Bars: Thanks to Julian Schnabel's over-the-top decor, the ambience at the Gramercy Park Hotel's Rose Bar can't be beat. It's private, private, private, especially during the day. You can sit for hours and no one will bother you. The bar at Gramercy Tavern is also quintessentially New York. It's a perfect place to entertain out-of-towners.

Coffee spots: 71 Irving Place is always bustling. The hotspot is known for strong coffee and an authentic neighborhood vibe. Our idea of a perfect work break: head to nearby Maialino for their espresso and sticky buns at the counter.

Places to shop: Saturday morning is usually spent browsing for flowers and local organic goodies at the Union Square Greenmarket. ABC Carpet & Home is always a visual treat when we're in need of interior-design inspiration. Muji borders on Chelsea, but it's worth the extra few blocks for its minimalist line of pens, papers and organizers. We're compelled to stop by the Nike Running Store on Fifth Avenue as the weather starts to get cold, can't have enough layers going to and from the gym.

Unique stores in the neighborhood:
For kids' books and a place to take the girls on a rainy afternoon, Books of Wonder on 18th Street is a marvel. The travelogues and guides available at Idlewild Books on 19th Street were indispensable for recent trips we took to Iceland and Japan. Wanderlust begins there. Paper Presentation is where we go to stock up on art supplies and notebooks. The girls love it, too. (They will, without doubt, run up to us with fists full of stickers.) Though a tad expensive, Space Kiddets is the source for up-to-the-minute kids' fashion and retro-fabulous toys.

Restaurants: Pure Food and Wine, Casa Mono, Union Square Cafe, Tamarind, the rooftop at the Gramercy Park Hotel. Oh, and of course, afternoon tea (or a glass of wine for daddy) at Friend of a Farmer.

Galleries: Gramercy isn't known for its galleries, but makes up for it with the Swann Auction House on 25th Street. It's the best bet for vintage and antique prints.

Hole-in-the-wall restaurant: One Lucky Duck on 17th Street is our favorite takeaway spot for fresh juices, salads and other raw-food treats.

Fitness, beauty/hair, places to walk, etc.: You can't beat walking your dog (in our case, our ancient Yorkshire terrier, Woody) around Gramercy Park for prime people-watching and conversation. While Equinox Fitness always offers the chance to watch pretty people sweat, our favorite workout is laps around Gramercy Park early in the morning.