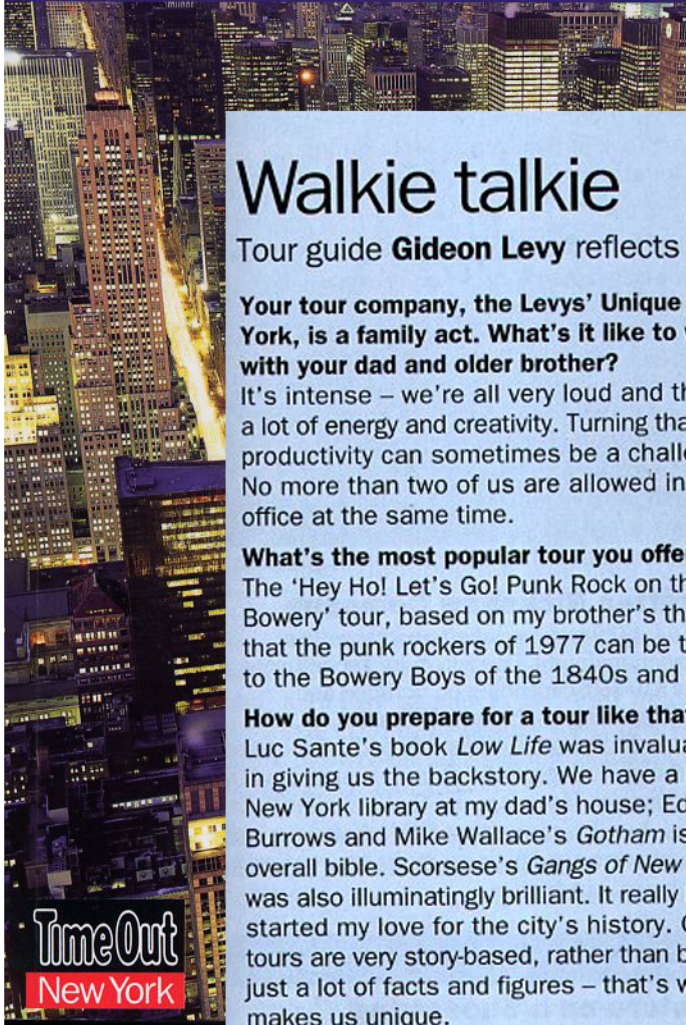


# TimeOut

2008

Updated annually

# New York



## The Levys' Unique New York

1-718 287 6177/www.levysuniqueny.com. Tours call or visit website for schedule & meeting locations.

**Tickets** from \$25 (reservations may be required for some tours). **No credit cards.**

This family tour company not only features walking tours lasting between an hour and 90 minutes – the Levys go the extra mile with their speciality four-hour comprehensive Manhattan tours. 'Starring New York', for example, dazzles its walkers with a relentless slew of TV show and movie spots. *See also p89 Walkie talkie.*

## Walkie talkie

Tour guide **Gideon Levy** reflects on his street-smart career path.

**Your tour company, the Levys' Unique New York, is a family act. What's it like to work with your dad and older brother?**

It's intense – we're all very loud and there's a lot of energy and creativity. Turning that into productivity can sometimes be a challenge. No more than two of us are allowed in the office at the same time.

**What's the most popular tour you offer?**

The 'Hey Ho! Let's Go! Punk Rock on the Bowery' tour, based on my brother's thesis that the punk rockers of 1977 can be traced to the Bowery Boys of the 1840s and '50s.

**How do you prepare for a tour like that?**

Luc Sante's book *Low Life* was invaluable in giving us the backstory. We have a big New York library at my dad's house; Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace's *Gotham* is our overall bible. Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* was also illuminatingly brilliant. It really kick-started my love for the city's history. Our tours are very story-based, rather than being just a lot of facts and figures – that's what makes us unique.

**In your opinion, what is the most underrated area in New York?**

The neighbourhood of Brooklyn Heights, definitely. Most tourists, and even New Yorkers, will just walk across the Brooklyn Bridge and turn around once they reach the Brooklyn side. Get off the bridge and explore this neighbourhood! Cranberry and Orange Streets have some of the most beautiful homes in the city and the Brooklyn Heights Promenade (*see p157*) is amazing.

**And the most overrated?**

Times Square – it is saturated with traffic and billboards. Go if you must, but don't linger.

**What's your favourite novel about New York?**

I love *Time and Again*, by Jack Finney. It's a time-travel romance that takes place in the Dakota apartment building (*see p147*) on the Upper West Side – it's magical.

**What's the dumbest question anyone's ever asked you?**

On one of our bus tours, someone asked, 'Does this bus stop at the Statue of Liberty?'

● For more on **The Levys' Unique New York**, *see p91.*

