

WORTH THE TRIP

I GET THE SHAKES AT HINSCH'S

Slurping summer in Bay Ridge.

BY ANNE SAXELBY



Photographs: Michael Harlan Turkell

Hinsch's is one of just two remaining independently owned ice cream parlors in New York.

Back when I was growing up in the Chicago suburbs, if my family had any concept of seasonal eating, it meant one thing and one thing only: hitting up Dairy Queen on the first night of summer. My mother, Pam, a diehard DQ devotee since childhood, predisposed my siblings and me for a love of all lactic confections. It's still with me. Pedaling up Fifth Avenue one recent warm day, pulled forward as if by some galactic ice cream magnet, I decided that the blame rests most solidly on her shoulders. Hello, my name is Anne, and I am a milkshake addict.

I first discovered Hinsch's on a somewhat dull errand to a Bay Ridge dermatologist a few years ago. I've since ended my relation-

ship with him (a bit of a crackpot), but am more in love than ever with the little gem of an ice cream parlor that is Hinsch's. Not only do they make all their ice cream by hand in a magical subterranean bungalow right below the shop, they also transform it into a milkshake that is rich, frothy and just the right amount of thick. I guess that after 85 years in the milkshake trade, it just comes natural-like.

Hinsch's opened in 1923. In the 1960's, when current owner John Logue was 12 years old and earning his stripes behind the counter slinging milkshakes, malts and egg creams a go-go (then just 35 cents a pop!) there were over 600 independently owned ice cream



parlors in New York. Today, Hinsch's is one of just two remaining in the five boroughs. (The other is Eddie's Sweet Shop in Forest Hills.)

Logue explains the rise and fall of the ice cream parlor institution as such: in the 1920's, Brooklynites had refrigerators the size of microwaves and freezers the size of Chinese takeout containers. There were no trips to the corner deli for pints of Ben & Jerry's to hoard away for some lonely eve. Back then folks bought their ice cream to eat on the spot. Factor in life before air conditioning, and you realize how a trip to the movies followed by a stop at the corner ice cream parlor would seem like a pretty good diversion on a sticky summer night.

Logue says that wherever there was a movie theater, you could bet there'd be an ice cream parlor within spitting distance. Bay Ridge's 86th Street was once home to not one but two movie theaters (now a Modell's and a Payless ShoeSource) and boasted two local ice creameries to boot. Over the years, through hell and Häagen Dazs, Hinsch's managed to stick it out, and still makes one of the meanest milkshakes this dairy glutton has ever tasted. Hinsch's; 8518 Fifth Avenue; 718.748.2854 📍

Anne Saxelby lives in Carroll Gardens and is the proprietor of Saxelby Cheesemongers in the Essex Street Market. She's a turophile, which means cheese freak.

OTHER MILKSHAKERIES OF NOTE

Junior's

The Brooklyn classic. Everyone thinks of Junior's as the cheesecake place, but they make a supergood, properly thick, wonderful milkshake. Plus you can get it to go and they're open really late so you can go in at 2 a.m., which I've done on an embarrassing number of occasions. *Junior's, 386 Flatbush Avenue Ext.; 718.852.5257*

The Chocolate Room

Park Slope's sinful little sweettooth's haven features a menagerie of amazing milkshakes. The ice cream is homemade, and, if you're feeling like a little healthy addition, add a banana to any shake for peanuts (pennies, that is). *The Chocolate Room, 86 Fifth Ave. at Warren St.; 718.783.2900*

Jimmy's Diner

Rumor has it, this new Billyburg diner is tinkering with alcoholic milkshakes, for breakfast, brunch and dinner. We heard tell they're working on a mimosa incarnation and a Bailey's version with a shot of espresso. Hello, R-rated milkshakes. *Jimmy's Diner, 577 Union Ave. at N. 10th; 718.218.7174*

Sunset Park Diner and Donuts

Quintessential diner with a mean milkshake. Cough up another buck to make it "extra thick." *Sunset Park Diner, 889 Fifth Ave. at 38th St.; 718.438.0381*