



Shop Cats of New York

Tamar Arslanian

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Humans of New York meets *The French Cat* in this carefully cultivated, gorgeous full-color collection featuring New York's iconic felines and the stories behind them.

They inhabit New York City's most legendary and coziest spots—the Algonquin Hotel, a whiskey distillery, Bleecker Street Records, and a host of yoga studios, bodegas, bookstores, and bike shops in between. True New Yorkers—masters of people watching—they perch on wine crates, piles of books, and a classic hotel countertop, taking in the activity around them. Depending on their mood, these cats will ignore enthusiastic admirers, offer a few delightful purrs, or occasionally even take a swipe. Some even find a mouse or two to chase.

Shop Cats of New York introduces forty of New York's favorite felines—all who have an extraordinary story to tell. Popular cat blogger Tamar Arslanian and Instagram pet photographer Andrew Marttila capture these deeply loved and well cared for animals in their city habitat and reveal how they came to reign over their urban kingdoms.

A celebration of some of the city's most revered citizens and a unique look at New York life, this enchanting illustrated volume is a must for every cat lover, and every Big Apple devotee.

Shop Cats of New York Details

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From Reader Review Shop Cats of New York for online ebook

Melissapalmer404 says

Book #118 Read in 2016

Shop Cats of New York by Tamar Arslanian

This is a book of beautiful cat photographs and short cat biographies of New York City's cats that live in bookstores, grocery stores and other businesses. This would be a great gift for cat lovers.

karen says

maggie is unimpressed, but i enjoyed it.

look, another book about CATS! about grizzled blue-collar cats, salt of the earth and backbone of the working class, like matilda the ragdoll shown working hard at her post at the algonquin hotel:

i love going into stores that have their own house cats. shocking, i know, but true. and i love that someone has finally taken the initiative to document some of these shop cats, particularly since i know most of these places, and can visit these little cuties whenever i want! during business hours, of course. but i do NOT love that, of the 36 cats featured, there are 24 from manhattan, 11 from brooklyn and only ONE from queens! staten island and the bronx are boroughs used to being overlooked, but queens? we have many cute cats who live in stores! don't neglect our pussies!

here's the queens cat - max at pets on the run, a pet supply store in astoria:

howdy, neighbor!

that complaint aside, i have no others about this book. the photographs are excellent, and each cat (or cats, in cases where stores have multiple feline representatives) gets a little write-up about their personalities, origins, or responsibilities while on the job.

there are shoe store cats, pharmacy cats, flower shop cats, and some cats who are really living the dream, like jeffie the whiskey distillery cat, shown here clearly licking some fine whiskey outta his whiskers:

i would say go home cat, you're drunk, but you're already there

another drunkard is jack daniels bagley, punching his timecard over at wine haven.

and ric and rac, who live in a freaking ribbon store, which is the best job ever for a cat:

they are having way more fun than valentino the real estate cat, who has nothing to play with but this chair, although he's making the most of it:

three of the featured kitties are bookstore cats, and lemme just say - if you open a bookstore, you really must have a cat or two.

tiny at community bookstore

hampton at corner bookstore

and harriett at shakespeare & co

there's also this little cutie named molly:

who i ran into while on an adventure not too long ago, but i didn't want to bother her with picture-snapping since all new yorkers know you wanna give celebrities a little breathing room. plus, this little girl's been through a lot in her life without me documenting her private time:

<http://www.myersofkeswick.com/molly/>

other adorable mentions are keetah, who presides over the vinyl at bleecker street records, and is probably an awesome dj after hours

and who totally looks like he belongs in the band from the aristocats:

also bud; a sweet little girl-cat who sheds it up at chenille cleaners, being so adorable that a customer offered her 'owner' \$2,500, because that's a totally reasonable sum to pay for a cat, but no sale.

she reputedly has “the softest fur,” but i know my maggie’ll win that prize every time.

this little guy is my favorite - 10-year-old sammy, who works security, employee-soothing, and keyboard-stomping in the tiny offices of mph, which provides messenger and courier services.

i love his crazy-ass whiskers and little red beard-area.

lionel maintains the bubble wrap at the red caboose hobby shop, which is a very important job, indeed

and the there’s chloe

who is SEVENTEEN and looks damn good for her age, despite being yowly and deaf and living on a desk. if i ever end up in an office job again, this is how i shall decorate:

and i will have my own personal assistant to help me type. perhaps i will even learn how to use capital letters under a kitty’s scrutiny.

i also love spooky, who lives in a bike shop in park slope, although i fear for his tail. beware, little one!

i’m also in love with kitty, even though living in a pilates studio has given her many white hairs

look at those eyes

although - again - i gotta go with maggie FTW

one more for the road! this is charlie, who lives at smoke scene, which is a smoke and vape shop:

make no mistake, charlie totally judges you when you vape.

so there you go - shop cats! being cute so you'll buy more stuff. like this book.

come to my blog!

Lauren (LaurenHannah.net) says

This book gave me so many happy feels! I've read a book about shop cats before but this one was so much better: the photos were excellent and the stories about the cats interesting.

The only downside to this book is that it's not bigger! And I guess I wish every cat had a story — some cats featured are just the photos, nothing else about them. But there were enough stories for me to be satisfied.

I want to be a professional cat photographer now.

Tamara says

Lovely pictures. Some of the cats have only a few sentences, or just pictures. Other cats have nice long blurbs.

Katie says

I loved reading about all the store cats of New York.

Susannah says

This is a sweet book profiling cats that live in shops and businesses in New York City. Each cat is named, along with the business they inhabit. Most entries are accompanied by a little bio that says how the cat (or cats) came to live in the store. All entries feature gorgeous colour photos of the cats by Andrew Marttila. I definitely recommend this book for cat lovers.

Christine says

Sadly, I have been woefully neglectful of this site and my blog and about posting my book reviews. Things just got busy ... there was a great trip to go on and now I'm trying to get a small business off the ground and ready to go for January 2017.

But, last year I participated in NaBloPoMo (National Blog Posting Month) which spurred me on to posting every day for the month of November. I managed to succeed in doing it last year so hopefully I can be equally motivated this year. If you like a challenge you can find out more about it and then sign up at www.blogger.com.

So here I go ...

If you've ever been pleasantly surprised (or slightly startled) by a kitty face peering at you from the shelves while you're shopping then you are personally familiar with the premise of this book.

The first time I came across cats in a store was while shopping in Watson's Chelsea Bazaar in Stratford, Ontario. I was quite surprised to see a kitty face peering at me from a shelf while I was browsing their very eclectic merchandise. I haven't been in the store for quite some time so I don't know if it still has cats, but I hope so. Then Dewey, the library cat, came to my attention. Lately I have befriended a cat that lives in a centre for seniors in my home town, which kindly allows my TOPS group to hold our meetings in their board room. I learned there is a cat living on each floor and they are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Bumper, often comes to visit during our meetings so we have adopted him as our group mascot.

Despite the fear of allergies or people just not enjoying the company of cats – shrug – a concept I just can't fathom, cats have taken up residence in any number of unusual places. Some places just seem to go hand in hand with cats, book stores (especially used books stores), antique shops and of course pet stores. These are all represented as is the Cat Café (obviously!) and veterinary offices. Some of the cat friendly shops that surprised me? Jewellery stores – I've worked in a jewellery store and paw prints on the display cases sounds like a nightmare ... pass me the Windex. Flower Shops – I know my kitties love to chew flowers and plants and some foliage is dangerous to kitties. Also included are a copy shop, a hotel, a shoe store, a record store and a distillery.

The idea for this book was born out of the popularity of the author's blog which tries to dispel the stigma of a 30+, single woman living with her cat in NYC. The photographs in the book are lovely and each venue tells the story of how the cat(s) came to be living there. Some welcome customers with a meow or a soft purr while others with a swipe, some lounge gracefully and others earn their keep by catching a mouse or two, but they all bring smiles.

If you are a cat lover or know someone who is, this book would make a beautiful addition to the bookshelf.

Debbie says

If I ever have a shop, I'm going to have a shop cat(s).

Bill Lynas says

A highly amusing & informative book that takes the reader around various shops in New York City & introduces them to the felines that inhabit them. There are some fun tales, which are accompanied by excellent photographs throughout. I really like the idea that many people visit the shops just to see the cats, even though they have no interest in the shops themselves!

Leigh says

A light read for those who love all things feline. This book features color photographs of cats who live in

various small businesses in New York City. All were rescues and all are beloved by shop owners and customers alike.

Will Byrnes says

February, 2017 - I added a link at bottom to an amazing NatGeo article, MUST SEE!!!

There may be eight million stories in the naked city (well, closer to nine these days). But that only counts people. What about some of our other citizens? How many times have you walked into a shop and spotted the resident mouser strolling down an aisle, busily guarding a shelf, or splayed in the front window? They are so common as to have become an embedded element of the urban landscape. But their very ubiquity has made them somewhat invisible. We accept them as part of our environment, and pay them little attention. But Tamar Arslanian noticed, and decided to write a book featuring these often unnoticed New Yorkers.

*It was one of those times when my wife, in a flurry of OMGs, blew through our front door and announced in full capital letters. YOU HAVE GOT TO SEE THIS. The **this**, of course, was the book under review here, Shop Cats of New York. If she had done this twenty years earlier, I would not have been very interested. And my first wife probably would have wondered just who the hell that woman was. At that time I was not only cat-free, but the proud owner of a considerable cat allergy. Things change.*

Author Tamar Arslanian interviews the Neergaard Pharmacy representative

The portraits in this collection include brief write-ups about the cats in question, ranging from considerable to pretty-much non-existent, with most falling in the one to three paragraph middle range. There are some moving tales told, along with the sort of cat-as-local-royalty picture one might expect. The photographs look good enough to make you want to rub the side of your head up against them, repeatedly.

*As happens with about half the marriages in the USA, my first went the way of dial-up. In late 1998, I was looking for an apartment, but also someone else to share the rest of my life with. I suppose one could say that at the time I was a bit of a stray, not exactly homeless, but certainly unsettled. I partook of Match.com, including the sort of profile millions of other people have penned. Mine was probably typical enough, blah-blah-blah, three kids, blah-blah-blah, systems analyst, blah-blah-blah Mets fan, blah-blah-blah, and **Sorry, no cats. Allergic**. I met several women, but was particularly intrigued by one. Despite the fact that we had engaged in a considerable series of on-line exchanges, it turned out she had issues with reading.*

Shadow on arrival - shot by Cat Rescuer pal, Sara

There are 36 chapters in *Shop Cats of New York*. Most cover individual kitties. Three deal in multiples. One of these looks at a pets supply store that also fosters, one looks at the campus cats of Pratt Institute, and the third tells of The Meow Parlour on the Lower East Side, a “cat cafe” that specializes in adopting cats out to local residents.

The first time I went to visit my new friend at her place, I was in for a surprise. She was sharing her apartment. Her room-mates kept their distance but they made their presence felt anyway. In short order my eyes began to itch. Soon after, my nose began to run. Within thirty minutes of my arrival I was struggling to breathe and bolting for the door. Ummm, about that

cat thing.

Photographer Andrew Marttila checking in at the Algonquin

Andrew Marttila's photographs are wonderful, capturing the expressiveness of the featured furies in their now-native habitat. These include a fair range of commercial enterprises, from a copy shop to a brewery, from bookstores to, surprisingly, a boutique for dogs, from a bike shop to a pharmacy. One thing that struck me as a bit odd was the absence of representation from both The Bronx and Staten Island. Hey, wuddah we? Chopped livah?

I guess she was interested enough in me to risk not copping to the kitties. And I guess I was interested enough in her to take on a steady diet of whatever allergy med seemed to work at the time. It also seemed a reasonable thing to try to build up a bit of tolerance. About a year later, I was living in a garden apartment in Park Slope, with access to a back yard, when I started getting a regular visitor. This good-sized black cat showed his puss near my back door more and more. I started putting out some food for him. Then left my back door open until he began risking visits inside. After a few of these. I closed the door behind him. He did not seem to mind. I called him Pitch. He was my first cat.

Julian and Nala have been bosom buddies ever since we brought them home - shot by Mary Ann

Arslanian asked the shop owners for their cats' origin stories. Many are rescues.

According to Neergard pharmacist Lana, "Ivy was found as a wee kitten pulling tricks on the gritty streets of Brooklyn's Park Slope."

Geez, talk about mean streets. Some came along with the building or business when a new owner took over.

We moved in together in 2001, marrying later that year. My Pitch joined her Madison, Winnie and Bo. There would be more. One morning a small stray tried to follow Mary Ann into the subway. It was not her first encounter with this kittie. She was so small we believed her to be a kitten. Concerned for her safety, she brought the wee beastie back upstairs before heading out to work again. I was not thrilled at the prospect of yet another cat being added to our pack. We put her in my daughters' bedroom. That night when Mary Ann got home from work, she came into the room, and there I was like a thief with his hand in the cookie jar, holding this little cat in my arms in the same way I had held my tiny humans not so long ago. Forgotten was the notion of trying to find another home for her. I looked up at my wife, sheepishly, and said, "She had me at meow." Turned out she was as large as she would ever get. We called her Little Cat. or LC for short.

One of many shots available at the FB page for the book

A fair number of these cats have fans, locals who stop by for a scratch-n-rub. But some of these contemporary kitties have on-lion (sorry) presences as well. The shop cats range in temperament from sweet to imperious, from scratch-me-rub-me-love-me attention-whores to full-on Travis Bickle. "Are you lookin' at me?" Tiny, the cat in charge of the Community Bookstore in Park Slope, seems particularly fearless.

Customers come in with their dogs assuring the staff they are ok with cats, to which the staff responds, "Well, our cat is not ok with dogs. If you see Tiny up in the shelves

following you, your dog is being stalked.”

Madison

In the mid aughts, a work friend of Mary Ann’s at Harper was about to relocate out of the country. His wife had gotten a job with the State Department, and they had very little notice before they would have to leave. In order to be able to take their two cats along, they would have had to put them into seriously prolonged quarantine. They were not confident that both would survive the experience. That is how Anakin and Kiki joined our herd.

They may sleep sixteen to twenty hours a day, but these are working cats, with diverse jobs, in addition to their traditional rodent management portfolios.

When I asked the only desk-less guy there [MPH messenger service] if he was security, he nodded in Sammy’s direction. “He’s security.”

One Red Hook cat helps close deals as an assistant sales rep for a glass products company by sitting on customers’ laps.

And your total is... - From Shop Cats FB pages

For any who may wonder at the ability of felines to feel, there is a particularly moving tale of one cat mourning the passing of his sister.

In 2011, a surprise was found at my mother-in-law’s place in Wilkes Barre. A stray had taken up residence on the back porch. When Mary Ann, there for a visit, picked her up, there were two babies beneath her. Her mother was actually ok with taking them in. The mom was named Isabelle and the babies were Oscar and Felix. We had intended to head out there for a visit a few weeks later. Get Isabelle to the vet, and have the babies checked out. But Hurricane Irene had other plans, and we did not manage the trip until enough later to matter. Isabelle had managed to get mommified again, this time with Scout and Boo. So we had a triple-A team of cats in residence in Wilkes Barre. It was good company for mom, who was getting on. We helped out with cat costs, buying food, litter and dealing with vets. We had expected to bring them to Brooklyn over time. It was during this period that another arrival turned up. Tabitha had been showing up in the Wilkes Barre back yard looking for food, and getting it. But came inside a time or two when it got very cold. One time was when we were there on a visit. She came into the kitchen, but was so terrified of the other cats that she hid under the stove. To our great surprise mom-in-law asked us to take her back with us, afraid that her brood would harm the outsider. In January 2015, my mother-in-law passed, peacefully, in her sleep, a favorite German shepherd companion at her side. Our triple-A team would be moving up to the majors. Well, somewhat. Some of them were particularly gifted at evading capture. But we did bring home Isabelle, Scout and Oscar.

Scout on the couch - shot by Mary Ann

Shop Cats may stretch the definition of the word *shop* a bit, including a chapter on the cats of Brooklyn’s Pratt University. We learn of the attempt by those in charge to make Pratt a cat-free zone, which is enough to make one want to hack up a hairball, and leave it in management’s shoes. But it is certainly a forgivable extension, considering the subject matter.

We have lost several of our four-footed children to the ravages of age. They had lived lives that were respectably lengthy, but it was heart-breaking to lose them. There would be two more sets of incomings. We have a friend in Wilkes Barre who is a registered cat-rescuer. She is a saint, in our view, who has helped many a feline shift from living on the streets to finding a safe, loving home. However, there was a time when she needed a temporary place for many of her wards. Mom's place in W-B was offered, and a dozen or so squatters took up residence. Two of them took a shine to Mary Ann and me when we were there. The result was Nala and Julian. On another trip to W-B, we had intended to retrieve Felix from the cat angel of W-B, but he was clearly happy to remain where he was. It so happened that at the time there was another resident in that illustrious cat house that was in need of placement. He was young, but no longer a kitten. What set him apart was that he had an extra digit on all four paws. We named him for Ernest Hemingway, as the cats at Papa's Key West home were known for being polydactyl. So Nesto signed on.

King Jeffie of the Brooklyn whiskey distillery – an outtake on the FB page

The stories told here are mostly sweet and adorable. But there are one or two occasions where those stories include reports on the cats' more predatory inclinations.

But wait. there's more. In the last few months Mary Ann had been finding other people in our neighborhood who have been feeding some of the local ferals (there are many), and a get-together was arranged. Brunch was had. A plan was made. Ferals were trapped. One was checked out, then brought to a family in upstate NY (not a euphemism). Two others were brought to our rescuer pal in Wilkes Barre. And we are currently fostering a mom and her three babies, and one more, a beautiful tabby, probably under a year old. But it came to pass that one night, after heading out with her fellow trappers, Mary Ann returned home with about three ounces of rescued lovability clutched to her clavicle. Neither of us had ever had a kitten. We do now. Shadow has joined the pride. It will take a while for her to be safe, being set loose among the considerable fully-grown group that ranges free in our apartment. I can well imagine Nala prancing across the living room with a tiny black tail hanging out of her mouth. But eventually Shadow, who is dying to play with the big kids, will find her place among the burgeoning crowd. I still sneeze on occasion, probably because I have not become fully acclimated to the newbies yet. But I have not been driven to an allergy-driven asthmatic panic in so long I cannot actually recall when that last occurred. Our children may throw up on the floor, shred our furniture, knock things from their places, and generate unspeakable aromas at times, but we love them, and expect that the feeling is shared. They are good company, with lots of personality. Their addiction to catnip and laser pointers offers moments of true hilarity. And their fondness for snuggling reinforces our mutual affection. I am glad Mary Ann had issues with reading. I am glad I was able to manage my allergy. It is a considerable, loving family we have patched together. And that is nothing to sneeze at.

Nesto is a full, four-paw polydactyl, which gives him nearly supernatural climbing ability

Shop Cats of New York may be a local look, but it certainly represents a global phenomenon. There are plenty of representatives wherever you live, guaranteed. The next time you stop into a shop, take a look around, and see if there might be a silent prowling proprietor in residence. Odds are he or she will welcome a gentle scratch behind the ears or under the chin, or a gentle cranial rub. You might even sweeten the deal with a cat treat or two (delivered surreptitiously). And if you are feeling particularly bold you might inquire into the cat's name, where he or she came from and if he or she would mind sitting, standing, or lying down for a photo. For anyone with a fondness for the feline, you might want to give *Shop Cats of New York* a place

in your home. It will make you purrrrrr, now and forever. It's cat-tastic!

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=====EXTRA STUFF

Here is the link to the book's official facebook page.

Tamar Arslanian's blog is called, fittingly, I Have Cat. You Can find her on Instagram and Twitter as well.

Andrew Marttila's main site, The Great Went Photo, has some amazing shots. Must see material. You can also find him on instagram, Twitter, and FB

A promotional video for the book

An interesting recent article on an upcoming PBS documentary, Cat Evolution

A New York Magazine piece on working felines at the Javits Center - Feral Cats Are Being Deployed in New York's War on Rats - by Chas Danner

PS – the author is aware of having managed only three of NYC's five boroughs, and plans to repair that breach with a sequel. Or several, maybe? Shop Cats, the Litter?

December 3, 2016 -Had to add this one

Nesto at Resto or **Relax** (note serendipitous book title at upper right) - shot by Mary Ann - Clearly the boy is all shagged out after a long day at his desk job

February, 2017 - part of a multi-year *Photo Ark* project to photograph captive species before they vanish from the world, this piece looks at a host of small cats. OMGOMGOMGOMG!!! - Out of the Shadows, the Wildcats You've Never Seen - By Christine Dell'Amore - Photographs by Joel Sartore

The Iberian Lynx

Megan (ReadingRover) says

Fabulous book documenting the lives of cats all over NYC that make their homes in different shops and businesses. There is such a diverse group of people who have decided to allow these wonderful little felines to make their businesses their homes. The Algonquin Hotel has had a cat in residence for years and she even has her own attendant who answers emails for her. There is a cat who lives in a bike shop and one who lives in the busy mph dispatcher office. One stays in a bookstore and only lets dogs enter at their own risk! Another lounges around a cleaners which makes it really hard for her owner to not get hair on things. All are loved and adored. Many have admirers who visit regularly. Some have even hootenanny offers to be bought for crazy sums which of course were denied because who can by a pet you love that's a member of the family. Right? This book was great. I wish it was bigger and included more cats around the NY. Maybe there will be a next one that branches further out into Westchester and I can visit all of those cats!

Derek brown says

Can but be of good was very not get TV good. Not one in kg not just John to has h

Lucy says

It's always nice to have a book with positive stories. Here we have cats who live in, work in, and advertise various shops around New York. Several bookstores of course, and the Algonquin Hotel. There's even a cat at the Canine Styles dog boutique. Good photos by Andrew Marttila, usually more than one per cat. I really like the collection of kittens at the PS9 Pets store, where they're up for adoption. The Meow Parlor cat cafe also has cats for adoption.

Mary says

Cute table book for all cat lovers!
