

GOTHAM

2016 Issue

SPACE HOOD

OH-LA-LITA!

IT TURNS OUT THAT THE OUTSKIRTS OF LITTLE ITALY ARE TOTALLY IN.

BY MARK ELLWOOD

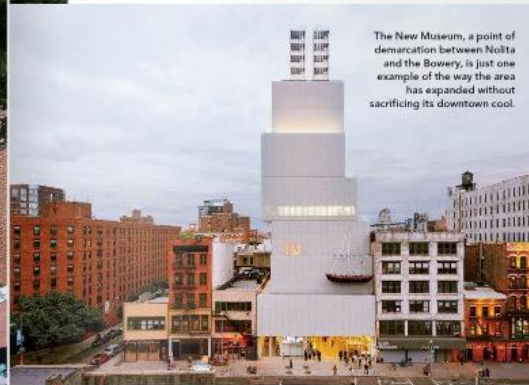
For Quincy Moore, no other neighborhood appeals quite like Nolita. “Manhattan is so big, overwhelming almost, and Nolita makes it feel smaller in a way I didn’t think was possible,” he says. “It’s tight-knit—a community of people that support each other.” Indeed, Moore loves the area so much he named his company in its honor: Knowlita, a graphic design firm that produces clothing and art prints.

Moore is right, of course: Nolita is a tiny area of 16 square blocks home to just over 5,000 New Yorkers. It’s a secret pocket of downtown, wedged between the bustle of Soho and the grit of the Lower East Side, that quietly emerged as a

distinct district in the late 1900s. Its nickname “Nolita,” or North of Little Italy, came as a christening of sorts as the trendy stores and restaurants commandeered fusty shop fronts on Mulberry, Mott, and Elizabeth Streets. It immediately appealed to Lenny Kravitz, who not only moved into the district but shot the music video for “Again” inside one of its then-new hangouts, Café Habana. Nolita soon earned another nickname, Little Sydney, as expat Australians flocked there, opening boutiques like B Space or cafés like Ruby’s, renowned for its long blacks and flat whites. Despite its Frenchified name, Café Gitane is an unofficial



A townhouse at 36 Prince Street embraces Nolita's intimate appeal with its serene outdoor space.



The New Museum, a point of demarcation between Nolita and the Bowery, is just one example of the way the area has expanded without sacrificing its downtown cool.



Aussie clubhouse: It was here that hungry, unsuspecting New Yorkers first encountered the Down Under delicacy of avocado on toast.

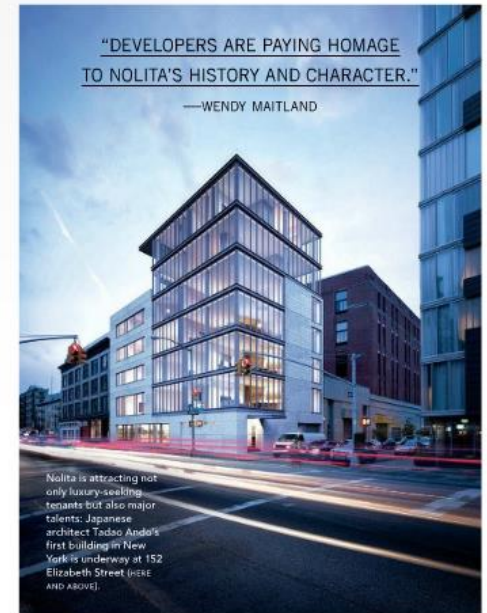
Almost twenty years later, Nolita is undergoing an upgrade. On its eastern reaches, the Bowery is populating with major art players like Sperone Westwater gallery and the New Museum. For the first time, too, upscale developments are underway: An erstwhile parking garage has been reconceived as the six-unit 224 Mulberry (212-726-0786; 224mulberry.com), and a shuttered school on the corner of Prince and Mott Streets will soon re-emerge as a row of ultra-luxe townhouses (34 Prince St., 917-341-4928; princetown.com). A pair of noteworthy architects also has new constructions on the way: Annabelle

Seldorf's retro-inspired 42 Crosby Street (42crosbystreet.com) has topped out, while work on the Japanese architect Tadao Ando's first building in New York—described as a jewel-box-like, seven-story complex—is underway on the corner of Broome and Elizabeth Streets (152 Elizabeth St., 212-913-9078; 152elizabethst.com).

No wonder Wendy Maitland, TOWN's President of Sales, is another fan. “When you're on the streets of Nolita, you have the sense you could be in any century,” she enthuses. “Developers have reflected that here—they're paying homage to its history and character.” What's next for one of Manhattan's smallest, most overlooked neighborhoods? Maitland pauses. “Nolita? It's on the verge of booming.” ■

“DEVELOPERS ARE PAYING HOMAGE TO NOLITA'S HISTORY AND CHARACTER.”

—WENDY MAITLAND



Nolita is attracting not only luxury-seeking tenants but also major talents: Japanese architect Tadao Ando's first building in New York is underway at 152 Elizabeth Street (HERE AND ABOVE).