

Sunday
Vendors

10AM-4PM

JUNE 8
JULY 10 | SEPT 14

The
Meanwhile

UPTOWN

Guide

welcome to GR's uptown neighborhood businesses.

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The Image Shoppe has been lucky to call Uptown home since 2006. We live, work and play in this dynamic neighborhood, and we're happy to have been a part of its revival. We created this guide to share some of our favorite places from the perspective of fellow business owners who also call this incredible place home.

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UPTOWN MAP

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BREWERS COMMITTED TO *"Beer the Change"*

Coined as Beer City USA, it's no surprise that breweries populate the streets of Grand Rapids wherever you go. With 40+ breweries in greater GR, differentiating craft brews can become a bit hazy—especially after a pint or two. But you won't have any problem deciphering the Belgian- and French-inspired ales, IPAs, and wood-aged deliciousness from Brewery Vivant.

www.breweryvivant.com

QUICK FACTS

925 CHERRY ST. SE, EAST HILLS

- Opened by Jason and Kris Spaulding in 2010
- First LEED-Certified commercial microbrewery in the world
- First Certified B Corporation microbrewery
- It took 5 years for Jason and Kris to acquire their dream building
- 1% of total sales are donated to local charities

Q&A WITH JASON SPAULDING

Q: Why did you choose to set up shop in Uptown, and what drew you to this building in particular?

A: We had always planned on this type of brewery... when we saw this building, we knew it was the one. The neighborhood was the perfect fit with its walkability, proximity to public transit, and size.

Q: What is your first priority as a business owner in the Uptown neighborhood?

A: To operate as sustainably as possible (planet) with significant charitable giving, and happy, well-taken-care-of employees (people), and to be a destination brewery in the state of Michigan and beyond (profit).

Q: What should newcomers know about the area before moving to or visiting Uptown?

A: The best way to get a feel for the personality of a city is to visit its neighborhood pubs, restaurants and shops. Our people have an insurmountable amount of pride in where we live.

Q: What do you envision for the future of Uptown?

A: We have dozens of local businesses with owners who live and invest in their neighborhoods, but we have to encourage residents to buy local and remain loyal to the places they've supported for years and have come to love.

SPICING UP THE NEIGHBORHOOD *Since 2013*

One of the best ways to experience a different culture (without having to travel out of the country) is by seeking out traditional, ethnic cuisine from that culture. Thankfully, we have quite an eclectic mix of authentic cuisine in the city of Grand Rapids, especially in Uptown. Dishing up authentic Indian cuisine on E. Fulton, Curry Kitchen is one of Uptown's most popular spots to grab a bite.

www.currykitchengr.com

QUICK FACTS

961 FULTON ST. E, EAST FULTON

- Owned by Raj Grewal, managed by Bhimlal Basel
- Opened on E. Fulton in 2013, original location in Muskegon
- Authentic Indian cuisine with a daily lunch buffet and separate dinner menu

Q&A WITH BHIMLAL BASEL

Q: Why did you choose to set up shop in Uptown, and what drew you to this building in particular?

A: We loved that there is so much life in the Uptown area, both during the daytime and nightlife. There is a lot of energy on E. Fulton, at our neighboring businesses and nearby business districts and neighborhoods as well. This particular building was a perfect fit for us because the previous occupancy was also an Indian restaurant, so it was set up well for us to occupy the space. We love how safe, walkable and active Uptown is!

Q: What is your first priority as a business in Uptown?

A: Our first priority is to serve the people of Grand Rapids real, delicious cuisine that we make in India. We love being able to spread our love of Indian culture to West Michigan, and a big part of that is our food. That's why we love to cater events as well. It is a big part of our business; the larger the party, the better!

Q: What should newcomers know about the area before moving to or visiting Uptown?

A: This area is very safe and energetic, it feels great to be here whether you're just visiting or a new resident. If you plan on moving here or starting a business here, you are guaranteed to have a great future!

BRINGING THE FUNK TO *Uptown*

Grand Rapids may be home to craft beer, local food and talented artisans, but we're also home to some killer boutique workout studios—like The Funky Buddha Yoga Hothouse. Funky Buddha takes hot yoga to a whole new level, with a variety of classes, special events, live musical guests and more. This is not your mama's yoga studio! Get ready to move, sweat, breathe, and find a new passion for working out in a 95-degree studio in Eastown. Check out their schedule to get started on your journey as a yogi!

www.yogahothouse.com

FUNKY BUDDHA YOGA HOTHOUSE

QUICK FACTS

1331 LAKE DR. SE, EASTOWN

- **Chris and Kerri Reinbold opened Funky Buddha in 2010**
- **Three locations: Eastown, Forest Hills and Holland**
- **Built with a sustainable focus, including cork floors and a fresh-air exchange system**
- **Offering over 100 classes weekly**

Q&A WITH CHRIS REINBOLD

Q: What is your first priority as a business owner in Uptown?

A: Continuing to strengthen our culture for our employees and infrastructure, focusing on the quality of our services and maintaining the atmosphere that resonates with thousands of our members. We're now deepening our roots in the community by partnering with local workout studios, musicians, and artists.

Q: What are the major differences between the area now and when you first moved in?

A: When we opened, we were coming out of the recession, and Eastown was struggling. We were the first high-profile business to open once the recession hit. Today, Eastown and the entire Uptown area is thriving. It's an awesome feeling to be part of the revitalization of the neighborhood.

Q: Why did you choose to open Funky Buddha in Uptown, Grand Rapids?

A: We chose it for the location. With Lake Dr. connecting downtown and East Grand Rapids, we are highly accessible. The Uptown and specifically Eastown neighborhood fit with our vision.

Q: What do you envision for the future of Uptown?

A: I see more prosperity, continued growth and evolution. A lot of the growth that's already been made is because of the local, small businesses, entrepreneurs and creatives who thought, "Wouldn't it be cool if..." and then pursued their vision.

The
Chez Olga
Taste The Caribbean Heat
(616) 233-4141

CHEZ OLGA

CAN YOU HANDLE THE *Caribbean Heat?*

Every neighborhood needs a little spice to liven things up now and then—and there's no better way to spice things up than with Caribbean flair. Thankfully, Uptown is home to one of Grand Rapids' only Caribbean restaurants, Chez Olga. Located on Wealthy St., Chez Olga was opened by Olga Benoit, a native of Haiti and one of the sweetest personalities you'll meet in Uptown. If you think you can handle spicy food, you may want to reconsider your spice tolerance before dining at Chez Olga because their spice level is seriously hot. Try it if you dare!

www.chezolga.com



QUICK FACTS

1441 WEALTHY ST. SE, WEALTHY STREET

- Owned by Olga Benoit, who moved from Haiti to Grand Rapids in 1993
- Opened on Wealthy St. on July 9, 2010
- Serves fresh, scratch-made Caribbean cuisine
- Uptown's one and only Caribbean restaurant

Q&A WITH OLGA BENOIT

Q: Why did you choose to set up shop in Uptown, and what drew you to this building in particular?

A: I looked for a building in Uptown for over 2.5 years, and worked tirelessly with the Uptown Business Association to find the perfect spot. I was lucky enough to get this building once it became available, and I think it's the absolute perfect fit. I love how unique it looks from the street—it's both intriguing and unforgettable!

Q: What are the major differences between the area now and when you first moved in?

A: When I first moved to Grand Rapids in the early 90s and even when my restaurant first opened in 2012, there weren't nearly as many people walking around, experiencing what Uptown has to offer—probably because we have so much more to offer today than we did just a few years ago.

Q: What's unique about Uptown as compared to other neighborhoods in Grand Rapids?

A: There are so many different kinds of people here, especially during the summertime when there are more visitors. Some dress very classic while others are covered in tattoos and piercings. But everyone is very nice and all make up this community I love. My way of giving back to this community is with my cooking, and I hope it makes people as happy as it makes me!

Q: What do you envision for the future of Uptown?

A: The more small, local businesses that move into Uptown, the better! I love the character that each business adds to the neighborhood. Each business is unique in its own way and I want us to always stand out as one of the most special neighborhoods in Grand Rapids and any other city.

URBAN. FASHIONABLE.*Sustainable.*

You may think that staying up-to-date on the latest fashions has to be expensive or wasteful, but Urban Exchange Consignment Boutique will show you otherwise. Located on E. Fulton, Urban Exchange carries an impressive collection of softly worn, hip women's clothing for all shapes and sizes. There's something for every kind of fashionista in this cute shop in Uptown.

www.myurbanexchange.com

QUICK FACTS

926 FULTON ST. E, EAST FULTON

- Opened on October 26, 2009
- Owned and operated by Stephanie Johnson
- Carries lightly worn, name-brand clothing from popular designers and retailers
- Dogs are welcome!

Q&A WITH STEPHANIE JOHNSON

Q: Why did you choose to set up shop in Uptown, and what drew you to this building in particular?

A: I knew I wanted to open Urban Exchange in the Uptown neighborhood because it's where I live and love to be! When Neighborhood Ventures showed me this building I had "that feeling" right away—I knew it was the one! It had great potential for beautiful curb appeal, a great layout for clothing retail and lots of street parking—perfect for consignment.

Q: What is your first priority as a business owner in the Uptown neighborhood?

A: My main priority is to set the bar for the standard of business in Uptown. Staying ahead of the game on our inventory, curb appeal, and customer service is critical. I don't want UE to feel boring just because I'm comfortable as a business owner, or because what we're currently doing is easy and convenient. I always want to push the bar!

Q: What's unique about Uptown as compared to other neighborhoods in Grand Rapids?

A: We have a very walkable, condensed shopping district here on the East Fulton side of Uptown. In general, Uptown has a much more eclectic mix of businesses compared to the other districts in Grand Rapids. East Hills and Wealthy are packed with unique restaurants, Easttown has a little bit of everything, and East Fulton has much of the retail in the Uptown area. We have a lot to offer here!

Q: What do you envision for the future of Uptown?

A: I envision unity amongst businesses and our community as a whole. I want to see business owners work together (even more than we already do) to create a fun, safe environment and a positive experience for residents and visitors alike.

FINE ART NESTLED IN THE
Neighborhood

If you think you have to stick to downtown Grand Rapids to experience fine art in the city, think again. We've got our very own fine art gallery right here in Uptown on Cherry Street. The Richard App Gallery has been a long-standing business resident in Uptown since 2001. What started out as just a photo and film processing studio became a resource for art restoration, installation, custom framing, large format printing, classes, and events. There's a lot goin' down at 910 Cherry!

www.richardappgallery.com

QUICK FACTS

910 CHERRY ST. SE, EAST HILLS

- Opened by Richard App in November 1992
- Originally located on 44th and Kalamazoo
- Moved to the East Hills neighborhood in 2001
- Features local and national artists

Q&A WITH RICHARD APP

Q: Why did you choose to set up shop in Uptown?

A: My space was originally located on 44th St. and Kalamazoo right out of college as my photo studio. We eventually started doing custom framing and curating and selling artwork. When I saw this building on Cherry for sale in 2001, I knew I had to grab it. I was always a big fan of this space (even before the “cool factor”)—despite there not being much to the neighborhood yet at that point.

Q: What are the major differences between the area now and when you first moved in?

A: When I first moved in, the only businesses that were there back then (and still are today) are Pickwick Tavern and Cherie Inn—so you could say it was pretty underutilized. Today, East Hills and all of Uptown have obviously done a complete 180. The East Hills neighborhood actually has the highest business occupancy in the state of Michigan. You can't find that outside of Uptown!

Q: What is unique about Uptown as compared to other neighborhoods in Grand Rapids?

A: When you take a look at other neighborhoods in GR, they're all on the same path that Uptown has been on. When I first moved in, there was a sort of identity crisis in East Hills with naming the neighborhood. It took some growing pains, but now we're established—it's a destination.

Q: What do you envision for the future of Uptown?

A: My hope is that all of Uptown continues to mature, especially the retail businesses; I'd like to see retail shops gain a stronger foothold. We're all really looking forward to the partnership with the East Hills Neighborhood and Congress School.

QUICK FACTS

959 WEALTHY ST. SE #2, WEALTHY STREET

- Worked with Guy Bazzani to launch Local First in 2003
- Owned by partners Rob McCarty, Karen Tracey, Troy Best
- Michigan's first certified B Corporation brand marketing firm
- Community advocates for equity, social justice, and environmental sustainability

www.theimageshoppe.com

YOUR *Neighborhood Ally*

You'll find a great mix of businesses in Uptown, especially on the corner of Diamond and Wealthy. Wealthy Market, Erb Thai, and The Meanwhile, just to name a few. The Image Shoppe (TIS) has called the corner of Diamond and Wealthy "home" since 2006. As a Certified B-Corporation brand marketing agency, TIS has been grounded in the establishment and evolution of the Wealthy Street Business District and Uptown first hand, and works to serve as an ally to the community and its growth.



GALLERY 154

Ron Lichtenstein

Q: How has the establishment of Uptown helped Gallery 154?

A: Easttown has always been one of the most balanced neighborhoods in Grand Rapids, with both a vibrant daytime and nightlife. When Uptown came to be, it gave us more opportunities to network with other businesses in the area. Now, we can connect our customers to even more shops and resources in Easttown, East Hills, Wealthy St., and vice versa. The Uptown community creates mutually beneficial relationships unlike any other place.

1456 Lake Dr. SE

616.454.2154
www.gallery154.com



HARMONY BREWING

Heather Van Dyke-Titus

Q: What is your number one priority as a business owner in Uptown?

A: As a small business owner, your culture helps create the culture of a neighborhood, which also helps create the culture of a city. Being a business owner automatically makes me an engaged participant in creating the culture of Easttown, Uptown, and ultimately, of Grand Rapids. It's up to me and other business owners in the area to enact thoughtful business practices to make positive strides in our community, like hiring a diverse group of people from surrounding neighborhoods, supporting and contributing to community events and fundraisers, and resourcing locally and responsibly.

1551 Lake Dr. SE

616.233.0063
www.harmonybeer.com



REBEL RECLAIMED

Chip Minor

Q: What is your first priority as a business in the Uptown neighborhood?

A: For years, Uptown has seen some wonderful neighborhood caretakers—the people who have been here for nearly a decade or longer. Specifically in Eastown, Spirit Dreams, Gallery 154, Argos Book Shop and Redux Books have been the caretakers in this part of Uptown for years. It's now our turn to carry on that tradition into the future as the younger generation of caretakers in Eastown.

1409 Robinson Rd. SE

616.218.9257

www.rebelreclaimed.com



LIGHTFAST COFFEE

Richard Mooney

Q: What's unique about Uptown as compared to other neighborhoods in Grand Rapids?

A: I love that I can get something to eat and drink, purchase items for the house at the antique shop, buy a cigar and shop for art and gifts right here in my neighborhood. There's so much to do, see and explore.

944 E. Fulton St.

616.930.3768

www.lightfastcoffee.com



ALL CITY KICKS

Edwin Victory

Q: What do you envision for the future of Uptown?

A: We have a lot of diverse restaurants and cuisine in the area but need more retail businesses. More retail stores would keep even more people hanging out in Easttown and Uptown during the day instead of going to a mall or outlet store. Then they can shop during the day, eat in the evening and party at night!

1500 Wealthy St. SE

616.242.1307
www.ackgr.com



THE PITA HOUSE

Marwan Kayyali & Basel Shatara

Q: What are the major differences between the area now and when you first moved in?

A: There are a lot more businesses in the area now and a lot of beautification projects have been made to Easttown since we opened. Today, Easttown is a multicultural area with different ethnic restaurants and residents—all who come from different backgrounds.

1508 Wealthy St. SE

616.454.1171
www.pitahouse.net



BAZZANI

Guy Bazzani

Q: Why did you choose Uptown?

A: I moved here before the establishment of Uptown. The neighborhood desperately needed to be rebuilt. Not many saw the potential here, but I did, and wanted to make it a reality. Thankfully, there were enough people who saw the same potential as I did, so we used that momentum and took the risk. We made sure the process was very community-involved, digging deep with committee meetings and local input to build the neighborhood up to a place everyone wanted to be. And I think we did that pretty well.

959 Wealthy St. SE #1

616.774.2002
www.bazzani.com



THE WINCHESTER

Paul Lee

Q: What is the major difference in Uptown today as compared to when you first moved in?

A: Today, you see residents and business owners actually investing in residential and commercial properties. What it really took was more investment into the area for the positive changes and growth to happen. When commercial areas improve, residents are encouraged to improve their homes as well. The boom of downtown Grand Rapids has also been a strong influence; downtown areas thrive when their neighborhoods thrive.

648 Wealthy St. SE

616.451.4969
www.winchestergr.com



ATOMIC OBJECT

Carl Erickson

Q: What is your first priority as a business in Uptown?

A: What matters most to me about keeping Atomic Object in Uptown is the human scale and connectivity of the place. My employees diffuse out from our building for walks, coffee, lunch, drinks and shopping. We use the sidewalks and neighborhood businesses as part of our office. We can practice our very high-tech craft in a 100-year-old building where they used to shoe horses. We don't need our cars during the day. We know and care about our neighbors. We're connected.

1034 Wealthy St. SE

616.776.6020
atomicobject.com



LITTLE AFRICA

Loul Negash

Q: What is your first priority as a business in the Uptown neighborhood?

A: Being a friendly, helpful person to my community is always my first and biggest priority. I want to serve my community as best as I can, from providing a unique cultural experience to just being a good neighbor. Being community-focused will forever be important to me.

956 E. Fulton St.

616.222.1169
[facebook: little africa ethiopian cuisine](https://www.facebook.com/little.africa.ethiopian.cuisine)



ELK BREWING

Eric Karns

Q: What's unique about Uptown compared to other neighborhoods in Grand Rapids?

A: There really isn't something you can't find here. Uptown has a large variety of food, from hot dogs at Jonny B'z and Yesterdog to small plates at Grove and Indian cuisine at Bombay Cuisine, you can visit a handful of coffee shops, bakeries, specialty retail stores, clothing stores, and of course, breweries, and so much more. We're all very similar people that offer different goods and services.

700 Wealthy St. SE

616.238.5227
www.elkbrewing.com



EAST HILLS COUNCIL of NEIGHBORS

Rachel Lee

Q: What should newcomers know about the area before moving to or visiting Uptown?

A: Simply put, take a walk. The neighborhood is beautiful and the best way to familiarize yourself with Uptown is by walking down Wealthy, Cherry, Lake, and the side streets. Stop into any and all stores, restaurants, and bars that pique your interest. Chances are you'll be busy all day!

131 Eastern Ave. SE

616.454.9079
www.easthillscouncil.org



MARIE CATRIB'S

Fouad Catrib

Q: What is unique about Uptown compared to other neighborhoods in Grand Rapids?

A: Uptown is the first neighborhood in Grand Rapids to have undergone a total revitalization. Over the years, many neighborhoods have followed this lead, and we're glad to be a founding business in this pioneering district.

1001 Lake Dr. SE

616.454.4020
www.mariecatrubs.com



SPIRIT DREAMS

Jaye Van Lenten

Q: What is your first priority as a business owner in Uptown?

A: I want to remain a viable small business so I can participate and contribute as much as I can in the community. It's very important to my staff and me to be community-driven and neighborhood-based; we never want to lose that!

1430 Lake Dr. SE

616.456.9889
www.spiritdreamsgr.com



THE GREEN WELL

Bobby Randall

Q: What is your first priority as a business in Uptown?

A: Having a positive impact on our guests, vendors and community is a non-negotiable priority of mine. The entire staff at The Green Well, Essence Restaurant Group and I aspire daily to help foster the growth and sourcing of the West Michigan local food systems. The work of our local farmers is at the core of what creates outstanding experiences for our guests. Without them, we could not fulfill our purpose in the community.

924 Cherry St. SE

616.808.3566
www.thegreenwell.com



ART OF THE TABLE

Amy Ruis

Q: What should newcomers know about the area before moving or visiting Uptown?

A: Uptown is an incredibly social and homey place to be. There's so much going on here—we have restaurants, breweries, retail, specialty shops, local artisans, not to mention it's a walkable, friendly and welcoming community. I know several people from big cities who moved here and are absolutely floored by what Grand Rapids has to offer. They'll say, "It feels just like home! I never thought I'd find anything like it!" That's what makes Uptown so unique.

606 Wealthy St. SE

616.301.1885
www.artofthetable.com



THE MEANWHILE

Tami VandenBerg

Q: What do you envision for the future of Uptown?

A: I would like to see continuing work on inclusion, bringing more people from diverse backgrounds to the table and encouraging them to voice their opinions. There has undoubtedly been a ton of progress thanks to the work of Grand Rapids activists, who made sure nobody in the neighborhood felt left out of the conversation. We have been intentional about how we've worked to grow the Uptown district, and would like to keep that intention moving forward.

1005 Wealthy St. SE

616.233.1679
www.meanwhilebar.com



WEALTHY MARKET

Aman Ghotra

Q: What is your first priority as a business in Uptown?

A: We strive to provide great customer service to each and every customer, whether they're a regular or walking in for the first time. There's a lot of diversity in Grand Rapids—especially in Uptown—and I want everyone to feel welcome and find what they need every time they stop in.

1012 Wealthy St. SE

616.454.9079
facebook: Wealthy Market

COMMUNITY *Resources*

UPTOWN DISTRICT

uptowngr.com | info@uptowngr.com | 616.301.3929

FULTON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

fultonheights.org | P.O.Box 1590 | fhna@fultonheights.org

MIDTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

midtowngr.com | 1147 E.Fulton St.
616.732.9191 | midtownmi@yahoo.com

EAST HILLS COUNCIL OF NEIGHBORS

easthillscouncil.org | 131 Eastern Ave. SE
616.451.3025 | info@easthills.org

EASTOWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

eastown.org | 415 Ethel St. SE | 616.451.3025 | info@eastown.org

BAXTER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

813 Franklin St. SE | 616.456.6120

NEIGHBORHOOD VENTURES

neighborhoodventures.org | 1514 Wealthy St. SE STE.214

WEALTHY STREET BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

1514 Wealthy St. SE | 616.301.3929

EAST HILLS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

easthillscouncil.org | 131 Eastern Ave. SE
616.451.3025 | info@easthills.org

EASTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

eastowngr.com | eastownba@gmail.com

HERITAGE HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

heritagehillweb.org | 126 College Ave. SE | 616.459.8950

FULTON STREET FARMERS MARKET

fultonstreetmarket.org | 1145 E. Fulton St. | 616.454.4118

WEALTHY THEATRE

wealthytheatre.org | 1130 Wealthy St. SE | 616.459.4788 ext. 130

HOW DO OUR BUSINESS OWNERS DESCRIBE

Uptown?

- ACTIVE
- PASSIONATE
- PROGRESSIVE
- DIVERSE
- ENTERTAINING
- VIBRANT
- ENGAGING
- URBAN
- FUNKY
- GREAT
- WALKABLE
- ELECTRIC
- LOCAL
- CARING
- FOOD-FOCUSED
- PEOPLE-FOCUSED
- ENVIRONMENTAL
- EVER-CHANGING
- HOME
- SAFE
- GRITTY