



THE *Gourmet* Diary

By R.B.H

The rainbow bagel, the brainchild of self-proclaimed “world premier bagel artist” Scott Rossillo, who has been making the brightly hued treat for almost two decades, is having a moment that many people in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, could do without.

For years, Williamsburg was the epicenter of cool for a specific kind of person. A thriving artist population, a liberal bend and a general disdain for popular culture birthed a haven for counterculturalism, a capital of hipsterdom that was defined, at least in part, by a high concentration of yoga studios, organic markets, vintage stores and artisanal coffee shops.

But time has transformed the neighborhood from the sort of place coveted by a select few to a destination for just about anyone visiting New York City. And that popularity hasn’t always jibed with local values. The tourism triggered a commercial flood: First came the Dunkin’ Donuts, then the Starbucks. A Whole Foods will be opening this year.

In many ways, the rise of the rainbow bagel perfectly encapsulates this tension, an unlikely but apt example of a proud neighborhood confronting the inevitable: change. The dye-infused treat, whose dough resembles Play-Doh more than it does something edible, is the antithesis of the organic-eating culture that courses through the veins of so many who live in the area.

It’s evidence of a uniquely modern form of gentrification, one more concerned with remaking a local economy for popular consumption than with simply raising housing prices. As Neil Smith, a longtime anthropology and geography professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center, described it to the New York Times, this economic force transforms a local lifestyle into a tourist experience.