

Check Out TurnStyle, A Subway Passageway Turned Food & Shopping Hall In Columbus Circle

BY SCOTT HEINS

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(Scott Heins/Gothamist)

Commuters walking through Columbus Circle will have a multitude of new shopping options when TurnStyle, an underground retail complex four years in the making, opens for business Tuesday. A long, hallway-style mall that features over a dozen boutique stores decked out in warm lighting and industrial fixtures, the space was designed with the intent of getting New Yorkers to slow down, open their eyes, and, of course, shop.

TurnStyle's lead developer Susan Fine worked on the remodeling of Grand Central Market, and used that space as a reference point for her new Columbus Circle project. "I knew I needed to create lots of energy, and the way you do that is by having lots of small stores," Fine said Tuesday.

A dingy, 325-foot-long subway passageway between 57th Street and 59th Street along 8th Avenue has been transformed to create the space, which boasts 30,000-square-feet of food and retail. All together, there are 39 different vendors in the space, including 20 food service establishments, 12 boutiques and other rotating vendors.

"These shops understood what we're trying to do, and they're into it," says Fine. "Our eyes are deadened in a lot of ways. Screens deaden them, and I think we'll open your eyes. I hope we do."

Boutiques are the defining feature of TurnStyle, and its stores offer just about everything from high-end dog toys to fine menswear to artisanal hats to books to wine. In terms of food, sweets from Chelsea Market fixtures Doughnuttery and The Nut Box complement a host of coffee options including FIKA and Starbucks. A Melt Kraft grilled cheese stand is tucked near the space's entrance. The space is geared

toward the urban gourmand on the go, but Fine also hopes TurnStyle will become a destination itself. A late evening program of live music is currently in the works.

"It was hard to figure out how to be subversive and cool and industrial, but warm. You have to be inviting," Fine said as she oversaw the last stages of construction before Tuesday evening's opening. Each boutique is required to be open for 12 hours each day, but opening and closing times will be in flux for the next few weeks.



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