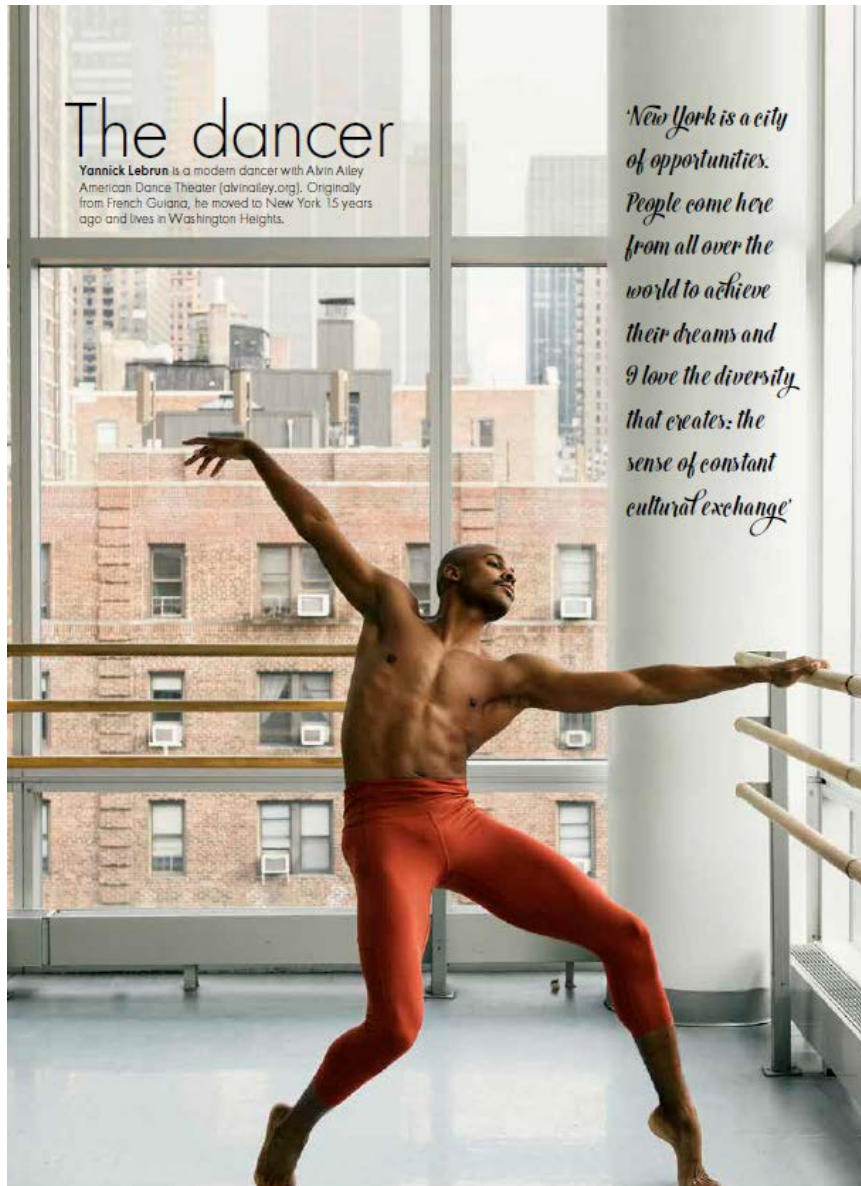


2 Days in 4 Ways: The Dancer

By: Orla Thomas

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The dancer

Yannick Lebrun is a modern dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (alvinaley.org). Originally from French Guiana, he moved to New York 15 years ago and lives in Washington Heights.

'New York is a city of opportunities. People come here from all over the world to achieve their dreams and I love the diversity that creates the sense of constant cultural exchange'

INSIDERS' NEW YORK



SATURDAY AFTERNOON

When I want to relax, I head to Central Park's **Sheep Meadow** (centralparknyc.org): a huge, calm, green space where I go to reconnect with nature. I like to take off my shoes and feel the grass beneath my feet. If the weather is cold I'd walk among Soho's small streets instead. **Vive la Crêpe** (vivelecrepe.fr) is a great spot for a crêpe and a coffee. I enjoy finding French things in the city. Back home our culture is a mix of French and Creole, and my mum used to make crêpes. Nutella-banana is the best.

FRIDAY NIGHT

When not performing, you'll often find me in the audience. A favourite venue is the **New York City Center** (nycitycenter.org), a historic building with a varied season: concert dance as well as Broadway productions. The **Joyce Theater** (joyce.org) in Chelsea is another amazing venue – it's a small stage, with performers and audience so close it gives a real sense of warmth. After, I'd eat at **TAO Downtown** (taodowntown.com), which serves Asian fusion food. Tasty healthy but I don't have a strict regimen; I like fried rice. Later I'd head to **Le Bain** (lebaainnewyork.com) a rooftop club at the top of the Standard Hotel, for a vodka and ginger nightcap. It's a super-cool place with fantastic views over the Hudson River. There's a tiny pool, so people party until they end up in the water.

SATURDAY MORNING

Around noon, I'd have brunch – a big thing in New York. **The Wild Son** (thewildsonnyc.com) is beautiful. It's a cosy space with healthy juices and good pancakes. Afterwards, I'd walk around the Meatpacking District, admiring the architecture and stopping by some of the cute shops. I can always find unique sneakers at **Sneakersnstuff** (pictured right: sneakersnstuff.com) and the design is fantastic. It's like an Apple Store, with huge glass doors, and shoes displayed on wood tables. I love a comfortable sneaker, for walking or rehearsing ballets.



SATURDAY EVENING

Diverse, with a great vibe and people, Harlem is where I feel most at home. People will come all the way from Brooklyn for a night at the **Red Rooster** (redroosterharlem.com). You're drawn in from the street by the music, you can see people inside having a great time. Everybody's chill, and the decor looks like a vintage bazaar – full of antique cameras and clocks, portraits of black icons and old books – so it doesn't feel uptight. Their restaurant is



great quality (try their chicken and waffle) and, underground, there's an atmospheric place to dance. I love a good beat to dance to.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

I'd start with eggs benedict at **Community Food & Juice** (communityrestaurant.com). Everything is so fresh, the staff are friendly and, at one of the shared tables, you feel part of a community. Later, I'd work out, or head for an appointment downtown. When preparing for a season I book a class at **Gyrotic on Broadway** (gyroticonbroadway.com). This is a practice that allows you to build strength and reach maximum flexibility. Alternatively, I might have a session at **Advanced Cryo NYC** (advancedcryonyc.com). Cryotherapy is a tool for muscle recovery. You step into a tube and the temperature is brought down to -170°C for three minutes. It's intense, but afterwards I have less tension. For pure relaxation, I'd head for **Aire Ancient Baths** (pictured above: beaire.com) in Tribeca. It's very dark, with flickering candles, and pools at different temperatures – I like the flotation one, with Dead Sea salt.

SUNDAY EVENING

I'd end with a cocktail and a performance at the **Blue Note Jazz Bar** (bluenotejazz.com), where legendary musicians come to play. Like the atmosphere of this area around Washington Street Park. It's on the edge of Greenwich Village but more laid-back, and full of tattoo shops. At Caribbean restaurant **Negri Village** (negriinyc.com) there's some crossover with French Guianese cuisine. I'd order shrimp roti or curried chicken, and a rum punch. I do love a rum punch, and it's the perfect fuel for some fun in the club downstairs, listening to dancehall reggae and feeling a little bit closer to home. →