



GARDEN & GUN PRESENTS

HIGH TIMES IN THE HOLY CITY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
PETER FRANK
EDWARDS

CELEBRATING 350 YEARS, CHARLESTON HAS NEVER LOOKED BETTER

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Clockwise from top left: Kathleen Hay Hagood and Mini Hay of Croghan's Jewel Box; the armoise vert cocktail at Maison; St. Michael's Alley; the bar at Renzo; a tidal marsh; shrimp and grits at VIP Bistro; an aerial view of White Point Garden, along the Battery.

CHARLESTON BY THE DISH

FROM AN ELEGANT SEAFOOD PILAU TO A SUBLIME SMOTHERED PORK CHOP, THESE TEN DISHES TRAVERSE THE BEST OF THE HOLY CITY'S CONTEMPORARY FLAVORS, ALONG WITH A FEW MUST-EAT CLASSICS **By Hanna Raskin**

CHS, S.C.

FOOD &
DRINK



THERE'S LATELY BEEN MUCH HAND-WRINGING in Charleston over the state of the local restaurant scene, which a decade or so ago scaled previously unimaginable heights: As openings and accolades mounted, trusted writerly types with epicurean chops called it one of the best places to eat in the world. They weren't exactly wrong.

Current anxieties have been stoked by downtown rents, which have risen sharply, and the availability of restaurant workers, which hasn't. Yet neither challenge has seemed to slow the rate of restaurant openings. Some longtime players wonder if new hotels can possibly hold enough diners to fill all of the seats. But start eating what's being served in Charleston today, and it's clear the city's food credentials are intact. In fact, deliciousness per capita may have surpassed record levels. Chefs and bartenders have always had the advantage of year-round fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as a sea full of fish. But now they have access to ingredients that didn't formerly make their way to coastal

South Carolina, and knowledge imported by colleagues besotted by the city. Mostly, though, eaters are the beneficiaries of a long-standing collective mind-set that places a premium on hospitality.

Think of the following ten dishes as a highly polished mirror held up to all of the above, or as a window through which diners can glance at the past and look toward the future. These plates hail from a range of restaurants—older and newer, casual and elegant—and emerge from kitchens showcasing varying ideas about how to cook. What they have in common, though, is the unmistakable taste of place.

Take the **agnolotti** at Renzo, a calmly sophisticated trattoria that opened in 2018 and prides itself on pizza crusts charred

by open flames and wines invigorated by wild yeast. If a still-life artist produced something as pretty as this plate, he'd probably call it a masterpiece and hang up his smock: The crimped cheese-stuffed pasta bundles, as delicate as the flower petals scattered among them, are enriched by Orangeburg County eggs and sweetened in summertime by roasted muscadines. Opening chef Evan Gaudreau created the dish with help from his now fiancée, Eva Suárez, then an employee of Charleston's leading cheese shop, Goat Sheep Cow. Gaudreau wanted a cheese funky enough to anchor the preparation, and Suárez came up with Castelrosso, a cow's milk cheese produced in the Italian Piedmont since the 1890s. Still, its origin is very much a story of contemporary Charleston, where chefs often take a more communal rather than competitive approach.

Rodney Scott is one of barbecue's biggest names: Since opening in Charleston the first of what's shaping up to be a small chain of smoked-meat parlors, the Hemingway, South Carolina-raised chef has become only the second pit master to win a James Beard Award. Yet his name doesn't grace the only dessert served at his counter-service restaurant, listed as **Ella's Banana Puddin'**. It's a tribute to his mother, and following her lead, Scott refuses to skimp on vanilla wafers in his exceptionally creamy custard—every bit as cool and sweet as what sits at the end of a traditional Southern cafeteria line, but as carefully considered as an old-style trifle. Broken up amid the meringue, the store-bought cookies aren't a cheat so much as a nod to the most democratic aspects of regional culture.

When brothers and fine-dining vets Joe and Kevin Nierstedt decided to open KinFolk, a small restaurant that debuted last summer on verdant Johns Island, southwest of downtown, they figured they'd focus on barbecue. "Fried chicken was meant to be a crutch if barbecue didn't go well," Joe says. "Then it became a monster in its own right." Regardless of whether patrons order chicken or pork, they get bread-and-butter pickles on their plates, which means the KinFolk kitchen is swimming in pickle juice. The Nierstedts didn't want to pour it down the drain, especially since the pickles are made according to a recipe that once won a blue ribbon at the Tennessee State Fair. So they used that brine for their chicken, including a standout **crispy chicken sandwich**. Most guests would probably never guess that the Nierstedts' preparation also includes a dunk in seasoned duck fat, but when they savor the essence of poultry, they're bound to appreciate Charleston chefs' knack for covertly applying high-end techniques to familiar dishes.

Sometimes the embrace of elegance isn't quite so discreet. Delaney Oyster House, the newest member of a restaurant family that also includes the lauded

Local Tip:

WHAT I WISH MORE PEOPLE KNEW...

"How culturally rich this city is. The Gullah Geechee culture is the heart-beat of the city."

Thai Phi,
chef/owner of
Pink Bellies





*Muscadine agnolotti
at the neighborhood
trattoria Renzo.
Opposite: Head
server Latarchia
Frasier at VIP Bistro
on Meeting Street.*



Husk and McCrady's, is designed for spur-of-the-moment caviar snacking, early evening chilled martini, and raw oyster platters after a concert at the nearby Gaillard performing arts center. But there's nothing nonchalant about chef Shamil Velazquez's thought-out plates, including a phalanx of succulent Carolina **blue crab claws**, cracked and dusted with Aleppo pepper. They're served with an herbaceous mojo sauce, which makes for a lovely meeting of land and sea.

Chefs around Charleston are also looking beyond the American South for inspiration, with references to East Asian cuisines cropping up on menus that a few short years ago didn't have a drop of miso or a dot of koji. Leading the charge is David Schuttenberg, a New York City transplant who moved to Charleston in 2015. Schuttenberg launched Kwei Fei as a pop-up downtown before finding a permanent home on nearby James Island for his Szechuan cooking. Although his **Yibin noodles** are styled after a classic dish devised on the other side of the globe, the joyous tangle of soy-dark wheat noodles derives its soul from mustard greens and sesame seeds, ingredients that have figured into cooking here for centuries.

Bob Cook at the lively Edmund's Oast, also one of the city's best breweries, excels at weaving together ingredients and influences, a point made beautifully by his captivating **mac and peas**. The itty-bitty ditalini noodles and aged cheddar béchamel are wholly European, but it's also shaded by curry, brightened by garden-green peas, and served bubbly in a cast-iron pan, blending complexity with comfort.

"When we first opened, we served bouillabaisse," recalls chef Kevin Johnson of the Grocery, which in eight years has established itself as the city's preeminent local vegetable interpreter as well as a graceful handler of shellfish. "Within the first few months, we decided celebrating the rice, field peas, and seafood of the Lowcountry seemed like a much better choice." That decision led to Johnson's impeccable **Lowcountry seafood pilau**, almost too magnificent to classify as a side. In addition to giving visitors a chance to grapple with the word *pilau* (also spelled *perloo* and variously pronounced PER-lou, PER-lo, and per-LO), the layered rice dish is an edible remnant of the era when hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans transformed the region into a rice kingdom, forever altering the state's physical and cultural contours. Elsewhere, there are chicken pilaus and beef pilaus, but the Grocery's version, sized for sharing, nestles shrimp, steamed clams, and wedges of fried sheepshead into the soft Carolina Gold rice.

Rice is the traditional accompaniment to shrimp in Charleston, despite the ubiquity of **shrimp and grits**, a staple on menus here since the 1990s. But the fast track



to appreciation of the latter dish's glories is a stop at VIP Bistro, opened in 2018 by Vernon and Catrina Edwards Pinckney, who also operate a nightclub in North Charleston but wanted a place where people could sit down and eat together. Under their supervision, slowly cooked white corn grits are swamped with smoky brown gravy, studded with sausage and brightly colored bell peppers. The shrimp seem just a bit sprightlier against the backdrop of resonant grits, which aren't weighted down by cheese or too much heavy cream.

Shrimp also play a starring role in the **Lowcountry hash browns** at Marina Variety Store Restaurant. Hard by the Ashley River, the unfussy diner has the local lock on splendid food served with the sunrise, and there's no finer example than hot crisped potatoes mingling with sweet shrimp, onions, and eggs. As you stare out over pleasure boats drifting across the water, it's hard not to think of the fishermen who spent their lives setting out the same way, each in hopes of coming home with shrimp like those on your plate.

Of course, breakfast isn't always an early morning affair, which is why the clock never runs out on the **smothered pork chop** at Hannibal's Soul Kitchen. Though listed as a breakfast dish, it's typically available from morning to night. Founded in 1985 by Robert "Hannibal" Huger, who was nicknamed for the African military commander, Hannibal's is a neighborhood soul-food institution, celebrated for its fried shark, crab rice, and stew gizzards. But the lightly breaded pork chop is masterful, as is the salty smooth gravy that envelops it.

Toward the end of 2019, a sign pinned to the front door warned that Hannibal's would be in minor disarray during a renovation. But diners pressed ahead anyhow, taking their usual seats at the restaurant's bar for breakfast. Charlestonians like to come together. And so long as they do, it seems likely they'll have no trouble finding wonderful food to eat.

Local Tip:

MY FAVORITE DRINKS ARE...

"Whatever wines Miles White and Femi Oyediran are pouring at Graft. They have created a salon of wine and music, celebrating the imitable classics and funky, fresh, esoteric offerings. My favorite drop-in is Babas on Cannon. There is a coffee magician there named Matthew Haigler who is making the most incredible espresso drinks in town."

Jason Stanhope, executive chef at FIG

Top right: Marina Variety Store Restaurant's Lowcountry hash browns, with shrimp and eggs. Opposite: Bartender Andrew King at Maison.

Bar None

These great new places to eat are also excellent places to drink. Get started with these cocktails

Eric Estrada, LowLife Bar

Rum purists like to point out that real daiquiris aren't frozen, but this charismatic bar on Folly Beach proves that piña coladas are well served by a run through the slushy machine. Finished with a float of Angostura bitters, the cocktail is distinguished by fresh fruit juice and a blend of savory spices.

Dr. Melfi's Medicine, Melfi's

The latest from Charleston restaurateur Brooks Reitz (Little Jack's Tavern, Leon's Oyster Shop), the Italian restaurant Melfi's exudes an appealing mix of glamour and fun, summed up by a light and bright negroni sour, shaken to a froth in violation of bartending orthodoxy.

Armoise Vert, Maison

French cooking is enjoying a minor resurgence downtown, with the celebration of refined technique and richness reaching its apex at Maison. The year-old restaurant's sophistication doesn't let up at the bar, where you'll find this compellingly green gin drink with absinthe notes.—H.R.



THE HOME STRETCH

LIVING MONUMENTS TO THE PAST, CHARLESTON'S HISTORIC PROPERTIES CONTINUE TO IMPRESS, BUT MANY ARE ALSO MAKING STRIDES AT TELLING A FULLER STORY

By Allston McCrady

CHS, S.C.
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TWO DECADES AGO, THE LATE CHARLESTON matriarch and consummate storyteller Emily Whaley decided to publish a small book of horticultural advice. The book's scope quickly expanded, weaving together tales of rural life, foxhunting, ballroom dancing, bridge playing, custard making, and, yes, plenty of garden pointers, such as not overdoing the sculptures: "There's such a thing as too many dancing girls!" Little did she know that *Mrs. Whaley and Her Charleston Garden* would inspire fans far and wide to come knocking at 58 Church Street for a glimpse of her alternately blooming tulips, azaleas, and camellias. And they still do. Today the garden is lovingly maintained by Whaley's daughter Marty Whaley Adams Cornwell, and you can let yourself in. The sign on the gate instructs



visitors to slip a small donation through the mail slot, on the honor system.

The best seller made Whaley's 30-by-110-foot plot one of the most famous private gardens in the country, but rubbernecking has long been a local pastime in a city where fountains burble behind wrought-iron fences, mossy statuary rises from boxwood mazes, and the eye-level windows of colonial parlors invite surreptitious glances. In March, you can get much more than a glimpse during the **Festival of Homes & Gardens**, offered through Historic Charleston Foundation. But many of the city's historic venues are open to the public year-round, a gateway to Charleston's living past. In recent years especially, there's been a greater commitment by many of them to present a fuller, more powerful picture of that past.

A must for any first-time visitor to the city is a stop at **White Point Garden**, which flanks the waterfront at



the southern tip of the Charleston peninsula, as it has for centuries. A labyrinth of mature evergreen live oaks doubles as a night heron rookery, so if you encounter a wobbly juvenile along the park's oyster-shell pathways come summer, give it a wide berth and keep your dog on leash. From there, a grand promenade of antebellum houses lines the Battery seawall, an artillery defense during the Civil War. Take in the view from the second-floor veranda of the **Edmondston-Alston House**: white balustrades, palm fronds, a glimmering harbor, and sky.

Directly across from the Charleston Library Society on King Street lies a somewhat secret passageway: Walk through the gate and follow the lush and shady alley to the hauntingly romantic **Unitarian Church-**

yard, equal parts garden and cemetery. Veils of Spanish moss drape from crape myrtle amid nineteenth-century gravestones overflowing with crinum lilies and ivy. Peek inside the church if it's open to gape at the fan-vaulted ceiling.

Monogrammed ironwork on the **Nathaniel Russell House** indicates that the 1808 home was built to impress, as do its towering magnolias and gardens of ginger lilies and satsuma trees. A self-guided audio tour allows you to linger over the custom bird-and-butterfly-patterned dinnerware, the jaw-dropping three-story cantilevered staircase, and the twenty-two-karat-gold-leaf cornice in the drawing room. Meanwhile, ongoing excavations in the rear kitchen house have already yielded significant clues to the ever-expanding narrative of the eighteen enslaved residents who once lived here, including sewing pins, seeds, and a crystal talisman hidden beneath a floorboard, reminiscent of West African tradition.

In an inverse approach to the typical house tour, visitors to the lime-washed yellow ochre 1820 **Aiken-Rhett House** begin by migrating through damp cellar confines and cramped outbuildings for a sobering perspective before continuing upstairs through grand faded parlors, breezy piazzas, and a European-style gallery. The emphasis here is preservation, not restoration, with the property frozen in time in all its bare-boned testimony.

To learn more about Charleston's ornate decorative ironwork, head to the **Philip Simmons Foundation**, housed in the low-slung cottage of the late African American master blacksmith. Out back, past a loquat tree, Simmons's nephew Carlton Simmons carries on the tradition. Watch him as he stokes fire and shapes red-hot iron, then leave with a map detailing the locations of Simmons's tightly curled creations around town.

Just across the Ashley River, **McLeod Plantation Historic Site** was recently recognized by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience for its boldly transparent and deeply informative tours depicting life on the former Sea Island cotton plantation. Adjacent to the main house with its pristine white columns and imposing oak allée, a stunningly intact row of clapboard cabins that once housed enslaved residents honors the ghosts of Charleston's not-so-distant past (in fact, a descendant lived in one of the cabins, with no plumbing, until 1990).

Slightly farther afield sit a trio of neighboring plantations fifteen miles west of downtown. You can go alligator spotting at the famous terraced "butterfly lakes" of **Middleton Place**, then wander through formal gardens among ancient trees, statuary, and a roaming pack of resident Gulf Coast sheep. Stroll through **Magnolia Plantation's** camellia pathways over bridges reflected in blackwater ponds. And last but not least, feel the floorboards of **Drayton Hall** creak underfoot as you imagine a craftsman hand carving designs into the wet plaster ceiling of planter John Drayton's circa-1750 Georgian Palladian home. From the remnant fingerprints of enslaved laborers on handmade bricks to Drayton family "growth chart" markings on an interior wall, the property continues to speak, in all its complexities, from past to present.

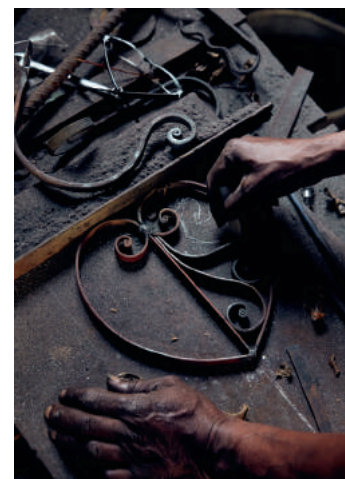
Local Tip:

ONE of the BEST-KEPT SECRETS IS...

"The Gateway Walk, which was designed in the 1930s. It takes you through the heart of the city by way of graveyards and gardens; a shaded, lovely respite from the crowded sidewalks."

Lauren Northup,
Historic Charleston
Foundation Director
of Museums

*This page, left to right:
White Point Garden;
Carlton Simmons at
work. Opposite, from
top: The Unitarian
Churchyard ceme-
tery; a historic home
on Church Street.*





A selection of silver pieces at Croghan's. Opposite: The garden at the Calhoun Mansion.



CHARLESTON'S WILD SIDE

SOME OF THE CITY'S BEST ASSETS ARE THE ONES THAT HAVE BEEN HERE
THOUSANDS OF YEARS **By Chris Dixon**



CHS, S.C.
OUTDOORS

Local Tip:

MY FAVORITE BITE IS...

"A perfectly prepared softshell crab. Before my husband and I moved to Charleston, we visited one spring and caught the middle of softie season. We borrowed bikes from our hotel and cruised from restaurant to restaurant. In hindsight, I think we decided to move here permanently because of that day."

Ann Marshall,
co-owner, High Wire
Distilling

*Opposite: Exploring a
boneyard beach.*

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING A BEER AT SALTY Mike's or standing in line at the Harris Teeter, there's a good chance you'll hear somebody talking about the speckled trout bite or how the surf's looking at Folly Beach. That's because the tidal creeks and rivers, spartina marshes, moss-hung forests, primeval swamps, and windswept islands that surround the Charleston peninsula like a verdant halo are as deeply woven into the cultural fabric as benne wafers and joggling boards. While new subdivisions and traffic stress out locals, it's also true that partnerships between a coalition of land trusts and federal, state, and private landholders are conserving tens of thousands of acres of vital woods and water.

One of the latest examples of Charleston's conservation ethos can be found close to town. The newly opened **Woodlands Nature Reserve** lies just across Highway 61 from Middleton Place. Co-owner Holland Duell launched an ongoing effort with Ducks Unlimited and the City of Charleston back in 2004 to preserve this six-thousand-acre swath of former rice plantation. Today onetime rice canals lead you through a blackwater cypress forest. Take a fascinating interpretive paddle with the **Charleston Kayak Company**, or to explore on your own, you can arrange a stay in a cozy elevated lakefront tent at the Woodlands' private campground. A fat-tire bike or stand-up paddleboard will carry you through forests and above gin-clear lakes even most Charlestonians have never seen.

While the Woodlands delivers a new view of ancient landscapes, from historic Morris Island to the sixty-six-thousand-acre Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, **Coastal Expeditions** offers a deep well of Lowcountry kayak and nature tours, including a ferry to Bulls Island, the jewel of Cape Romain. About six miles long and a mile wide, the barrier island is a stunning landscape of palmetto, pine, and sea oat, populated with ibis, bobcats, deer, and one of the highest concentrations of alligators this side of the Everglades. At the north end lies a breathtaking boneyard beach, where skeletal oaks rise from the encroaching ocean

in what was once a dense maritime forest. The ferry departs about thirty minutes northeast of downtown in Awendaw, where it's well worth a visit to the **Center for Birds of Prey** for a close look at the owls, hawks, and eagles that soar the Carolina skies.

One of the most surprising natural treasures lies less than an hour outside Charleston in rural Harleyville. The eighteen thousand acres of **Audubon's Francis Beidler Forest** include an eighteen-hundred-acre stand of virgin cypress-tupelo swamp. Initially overlooked by loggers due to its inaccessibility, the tract is now the largest of its kind left on the planet. Stroll along a nearly two-mile-long boardwalk, or better yet, the Audubon Center offers naturalist-guided kayak treks amid the fantastical roots of giant cypress trees, some of them fifteen hundred years old.

Closer to the ocean, Charleston's tidal creeks and marshes mean that great fishing opportunities are never far away. Operating mainly in the waters to the west of town around Kiawah and Johns Islands, captain John Ward of **Affinity Charters** knows every nook and cranny to search for black drum, redfish, trout, and flounder. Meanwhile, typically launching from Isle of Palms to the east, Peter Brown of **Saltwater Charters** grew up fishing nearshore and offshore waters here and has been guiding since 1994, helping to pioneer saltwater flats fishing in the area.

To become the fish, though, take a trip down to Folly Beach. Through some strange trick of coastal geology, Folly Island tends to pull in South Carolina's best waves, and local merwoman Jenny Brown, the founder and owner of **Shaka Surf School**, shares the stoke with private and group lessons for locals and visitors alike. Or for an outing that's part natural history tour and part treasure hunt, link up with paleontologist Ashby Gale, of **Charleston Fossil Adventures**. The Lowcountry's shifting sands regularly reveal fossilized sharks' teeth and finds from the last ice age, eleven thousand years ago. "We had mammoths, mastodons, twenty-foot-tall sloths, saber-toothed cats, and dire wolves here," Gale says. Aided by his seasoned eye, there's no telling what you might uncover.

Back downtown after a romp into Charleston's wilds, stop into the **Sportsman's Gallery, Ltd.** Founder and curator Michael Paderewski translates his love of the outdoors into paintings, drawings, pottery, and sculpture by past and present masters. These might include an evocative turn-of-the-(twentieth)-century canine rendering by Percival L. Rosseau or a pair of duck-call cuff links by Mark Lexton. And should you feel inspired for one more painterly view, book a cruise with **Charleston Sailing Charters** aboard the fifty-foot sailing yacht *Fate*. You can head along the Battery and out past Shute's Folly Island and Castle Pinckney toward Fort Sumter and the open Atlantic, or simply anchor out so your crew can take a plunge as the sun sinks into the Ashley River.



BOUTIQUE FINDS

TUCKED ALONG BUSTLING KING STREET AND IN A BURGEONING CREATIVE COMMUNITY NEARBY, A VARIETY OF SIGNATURE SHOPS OFFER THEIR OWN DISTINCTIVE TAKES ON CHARLESTON CHARM

By Elizabeth Hutchison Hicklin



CHS, S.C.
SHOPPING
& STYLE

WALK DOWN KING STREET ON A GIVEN SATURDAY (or for that matter, the odd Tuesday afternoon), and you'll be transported along its handsome blue-stone sidewalks amid a polite—you're in Charleston, after all—but persistent stream of shoppers. Louis

Vuitton, Apple, Sephora, H&M, and other international brands occupy coveted space along Charleston's main retail artery, but in between the big-name shops, you can still find some of the city's best local boutiques, offering homegrown style and elegant service.

Tucked behind a cherry-red door is Croghan's Jewel Box. For 113 years, Charlestonians have turned to the family-run jewelry store to mark life's major milestones with gifts in signature silver-wrapped boxes. Ring the buzzer out front to browse the shop's notable collection of estate jewelry, or for a sophisticated Charleston souvenir, consider a camellia bowl or an entomologically inspired Goldbug cuff (from one of two in-house jewelry lines). Just north at Hampden, Holy City hospitality meets high fashion. Owner Stacy Smallwood and her team—known for their styling services as well as in-store events, such as this spring's trunk show with the German designer Dorothee Schumacher—value building relationships with customers. "It's about the experience," Smallwood says. "It's about making a woman feel beautiful." For more casual wear, check

Local Tip:

MY FAVORITE WAY
to SPEND a DAY
OUTSIDE IS...

"Playing golf. Kiawah Island Golf Resort has several beautiful courses that are always a good challenge. This city also has so many great courses to offer."

Darius Rucker,
musician





G&G'S CHARLESTON BOUTIQUE

*Join us at Fieldshop
for Southern-made
finds and more*

Tucked inside the lobby of the Dewberry Hotel, *Garden & Gun's* Fieldshop celebrates the beauty of Southern-made goods. Colorful Lowcountry-designed Brackish bowties adorn shelves alongside playful earrings by Molly Virginia Made, hardy canvas field bags from Alabama's Tom Beckbe, and cloud-soft blankets by South Carolina's Covered in Cotton, the latest winner of our Made in the South Awards. The shop also hosts pop-ups and events: Mark your calendars for early March, when heirlooms take center stage in coordination with the Charleston Antiques Show.

out her sister store, *Small*, just up the block.

As you'd expect of a men's shop founded by two Ralph Lauren alums, *Grady Ervin & Co.* gets the classics right—leather billfolds, oxford shirts, navy blazers—including an upstairs atelier for custom orders, and in 2018, the store added the Field Sport and Gunroom. The warm den with original 1812 heart-pine floors stocks Southern outdoor brands such as Free Fly and Criquet alongside such outfitters as Purdey, Dubarry, Beretta, and Caesar Guerini.

Farther south below Market Street, King Street is quieter. The crowds are thinner. But alluring shopping opportunities aren't. Though the twenty-first century hasn't been kind to most independent booksellers, well-edited stacks brim with everything from obscure histories to best sellers at *Buxton Books*. Co-owner Polly Buxton's husband, Julian, runs a walking tour company out of the space, too, including a two-hour Lost Stories of Black Charleston tour led by Citadel

professor Damon Fordham and based on years of his research and collection of oral histories. If you're anticipating curling up in bed later with a new book, visit *Lake Pajamas*, across from Buxton. It's hard to resist the Savannah company's baby-soft, pima cotton sleepwear (for men and women) in classic stripes and coastal hues. By its name, you'd be forgiven for assuming the adjacent *Preservation Society of Charleston Book and Gift Shop*—the nonprofit celebrates its centennial this year—is Rainbow Row refrigerator magnet territory. That it's not is thanks in large part to Andy Archie, who fills the nineteenth-century space with wares from some of contemporary Charleston's most talented makers, such as Smithey Ironware Company skillets. And he always keeps a community pot of King Bean Coffee hot.

For antique hunters, Lower King's landmark shops, including *Geo. C. Birlant & Co.* and the *Silver Vault of Charleston*, remain standard-bearers, but do peek

This page, left to right: Estate jewelry at Croghan's; a wealth of antiques inside Wynsum. Opposite: Hanging out at Buxton Books.

Stylish Stays

These downtown hotels blend comfort and panache

86 Cannon, Cannon Street

Gus and Sully—a pair of cockapoos—greet guests at this three-story Charleston single house turned inn. Local interior designer Betsy Berry, whose portfolio includes the Connaught Hotel in London, gave the historic home a modern makeover without sacrificing its classic architectural details. Berry is working similar magic on a set of new suites housed in the 1880s cottage next door.

The Dewberry, Meeting Street

Developer John Dewberry transformed a hulking bureaucratic blight of a building into a midcentury-modern showpiece, with in-room details such as custom Stickley armoires decorated in botanical patterns by local artist Becca Barnet. At the Citrus Club, the hotel's rooftop bar (the Holy City's highest), beverage director Ryan Casey's tiki-inspired drinks are photo-worthy in their own right.

Zero George, George Street

Period millwork blends with contemporary art at this sixteen-room boutique hotel, composed of five restored historic buildings and centered around a postcard-perfect courtyard garden—its charm rivaled only by the overlooking piazzas. Hop on one of the hotel's mint-green three-speeds to explore the surrounding Ansonborough neighborhood.—E.H.H.

into John Palmer's Wynsum Antiques & Interiors on Upper King. An architect by trade with a keen eye for design, Palmer opened Wynsum in 2017, stuffing his 3,500-square-foot warehouse with finds from thirty Southeast dealers. And there's more where that came from should you be on the hunt for, say, an eighteenth-century North Carolina highboy. "This isn't where our dealers' inventory ends," Palmer says. "If there's something you're looking for, let us know." You might scoop up a trio of antique cigarette urns (they make elegant bud vases) at silver dealer Saint Sampson's booth at Wynsum before visiting the Charleston Museum's Loeblein Gallery, which displays some three hundred examples of locally crafted silver. (Trivia fodder: By 1810, Charleston was home to nearly seventy-five silversmith shops.)

Just off King Street's well-trodden path, you'll find an assortment of creative shops in the burgeoning Cannonborough-Elliottborough neighborhood. Here, the postage-stamp-sized stationery store Mac & Murphy satisfies list-keeping left brains and the whimsical right with its inventory of irreverent greeting cards, letterpress calendars, and a rainbow of cult-favorite fine-point Le Pens. At J. Stark, Erik Holmberg and his team build some of Charleston's favorite carryalls, including the waterproof Bronson duffel, originally designed as a surf bag. Nearby at the Veggie Bin, a fifth-generation family-run produce market and grocery, you can pick up a four-pack of the latest release from Edmund's Oast Brewing Co. or a bottle of Red Clay hot sauce while you visit with the Bailey family. And for Raleigh Denim jeans, linen shirts, and a solid collection of sunglasses, drop into the indie clothing boutique Indigo & Cotton, where owner Brett Carron, also known to host art pop-ups, looks to the South and beyond for inspiration. "Our focus is on brands that are harder to find here," he says. "Makers and people with great products and good stories." Because in Charleston, even the shopkeepers are storytellers.

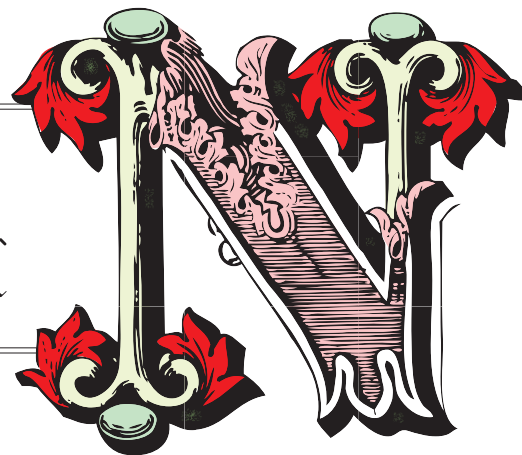


CREATIVE PURSUITS

TAKE IN THE BEST OF THE CITY'S ARTS SCENE, FROM TINY PORTRAITS TO PUBLIC MURALS TO A NEW HOME FOR JAZZ

By Sandy Lang

CHS, S.C.
ARTS &
CULTURE



Local Tip:

THE BEST VIEWS ARE...

"At the rooftop bar at the Dewberry hotel."

Quiana Parler,
lead vocalist of
Ranky Tanky

NOT LONG AFTER ITS FOUNDING IN 1670, Charleston was already a destination for artists and art seekers. In the 1700s, the seaport was the first place in America where artists painted masterful portrait miniatures on thin slices of ivory—mementos kept close in lockets and pockets. A collection of these prized tiny works is the focus of an entire gallery room at the Gibbes Museum of Art. The 1905 Beaux-Arts building serves as a repository for many of the city's art treasures, including works by the South Carolina-raised pop-art icon Jasper Johns, Charleston-based figurative and still-life artist Jill Hooper, and sweet-grass basket artisan and MacArthur Fellow Mary Jackson. Special exhibitions this year include a private collection of British sporting art, and paintings and sculptures from Southern women artists spanning six decades.

For a glimpse of what the next generation of Charleston artists are up to, Redux Contemporary Art Center houses thirty-eight studios where emerging artists create and collaborate. Visitors can view an ongoing lineup of gallery shows, go to quarterly open-studio events, or register for a one-night class in embroidery or watercolor painting. And near the downtown landmark Marion Square, the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston is known to mount some of the most adventurous and experiential work in the region—Japanese artist Motoi Yamamoto once spent a couple of weeks creating an intricate, temporary labyrinth of sea salt across the gallery floor.

While Charlestonians (and the country) eagerly await the debut of the International African American Museum, projected for late 2021, the College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture reopens this year fol-



lowing a nearly three-year renovation. Visitors joining daily tours of the former school for African Americans, which held classes from the 1860s to the 1950s, can see a historic classroom and the top-floor auditorium used for civil rights meetings in the 1960s, along with rotating exhibits from Avery's extensive archives. "Without learning the history," says exhibit curator and historian Daron-Lee Calhoun II, "we would never know where to go in the future."

Though the art of jazz has a rich history in Charleston, it's been something of a moving target. But nights of swing-sultry music can now reliably be had at **Forte Jazz Lounge**, opened last summer. Forte serves wine and beer, but owner Joe Clarke, himself a jazz pianist

and bandleader, keeps the focus firmly on the music in the boxy 120-seat listening room, complete with black velvet couches by the stage.

Throughout Charleston you'll find a mix of new work mingling with the city's history. Street artist **Shepard Fairey** grew up in the Lowcountry, and in recent years, a number of public murals by him and others have cropped up along King Street. Meanwhile, over on Church Street you can step inside the circa-1809 **Dock Street Theatre** for a peek at the grand foyer and historic stage. Springtime audiences can catch performances of *Bright Star*, Steve Martin and Edie Brickell's bluegrass musical set in North Carolina.

A few blocks away on Broad Street, take a casual art walk to collector-worthy galleries within steps of one another. The **George Gallery** houses work from a number of modern artists, including the abstract expressionist William Halsey, the Halsey Institute's namesake and a pioneer in the Southeast, while at **Helena Fox Fine Art**, you can take in Savannah native West Fraser's panoramic Lowcountry landscapes and the oyster-shaped links of necklaces by Charleston silversmith Kaminer Haislip. A few doors down sits **Dog & Horse Fine Art**, where gallery owner Jaynie Milligan Spector curates an array of canine- and equine-themed work. You can even commission a portrait miniature of a beloved spaniel or pointer, in a style reminiscent of those centuries-old human portraits at the Gibbes, to be incorporated into a pendant or a bracelet. And just a few blocks away, **Horton Hayes Fine Art** showcases gorgeous landscapes, still lifes, and more that evoke life in the Lowcountry.

Amid a clutter of leaning, framed works, **Carolina Antique Maps & Prints** might be one of the most Charleston places in Charleston. The shop houses a trove of engraved botanical and natural history prints—camellias, fish, birds—along with antiquarian maps and original sketches and watercolors of early-twentieth-century Charleston by the artist Alfred Hutton. Its current owner, Laura Vardell, has helped cultivate the shop's collection since 1985, including colorful engravings by the English naturalist Mark Catesby, who spent years exploring the region in the early 1700s. "Catesby wasn't a trained artist," Vardell says, "but he sure knew how to paint."

Vardell takes the long view of Charleston's artistic output—the new galleries and work continually adding to the centuries of what's been created. So it is in Charleston, where art seekers still come to find their own little piece of Lowcountry beauty. **G**

Spring Showcase

The city's annual arts festival brings a highly anticipated debut

Come May, Charleston's theaters, churches, and more fill with performances from a worldwide roster of dance troupes, musicians, actors, and acrobats during the annual **Spoletto Festival USA**, founded in 1977 as a counterpart to Spoletto, Italy's arts festival. This year's Spoletto (May 22–June 7) will bring the world premiere of a new full-length opera by MacArthur Fellow and Grammy Award winner Rhiannon Giddens. *Omar* is based on the life of Omar Ibn Said, an enslaved Muslim African man who was brought to Charleston in 1807. The true-life story has largely remained untold, and the premiere will also give audiences a first look at the College of Charleston's refurbished 1920s-era **Sottile Theatre** after a major renovation and mural restoration project. —**S.L.**



Local Tip:

MY FAVORITE PLACE to get a BITE IS...

"Home Team BBQ. You know they're good when they can do smoked turkey right—it's tender, which is hard to do because it's not too fatty."

Jonathan Sanchez, owner of Blue Bicycle Books

This page, clockwise from top: TKTK PRINTS; Daron-Lee Calhoun II with a shrimp net at the Avery Research Center; a Shepard Fairey mural along King Street. Opposite: The St. Michael's Church steeple rises above the intersection of Broad and Meeting Streets.