

# Brooklyn's Finest

Fairway's newest flagship store ups the ante on its offerings and ambiance in the famed New York City borough.

By Bridget Goldschmidt

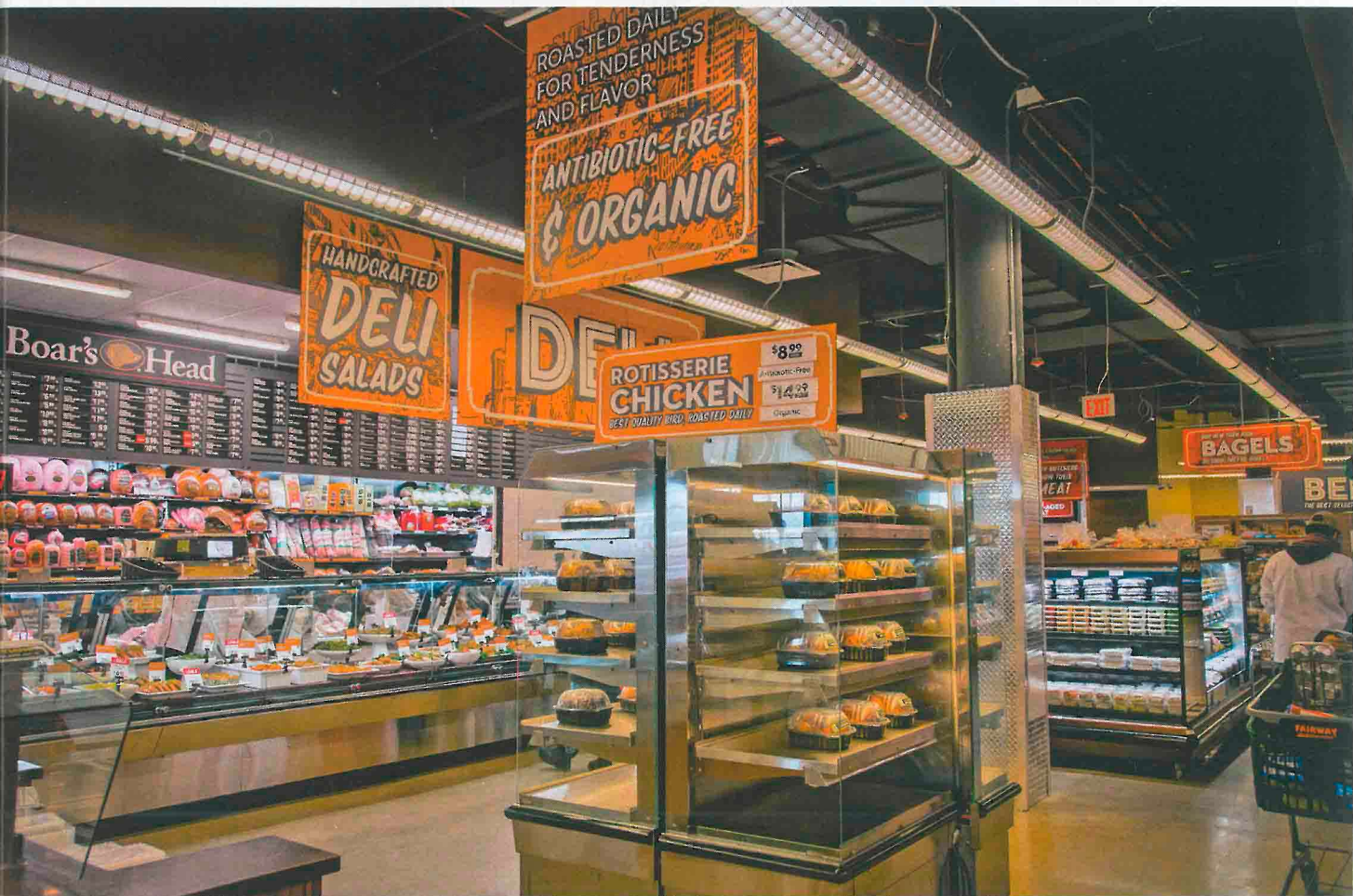
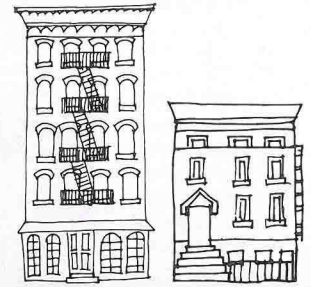
**B**rooklynites are well known for their blasé — some might say downright cynical — attitude, but the newest Fairway store, which opened its doors this past January in the borough's diverse Georgetown neighborhood, boasts enough standout features to make the most jaded resident look on in awe.

"The idea of this store was to take the best of what Fairway had to offer and then also to modernize the brand for a new shop," explains Dorothy Carlow, Fairway Group Holdings Corp.'s chief merchandising officer, of the New York-based company's second location in Brooklyn (the first opened back in 2006 in Red Hook).

That modernizing influence is apparent as soon as shoppers enter the store and are greeted by an abundant array of produce, flanked on one side by a brand-new juice bar concept and framed by urban-inspired artwork and accents, including a sign mimicking the big board announcing arrivals and departures at Manhattan's Grand Central Station, which Carlow points to as a particular favorite.

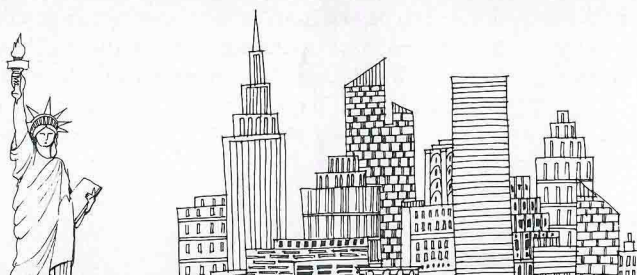


Photos by Sue Barr



**CITY STORE**

Far left: Oumar Cisse (left), general manager of Fairway's Georgetown store, and District Manager Andy Zuleta are justifiably proud of the chain's newest store, which includes a back-fill dairy, a bustling deli/prepared food section, state-of-the-art meat and seafood cases, and Fairway's high-quality store-brand items across all departments.



**BAKERS' DOZENS**

The extensive bakery section in Fairway's Georgetown store was recently certified kosher.



"When you see the cityscapes across the top, instead of focusing on putting pictures of fresh produce there, we said, we are a New York brand," she says. "That's why we picked the cityscapes and really tried to bring in elements of the New York subways and the brick and just making you feel like you're actually in a New York food store."

**New Views**

The Georgetown store's produce department features a ratio of about 70 percent conventional product to 30 percent organic. During the week of *Progressive Grocer's* visit, its flier boasted 178 organically grown items. "We pride ourselves on the fact [that] if you want organic, you will have the same exact item as an organic item at this store," asserts Carlow, "The variety and selection we carry is probably more than anybody else, especially in the apple category."

Additionally, as they come into season, the store offers a whole section dedicated to local fruits and veggies, she makes sure to mention.

"What made Fairway special was the variety, the selection in ... produce, plus the quality piece," notes Carlow, adding that for the Georgetown store's produce department, "we brought down the height of the displays so that you could see from the front of the store all the way into our ... coffee [department] in the back of the store, and you could see all the way into our cheese department, so this really opens it up."

As in any Fairway store, ob-

serves Carlow, "Produce always flows into dried fruits and nuts," much of it imported from France. Along with these high-quality store-brand items — packaged at Fairway's Bronx, N.Y., warehouse — are bulk foods. "This is the first time we've ever done this type of bulk," she says. "We expanded it because it's something that the customer wants, and it's a convenience item."

Next up is the imported olive oil section, home to a large variety oils and vinegars. "We import direct from Italy

... in gigantic barrels, and we bottle it at our Bronx warehouse facility," notes Carlow. "For the most part, all of this section, with the exception of the top, is all imported directly from Italy and then barreled by us, and some of the vinegars are done the same way for us. Then this is all of your unique items that are imported or domestic. ... This was historically the No. 1 destination category for the business, and it's still very strong. ... We ship this olive oil all over the world."

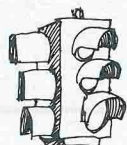
As for the oil selection, she points out, "We try and run the gamut of very, very aromatic, all the way down to your basic household [product]." The lighting in the area is intentionally dim, she explains, because if olive oil is exposed to light, it turns rancid more quickly. "It's a living thing," asserts Carlow. "That's why we don't have lights on it."

The coffee department features on-site roasting, which imparts an irresistible aroma to the area. "All of our coffee that is loose is done by us," notes Carlow. "One hundred percent of this selection is roasted either here or in our facility in Brooklyn."

The store additionally offers a curated assortment of conventional and specialty teas. "This has done really well for us here, so we're actually going to build custom cases for our next store, because tea has to be vacuum-sealed to keep its flavor," she says, "so we're going to build custom cases that you can actually see through to the tea, but they're still vacuum-sealed."

**Cheese to Please**

For the Georgetown store's cheese department — a standout at the chain's other locations — Fairway decided to depart from its usual practice in an effort to add even more excitement. "Normally, we'll make the fresh-handmade-daily mozzarella in the back and then bring it out to the front, but this particular location is the first store in which we have the fresh

**Fairway Market**

2149 Ralph Ave.  
Brooklyn, N.Y., 11234

**Grand opening:** Jan. 18, 2017

**Total square footage:** 41,445

**Selling area:** 28,182 square feet

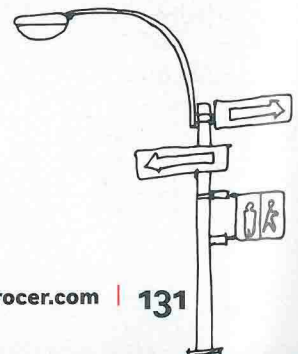
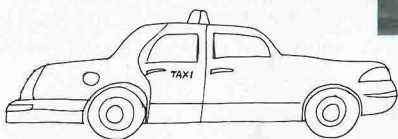
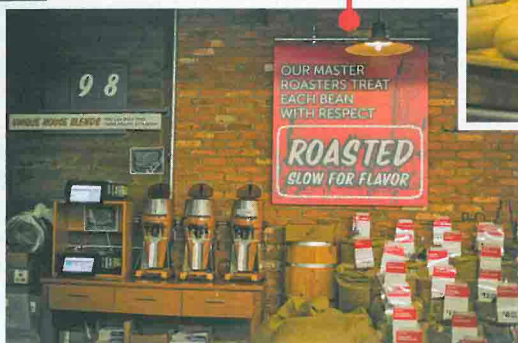
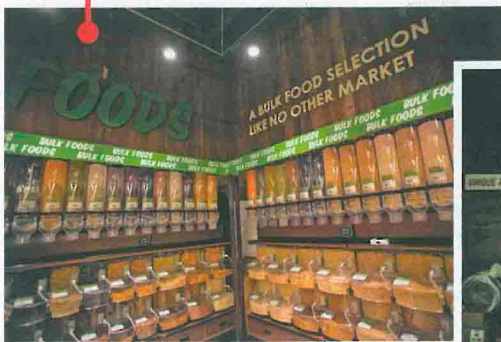
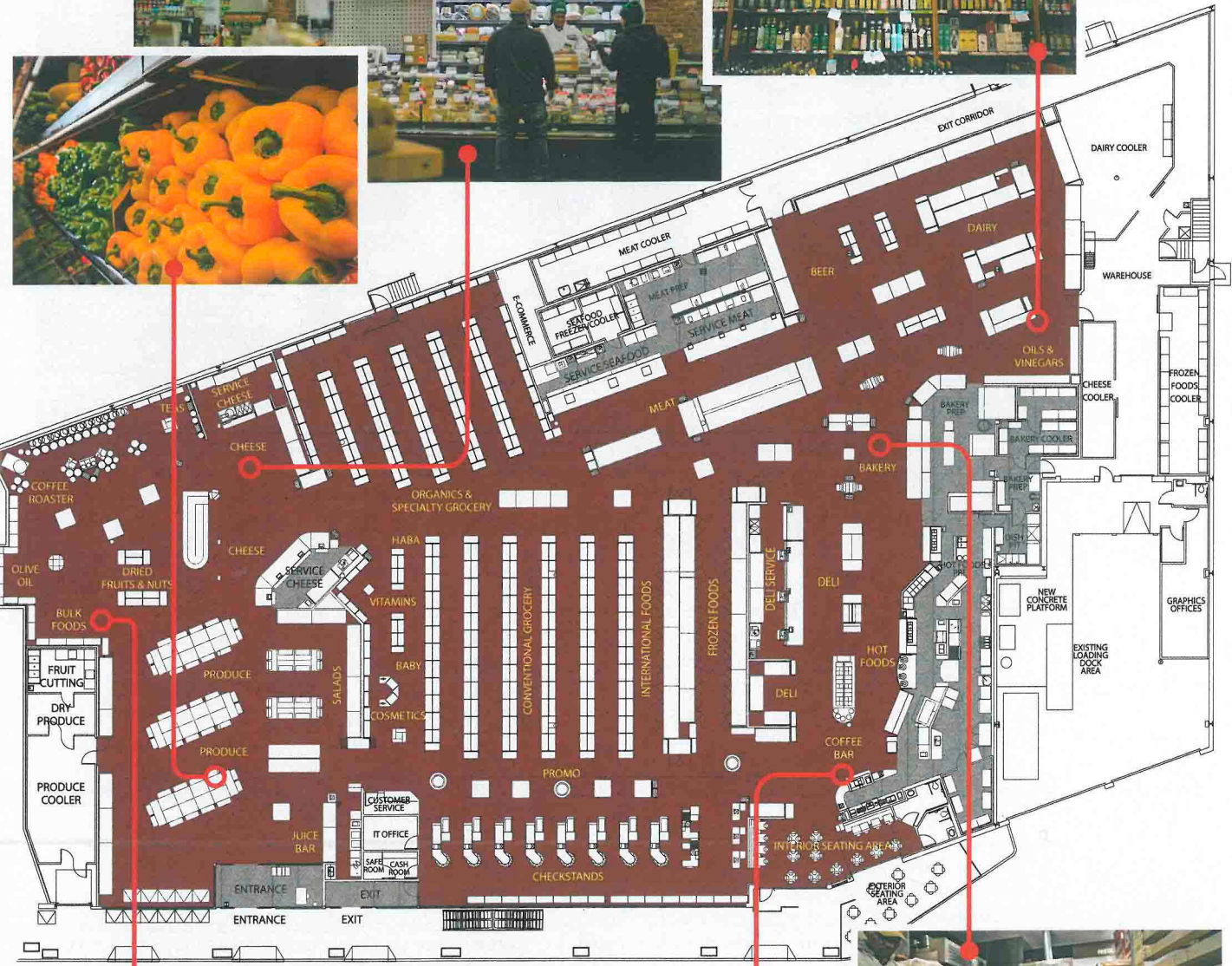
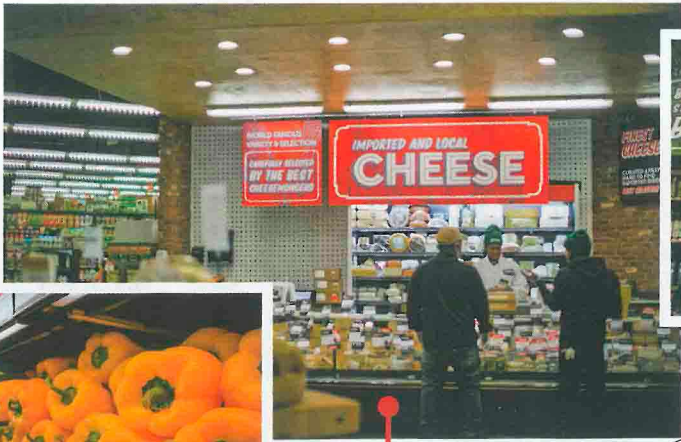
**SKUs:** 60,000

**Employees:** 200

**Checkouts:** 13

**Hours:** 7 a.m.-11 p.m. daily

**Designers:** King Retail Solutions, Eugene, Ore.; Edward M. Weinstein Architecture & Planning, Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.



**A CUT ABOVE**  
The Georgetown meat department offers such items as corned beef made on site and dry-aged beef.



handmade mozzarella [being made] on the floor,” notes Carlow. “It is a destination item for us. People come just for that item, and we wanted to feature it.”

Another departure was to bring down the height of the cheese case so that shoppers can “see what [associates] were doing or see what they were cutting,” as well as lean right in and take whatever items they want, even at the back, she adds. “We made the shopping experience more conducive to a person of any height.”

In regard to the product offering, Carlow boasts that “we have the largest selection of imports, probably in the New York area,” along with an enticing array of domestic specialty and commodity cheeses, all of them hand-cut. One standout is a Kerrygold whiskey cheddar that tastes exactly how it sounds.

As well as creating a cheese department, rather than just a counter, with shelves of packaged commodity items, the store offers some complementary items in the section. “Our private-brand ravioli are actually part of our cheese department, because ... we believe good ravioli is made with exceptional cheeses,” says Carlow. “This is the first time where we’ve had the capability to merchandise our fresh pastas with our cheeses.” There’s sauce there, too, so shoppers can pick up the makings of a convenient meal all in one place.

Nearby is a big olive and pickle bar that Fairway “actually completely redesigned ... for this store to make it more user-friendly for the customer and to give them more variety and selection,” she says. “This is one of our growing categories, something people love, Fairway is famous for it, but it wasn’t

working as just one long island, so we totally redesigned it and put more specialty product and imported product in the more premium bins, and they’re doing really well for us.”

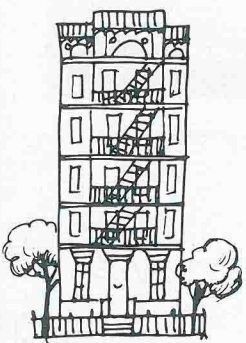
### Center of Gravity

From show-stopping perimeter departments, we next move into the center store — but even in this relatively less exciting department, Fairway has decided to depart from its usual practice.

“This is the first time in the company’s history ... that we opened a store that was 100 percent planograms,” says Carlow, explaining that prior to the Georgetown location, “we would have our VPs come in and set the departments as they wanted to, without planograms.”

As a result of this change in thinking, she notes, “Every single product on every single shelf has been planogrammed out, so that we can guarantee our vendors that they have the space that we told them they would have and that we can show proof [of] our performance for that space, and if they’re not performing, then we can have a discussion with them about it. We know where the product is on the shelf.”

According to the new system, explains Carlow: “We have set conventional, organics and specialty together. Before, conventional grocery was by itself. If you wanted Tide laundry detergent, you’d have to go to one section. Then, if you wanted Seventh Generation to clean your house with, you’d have to go to another section. Now, if you want to have Doritos because your daughter likes Doritos, but if



you want to eat organic tortilla chips, and your husband wants Utz potato chips, we have it all together. You only have to go to the chip aisle. There's not three chip aisles, there's one, to show the consumer a breadth of selection."

Indeed, that breadth of selection proves overwhelming for a shopper in the cereal aisle whom Carlow and PG pause to help find a suitable product for his diabetic wife. After the man has found an appropriately low-sugar item and moved on, Carlow says: "We are re-planogramming all of our stores. We just set four other stores with planograms, and what we have here is a turn from how the company normally did things."

Also new to Fairway is an end cap program. "These change out on a monthly basis," observes Carlow. "The reason we have an end cap program is so that vendors will participate and give us deals so that we can pass those along to the consumer." At the time of PG's visit, there's an end cap laden with items that are kosher for Passover, which is "definitely something that this particular neighborhood asks for, and they want it," she adds, noting that "this store is a better representation of kosher product selection just because of the demographic" of Orthodox Jews in the area.

### Seafood Roadshow

"About six months ago ... we rolled out a traveling seafood roadshow, and the idea was that we were going to have the freshest, best available, largest product that you could get from the sea, and it would change on a weekly basis," recounts Carlow as we enter the seafood department. "We were going to move these units on a weekly basis from store to store to store, but the program was so successful ... that we decided for all of our stores that we were going to put

### SOME FOR THE ROAD

Fairway's Seafood Roadshow concept, housed in a custom-made cooler, is a centerpiece of the Georgetown store's seafood department.



in the seafood roadshow as a staple. These products change out on a weekly basis."

During PG's visit, jumbo lump crab cakes, whole crabs and giant lobster tails — the biggest PG has ever seen — are on display as part of the roadshow in "a giant cooler that we purchased, and then our guys at our Bronx facility, there are people that make these, cabinetry people, they actually make the glass for it because you have to keep seafood on ice," says Carlow, adding, "That was specifically designed for this store. Some are larger. The ones in [Manhattan] are a little smaller."

That's not the only thing that sets the Georgetown store's seafood department apart. "This is the first store where we've given seafood more square footage than our butcher," explains Carlow. "The reason that we did that is because the demographic here, we found that there's a lot of Caribbean influence in this particular neighborhood, and we wanted to serve the neighborhood well. We felt like what they wanted was more variety, more selection, more fresh seafood. We said, we're going to lead with seafood in this store, which we've never done before, and we're going to make it a destination department."

### From Meat to Beer

In the adjacent meat department, which, like seafood and deli, features state-of-the-art, crystal-clear cases that can be serviced from the front or the back, Carlow says, "We do our own barreling for corned beef. We're the only store, I think, in the country that does it." Along with that, she adds, "we're dry-aging all our own beef, which I'm a huge proponent of, just because we can really control the quality and the environment for it."

Another landmark for Fairway is the "first back-fed dairy in the entire company," asserts Carlow. "All of our dairy is freshly rotated, fed through a dairy cooler in the back." The section, offers a "curated selection of yogurt [where] you can get

conventional, specialty or organic all in one location. I think that we probably have one of the largest yogurt sections ... of any grocery store."

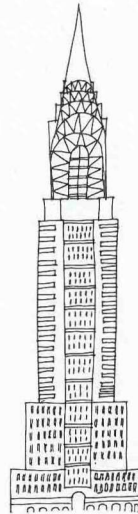
Further, she points out: "If you look at our milk section, this is the first time we've gone good, better, best in milk, where you have your conventional milk, your organic milk, then your grass-fed. We do our own line of private-brand grass-fed, plus you have all your milk alternatives. So if you're a mom, and you're shopping for your family, but you also have someone who can't have lactose, we have it right here for you, which is not the case in most of our stores."

Speaking of liquid refreshment,

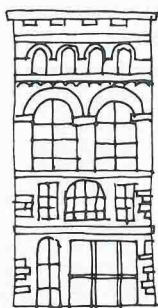


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—Dorothy Carlow, Chief Merchandising Officer



**OVEN FRESH**  
Fairway's New York-style — or, more properly, Brooklyn-style — pizza program has proved highly successful at its Georgetown location.



Carlow rather unexpectedly observes that “one of things we learned from our customers ... is we didn’t have enough cold beer.” That being the case, for the Georgetown store, Fairway “expanded our selection to a variety of cold beer, plus our Pick Six program,” she says. “We have everything, from your conventional ... all the way into the very special, local brands. Here, we’re leading with those because we want people to support your Coney Islands and your Brooklyn beers, because it is this neighborhood we’re in. We also want to say, you know what, if you want just a Bud Light, you can get that, too.”

Georgetown’s Pick Six selection, she notes, “is constantly shifting to what’s selling and what’s not, and what’s new and what’s local.” The mix-and-match beer program offers six assorted brands for \$11.99, or 12 for \$20.

### Bagels, Pizza and Relevance

Then it’s off to the bakery, a true showplace where bagels and other items are made daily in front of cus-



tomers. “We have the best bagel in New York,” asserts Carlow, providing proof of her claim in the form of a hot, crusty sample. “We decided to pull this out of the back room. In all our other stores, it’s in the back room. Bring it to the floor, let us show that we have all of these fine people working so hard to deliver fresh bagels, fresh baguettes, fresh bread on a daily basis.”

Shortly after *PG*’s visit, the Georgetown store’s bakery was certified fully kosher by Mehadrin Kosher and KOF-K Kosher Supervision, making it one of the largest in any supermarket in the New York metropolitan area, according to Fairway.

Beyond the bakery is the deli/café. Carlow explains

that “prior to opening this store, our café and our deli were separate. ... One of the things we did for labor savings and customer convenience, both at the same time, is we brought the two departments together.”

The offerings include the now ubiquitous chopped salad, which Carlow contends that Fairway invented, along with “a handcrafted sandwich station. You can either get a wrap, just a regular wrap, or you can have a handcrafted sandwich. We put in an authentic New York-style pizza, which is [actually] Brooklyn-style. ... This pizza program has been incredibly successful.”

Discussing the traffic in the department, she notes that “for the most part, we see a huge move at lunch, and then the dinner crowd comes in and buys our meal for two. ... You can just grab it and go, and heat it up at home, and it even has a dessert in it.” Also offered are rotisserie chicken meals, which Carlow describes as “more popular at night,” while “pizza’s definitely a destination during the day.”

Once they’ve got what they want to eat, customers can go to the quiet café area in the front of the store to chow down as they enjoy the passing scene on the other side of the windows. The café is a short walk to checkout, where friendly cashiers (Fairway doesn’t

have self-checkout at any of its stores) send shoppers on their way with one last positive interaction.

In creating this prototype store in Brooklyn, with possibly more on the way — Carlow notes that the grocer is “currently on the hunt in all five of the [New York City] boroughs for locations” — Fairway is aiming to build on its illustrious history while embracing the future of retailing.

“We wanted to take all of the really amazing things that were done by the legacy team at Fairway and combine them with some of our experience with productivity and consumer-facing flow and adjacencies, and that was the whole point, to take the past and say here’s what’s amazing and iconic about this brand, but how do we combine it with what the new consumer wants so that we can stay relevant?” she muses. “That’s what we tried to do. Plus we wanted to say we are New York. I think we still have some opportunity there, but we are New York. We are the local brand to New York.” **PG**

For more about the Georgetown Fairway store in Brooklyn, N.Y., visit [progressivegrocer.com/fairwaygeorgetown](http://progressivegrocer.com/fairwaygeorgetown).

