycle helmets. For more moto and vintage, visit Dream Company on Ingersoll.

Valley Junction in West Des Moines has been down on its luck in recent years, but the buzz and lure of new retailers and restaurants is making this eight-block shopping strip DSM's Comeback Kid. Once known for its dozens of antique and vintage shops, the compact neighborhood (about five miles west of downtown) still has some old-school survivors, like Atomic Garage (polyester pants, disco dresses and go-go boots) and sister shop A OK Antiques (jukebox, mid-century furniture). And there's new blood. In June, designer John Bosley, formerly with Raygun, opened Bozz Prints (posters, shirts, mugs); home and gift shop M Mere recently moved to a bright, larger space; and an acai bowl cafe has joined the mix. In the spring, St. Kilda will open a large restaurant in an old Ford dealership. Parking's free and plentiful. Visit every Thursday evening through September for the farmers market and live music.

Guidebook musts

When I met **Raygun** founder and local Mike Draper, he wore a T-shirt with Olympic rings that read, "Des Moines 2024." If you think that's funny, you'll love his flagship store in the East Village neighborhood, a giant, high-ceilinged printing and retail space filled with clever and politically charged shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, temporary tattoos, stickers, postcards and tote bags. There are blank journals titled, "How I'll survive the zombie apocalypse," RBG air fresheners, Nancy Pelosi socks and \$1 postcards ("Iowa: 75 percent vowels, 100 percent awesome"). And the T-shirts: "Iowa. Terrifying dirt roads. No almond milk anywhere. Extremely well-informed caucusgoers" and "The Squad: Why don't they go back to America." If you can't find a fun gift here, you might need new friends.

Popularized by HGTV's "West End Salvage" reality show, **West End Architectural Salvage** is a treasure-hunter's paradise, with inventory from across the nation and four floors of fabulous finds. On the ground floor, grab coffee (or a Bloody Mary, if it's that kind of morning). Strolling around the



TOP: The Iowa State Capitol, with its five domes, has a majestic presence in downtown Des Moines. The interior of the building includes a marble-walled, five-level law library complete with a spiral staircase.
MIDDLE: Kevin Allen and Erik Hastings share a drink in the lobby of the high-end Des Lux Hotel. The hotel has 51 uniquely decorated rooms and amenities that include a sauna, hot tub and 3,000-square foot gym.
ABOVE LEFT: Shoppers explore Raygun, a high-ceilinged printing and retail space located in East Village that is filled with clever and politically charged shirts, mugs, postcards and more.
ABOVE RIGHT: Audrey Dyvig holds flowers at the Downtown Farmers Market, which draws up to 40,000 visitors each weekend.

century-old building, you'll find an old amusement park car and carousel animal, a barrel of old yardsticks, vintage metal lockers, Underwood and Smith Corona typewriters, stained glass, a metal cowboy bathtub, old motel signs, a bench from the Des Moines airport, tin ceiling tiles and doors, license plates, a bench made from the back door of a flatbed truck and window grates from an Iowa jail. You'll also find beautiful tables made from reclaimed barn lumber. At the nearby Art Terrarium, sidle up to the potting bar to make your own succulent garden.

Stay

Local fave

Going first class was never so affordable. **Des Lux Hotel**, a downtown boutique property in a century-old building a block from the sculpture park, is a local favorite because of the martinis and a guest favorite because, well, who doesn't like a little class? Along with a grand piano and a wall of mismatched mirrors, the common area features a gorgeous lounge with blue velvet bar chairs and a repurposed stained glass communal table. In the lobby bathrooms, you'll find gold swan faucet handles and gold peacock wallpaper. Amenities include a sauna, steam room and hot tub, a 3,000-square foot gym and 51 uniquely decorated rooms. Complimentary made-to-order breakfast and a free airport/East Village shuttle are also available. All this, starting at \$189. Guests often dine nearby at some of the city's most upscale restaurants, including 801 Chophouse, one of Iowa's top steak houses, and Proof, considered the foodiest restaurant in town.

Guidebook must

Revel Hotel opened this summer in Urbandale, about 15 minutes west of downtown and within walking distance of the 500-acre Living History Farms, an interactive outdoor museum focusing on Midwestern rural life experiences. The 112-room hotel, part of Hilton's Tapestry Collection, plays up the farm theme with tasteful modern farm murals, large black-and-white cowboy photos and lobby pillows with pig and horse faces. Revel's restaurant has a pool table and a full bar with local beers on tap. Its gym should satisfy iron-pumpers, rowers and yogis alike. Rooms start at \$174. Next door is its sister property, Hotel Renovo, a little family and budget-friendlier, with a pool, weekly live music and a small lobby bar.

Explore

Local fave

Bike, run, walk or skip across the **High Trestle Trail Bridge**, about 30 minutes north of downtown. At 13 stories above the Des Moines River, the half-mile, award-winning bridge is one of the tallest trail bridges in the world. But the main attraction is the display of 41 artistic steel frames rising over the path, lit a brilliant blue starting at sunset. The 25-mile trail runs through five towns; rent bikes at Pingora Outdoors, 50 feet off the trail in Ankeny, or Trailside Rentals in Madrid (pronounced MADRID), a block from the trail and a few miles from the bridge. Also in Madrid, hit the Filling Station for shakes and malts and Flat Tire Lounge in a Quonset hut for beer; Firetrucker Brewery is a cyclist-friendly spot in Ankeny. Iowa's bike trail system is robust, and social cycling is legendary here, thanks in part to RAGBRAI, the week-long summer ride across the state. Join the masses on a smaller scale, pedaling eight miles south of Des Moines on the Great Western Trail to Cumming Tap for Taco Tuesday.

Guidebook must

In **East Village**, east of the Des Moines River, you'll still find some of the old characters, like an 86-year-old plumbing supply shop, but you'll also discover independent retailers that channel more of the other East Village: Raygun, Fontenelle, Domestica (jewelry, totes, tees), Eden (bath and home boutique with insanely soft animals from London's Jellycat), Marv's Music (vinyl), the Permanent Collection Letterpress + Design Studio (classy cards), Honey Dot Baby Shop (posh toddler threads) and Kitchen Collage (that sorbet-colored Smeg water kettle you've been eyeing). Also check out Gong Fu Tea, Zombie Burger + Drink Lab (locals recommend the Walking Ched burger with deep fried macaroni), Black Sheep (underground satanic tequila bar) and Alba, which has a long, winding concrete bar, open kitchen and veggie gnocchi to write home about.

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