

# ARTS & EATS IN JERSEY CITY BY VICTORIA KEENAN

These days, an eating experience means more than just great food. While a delicious lunch or dinner is always important, restaurant goes undoubtedly expect a friendly staff and an unrivaled atmosphere. More and more, we're seeing food and restaurants inspired by art, whether it be walls adorned with hand-painted murals, or drinking glasses and decorations made from upcycled items, repurposed to be decor. The cities throughout Hudson County are bursting into the art scene in big ways, with chefs plating food in innovative and interesting ways and local artists designing everything from street art to the walls of restaurants, most even reminiscent of our neighbors across the river. From unique takes on everything from food and drink to the style of the restaurant itself, we wanted to give readers a tour of some of our local art-inspired favorites.

## Cellar 335 ▶

Though Cellar 335 has only been open for a few months, they have made a name for themselves with their food, drinks, and art work. Their tapas-style, progressive Asian-American dishes evolve seasonally and are designed with sharing in mind, while their tiki-style cocktails are served in unique glasses, from octopus mugs and copper pineapples to large flaming drinks in goblets. Dark brick lines the space, one being a living wall, complete with lush green moss. Large lights hang from the ceiling to cast a warm glow over the plush red chairs and leather booths, and next to the living wall, a mural painted by locally-renowned graffiti artist Mr. Mustart. Both the hand-carved bar and featured art set an overall ambience of the restaurant, not to be overshadowed by the delicious menu curated by Chef Jamie Knott.



## Ani Ramen ▶

Translating to “big brother” in English, Ani Ramen focuses on connecting family, community, and of course, delicious Ramen noodles. Having first opened in Montclair and coming soon to Jersey City, the noodle house serves up authentic Asian culture in standout ways, both through food and atmosphere. Both restaurants feature hand-painted murals commissioned by artist Rich Tu, hailing from New Jersey. Tu has known the owner and his wife since high school, so when the family opened Ani Ramen, the owners knew exactly who to call. Tu himself explained that he had wanted to do a large scale mural for a while, and the Ani pieces presented the perfect opportunity. “The aesthetic [in Montclair] was black wall, white lines on top from a pure visual approach; an East-meets-West, old-meets-new vibe, in addition to telling the story of the family. In Montclair, it’s a generational story, with the owner’s children in it. In Jersey City there’s going to be a similar thought, but because there’s a little more space, the restaurant will be more playful and have a bunch of different cultural references and details.”



ART BY RICH TU

# Dullboy

Bringing a speakeasy feel to Jersey City's Grove Street, Dullboy is a new take on the restaurant and bar classics. Taking inspiration from the saying "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," the laidback eatery is full of comfort food and cocktails named after literary figures, most of which

are women. Lining the walls next to the tables are old typewriters and one is covered floor-to-ceiling paperback books. Some books lay opened-faced against the wall, giving patrons a truly unique restaurant atmosphere unlike any other in the area.



## South House

Bringing Texas to New Jersey, South House serves up everyone's favorite Southern comfort food, but with a funky Garden State twist. The huge, three-floor space offers takes on classic drinks and everything from fried chicken to brisket. Aside from the outdoor area and the downstairs hangout (complete with a pool table, dartboard, and shuffleboard), some of the most impressive part of South House is their art collection. Photos, prints and paintings line the brick walls, featuring the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley, Bob Dylan, The Beatles, and many more. From the vintage furniture to their live Blue's music, South House's rustic setting is full of Southern charm. Behind the building, the massive space is covered with a graffiti mural by Jersey City Muralist Shaun "Pawn" Price. The psychedelically-colorful piece pays homage to artists deeply ingrained in music movements of the past.



## Taqueria Downtown ▲

Bringing a speakeasy feel to Jersey City's Grove Street, Dullboy is a new take on the restaurant and bar classics. Taking inspiration from the saying "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," the laidback eatery is full of comfort food and cocktails named after literary figures, most of which are women. Lining the walls next to the tables are old typewriters and one is covered floor-to-ceiling paperback books. Some books lay opened-faced against the wall, giving patrons a truly unique restaurant atmosphere unlike any other in the area.