

The Mecca of Sneakers

By: Daniel Bates

When it comes to shoes, I can't help myself, and since relocating to 812 Broadway, Flight Club New York has become a must see destination for those who love sneakers. A simple hop on the 6 train from Grand Central followed by a four minute walk from 14 Street - Union Square Station, people visit from all over to look at the rarest of rare sneakers like Nike Air Yeezys, Adidas x Pharrell NMDs, and Kobe Bryant's Air Jordan PE Pack.

Enclosed behind tall glass doors, the buildings industrial design houses an open sales floor that is equal parts Library of Congress and New York City Stock Exchange. Shrink-wrapped shoes line the entirety of the brick wall to your left in clean rows, with sneakers that range from grail-status to last weekend's release. Gawking sneakerheads move about the bustling open floor asking for sizes, while the bass of mid-2000s hip-hop and R&B thumps away in the background.

Another room awaits toward the front-entrance of the store that features a well-lit glass display of the most coveted sneakers on the market. Nike Air Mags, Yeezys, rare and OG Jordans, and Player Exclusives that were made in scarce numbers or never released to the retail public can all be found behind the glass. Selling these vaunted sneakers is what gives Flight Club its reputation as the mecca for secondary sneaker selling. Shoes in this display can run you anywhere from \$500 (Air Jordan 6 Black/Varsity Red) to \$100,000 (Nike Air Yeezy "Black Glow" Sample).

What is unique to Flight Club, aside from their selection, is that their sneakers are sold on consignment. Potential sellers bring their brand new or deadstock kicks, fix a price with the staff and take home 80 percent of their sale.

Before I entered, a matte black Mercedes AMG coupe pulled up to the curb and popped the trunk, while three men grabbed several boxes of the latest releases and made a bee-line for the counter.

It is not out of the ordinary either for a celebrity to come through Flight Club and shut it down. Whether it be in New York or their Los Angeles location, employees share wild stories like when rapper Wale came in and bought every pair of Air Jordan 3's for he and his team back in 2013, or Complex News filming their "Sneaker Shopping" segments with the some of the biggest names in pop culture.

When shopping at Flight Club it is crucial to come in with a plan. The store's stock can be overwhelming even if it's not your first time visiting. Only bring what you're willing to spend because one shoe can make the difference between fresh kicks and you not eating for the next two weeks. Flight Club keeps an up-to-date online store/inventory as well where one can familiarize themselves with the prices of the shoes they've been eyeing beforehand.

Those receipts can add up quickly so be sure there's some extra cash for Roberta's pizza in Urban Space on Park Ave across from Grand Central. It's fire.

Flight Club 812 Broadway, New York, NY; (888) 937-8020

Prices: About \$200 to \$100,000

Hours: Sunday - Thursday 11 AM. - 8 PM

Friday - Saturday 11 AM - 9 PM

Roberta's Pizza 230 Park Avenue, New York, NY; (646) 747-0820

Prices: About \$13 to \$18

Hours: Monday - Friday 11 AM - 9PM

Saturday - Sunday 11 AM - 5PM

Directions (Transit approx. 14 mins): Flight Club to Roberta's Pizza (Urban Space)

Flight Club 812 Broadway New York, NY 10003

Walk 0.2 mi (4 mins)

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14 Street - Union Square Station

4 Train towards Woodlawn

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Grand Central - 42 St

Walk 0.3 mi (7 mins)

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230 Park Ave, New York, NY 10169