

CREAM OF THE CROP

BY REBECCA PATTON

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This time of year is punctuated by tinny, ice cream truck music and late-night Ben & Jerry's runs to the nearest bodega. And even once the humidity becomes more manageable, ice cream will still be there to tide us over into autumn. Fortunately for folks in Long Island City and Astoria, three new ice cream shops have cropped up this summer. And who can say no to gourmet ice cream with high-quality ingredients and Instagram-ready presentations? Look no further than these three newest additions for decadent desserts guaranteed to make you smile.

Ice & Vice

An unassuming storefront on the corner of Dutch Kills and Jackson says "Jules Printing & Stationery Co.," but it's really a pop-up for the ice cream shop Ice & Vice.

"A lot of people walking by tend to think we're really popular for a print shop," said Ken Lo, one of Ice & Vice's two owners. "It almost makes it appear like a known secret for LIC. We find it rather charming. It kind of keeps the history with the place, as we try to do that with all of our locations."

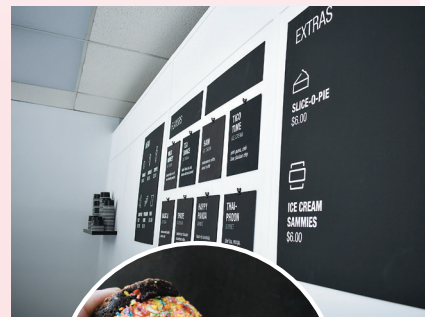
While Ice & Vice's LIC pop-up location opened at the end of June, their flagship store is in the Lower East Side, with a second pop-up in Times Square. And although both Lo and his co-owner, Paul Kim, are originally from Los Angeles, Ice & Vice got its start in Long Island City.

"We're returning to our roots," Lo said. "We first started back at the LIC Flea & Food back in 2013 and 2014." And Queens seems thrilled by the brand's homecoming. "An overwhelming number of residents have been requesting we stay permanently in LIC," Lo said. "[I]t's been great being able to reconnect with the community that we started in."

As for fan favorites, Lo said that their ice cream sandwiches are a big hit, and their best-selling ice cream flavor is Milk Money, which he described as "a toasted milk ice cream with a sea salt chocolate ganache." One such ice cream sandwich is their Everything B&W Sammie, which features two black-and-white cookies with everything seasoning-flavored ice cream squished in between.

But ice cream aficionados should act fast: Ice & Vice's LIC pop-up may only be open through the end of September. That being said, it sounds like they could be persuaded to stay longer.

"With such a positive response coming from the local community, we may consider opening a permanent shop in LIC," Lo said. "You never know!"



Photos courtesy of Ice & Vice

Ample Hills Creamery

This recent addition to 30th Avenue is already an Astoria fixture, although it just opened on June 22. The line at Ample Hills often snakes out the door, and it's difficult to find seating inside. But with flavors like Cookie au Lait, Nonna D's Oatmeal Lace and Mexican Hot Chocolate, it's easy to see why.

This cult ice cream brand was founded by Brian Smith and Jackie Cuscuna in 2011, per an Ample Hills press release. And its Astoria storefront is just one of 11 Ample Hills outposts, with locations in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Jersey City, Disney's BoardWalk Inn and Rockaway Beach.

"We are thrilled and excited to open our first Ample Hills Creamery in Astoria, Queens!" Smith and Cuscuna posted on the Ample Hills Instagram back in April. "We looked long and hard at many great spaces until we found a perfect corner in an incredibly vibrant community near many of our favorite haunts."

One of Ample Hills's PR representatives, Account Executive Tavo Dam, said in an email that opening a location in Astoria felt like a natural progression for the ice cream company. And its newest location even boasts an exclusive flavor: Nectar of the Queens, which Dam described as "a smooth cinnamon honey ice cream mixed with pieces of two beloved Greek pastries – baklava and galaktoboureko." Both of these pastries are baked at Atropolis Bakery, another local institution.

Gourmet ice cream and an homage to the neighborhood's Greek heritage – what more could Astorians want?



Photos courtesy of Jordan Slocum/Ample Hills



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Chip Ice Cream

Anyone who's walked by 34th Street and 30th Avenue in the last year has caught the scent of delicious cookies wafting out of Chip NYC. And on July 22, the same team opened a second storefront: Chip Ice Cream, which is located on 31st Avenue and 41st Street and open Tuesday through Sunday, 3 to 10 p.m.

Andrea Prunella, Chip's executive pastry chef, grew up in Queens,

as did the brand's two owners, Theodore and Peter, whose last names she didn't disclose. Since they're from the borough, they know the area and clientele extremely well.

"[Astoria is] really becoming a hub for really great ice cream, and we're just really excited to be a part of it," Prunella said.

What's more, their plans for Chip Ice Cream began taking shape not long after they opened their first set of doors.

"Once we saw that [Chip NYC] was very well-received and successful, we said, 'OK, well now, what's the next step?'" Prunella recalled. "And after a couple months, we said, 'We have to pair this with ice cream.'"

Their new storefront currently offers soft-serves (which are a blend of ice cream and Chip cookies) and ice cream sandwiches. Prunella emphasized that all of their menu items incorporate the Chip cookies.

"It was very important to us that when you took a bite of the ice





cream, you were reminded of the Chip cookie," the pastry chef said. "That buttery goodness you get."

And while these dessert concepts aren't new, Prunella explained that their ingredients set them apart.

"Chip is unique because we use cookies that are literally baked fresh in the shop," she said. "You can smell them in the air." As for the ice cream itself, Prunella said that it's very good quality and is sourced from a local distributor. "It's almost like gelato but not quite as thick," she explained. "It's got a nice aeration to it."

But ultimately, Chip Ice Cream is all about those delicious, ooey-gooey, homemade cookies.

"What's better than pairing cookies and ice cream?" Prunella said. "I mean, it's a match made in heaven."

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Photos by Alexander Stein