

TIMES *Ledger*

New Queens Guide Is 'Not For Tourists'

By Scott Sieber
June 22, 2006

Looking to entice "explorers" into the borough, Not For Tourists hosted a release party Sunday for its first-ever guide to Queens.

The pocket-sized guide book with the obscure title, "Not For Tourists Guide to Queens," consists of more than 100 pages of local hot spots, compiled by residents and mapped out in detail on every page.

The concept is similar to what made places like the Village and Brooklyn popular tourist destinations, said publisher Jane Pirone - in a word, truly unique New York experiences occur in the places that tourists don't normally frequent.

"When we use the word 'tourist,' it's kind of a pejorative version of the word 'tourist,'" she said. "We don't like to use the word because everyone we know are more like explorers. They're not coming here to just see New York as they just see it on 'Law and Order.' They're coming here to find Long Island City, not to see the Statue of Liberty."

The "Not For Tourists" guide is a blueprint for discovery, she said, complete with in-depth maps and descriptions of each neighborhood from Astoria to Bayside to Jamaica. While touted as serving those other than ordinary tourists, the guide features traditional information for travelers such as the borough's bus routes, restaurants, shopping areas, entertainment and parks, among other notable places and events. The books are released once a year and are updated annually.

"It's a shorthand version for you to experience this city as though you've been living there for three years," Pirone said. "It's about exploration."

With an open bar and buffet to celebrate the release at the Sculpture Center in Long Island City, hundreds of people milled about inside where the floors are sprinkled with glitter and the walls are filled with artwork. Meanwhile, the pocket-sized books sold steadily at \$10 a piece.

It was a sign, Pirone said, that Queens is a changing landscape. Likening Long Island City's art scene to neighborhoods in Manhattan and Brooklyn, she said that when the artists move in, so do the development, the economic growth, and eventually the tourists. There are other places that will still pull the majority of the tourism in the city, she said, but the diversity of Queens can easily attract those bored with the typical city shtick, a prospect she hopes will involve using the snappy writing inside "Not For Tourists."

"We're very opinionated," she said about the sometimes outspoken writing style. "But we don't want to be judgmental so you can figure out what works best for you."

For more information, visit the Web site at www.notfortourists.com.