WANDERLUST: NEW HAVEN

I TRAVEL AROUND CONNECTICUT, RHODE ISLAND AND MASSACHUSETTS QUITE OFTEN, BUT ONE PLACE I ENJOY GOING TO REGULARLY IS NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT. THERE IS JUST SOMETHING ABOUT IT THAT KEEPS DRAWING ME BACK. THE YALE STUDENTS ARE SO FRESH AND NEW WITH EVERYTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO ... THEY BRING YOUTH, ENERGY AND INTELLECT TO THE CITY. THERE IS THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CAMPUS BUILDINGS, THE BOUTIQUES, COFFEE SHOPS, PUBS, BOOKSTORES, GALLERIES AND OUTSTANDING MUSEUMS. VISITORS AND RESIDENTS INCLUDE WRITERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS, DESIGNERS, STUDENTS AND FOODAHOLICS.

The center offers exhibitions and programs year-round. Admission is always free and parking is ample.

Further down Chapel Street is a delightful mecca of a more cutting-edge, progressive art incentive — the city-run Project Storefronts program that works to unite artists, entrepreneurs and retailers by placing artwork in empty retail spaces in the city in an effort to revitalize neighborhoods. You'll find current projects at 100 Crown Street and 756 Chapel.

"The Ripple Effect," the brainchild of Director of Artistic Services and Programs for the Arts Council of Greater New Haven Debbie Hesse, runs through March 18 at 756 Chapel. The installation invites artists near and far to add to the installation; as one artist "tags" another, it creates ... yes ... a ripple effect, with the resulting art adorning the three-story former home of music store Goldie & Libro. "At present we have about 40 artists participating," Hesse said. "They come locally and from afar. The artists hear about us and stop by because they have been tagged or want to participate in the project."

There are big-name galleries such as the Yale University Art Gallery. The Swartwout building is presently undergoing a facelift, but the Kahn building is open and offers fine collections of European art, modern and contemporary works, American paintings and sculpture. You'll find the Yale University Art Gallery at 1111 Chapel Street, and admission is free.

Right across the street is another big contender. At the Yale Center for British Art (1080 Chapel Street), works by Joshua Reynolds, George Stubbs, Thomas Gainsborough and J.M.W. Turner highlight a collection that includes paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, rare books and manuscripts focused on the development of British art and life from the Elizabethan period on.
Another ongoing project at 756 Chapel is InterCambio. Translated as "exchange," InterCambio is composed of New Haven residents embracing a diverse program of special events including music performances, art exhibitions, workshops, street festivals and creative dialogue. The mission here is "to encourage people to collaborate artistically in broader ways," said writer and curator Alexis Zanghi. "We work building creative economies and supporting the work of emerging artists in a variety of disciplines and media. Our performance programs are unique in that they are almost exclusively multimedia ... many incorporate installations, video and interactive elements."

Around the corner is Artspace New Haven at 50 Orange Street. A non-profit organization working to bring together communities and emerging and local artists, Artspace has been presenting an ongoing roster of local and national visual artists since 1987, both on- and off-site. The venue is a generously laid-out location composed of several galleries and initiatives for artists and art lovers. Each September and October, it oversees the City Wide Open Studio.

There is no shortage of culinary delight in this area, either. Our first stop is 116 Crown. Having partaken of their menu and diverse martini offerings many times, I can attest that the ambiance is fantastic. The food is served up by chef Michael Denisewicz and is influenced by his Italian/Polish heritage. 116 Crown also offers events and happenings on a regular basis. A sophisticated gathering place, the service is great and it is a must-go-to destination.

Another venue for fine eats is a place recommended to me by graphic design legend Tom Morin. Skappo Italian Wine Bar at 59 Crown Street invites you to celebrate the culture of Italian food and wine along with family and friends. The menu offers cured meats and cheeses, vegetables and wonderful deserts ... all complemented by the flavors of Italian wine. And just for fun, owner Anna Gambacorta also offers you Italian lessons every Monday night. Choose from beginner, intermediate and conversational lessons.

Perhaps sit-down isn’t your thing. In need of something quick and organic? Right across the way from 756 Chapel Studio is the recently opened Elm City Market at 777 Chapel Street. Elm City Market is a new food co-op where anyone can shop. They offer a huge selection of healthy and affordable foods including deli items, meat, seafood, dairy, baked goods, and natural and organic selections. There are prepared foods and a salad bar. Just head in, grab something yummy and go. The Market is open seven days a week.

These are just some of the fine places for art and food in New Haven. I’ve tried to provide you with some of my favorites but there are many more and I encourage you to explore. Next time you pass through town, get off the highway — New Haven is easily accessed from Interstate 95 and has a great selection of business and art that will welcome you.

Lisa Mikulski

Caribiana: tropical sights and colors
SANDRA GOLBERT
March 28 - May 13
Artist’s Talk & Reception
Wednesday, April 4
11:30 am - 1 pm

Pine Manor College
Hess Gallery
400 Heath St., Chestnut Hill, MA
617-731-7157
www.pmc.edu/hess-gallery