

For more information, visit eastvillagedesmoines.com.

Not long ago, the neglected 1880s buildings in the shadow of the lowa State Capitol were an eyesore. But over the last dozen years, savvy shop and restaurant owners transformed the Historic East Village into a vibrant and diverse shopping and dining destination. It's now a favorite meet-up place when a drive to yet another mall won't cut it. And did we mention nearly every business is locally owned?

Today, the East Village opens before dawn for coffee and bumps along into the evening with live music at restaurants, bars, and concert venues. Seven housing developments have added about 300 lofts for residents who now call the East Village their home. Live-work lofts house several businesses. Look for shops, services, restaurants, and bars proudly displaying "Best Of" certificates awarded by *Cityview*, a local alternative weekly newspaper.

From Adair to Wright Granite squares embedded in the Locust Street sidewalks commemorate each of lowa's 99 counties and county-seat towns. The city maintains sidewalk flower beds with roses, tropical hibiscus, and more.

Walk east on Locust Street toward the glistening domes of the lowa State Capitol, then explore shops between Des Moines Street (two blocks north and Walnut Street (one block south).

Check for Sunday and Monday hours before slipping into your walking shoes.

Shopping Kitchen sinks and kitchen accessories; herbs, spices, and oils; women's apparel, custom wedding gowns, custom jewelry, handcrafts, bath and beauty, edgy T-shirts, flags, gardening, maternity, eyewear, letterpress stationery, bicycles, skateboards, dog products, and Asian foods.

Furnishings Contemporary, handcrafted, vintage, fine arts, and architectural finds.

Hungry? Local bakery, sushi, Thai, Lebanese, Greek, burgers and baskets, tapas, sandwiches, vegan, and fine dining.

Thirsty? Coffee, tea shop, and bars of nearly every description: beer, rooftop, underground, gay, dive, and contemporary.

Route Scouts Susan and Carl Voss, East Village residents since 2000