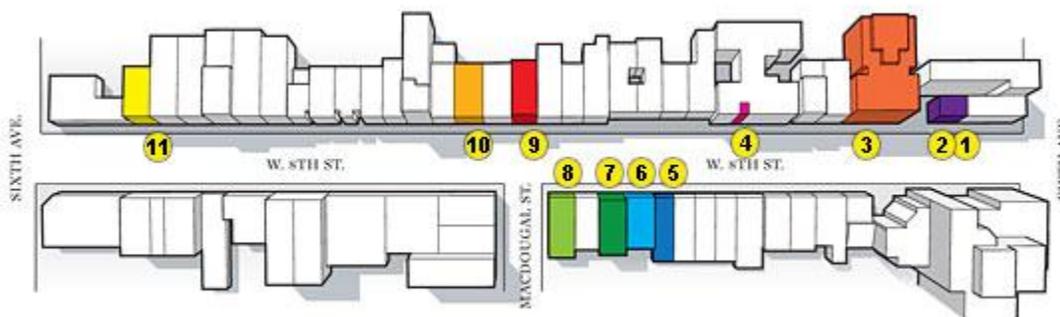


# Less Shoes, More Sashimi

With a boutique hotel and a Stumptown café on the horizon, stubbornly schlocky West 8th Street may be turning the corner.

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*Illustration by Jason Lee*

Despite its inexorable advances elsewhere, gentrification has somehow eluded the block of West 8th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. In recent years, the corridor has been known more for its cut-rate clunky-shoe stores—and lately, in a possibly related development, its back-and-foot-rub parlors—than for anything else. Restaurants and bars, those usually reliable neighborhood-makers, open and close in such quick succession it's impossible to keep track. But with a flurry of new food and drink options catering to contemporary appetites (fancy sushi! Beer in growlers! Juice cleanses! Chicken fingers?), change seems imminent. If anything can reverse the street's checkered fortunes—for better or worse, depending on your view of real-estate values—it's a nationally revered cult coffee shop and a hip boutique hotel, both of which have recently signed 8th Street leases. Here, the strip's newest spots to eat and drink, and a few coming soon.

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## 1. Organic Avenue

*1 W. 8th St.; 212-358-0500*

Before this cold-pressed juggernaut brought its inventive juices, vegan snacks, and \$350 five-day cleanses to the block, the reigning health-food specialist was 34-year-old Eva's, still slinging six-egg-white omelets and bodybuilder shakes just up the street.

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## 2. Populence Artisan Popcorn

*1 W. 8th St.; no phone yet*

Yes, a whole shop dedicated to not just popcorn but artisan popcorn, which seems to be having a good-for-you moment (except, that is, when it's drenched in caramel and chocolate). Opens by June 1.

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(Photo: Alamy)

## 3. Marlton House

*5 W. 8th St.; no phone yet*

Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady slept here. And by early next year, so can beatnik-groupie out-of-towners willing to spend \$250 to \$300 a night in one of 120 gut-renovated rooms. This latest venture from the team behind the Jane and Bowery hotels will house a bar and restaurant—cuisine to be determined.

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## 4. Cafetiny

*11 W. 8th St.; 212-470-4550*

Many New York closets are larger than this “organic coffee shop,” where the beans come from Turkey or Brooklyn’s Stone Street, and the pistachio baklava from a bakery in Jersey.

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## 5. Amélie Wine Bar

*22 W. 8th St.; 212-533-2962*

The congenial 8th Street Winecellar gets some vinous competition in the form of this French via San Francisco newcomer, which has installed theater seats and a menu of Gallic standards like escargots and daube Provençale.

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## 6. Apple Cafe Bakery

*24 W. 8th St.; 212-432-4300*

This bakery tirelessly run by a former Pies 'n' Thighs man is especially proud of its flourless chocolate cake, but the buttercreamy repertoire is also heavy on cupcakes (vegan and not), lofty layer cakes, and a darn good banana pudding.

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(Photo: Danny Kim/New York Magazine)



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## 7. The Growler Station

26 W. 8th St.; 212-777-2337

The growler, an increasingly popular beer-transport system, comes in a plastic or glass version here, filled in a method that displaces oxygen with carbon dioxide to keep the brew fresher. Beer snacks include artisanal beef jerky and prepacked Artisanal cheese.

(Photo: Courtesy of Growler Station)

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## 8. Stumptown Coffee Roasters

30 W. 8th St.; no phone yet

More than twice the size of the [Ace Hotel](#) coffee bar, this one should open by midsummer with both indoor and outdoor seating.



(Photo: Courtesy of

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## 9. Sticky's Finger Joint

31 W. 8th St.; 212-777-7131

On paper, a gourmet chicken-finger restaurant doesn't sound like such a terrific idea, unless, of course, you're a 9-year-old boy. One bite of the *spécialité* de la maison, though, and you're struck by the thought that the opinions of 9-year-old boys may be highly underrated.



(Photo: Danny Kim/New York Magazine)

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## 10. Pour George

35 W. 8th St.; 212-253-2999

With the demise of State Room, the street's sole gastropub courts locals with a working fireplace, multiple flatscreens, and a menu that ranges from chicken wings and sliders to a four-course duck dinner.

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## 11. Neta

61 W. 8th St.; 212-505-2610

The strip has other sushi bars, but none as out-and-out posh as this, with its white-curtained façade, streamlined wood counters, and talented chefs newly sprung from the employ of Masayoshi Takayama, New York's most illustrious sushi maestro.



(Photo: Melissa Hom/New York Magazine)