



Clockwise from top left: Train Me 24/7's Drew Edmonds (Best Personal Trainer), Bleubelle's Heather Burge (Best Bridal), Tailspin's Jusak Yang Bernhard (Best Pet Supplies), The Grey's Mashama Bailey (Best Chef) and Savannah Morning News' Tom Barton (Best Columnist)



# CAMPAIGN 2016

One decade and six years ago, the editors of this magazine brought forth the Best of Savannah™ poll, designed to ask you, discerning readers, your favorites in food and fêtes, shops and services, people and places. Once again, you have cast your ballots—and given your fellow Savannahians a list they can truly trust.

*The votes are in, and the winners of Best of Savannah™ 2016 are ...*

*By the readers of Savannah magazine*  
Written by **Alvieann Chandler** and **Sarah Taylor Asquith**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY IZZY HUDGINS

# DINING & NIGHTLIFE

How often does a friend or guest ask you for a restaurant recommendation or where to meet for a drink? Now you'll be ever-ready with an answer, thanks to *Savannah* magazine's readers.

## APPETIZERS

Brian and Julie Curry brought the small-plate trend to Savannah 13 years ago with **Jazz'd Tapas Bar**, and today, it's still the dish for locals and visitors alike. The main attraction: Their something-for-everyone menu of 30-plus tapas, from truffle fries to barbecue beef brisket tacos. [jazzdtapasbar.com](http://jazzdtapasbar.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Tybee Island Social Club*

## ASIAN FUSION

Right off Route 80 on Wilmington Island, **Ele Fine Fusion** serves some of the finest Asian food around (think: dumplings, noodles, curry, sushi). Owners Ele and Sean Tran pride themselves on authentic cuisine, as well as an upscale, elegant atmosphere. [elesavannah.com](http://elesavannah.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Tangerine Fusion and Sushi Bar*

## BAKERY

You'll probably wait in line at **Back in the Day Bakery**, but as you know, it's worth it. Owner-chefs Cheryl and Griff Day whip up an irresistible selection of sweets (cupcakes, pudding, pies!) and savories (biscuits, grilled cheese!). Even their salads—topped with dried fruit and spiced nuts—are scrumptious. [backinthedaybakery.com](http://backinthedaybakery.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Baker's Pride Bakery*

## BARBECUE

The trophies along the wall don't lie, nor does the name. **Wiley's Championship BBQ** is a crowd favorite, where those-in-the-know gobble up caramelized burnt ends and St. Louis-cut ribs—slathered in their famous "Better Than Sex BBQ Sauce." We'll let you be the judge on the latter. [wileyschampionshipbbq.com](http://wileyschampionshipbbq.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Sandfly BBQ*

## THE VOTING PROCESS

**Ethics:** Reader votes—and only reader votes—determine a Best of Savannah™ winner. As with all of our editorial, there is no pay to play. Period.

**Tradition:** As part of the area's largest news organization, we strictly limit our role to tallying and reporting results.

**Procedure:** We only accept one ballot per person. Duplicate ballots, and those without verifiable names and addresses are automatically disqualified.

**Disclaimer:** We can't control how individuals campaign for Best of Savannah™; we can only control how accurately the votes are tabulated.

## BEST NEW RESTAURANT Cotton and Rye



IZZY HUDGINS

## BEER LIST

Hop heads of the world, unite ... and answer some trivia questions while you're at it! This tavern's name, **World of Beer**, speaks to the breadth and depth of its brew-based menu, but the live music, mind games and craft cocktails keep Savannahians walking through the door. [worldofbeer.com](http://worldofbeer.com)  
**Runner-up:** *The Public Kitchen and Bar*

## BREAKFAST

With as many "skillet breakfasts" that **J. Christopher's** serves daily, it's a wonder that owners Jay McCann and Chris Brogdon have enough cast-iron pans to go around. But that's just one of the restaurant's draws—customers also love the Blueberry Crunchcakes and omelets the size of your head. [jchristophers.com](http://jchristophers.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Clary's Café*

## BRUNCH

There's something about making pancakes at your own "griddle table" that's so much more fun than making them at home—just ask a three-year-old. Hence the lure of **Funky Brunch Café**, which serves plenty of non-DIY brunch options, too. Bonus points for the hopscotch outside. [thefunkybrunchcafe.com](http://thefunkybrunchcafe.com)  
**Runner-up:** *The Collins Quarter*

## BUSINESS LUNCH

It's named after the trendy New York City neighborhood, but **Soho South Café** has a certain charm that's all Savannah. Its rustic-chic décor and comforting menu (tomato basil bisque, fried goat cheese salad, pot roast) make even a lunch with your new boss a relaxing experience. [sohosouthcafe.com](http://sohosouthcafe.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Vic's on the River*



# DINING & NIGHTLIFE

## BEST DESSERTS Lulu's Chocolate Bar

### CARIBBEAN

Jamaican food in Savannah? It's true, *mon*. Donavon Smith, who hails from Westmoreland, Jamaica, opened **Sweet Spice Restaurant** in 2011 and continues to greet diners, now at two locations, with jerk chicken, beef stew, fried plantains and, as he should, a Bob Marley Burrito. [sweetspicesavannah.net](http://sweetspicesavannah.net)  
*Runner-up: Best Caribbean Cuisine*

### CHINESE

Opened by Taiwanese Savannahian Simon Chi more than 20 years ago, **Wang's II** is a family tradition for dine-in and delivery. Popular dishes include the Walnut Chicken and Sliced Beef with Broccoli, while, for some, Chi's Moo Goo Gai Pan is a throwback to suburban takeout of yore.  
*Runner-up: Yummy House*

### COCKTAILS

Should there ever be a category for Best Place to Make a Scene, **Rocks on the Roof** atop the Bohemian Hotel fits the bill—that sweeping vista of the river and bridge is the ideal backdrop for a girls' night out, after-theater drinks and pre-dinner libations.  
[bohemianhotelsavannah.com](http://bohemianhotelsavannah.com)  
*Runner-up: Jen's and Friends*

### CRAFT BREWERY

The crew at **Southbound Brewing Co.** is crafting more than brews; they are creating community in their outpost on Fahm Street, from hosting monthly hot yoga-hops mash-ups to pre-concert parties with cornhole competitions.  
[southboundbrewingco.com](http://southboundbrewingco.com)  
*Runner-up: Service Brewing Co.*

### CUPCAKES

More than 30 kinds of cupcakes? Believe it. With flavors like chocolate chip cookie dough and root beer float, the assortment at **Gigi's Cupcakes** is vast—and delicious. Bethany Shantz opened the franchise here in 2011 and has been sweetening up Savannah ever since. [gigiscupcakesusa.com](http://gigiscupcakesusa.com)  
*Runner-up: Wicked Cakes*

### CURRY

Ele and Sean Tran are nicknamed Savannah's "first family of Asian cuisine" for good reason. **The King and I**, one of their seven restaurants, is crowned a local favorite year after year. With five mouth-watering Thai curry dishes on its extensive menu, the restaurant is a Midtown mecca.  
[kingandisavannah.com](http://kingandisavannah.com)  
*Runner-up: Taste of India*

### DATE NIGHT

At once luxurious and cozy, the historical **Olde Pink House** is an ideal setting for lovebirds. Dine in the main restaurant, outside on the terrace or in the cellar tavern, where, at the latter, the piano bar is the stuff of memories. As for the hearty chicken pot pie? It tastes best shared. [plantersinnsavannah.com/the-olde-pink-house](http://plantersinnsavannah.com/the-olde-pink-house)  
*Runner-up: Circa 1875*

### DESSERTS

For those who adhere to that old saw, "life is short; eat dessert first," look no further than **Lulu's Chocolate Bar**. The city's collective sweet tooth finds deep satisfaction from such offerings as brown sugar shortbread dipped in a dark



TERESA EARNEST

# DINING & NIGHTLIFE

chocolate fondue, triple-chocolate mousse towers and a strawberry suspension cake.

[luluschocolatebar.com](http://luluschocolatebar.com)

*Runner-up: Baker's Pride*

## FINE DINING

A burst pipe left this basement enclave a bit swampy, but diners are game once again for Stephen McLain's wildly inventive menu at **Alligator Soul**. Rebuilt, the new space exudes the inviting warmth of the old but has a reinvigorated sense of purpose. [alligatorsoul.com](http://alligatorsoul.com)

*Runner-up: The Olde Pink House*

## FRENCH FRIES

How do you like your fries? For **Green Truck Neighborhood Pub** aficionados, the answer is simple yet specific: skin-on, lightly salted, soft in the middle while crunchy on the ends, and best dipped in house-made ketchup and washed down with a local draft beer. [greentruckpub.com](http://greentruckpub.com)

*Runner-up: Five Guys Burgers and Fries*

## FRIED CHICKEN

Unless you know someone who knows someone who knows someone in the kitchen, you're going to wait in line. And after 70 years in business, that's become part of the fascination with **Mrs. Wilkes' Dining Room**. Another fascination? That succulent, perfectly seasoned, fried just-so chicken. [mrswilkes.com](http://mrswilkes.com)

*Runner-up: Sisters of the New South*

## FROZEN YOGURT

For frozen yogurt lovers, the pay-by-the-ounce concept is the best thing since, well, frozen



**BEST LATTE**  
**Foxy Loxy Café**

IZZY HUDGINS

yogurt. That's what **La' Berry Frozen Yogurt** is all about, along with 10 rotating daily flavors and toppings galore, from healthy fruit and granola to the much-more-fun mini donuts and Nerds candy. [laberryfrozenyogurt.com](http://laberryfrozenyogurt.com)

*Runner-up: Lovin' Spoons*

## GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

A dinner at **Circa 1875** is unique, classy and fun—just like your girlfriends. Owners Donald Lubowicki and Jeffery Downey go out of their way to make their cuisine thoroughly French yet unpretentious,

with dishes that include escargots, steak frites and roasted chicken.

Just add a bottle (or two) of Bordeaux. [circa1875.com](http://circa1875.com)

*Runner-up: Jazz'd Tapas Bar*

## HAMBURGER

At **Green Truck Neighborhood Pub**, Josh and Whitney Yates make sure their beef is grass-fed, all natural, hormone free and locally sourced. They also make sure their burgers are delicious. Enter 10 different kinds, including the Trailer Park, a house favorite topped with pimento cheese,

bacon, tomato and onion. [greentruckpub.com](http://greentruckpub.com)

*Runner-up: B and D Burgers*

## HAPPY HOUR

It's been more than 20 years since Julia Roberts stood outside that big paned window in her nightgown, catching a cattin' around Dennis Quaid in the act—but it's clear Savannahians find the **Six Pence Pub** still "something to talk about." [sixpencepub.com](http://sixpencepub.com)

*Runner-up: Churchill's Pub*





COURTESY OF VISIT SAVANNAH

## THE BEST OF US

Our better angels defy categories. So, we went to the people and asked them to describe our city's finest attributes. **Compiled by Amy Paige Condon and Sarah Taylor Asquith**

### George Dawes Green, novelist, raconteur and founder of *The Moth*

"Savannah's stories: I think we owe them to James Edward Oglethorpe, to his brilliance and sense of adventure, to the gregariousness and kindness of the man, and to his plan for the city, which strikes me as a big self-portrait of his soul. The ubiquitous open squares where everyone must rub shoulders: nabobs and paupers, Whigs and Federalists and Black Lives Matter activists, sailors from far ports and their local assignations, duelists and shipwreck survivors and rumrunners and the homeless congregation of Wright Square with their 12-packs of Icehouse that they just picked up in the Pal Superette 7-to-11 on Drayton Street.

It's true that Oglethorpe's design was much disfigured by, first, the black-hearted Thomas Stephens, who snuck slavery into the colony, and later by the civil policies of the twentieth century, which chased out commercial establishments and dramatically reduced the downtown population—turning many of our squares into lifeless memorial gardens. Nevertheless, Oglethorpe's spirit still pervades everywhere. This city is still a beautiful loony menagerie. No place in the country has such delicious gossip. So many unbalanced passionate people straining against the bonds of propriety, trying desperately

to get rich or get famous or get lucky, so many sad drunks falling on their faces at 2 a.m. in Forsyth Park, so much scandal, so many unlikely visionaries creating empires (I'm thinking of you, Paula Deen, and you, Juliette Gordon Low, and you, Big Boi, and you, Flannery O'Connor, and you, James Alan McPherson, and you Eli Whitney, and you, Paula Wallace, and on and on). The stories still pulse out of here, just as they did on the nights 300 years ago when Oglethorpe would slip past the town palisade to join his lover Mary Musgrove in Tomochichi's tent for evenings of rum and tales and passion (I may be embroidering a bit, which is the point)."

### Megan White, marketing projects manager, Visit Savannah

"If I were new to Savannah, the best place for me to get a sense of its spirit would be along one of my favorite streets, Bull Street. A stroll from the river to Forsyth Park, through the squares, is just the perfect way to get to know Savannah—from the beautiful trees and monuments to the coffee shops and restaurants along the way. You'll see trolleys and horses, pedicabs and walking tours, shopping and maybe a movie being filmed! Just before making it to the park, you cross over one of our most beautiful streets, Jones, and then you

arrive at the park with the fountain in view. I often tell visitors that they must take this walk, and also to stop and notice the details in the architecture that would be missed while driving: the musicians playing in the squares, the shop owners working on their craft, the students hurrying to their next stop, dog owners taking their furry friends out for a walk—that's where you find the spirit of Savannah. In the quirky details and the chance encounters as you take the time to explore and let the city surprise you."

### Tony Parrish, owner, Parrish Auto Repair Inc.

"For me, the most beautiful and tranquil area is the bluff in Isle of Hope. My father passed away in 1995 after battling cancer, and every weekend my family from out of town would gather to be with him. But on Sundays, after everyone left, he and I would go for a drive. We would reminisce and have time together, and invariably, we would end up driving down the bluff—the beautiful Skidaway River and salt marsh, the majestic live oaks, the antebellum homes and a serenity that is unmatched. Those Sunday drives with the best friend I will ever have is a memory I will carry forever."

(Continued on page 154)



# DINING & NIGHTLIFE



**BEST PUB**  
Moon River Brewing Co.

## ICE CREAM

The first words often spoken by tourists? "**Leopold's Ice Cream.**" The historic parlor on Broughton Street is a sensation—with a line out the door to prove it. But one lick of the mint chocolate chip (or lemon custard or chocolate raspberry swirl) and that wait becomes a distant memory.

leopoldsicecream.com

*Runner-up: Cold Stone Creamery*

## ITALIAN

Joyce Shanks brings her Italian grandmother's cooking style to **Bella's Italian Café**, where local families take the whole gang for traditional antipasto, Manicotti and chicken parmesan. Parents are especially fond of the "kids eat free" deal on Sundays through Thursdays. bellascafe.com

*Runner-up: Corleone's*

## KARAOKE

The **Rail Pub** is haunted by spirits both real and libationist, which explains why so many revelers at this venerated watering hole brandish a mic to sing for their sippers. The later the hour, the louder the howl. therailpub.com

*Runner-up: McDonough's Restaurant and Lounge*

## KID-FRIENDLY DINING

With miniature-sized pizzas and a movie room just for kids, it's hard to say if parents or their children are bigger fans of **Basil's Pizza** and Deli. basilsonline.com

*Runner-up: Spanky's Pizza Galley and Saloon*

## LATE-NIGHT SPOT

Overlooking the bustling City Market from two spacious balconies, the **Tree House** is the last stop of the night for folks wanting to sidle up to the bar for an expert cocktail, or those ready to kick up their heels and dance to the music. treehousesavannah.com

*Runner-up: Congress Street Social Club*

## LATTE

Using beans from local roaster Perc and the ideal amount of steamed milk (read: not too much), **Foxy Loxy Café** knows how to get a latte right. Owner Jennifer Jenkins has been perfecting the art for years, and her Horchata latte (Mexican sweetened milk and espresso) is also a fan favorite. foxyloxycafe.com

*Runner-up: The Coffee Fox*

## LIVE MUSIC/ ENTERTAINMENT

Baroness, Kylesa, Black Tusk, Cusses ... just a few of the band names that launched from the stage of **The Jinx**, Susanne Warnkros' Congress Street mecca for musicians and their fans. From the Tuesday hip-hop night to the standing Saturday happy hour for Damon and the Shitkickers, live music has a forever home.

On Facebook

*Runner-up: Wild Wing Café*

IZZY HUDGINS

# DINING & NIGHTLIFE

## MARGARITA

The name alone is the first clue that the margaritas at **Tequila's Town Mexican Restaurant** might be legit. Then, one slurp of any of their eight potent flavors (Jalapeno! Peach! Mango!) and the verdict is in. Another round, *por favor*. [tequilastown.com](http://tequilastown.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Jalapenos*

## MEXICAN

Every single day. That's how often many of us crave the table-side guacamole and street-style tacos at **Tequila's Town Mexican Restaurant**. Especially after inhaling a couple of their margaritas (see above). [tequilastown.com](http://tequilastown.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Jalapenos*

## NEW BAR

*(less than a year old)*

Pinkie Masters' PBR sign didn't stay dim for long when its doors closed after 60 years. One of the city's top bartenders, Matt Garappolo, hung out a refurbished shingle—**The Original**—and cleaned out the fusty corner dive, freshening the drink menu with small batch cocktails. [theoriginalsavannah.com](http://theoriginalsavannah.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Castaways*

## NEW RESTAURANT

*(less than a year old)*

Zach Schultz and pals Brandon and Kimberly Whitehead have transformed the former site of cheese-and-wine shop Form into **Cotton and Rye**, a delightful neighborhood bistro with hearty fare, including a stupendous cheese plate replete with fresh-baked rye crostinis and handmade salumi.

[cottonandrye.com](http://cottonandrye.com)

**Runner-up:** *The Vault Kitchen + Market*

## ORGANIC MEAL

The phrase "farm to table" gets incorrectly used a lot these days, but the folks at **Cha Bella** aren't messing around. They work with local farmers and fishermen to obtain organic produce, cheese, meat and seafood, refusing to travel more than a day's drive for anything else. [cha-bella.com](http://cha-bella.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Kayak Kafé*

## OUTDOOR DINING

If a bustling City Market scene over a plate of wings is your jam, then **Wild Wing Café** is the place to be. Its outdoor terrace features large TVs programmed to the latest game, while the more chill patio tables are an ideal spot to catch the nightly live music. [wildwingcafe.com](http://wildwingcafe.com)  
**Runner-up:** *The Wyld Dock Bar*

## PIZZA

**Vinnie Van GoGo's** claim to fame is their New York style pizza, with a thin crust, fresh cheese and traditional marinara and pesto sauces. It's a no-frills, cash-only joint, and that's just how the locals like it. [vinnievangogo.com](http://vinnievangogo.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Mellow Mushroom*

## PUB

One part craft brewery, another part gourmet gastropub, **Moon River Brewing Co.** serves up both spirited historic ambience and cheerful patio dining. [wordpress.moonriverbrewing.com](http://wordpress.moonriverbrewing.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Churchill's Pub*

## SALAD

Remember when Elaine Benes was obsessed with the "biiiiig salad" on *Seinfeld*? That seems to be the inspiration behind the 10 salads at **Kayak Kafé**, each one of them piled high with all sorts of fixings. [eatkayak.com](http://eatkayak.com)  
**Runner-up:** *The Starland Café*

## SANDWICH

It is a rite of passage for all new arrivals to make their way to York and Drayton for **Zunzi's** mammoth Conquistador—a sandwich so epic it took one of the top three honors in the Travel Channel's quest for the best American sandwich. One bite and you know, it's well worth the wait in line. [zunzis.com](http://zunzis.com)  
**Runner-up:** *The Starland Café*

## SEAFOOD

**Sorry Charlie's Oyster Bar** might have the coolest neon sign in

town, but we're here to talk about their seafood. Oysters range from on the half-shell to Rockefeller, the Po-boys from crispy shrimp to catfish and the fresh catches from a Low Country Boil to seared grouper with Hoppin' John. [sorrycharliessavannah.com](http://sorrycharliessavannah.com)  
**Runner-up:** *The Crab Shack*

## SMOOTHIE

**Smoothie King** is the Baskin Robbins of smoothies with too many flavors to count. It's best to first pick your category (fitness blends, slim blends, wellness blends) and go from there: vanilla, chocolate, watermelon, pineapple, carrot, kale, acai and so on. And don't forget the protein powder. [smoothieking.com](http://smoothieking.com)  
**Runner-up:** *Beetnix Superfoods and Juice Bar*

## BEST TAKE-OUT Zunzi's



JOLENE ESPOSITO



# DINING & NIGHTLIFE

## SOUL FOOD

They don't call it "soul food" for nothing as the stick-to-your-bones cuisine at **Sweet Potatoes** soothes your soul. Highlights include the meatloaf, fried catfish and chicken gumbo, not to mention the much-praised banana pudding. On Facebook

**Runner-up:** *Sisters of the New South*

## SOUTHERN

More than 70 years later, **Mrs. Wilkes' Dining Room** is run by her great-grandson, Ryon Thompson. He keeps the dream alive with her Southern staples (fried chicken, meat loaf, macaroni and cheese, black-eyed peas, candied yams and on and on), served up family-style at tables with strangers who will be your friends before the meal's over. [mrswilkes.com](http://mrswilkes.com)

**Runner-up:** *Sisters of the New South*

## SPORTS BAR

When asked how many TVs are inside **Coach's Corner**, a hostess replies, "Ummm, seventy-ish?" Clearly, there's not a bad seat in the house, but it's not all about spectating—pool tables, shuffleboard, darts and video games are also in full effect, along with a sports-themed menu. Hector Macho Camacho's Nachos, anyone? [coachs.net](http://coachs.net)

**Runner-up:** *Wild Wing Café*

## STEAK

The legendary Louisiana-born **Ruth's Chris Steak House** stays on top year after year because it's never strayed from its award-winning formula: seared prime beef topped with butter and parsley

and served on a sizzling platter. [ruthschris.com](http://ruthschris.com)

**Runner-up:** *Toni Steakhouse*

## SUSHI

With 58 different rolls and Nigiri and Sashimi for everyone, **Ta Ca** knows its way around sushi. Top picks include the spicy tempura-shrimp Crunch roll and the tuna and scallop Taca roll. Not into seafood? Try the Cowboy roll with spicy beef, cream cheese and asparagus. [tacasushi.com](http://tacasushi.com)

**Runner-up:** *Sushi Zen*

## TACOS

There are eight different kinds of street-style tacos at **Tequila's Town Mexican Restaurant**, and, chances are, you'll want to order every single one. A reader favorite is the Carnitas (shredded pork, grilled onion, radishes) but the Rajas (roasted poblano, avocado, queso fresco) could turn even a carnivore green. [tequilatown.com](http://tequilatown.com)

**Runner-up:** *La Nopalera Mexican Restaurant*

## TAKE-OUT

By the time you walk across downtown to **Zunzi's** corner spot, you'll have worked up a serious appetite, and that's a good thing. Portions are plentiful, and the secret sauce is the secret sauce. [zunzis.com](http://zunzis.com)

**Runner-up:** *Carey Hilliard's Restaurant*

## THAI

Getting to know **The King and I** leads to Double Delight, Drunken Noodles and Prawn Panang. You're welcome. [kingandisavannah.com](http://kingandisavannah.com)

**Runner-up:** *Chiriya's Thai Cuisine*

## TRIVIA/GAME NIGHT

To win at the **Mellow Mushroom** trivia night, you'll need a strategy.

First, build your team by gathering friends with expertise in science, sports, geography, film and theater, and pop culture.

Then, come up with a clever name. There's nothing trivial about this pursuit. [mellowmushroom.com](http://mellowmushroom.com)

**Runner-up:** *Molly McGuire's*

## VEGETARIAN

**Kayak Kafé** proves that healthy eating, especially sans meat, can be filling, satisfying and mighty tasty. Do yourself a solid and order the hummus. [eatkayak.com](http://eatkayak.com)

**Runner-up:** *Cha Bella*

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### BEST VEGETARIAN Kayak Kafe



JASON B. JAMES



CARRIE L. KELLOGG



# NATURAL BEAUTY

Our colorful characters encompass lush surroundings, where blossoms burst all year long and otherworldly light shimmers off waters that keep our secrets.

**Jamie Burghardt, horticulture coordinator,  
UGA Extension**

"I always tell people to visit Savannah between St. Patrick's Day and Easter—that's the height of spring when all the trees are leafing. It's the real magical time. You get the tail end of the magnolias; you see redbuds, fringe trees and azaleas. A different shrub or tree is in bloom every month of the year here—we have witch hazel in December, star magnolias in January. One thing that sets us apart is the blending of cooler temperate gardens with the warming subtropical scene. We can grow palms, cycads, citrus trees and both evergreen and deciduous trees. When people see a magnolia next to a palm next to a kumquat next to a live oak, they really get thrown for a loop—it blows their minds!"

**Carrie L. Kellogg, landscape photographer**

"I know everyone talks about the golden hour here, but I'm more about the soft morning light. I try to get up right as the sun rises and be positioned as it comes through the trees and the moss. It's enchanting, spooky and magical. Several of my pieces are of just the light coming down through the trees. I'll never forget one

morning at Bonaventure about five years ago. It was really foggy and everything seemed extra quiet—I felt like there was more out there than just me, but it was more calming than scary. I shot my favorite photo that day. I call it 'Beyond the Fog.'" *(photo, above)*

**Captain Gary "Gator" Hill, co-owner,  
G and W Excursions**

"Being out on the water here in Savannah is a changing wonderland of sights, sounds and smells. Witnessing the awesome power of nature as storms roll in, watching water spouts form and dance, the smell of the salts as the tides return, the bait fish as they rush back to the safety of the spartina grasses. There's nothing like a boat ride at slack tide, watching the sun rise. It's truly some of the most drama I've seen anywhere on the planet. And the marsh has an aroma all its own—I laugh when I see newcomers wrinkle their nose when they get their first whiff of the low tide. No other place in the world has so much packed into so little a space, sometimes five micro ecosystems lying within a stone's throw of one another."

**Elizabeth McDonald, interior designer,  
Design House**

"My inspiration comes from never, ever getting tired of driving over the Moon River. The moment I hit that bridge and see the marsh grass and water, I am calm. It reminds of Pat Conroy's books—of mysterious, far-away places. My design inspiration comes from that place. I am transported to the West Indies with flowing fabrics and carved chairs. I am also inspired by the native Savannahians. They are eclectic and free-spirited and are willing to take chances."

**Charles Russo, owner, Russo's Seafood**

"Wild Georgia Shrimp tastes so sweet because of the quality and species of shrimp we have in our local waters. Here, we have shrimp that are caught in one-day boats. So the freshness is paramount compared to those shrimpers that may go out into the Gulf and may not return for a week."

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# DINING & NIGHTLIFE



**BEST TRIVIA/GAME NIGHT**  
**Mellow Mushroom**

BEAU KESTER

(Continued from page 152)

## VIETNAMESE

Ele and Sean's **Flying Monk Noodle Bar** gave Savannah a ramen game. Their White Elephant is one gift you'll never want to give away. [flywiththemonk.com](http://flywiththemonk.com)

*Runner-up: Saigon Bistro*

## WATERFRONT DINING

Whether you come by bike, boat or foot, you may toast the buttery sunset on Tybee's Back River from **AJ's Dockside Restaurant**—just make sure you have the proper accouterments: ice cold beer, a pound of peel 'n' eats and plenty of

[time.ajsdocksidetybee.com](http://time.ajsdocksidetybee.com)

*Runner-up: The Wyld Dock Bar*

## WINE LIST

In keeping with its unassuming French bistro fare and atmosphere, **Circa 1875** stocks the cellar with coveted vintages as well affordable luxuries from the motherland. [circa1875.com](http://circa1875.com)

*Runner-up: Elizabeth on 37th*

(Continued on page 156)



[www.christinehallphotography.com](http://www.christinehallphotography.com)  
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# SHOPPING & SERVICES

Never be caught flat-footed in fashion or business. This slate of skilled providers comes with the endorsement of our trusted advisers.

## AD AGENCY

Lifting a company's online presence is just one of the many top-notch services offered by **Boost by Design**. They also provide web design and development, search engine optimization and traditional print media. In a nutshell: The agency helps small companies realize big ideas. [boostbydesign.com](http://boostbydesign.com)  
*Runner-up: Robertson & Markowitz Advertising and Public Relations*

## ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

A first-time winner in this category, **Wright Square Antique Mall** is a

magical emporium of housewares, fashion, ephemera and oddities that, for good reason, attract creative and curious types alike. [wsantiquemall.wix.com/wsam](http://wsantiquemall.wix.com/wsam)  
*Runner-up: Jere's Antiques*

## ART GALLERY

Edgy and eccentric art is the name of the game at **A.T. Hun Art Gallery**, whose international and local artists create nontraditional pieces sure to dazzle any room in your home or business. [athun.com](http://athun.com)  
*Runners-up (tie): Friedman's Framing, Ray Ellis Gallery and Roots Up Gallery*

## ASSISTED LIVING/ RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

After a lifetime of hard work and hard play, local retirees find the **Savannah Square** community a fine place to call home. [fivestarseniorliving.com/communities/ga/savannah/savannah-square](http://fivestarseniorliving.com/communities/ga/savannah/savannah-square)  
*Runner-up: Buckingham South*

## AUDIO/VIDEO/ LIGHTING PRODUCTION

Lights, camera, action! With more than 30 years of experience, **Stage Front** has the skills and equipment to pull off special events, performances and presentations without a hitch. [sfps.net](http://sfps.net)  
*Runner-up: Advanced A/V Rentals*

## AUTO REPAIR

Whether road tripping or doing the daily commute, the certified technicians at **Savannah Tire, Brake and Alignment Centers** make sure your wheels are safe and sound. A Savannah go-to since 1951, they now have nine locations across town. [savannahtire.com](http://savannahtire.com)  
*Runner-up: RPM Autoworx*

## BABY GEAR/CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

With **Punch & Judy**, the Karpf family has been a one-stop shop for families for 70 years. The store recently underwent an extensive remodel and will soon be ready for a new generation of tiny humans. [punchandjudysavannah.com](http://punchandjudysavannah.com)  
*Runner-up: Sara Jane Children's Boutique*



**BEST CANDY SHOP**  
River Street Sweets

IZZY HUGGINS



# SHOPPING & SERVICES

## BANK/FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

As Mark Twain once said, "There are two times in a man's life when he should not speculate: When he can't afford it, and when he can." With 10 locations in the Savannah area, **Bank of America** helps customers alleviate that financial guessing game. [bankofamerica.com](http://bankofamerica.com)  
*Runner-up: Wells Fargo Bank*

## BIKES

Keeping bicycles spinning for 10 years now, **Quality Bike Shop** gets your ride in top shape. And they have a vast selection of new styles and gear at the ready if your bike decides to call it quits. [qualitybikeshop.com](http://qualitybikeshop.com)  
*Runner-up: Bicycle Link*

## BOUTIQUE HOTEL

(less than 100 rooms)

Eclectic yet modern, the **Bohemian Hotel** is not just for tourists. With its serene river view and two chic restaurants, Savannahians have been known to check into the hotel for a staycation or two. [bohemianhotelsavannah.com](http://bohemianhotelsavannah.com)  
*Runner-up: Cotton Sail Hotel*

## BRIDAL

From traditional to trendy, sexy to subdued, the dresses and accessories at **Bleubelle** meet many a bride's and bridesmaid's needs. Owner Heather Burge and her team of stylists are knowledgeable yet unassuming, alleviating the stress of saying yes to the dress. [bleubelle.com](http://bleubelle.com)  
*Runner-up: Ivory and Beau Bridal Boutique*

## CANDY SHOP

Pralines and taffy and fudge, oh my! With two locations in Savannah (and many more across the South), **River Street Sweets** is quite the sugar lover's destination, where many of the confections are made from scratch before your eyes. [riverstreetsweets.com](http://riverstreetsweets.com)  
*Runner-up: Savannah's Candy Kitchen*

## CHILDCARE/DAYCARE

What started in Maggie Smith's dining room in 1982 has grown into a private, nonprofit preschool for children 18 months to four years. With half- and full-day programs, **Maggie's Morning School** operates under a mission to "provide a developmentally appropriate, quality learning experience for a diverse student body." [maggiesmorningschool.org](http://maggiesmorningschool.org)  
*Runner-up: The Sanctuary Child Learning Center*

## CONVENIENCE STORE

Two words: chewy ice. That alone is a draw but **Parker's** also sells the requisite necessities. Since opening his first store in 1976, Greg Parker has grown his operation to 44 locations across Georgia and South Carolina. [parkersav.com](http://parkersav.com)  
*Runner-up: Enmarket*

## DAY SPA

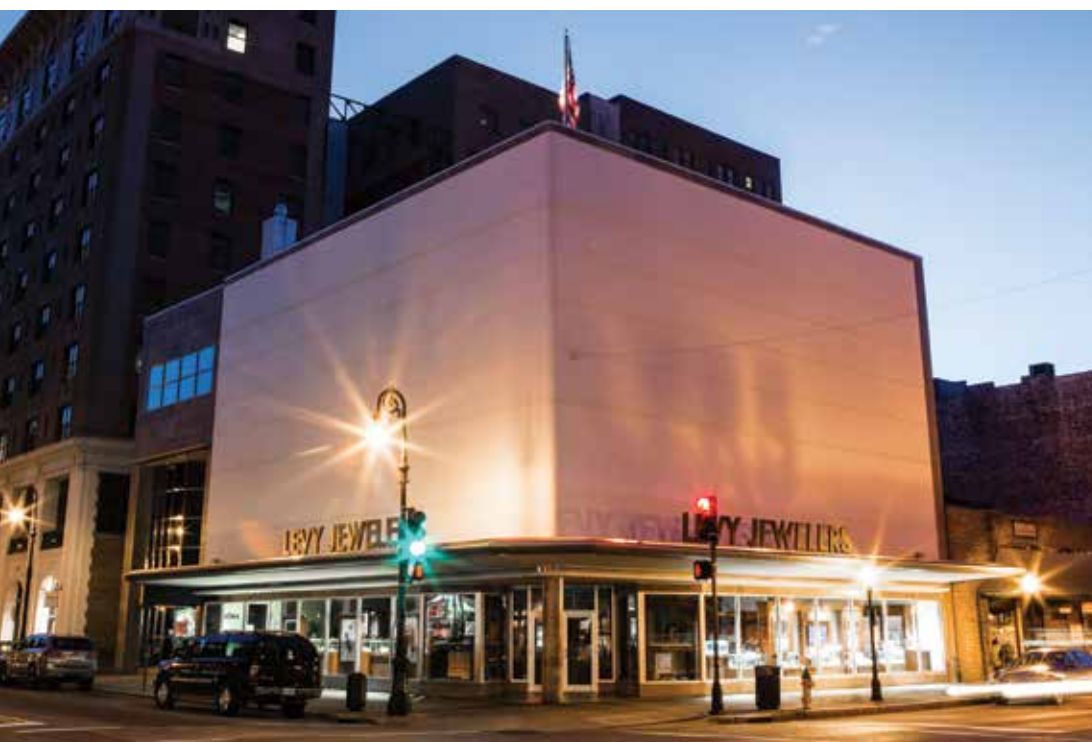
"True bleu southern comfort" is what **Spa Bleu** sets out to provide. Services include massage therapy, facials, waxing, makeup, spray tans and special packages for bridal parties, couples and mamas-to-be. [spableu-sav.com](http://spableu-sav.com)  
*Runner-up: Milan Day Spa*

## BEST HAIR SALON B Street Salon



IZZY HUDGINS

# SHOPPING & SERVICES



**BEST JEWELRY**  
Levy Jewelers

IZZY HUDGINS

## DRY CLEANER

Owned by local resident David Reeves and his daughter Morgan McGhie, **David's Dry Cleaners** strives to be this city's most modern dry cleaner by utilizing state-of-the-art equipment and focusing on eco-conscious practices and products. [davidsdrycleaners.com](http://davidsdrycleaners.com)  
*Runner-up: Curry Dry Cleaners*

## EXERCISE FACILITY

The folks at **Planet Fitness** promise you won't feel "gymtimidated" when working out with them. Their trainers and instructors practice a no-judgment policy, while the classes and equipment

rooms are fun and welcoming. Just think: fuchsia treadmills! [planetfitness.com](http://planetfitness.com)

*Runner-up: YMCA of Coastal Georgia*

## FASHION VALUE

Shopping for cute, affordable clothes has long been a hobby of best friends Leah Lancaster Riffle and Thu Tran, so it only makes sense that they'd open a store together. That was nine years ago, and **Red Clover** continues to meet the sartorial needs of Savannah's coolest chicks. [shopredclover.com](http://shopredclover.com)  
*Runner-up: Fab'rik Savannah*

## FLORIST

John Davis' love for flowers began as a Savannah child, cutting roses in his mother's garden. He went on to open his own shop, **John Davis Florist**, where he and his team create stunning arrangements on small and large scales—including his own recent wedding! [johndavisflorist.com](http://johndavisflorist.com)  
*Runner-up: Kiwi Fleur*

## FRESH/ORGANIC PRODUCE

Every Saturday, more than 1,000 people pay a visit to the **Forsyth Farmers' Market**, where 30-odd vendors are ready and waiting with the freshest of the fresh, from

produce and meats to bread and honey to gourmet, home-prepared meals. [forsythfarmersmarket.com](http://forsythfarmersmarket.com)  
*Runner-up: Davis Produce*

## HAIR SALON

A Savannah native, Monica McMasters has led beauty teams in Atlanta, New York, Boston and San Diego. In 1997, she opened **B Street Salon**, a full-service company devoted to all things hair and makeup, with a big business in weddings and editorial. [bstreetsalon.com](http://bstreetsalon.com)  
*Runner-up: Colorboxx Salon*

(Continued on page 164)





COURTESY OF THE DEEP CENTER

## HELPING HANDS

### **Keith Miller, programs manager, Deep**

"A powerful experience that still sticks with me was during a workshop in Block by Block, our yearlong program where students work to discover their voices as writers, while also unearthing the untold stories of a particular area in Savannah—in this case, the West Side. During this particular workshop, there was an unspoken tension in the air due to recent news about police brutality and shootings of unarmed black men. We gathered the students, got in a circle and started with a writing exercise that allowed them to get their feelings out on paper. Afterwards, we encouraged them to share their thoughts, concerns, fears and solutions. It was a tough, emotional workshop, but one that was extremely important for not only our youth but the educators in the room. Using the power of 'why,' we were able to walk through the trenches of a difficult and heartbreaking discussion in a way that was not only empowering and uplifting, but proved that we value their perspectives as future leaders." (photo, above)

### **Ariana Berksteiner, executive director, Emmaus House**

"Our Chef Freda feeds our souls. No matter who you are, she'll give you the same hug and the same smile. She's been with us for more than 15 years and everyone calls her Auntie Freda. She calls our regulars "niece" or "nephew," but she also knows everybody's name. If someone finds out she won't be here cooking one day, they'll tell all their friends and our numbers will go down from something like 250 people to 75 people. She has such an amazing love for our community, yet she doesn't want attention or accolades or photos. That's OK, because I'll sing her praises all day long."

### **Mary Jane Crouch, executive director, Second Harvest**

"When there's a need, our community hears about it and rallies. We have a giant freezer that holds about six tractor-trailer loads of food, and a few years ago its roof collapsed and we lost almost all of the food. The day it happened, a man called me and told me he heard the news and wanted to come by and drop off some proteins. You know what he did? He went to Sam's Club and

filled the whole back of his pickup with stacks of canned food—tuna fish, peanut butter, everything he could think of. That's just one example of how Savannah steps up and takes action."

### **Doll Miller, long-time volunteer and former board member, Humane Society for Greater Savannah**

"I grew up in the country, on the outskirts of a very small New York town in the Adirondacks. I had a dog, a small German Shepherd named Dutchess. I was an only girl with four brothers so Dutchess was the closest thing I had to a sister. I loved her in a way that only a small child can love. Fast-forward 50 years. I was being interviewed by a local TV station about a 60-mile run to raise money to build a low-cost spay and neuter clinic at our Humane Society. The director of our shelter joined the interview and brought along a small German Shepherd mix. Overwhelmed with memories, I took the little dog home with me. I named her Dutchess, and she ran the 60th mile of that run with me. Right now, she's curled up in my lap and just looked up and licked my face. Love is love."

(Continued on page 170)

## BEST OF US

(Continued from page 147)

### Andy Lynch, Lynch Associates Architects, PC

"The mixed-use redevelopment of Ellis Square and surrounding buildings was an incredibly complex undertaking with a lot of moving parts that involved the coordination of multiple architects and engineering firms, land planners, contractors, consultants, developers and city departments. It was a little more edgy for Savannah at the time, and was more typical of a project done in a larger city. I think the project made Savannah more current and cosmopolitan, and was a good mix of new infill buildings working in concert with existing historic buildings that were preserved and adaptively used in order to keep the character of that area."

## HELPING HANDS

(Continued from page 162)

### Dr. James McNaughton, DDS, owner, Family Dental Services of Savannah

"My wife and I moved from Los Angeles to Savannah in 1972. I worked as a dentist at Model Cities, a medical clinic down on Duffy Street that helped out people in dire straits. A few years later, I opened my practice on Broughton, and I've been here for 40 years now. I bought the building for \$30,000. It was a hair salon and before that, an old movie theater. There wasn't much around back then, just a used furniture shop and several vacant buildings on our block. The only place to eat was a Krystal on the corner of Drayton and there was a really good restaurant inside Levy's department store, where SCAD's Jen Library is now. I opened my business because I saw a need for low-priced dental services. I still keep my fees low and I see emergency walk-in patients, probably a dozen a day. I pull a lot of teeth. But now I'm ready for some leisure time—I just turned 70. I'd like to get another dentist to take over for me. I'm concerned about all the people who come in here; I don't want our doors to close."

## STRONG BONDS

(Continued from page 177)

### The Rev. Ben Gosden, Historic Trinity United Methodist Church

"Savannah is a historic and beautiful town. There's so much to appreciate about living here, but we aren't without our faults. For example, while our past is to be celebrated, we can't live in the past. Progress needs to be a way of life here. Progress happens as we foster creativity through partnerships across lines that tend to divide us. Savannah has a rich bank of creativity and we need to continue to find ways to make withdrawals from that bank because our diversity and creativity only make us richer as a community. As we address our problems with creativity, we need to do so with compassion and generosity as we seek to put others first. All of the resources, wealth and ideas we could ever need are already here. We just need to bring them together as we seek to elevate everyone in our beautiful city."



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Family Dental



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HFD114



# SHOPPING & SERVICES

(Continued from page 160)

## HANDBAGS

SCAD grad Elizabeth Seeger built her **Satchel** brand in 2006 and has been making custom bags and leather goods since. All are made inside her boutique/workshop, where sewing machines hum as you shop. Buy off the shelves, or design your own by choosing from dozens of shapes, materials and linings. [shopsatchel.com](http://shopsatchel.com)  
*Runner-up: Terra Cotta*

## HOTEL

(more than 100 rooms)

Located just across the Savannah River, **The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa** is mere minutes from River Street (by car or ferry), yet has a way of making you feel like you're away from it all. Maybe it's the pool, where fruity cocktails are delivered right to your lounge chair. [westinsavannah.com](http://westinsavannah.com)  
*Runner-up: The Brice, a Kimpton Hotel*

## INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE

Stepping inside **E. Shaver Booksellers** is like stepping into another time, where seven quaint rooms are stacked with books old and new. The shop specializes in local and regional topics, and has many tomes devoted to the Civil War. [eshaverbooks.com](http://eshaverbooks.com)  
*Runner-up: The Book Lady Bookstore*

## INN/BED AND BREAKFAST

Set inside an exquisite historic mansion, circa 1838, the **Ballastone Inn** is a five-star property that prides itself on the most luxurious amenities. There are fireplaces in many of the 16 suites, plus 800-threadcount sheets, gourmet breakfasts and complimentary afternoon tea, port and sherry. [ballastone.com](http://ballastone.com)  
*Runner-up: The Gastonian*

## INSURANCE COMPANY

(Auto, Life, etc.)

Apparently, the proof is in their famous jingle. **State Farm Insurance** was voted readers' go-to insurance agency, showing that they do their best to treat customers "like a good neighbor..." [statefarm.com](http://statefarm.com)  
*Runner-up: Allstate Insurance*

## JEWELRY

Owned and operated by Savannah's Levy family since 1900, **Levy Jewelers** is one of this city's oldest friends. Company president Lowell Kronowitz is carrying on his great-grandfather's tradition by offering the city an exquisite

collection of jewelry, watches, crystal and collectables, along with quality repairs and appraisals. [levyjewelers.com](http://levyjewelers.com)  
*Runner-up: Harkleroad Diamonds and Fine Jewelry*

## LIQUOR

You name it, **Habersham Beverage** has it. Selling wine, beer and booze for more than 30 years, the locally owned, two-location superstore boasts aisle upon aisle of reasonably priced libations—and a very friendly staff to boot. [habersham-beverage.com](http://habersham-beverage.com)  
*Runner-up: Johnnie Ganems Package & Wine Shop*

## MADE-IN-SAVANNAH PRODUCT

Savannah's resident beekeeper Ted Dennard turned his childhood hobby into quite an enterprise. With seven stores across the South (two in this city) and countless points of sale, **Savannah Bee Company** carries honey aplenty, from healing creams to candles to mead, an alcoholic drink of fermented honey and water. [savannahbee.com](http://savannahbee.com)  
*Runner-up: Nourish Natural Bath Products*

## MANICURES/PEDICURES

Most people visit a nail salon with hopes of finding relaxation, sanitation and a skillful staff. The two **Crystal Nails** locations have that in spades. Customers also appreciate the quality OPI and Essie polishes. [crystalnailsavannah.com](http://crystalnailsavannah.com)  
*Runner-up: La Bella Nails*



BEST MADE-IN-SAVANNAH PRODUCT  
Savannah Bee Company

BEAU KESTER

# SHOPPING & SERVICES

## MEDICAL SPA

Whether you want to turn back the clock or just look a bit fresher, **Glow Medical Spa and Beauty Boutique** provides non-surgical cosmetic procedures including chemical peels, laser treatments, Botox and fillers, in addition to facials, massages, spray tans and waxing. Hello, new you. [glowsavannah.com](http://glowsavannah.com)  
*Runner-up: Genesis Medical Spa of Savannah*

## MEN'S CLOTHING

With made-to-measure suiting and a quality assortment of business and casual clothes, **John B. Rourke Gentlemen's Clothiers** has been keeping Savannah dapper since 1949. Its current owners, Alan Tanenbaum and Patti Hendricks, possess a special sartorial knowledge that's hard to come by in this day and age. [johnbrouрке.com](http://johnbrouрке.com)  
*Runner-up: J Parker Ltd.*

## NEW CARS

**J.C. Lewis Ford** is as old as the 1912 Model T. It's a completely different world today, but the tried-and-true dealership continues to give Savannah residents personal, honest customer care. [jcmotor.com](http://jcmotor.com)  
*Runner-up: Southern Motors Honda*

## PET GROOMER

With three locations, plus a to-go mobile service, **Top Dog Grooming Spa** aims to keep pup and kitty grooming as hassle-free as possible. In addition to the requisite baths and trims, the company offers extras including flea treatments, teeth brushing

and, wait for it, blueberry facials. [topdogspa.com](http://topdogspa.com)  
*Runner-up: The Savannah Groom Room*

## PET SITTER

Kennel boarding can be a stressful time for both pet and owner. **Savannah Pet Sitters LLC** alleviates that anxiety by arranging to have your animal cared for in your own home, with personalized services based on pet (and owner) needs. [savannahpet.com](http://savannahpet.com)  
*Runner-up: Blissful Buddha Pet Services*

## PET SUPPLIES

**TailsSpin** specializes in healthy and organic animal foods, but it's so much more than a pet store. Since opening the company in 2007, Jusak Bernhard and Jeffrey Manley have worked with the Savannah community to raise funds for pet rescues and provide low-cost vaccine clinics at their three locations. [tailsspin.com](http://tailsspin.com)  
*Runner-up: Retail Retreat Dog Bakery and Boutique*

## PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM

Jennifer Abshire and her stellar team at **Abshire Public Relations** are experts at looking at the big picture through a community-minded lens. For 16 years, the firm has worked with national and local brands, creating and developing media relations on every level. [abshirepr.com](http://abshirepr.com)  
*Runner-up: Neilie S. Dunn PR*

## REAL ESTATE COMPANY

Founded more than 35 years ago by Celia and J. Laurence Dunn, **Celia Dunn Sotheby's International Realty** knows a thing or two about selling beautiful homes. With offices in Savannah and Bluffton, South Carolina, they're all about location, location, location. [celiadunnsir.com](http://celiadunnsir.com)  
*Runner-up: Keller Williams Realty*

## SEAFOOD MARKET

Opened in 1946 by Charles J. Russo Sr. and his wife Antoinette, **Russo's Seafood** is now run by their son Charles Jr. On the corner of Abercorn and 40th streets since 1970, the market is a Savannah landmark, offering just-caught seafood at affordable prices. [russoseafood.com](http://russoseafood.com)  
*Runner-up: Scuba Steve's Seafood*

## SHOES

Try this on for size. **Globe Shoe Co.** has been selling footwear to Savannah residents since 1892. Siblings Amy and John Sussman now run the business (their grandfather bought it in the 1940s), carrying men's and women's brands from Birkenstock and Ecco to Stuart Weitzman and Allen Edmonds. On Facebook  
*Runner-up: Copper Penny Shooz*

## SPECIALTY/GOURMET FOODS

Since moving downtown from The Landings last year, **Smith Brothers Butcher Shop** has connected with a whole new clientele—just what owners Robert and Brenda Anderson were hoping for. The shop is a butcher, but it's also a go-to for gourmet cheese, wine and delicious sandwiches. [smithbrothersbutchershop.com](http://smithbrothersbutchershop.com)  
*Runner-up: Verdant Kitchen*



COURTESY OF ABSHIRE PUBLIC RELATIONS



# SHOPPING & SERVICES

## BEST SPECIALTY/GOURMET FOODS Smith Brothers Butcher Shop



JASON B. JAMES

## SPORTS/OUTDOOR WEAR

They have the tents, kayaks and climbing gear for hard-core adventurers, along with the clothes, shoes and accouterments for a cute walk in the park. **Half-Moon Outfitters** has become a fixture on Broughton Street, carrying hundreds of brands, including North Face, Patagonia, Vans and Carhartt. [halfmoonoutfitters.com](http://halfmoonoutfitters.com)  
*Runner-up: Fleet Feet Sports Savannah*

## STATIONERY

The art of the handwritten note is alive and beautiful at **La Paperie**,

where owner Debbie Lewis carries an incredible selection of stationary, cards, journals and gifts, and also provides in-house customization. [lapaperiesavannah.com](http://lapaperiesavannah.com)  
*Runner-up: Emily McCarthy Shoppe*

## TOUR COMPANY

It's hard to keep track of all the trolleys rolling through town, but **Old Savannah Tours** has been at it since 1979. They offer seven different tours, as well as private excursions. The locally owned company strives to hire guides who were raised in Savannah, and residents get to ride for free. [oldsavannah tours.com](http://oldsavannah tours.com)  
*Runner-up: Old Town Trolley Tours*

## Savannah USED CARS

For the fourth year in a row, **Southern Motors Honda** has been voted the place to go when on the market for a used car. The dealership was established in 1929, so that's a whole lot of car-selling experience. [southernmotorshonda.net](http://southernmotorshonda.net)  
*Runner-up: J.C. Lewis Ford*

## VETERINARIAN

For Carla Case-McCorvey, pets really are family. In 1909, her great-grandfather opened **Case Veterinary Hospital**, making it, according to the Cases, the only one in the world with four direct

generations of veterinarians. Today, they specialize in endoscopic and laparoscopic procedures, as well as laser surgery and even acupuncture. [casevet.com](http://casevet.com)  
*Runner-up: Stanley Lester (Landmark Veterinary Services)*

## VINTAGE CLOTHING/ CONSIGNMENT

There are many vintage stores in Savannah, but readers voted **Goodwill**, and its four locations across the city, as the best place to nab stylish and practical clothes at affordable prices. [goodwillsavannah.org](http://goodwillsavannah.org)  
*Runner-up: The Future on Forsyth Vintage Clothing Store*

## WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Leah Lancaster Riffle and Thu Tran opened **Red Clover** in 2007, so they've spent years getting to know their customer—and understanding exactly what she likes to wear. That translates into easygoing, on-trend pieces by affordable emerging designers. [shopredclover.com](http://shopredclover.com)  
*Runner-up: Terra Cotta*

## YOGA/PILATES STUDIO

A healthy lifestyle is achieved by exercising the body and the mind—that's the premise of **Savannah Power Yoga**. Opened in 2011, the studio practices Baptiste Yoga, a method that focuses on physical yoga, meditation and self-inquiry. Most classes are heated to 90 degrees so prepare to sweat it out. [savannahpoweryoga.com](http://savannahpoweryoga.com)  
*Runner-up: Savannah Yoga Barre*



GEOFF L. JOHNSON

## CREATIVE SPARK

### **Nikko Raptoulis, singer-songwriter**

"Writing music in Savannah can vary wildly depending on what you're aiming for. For watching locals interact, Forsyth is the spot. To see tourists and how they maneuver the city, either Ellis Square or along the river. If I want quiet, I'll walk to an isolated square. To be inspired by something peaceful, I drag my notebook out to Tybee. I have a song titled 'If Not for You' that I wrote after meeting a homeless couple in Forsyth. The girl didn't speak much; the guy did most of the talking. I distinctly remember him saying 'If not for her' a good number of times to explain why he was still alive. So I used it. I wrote my song 'City of Ghosts' on a long walk, stopping at random different places to try and see the city from a different angle. I wrote the opening line right outside the gates of Colonial Cemetery: 'I live in a City of Ghosts, where the dead still hold more sway than the living.'" (photo, above)

### **Kayne Lanahan, founder and CEO, Savannah Stopover Music Festival**

"I love the concerts at Trinity United Methodist Church on Telfair Square. Their Trinity Sanctuary Concerts are always must-attend events highlighting primarily local talent, often

There must be something in the air, because our city is home to hundreds of working artists—designers, dancers, painters, sculptors, singers and songwriters, among them.

around a single mic. The church is acoustically pure and doesn't need much in the way of production. Instruments and voices are just as they were meant to sound—naturally amplified. Whether it's classical music at Savannah Music Festival or one of our rock shows at Savannah Stopover or a one-mic Sanctuary show, this is my favorite place to really listen to music in Savannah."

### **Chad Darnell, award-winning screenwriter, producer, actor, director and casting director**

"After living in Los Angeles for 16 years, I'm so happy to be able to walk everywhere! I love that my gym, my favorite restaurants and coffee shops are just blocks away from my new home. And even when I don't want to walk, I can hop on my little Ruckus and be anywhere in minutes."

### **Lori Judge, owner, Judge Realty, and avid art collector**

"Savannah boasts such a diverse mix of artists and creatives that work in a wide variety of mediums. Because of this, a collector enjoys the challenge of curating, growing and editing his or her collection's character. The base of Judge Realty's permanent collection balances new works from

emerging local and regional artists while continually acquiring works by more established local artists including Katherine Sandoz, Tobia Makover, Betsy Cain, Marcus Kenney, Troy Wandzel, Will Penny, Liz Winnel and Michael Porten."

### **Jenny Woodruff, education director, Savannah Music Festival**

"If Savannah had a theme song, I'd pick 'Blue Motel Room' by Joni Mitchell (from *Hejira*). It evokes a dreamy, rainy, melancholy summer Savannah evening perfectly—probably because she wrote it in Savannah."

### **Tobia Makover, fine art photographer and mixed-media artist**

"Savannah's creative community is incredibly supportive. I've been a part of it for more than 20 years and can firmly say that the artists and art lovers are like family to me. They've seen my transition from student to professional to wife, mother and artist. Some members have been subjects in my work, while others have become permanent collectors. One of the best parts about living in a creative community is how they infuse themselves seamlessly into your life—and sometimes, even your work."

(Continued on page 222)



# COMMUNITY & CHARACTERS

Looking for makers of music, mussels (muscles) or merriment? Our savvy readers are in the know with the people and organizations you need to meet.



COLUMNIST/BLOGGER  
Tom Barton

## ACTIVIST

Working with the Chatham-Savannah Citizen Advocacy for 30 years, executive director

**Tom Kohler** is one of this city's strongest voices. A Savannah native, he has assisted people with disabilities since he was 15, and is also a big believer in "authenticity, accessibility and sustainability." [savannahcitizenadvocacy.org](http://savannahcitizenadvocacy.org)  
*Runner-up: The Stone Stairs of Death*

## ARTIST

You can't miss the work of Scott Stanton, aka **Panhandle Slim**. He's represented by Roots Up Gallery, yet his bright, tongue-in-cheek art, often with political messages, is most prominent on walls outside of coffee shops, bars and abandoned buildings throughout the city (for more, see page 38).

[rootsupgallery.com](http://rootsupgallery.com)

*Runner-up: Lori Keith Robinson*

## BAND

For the past five years, the **Accomplices Band** has been putting a big smile on the face of Savannah. The four-piece folk/rock/string band (Matt Eckstine, Colleen Heine, Zach Smith and Stan Ray) plays all over town, and locals love to catch them at the annual Homegrown Holiday Hoedown. [theaccomplicesband.com](http://theaccomplicesband.com)

*Runner-up: Velvet Caravan*

## BARTENDER

**Sidney Lance** has been behind the Pacci bar since it opened in 2014, whipping up craft cocktails with fresh ingredients and entertaining customers. He's a big fan of smoky drinks made with Mezcal, and his

own personal favorite is a Fernet Branca. [paccisavannah.com](http://paccisavannah.com)

*Runner-up: Samantha Hutcheson, Buffalo Wild Wings, Pooler*

## CATERER

Joshua Thomas surprises clients by going beyond their expectations with his unique cuisine, self-described as a "very classical French technique, mixed with a Lowcountry approach." That's just one reason why his **JThomas Catering and Events** is this city's resident catering company.

[jthomascateringsavannah.com](http://jthomascateringsavannah.com)

*Runner-up: Susan Mason Catering*

## CHARITY EVENT

Splendid food and cocktails, silent and live auctions and world-class art makes the **Telfair Ball and Bash** one of the most anticipated parties on the social calendar.

The charity event is the Telfair Museum's most important fundraiser, with proceeds benefiting exhibitions, educational programs and acquisitions. [telfair.org](http://telfair.org)

*Runner-up: Next Generation's BBQ, Brews and Bluegrass*

## CHEF

It's fitting that The Grey sits in an old Greyhound bus terminal, because the dishes created by executive chef and partner **Mashama Bailey** take you to another place. She's been a local hero since the restaurant opened in 2014, bringing her own flavor to the traditional cooking she learned from her Georgian grandmother. [thegreyrestaurant.com](http://thegreyrestaurant.com)

*Runner-up: Chris Nelson, Five Oaks Taproom at Hotel Indigo*

# COMMUNITY & CHARACTERS

## COFFEEHOUSE

The southwest corner of Broughton and Whitaker feels extra busy and that's due, predominantly, to the crowds that congregate at **The Coffee Fox**, where owner Jennifer Jenkins is proving to be the barista Betty of Savannah. [thecoffeefox.com](http://thecoffeefox.com)  
*Runner-up: Foxy Loxy Café*

## COLUMNIST/BLOGGER

**Tom Barton** wields words with both compassion and straight-forward common sense. As the *Savannah Morning News'* conscience, he's not afraid to question conventional wisdom or turn toward the personal to make a point. That's why readers consistently turn to his editorial page—and return him to this coveted spot. [savannahnow.com](http://savannahnow.com)  
*Runner-up: Bill Dawers*

## COMPANY TO WORK FOR

When it comes to aerospace and jet aviation, **Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation** shoots for the stars. Clearly, the same can be said for its corporate environment, which tops our list of best places to work. [gulfstream.com](http://gulfstream.com)  
*Runner-up: Southern Motors Honda*

## FESTIVAL

For two weeks every spring, city parks, squares, bars and concert halls overflow with some of the best live music in the country (Lucinda Williams, Lyle Lovett, Bela Fleck, Emmylou Harris, Derek Trucks, to name a few), making the **Savannah Music Festival** Georgia's largest musical arts event—and one of the year's most

joyful parties. [savannahmusicfestival.org](http://savannahmusicfestival.org)  
*Runner-up: Savannah Stopover Music Festival*

## GROUP TO VOLUNTEER FOR

Bettering the lives of animals (and people!) including dogs, cats and even guinea pigs, rabbits and ferrets, the **Humane Society for Greater Savannah** cares for thousands of animals. Annual fundraising and awareness events include a Pup Crawl (Oct. 6) and a Dog Lovers' Walk (Nov. 12). [humanesocietysav.org](http://humanesocietysav.org)  
*Runner-up: One Love Animal Rescue*

## LAWYER

Savannah native **David Eichholz**, managing partner of the Eichholz Law Firm, is dedicated to serving the community with a primary focus on personal injury litigation, fighting for those who have been hurt through no fault of their own. [thejusticelawyer.com](http://thejusticelawyer.com)  
*Runner-up: Danny Falligant/Bouhan Falligant LLP*

## MASSAGE THERAPIST

Whether post-operative pain or it's just been one of those days, Savannahians turn to **Hope Lyon, LMT, MMP**, and her Ahh, There's Hope services. With 20-plus years of experience, Lyon specializes in lymphatic drainage therapy, hot stone sinus treatments and Electro Therapeutic Point Stimulation. [hopelyonmassage.com](http://hopelyonmassage.com)  
*Runner-up: Trina Pinkney, Balancing Touch Therapeutic Massage*



ANGELA HOPPER

## MUSEUM/HOUSE MUSEUM

It's easy to while the day away at any of **Telfair Museums'** stunning spaces. The Telfair Academy and the Owens-Thomas House are incredible pieces of history, while the Jepson Center is a modern masterpiece devoted to contemporary art. [telfair.org](http://telfair.org)  
*Runner-up: The Mercer Williams House Museum*

## PARTY/EVENT PLANNER

For the fifth year in a row, **Sebrell Smith Designer Events** has been named Savannah's go-to event planner. Indeed, Sebrell knows how to throw a party, from destination weddings (her bread and butter) to grand bashes and small-scale celebrations. [sebrellsmith.com](http://sebrellsmith.com)  
*Runner-up: Posh Petals and Pearls*



# COMMUNITY & CHARACTERS

## PERSONAL TRAINER

**Drew Edmonds** has been a personal trainer since his days at Georgia Southern University, where he met his wife and business partner Shazi (also a trainer). Today, their five Train Me 24/7 studios help Savannah get and stay in shape with boot camps, nutrition coaching and in-gym and at-home training sessions. [trainme247.com](http://trainme247.com)  
*Runner-up: Gail Ewaldsen, Islands YMCA*

## PHOTOGRAPHER

Wife-and-husband team Jade and Matthew McCully of **Jade and Matthew Take Pictures** do whatever it takes to capture those unscripted moments. They have fun with their subjects and get to know them on a personal level—the proof is in their photos. [jadeandmatthew.com](http://jadeandmatthew.com)  
*Runner-up: Christine Hall Photography*

## PRIVATE GOLF COURSE

Founded in 1794, the **Savannah Golf Club** is said to be the oldest golf club in America. The private, member-owned club features a challenging Par 72 6,481-yard course, as well as a gorgeous pool, eight tennis courts and two restaurants. [thesavannahgolfclub.com](http://thesavannahgolfclub.com)  
*Runner-up: The Landings Club*

## PRIVATE SCHOOL

Where does your child go to school? It's a popular question in Savannah, and "St. Andrews" is often the answer. The educational approach of **St. Andrew's School** (pre-K-12th grade) involves nurturing students with "a passion

for knowledge, a commitment to personal integrity and a deepened social consciousness."  
[saintschool.com](http://saintschool.com)

*Runner-up: Hancock Day School*

## PUBLIC GOLF COURSE

Designed by Donald Ross in 1926, the **Bacon Park Golf Course** has been a favorite public course ever since. Owned by the City of Savannah, the 71 Par course, with more than 6,400 yards, offers affordable daily rates starting at \$14 for nine holes. [baconparkgolf.com](http://baconparkgolf.com)  
*Runner-up: The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort & Spa*

## PUBLIC PARK/GARDEN

Set on 30 acres of land, **Forsyth Park** is Savannah's own little Central Park. Its great lawn is the site of many a picnic, soccer game and concert, while the playground is considered the city's best. The fountain is an oft-photographed landmark and the Fragrant Garden is an oasis of scent and serenity. [visithistoricsavannah.com/forsyth-park](http://visithistoricsavannah.com/forsyth-park)  
*Runner-up: Lake Mayer*

## PUBLIC SCHOOL

An award-winning performing and visual arts school, the **Savannah Arts Academy** was granted charter school status in 1998. Acceptance is based on an academic screening and audition, with students (grades 9-12) choosing from majors that include communication arts, dance, music (band, orchestra, piano and vocal), theatre and visual arts. [sccpss.com](http://sccpss.com)  
*Runner-up: May Howard Elementary School*

SEAMSTRESS  
Cate Lyon



CHRISTINE HALL



COURTESY OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE

## STRONG BONDS

Any Savannahian worth his or her salt knows that you can't take care of business without building friendships across all corners of the community.

### Angela Beasley, owner, The Puppet People

"When you're a performer, you really learn to read a city and see how the community mixes. And let me tell you, Savannah mixes. We've got the blue collar with the society with the military with the students. I think we all mix so well together because of our parks, squares and festivals—we have more gathering places than most cities. We're like a river of humans and we all flow together. You've got to feel it to believe it." (photo, above)

### Cecilia Tran Arango, marketing manager, Thomas and Hutton, and cabaret singer

"I find the best ways to connect with an audience in Savannah are to just be genuine and know your audience's 'why.' It's about understanding what inspires them, recognizing their likes and dislikes, and finding out what's truly important to them. Once you understand what motivates them, you can find your commonalities and begin to craft your message and/or your art around it. In my marketing world, I'm always focused on the integrity of the key message and ensuring there's a personal touch when creating a marketing campaign (whether internal or external) that will best grasp its intended audience. It's the same when I'm on stage. I want my audience to know the real me and not see me as just another performer.

I work on my banter, sharing personal stories that reflect certain songs that I sing, and I always make sure I'm myself on stage. In the end, connecting with your audience develops a deeper relationship."

### Lowell Kronowitz, president, Levy Jewelers

"Savannah is a wonderful place to have grown up and to do business. I have fond childhood memories of a festival known as Night in Old Savannah, when myriad communities set up booths encircling Johnson Square. It seemed like the entire citizenry came out that weekend to sample the foods, drinks and wares sold by the city's Greeks, Jews, Irish, Germans and African Americans. It's easy to say that Savannah came together and built up this community around our stomachs—I wish the festival would return!"

### John Fogarty, committee member, St. Patrick's Day Parade

"As an Irishman in Savannah, being a part of a smaller community than what you already belong to is always comforting and can be supportive at times when needed. And history—everyone likes hearing about where they came from. It is not uncommon to hear, 'Which Fogarty do you belong to ... oh really?' Let me tell you a story about your grandfather ..." Plus, it's just cool to say you have

Irish blood. If you choose to be part of the parade, you can say that you played an important role in generating something special for Savannah. The parade may do more for the city and local businesses than what some politicians can accomplish."

### Danny Britt, head football coach and athletic director, Benedictine Military School

"I'll never forget when we won the AA GHSA state championship game in 2014—it was the first time Benedictine won a state championship in, at that time, its 111-year history. The game was against Greater Atlanta Christian, a team we'd played earlier in the season and lost to. The championship game was held in Atlanta's Georgia Dome, and we got to play in front of a huge crowd, there were an estimated 10,000 Benedictine supporters there. Our guys played a truly flawless game, with the exception of a few turnovers early on. Wide receiver Brad Stewart started the game off on fire, making a tremendous catch for a touchdown. We won 45-21. We took over downtown Atlanta that night, carrying our trophy all around. Stewart ended up signing with Georgia Tech. Stevie Powers, our quarterback, signed a baseball scholarship with Southern Miss. And Joseph Holguin and Chance Jackson both signed with Stetson University." (Continued on page 222)



# COMMUNITY & CHARACTERS

BEST TOUR GUIDE  
Savannah Dan



COURTESY OF VISIT SAVANNAH

## RADIO STATION

Long live the radio! Whether you're tuning in to listen to today's most popular songs or the hilarious Kidd Kraddick Morning Show, **97.3 Kiss FM** is alive and well in Savannah's cars. [973kissfm.com](http://973kissfm.com)

*Runner-up: 105.3 Quality Rock FM*

## SEAMSTRESS

**Cate Lyon** has designed evening gowns for Harrods of London and dazzling creations for the Victoria's Secret runway shows. In 2001, Lyon moved to Savannah and opened her studio, where her specialty is custom gowns and dresses for weddings and special occasions. [catelyon.com](http://catelyon.com)

*Runner-up: Alterations and Designs by Vera*

## SPECIAL EVENT FACILITY

Built in 1902 as a horse stable, the **Savannah Station** is now the site of weddings and parties galore. With gorgeous historical details and 12,000 square feet of event space, it's a popular pick for locals and visitors alike. [savannahstation.com](http://savannahstation.com)

*Runner-up: Charles H. Morris Center*

## SPORTING EVENT

Every January, hockey teams from University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, University of Florida and Florida State duke it out at the annual **Savannah Tire Hockey Classic**, aka the "rumble in the rink." A Georgia school hasn't taken home the Thrasher Cup since 2012—will 2017 be our year? [savannahhockeyclassic.com](http://savannahhockeyclassic.com)

*Runner-up: Savannah Rock 'n' Roll Marathon*

## SUMMER CAMP

A childhood isn't complete without summer camp, and the **YMCA of Coastal Georgia** is a favorite for kids aged 5 to 13, not to mention their parents. Traditional camps include the requisite games, songs, skits and arts and crafts, while specialty camps specialize in surfing, culinary and even Legos. [ymcaofcoastalga.org](http://ymcaofcoastalga.org)

*Runner-up: Independent Presbyterian Church Day Camp at Point Pleasant*

## TELEVISION PERSONALITY

Former *Coastal Sunrise* anchor for WSAV NBC, **Dave Kartunen** earned high ratings, an Emmy and quite the fan following in Savannah. [wsav.com](http://wsav.com)

*Runner-up: Jody Chapin, WTOC*

## TOUR GUIDE

No matter the temperature, you can count on **Savannah Dan** to wear a seersucker suit, bowtie and Panama hat. His look—as well as his bold personality—is unmistakable as he guides visitors through the city's streets and squares. [savannahdan.com](http://savannahdan.com)

*Runner-up: "Hollywood" with Old Savannah Tours*

## TELEVISION STATION

Whether readers are checking the weather, the traffic, the scores or the daily news, they voted local station **WTOC** as their favorite choice. [wtoc.com](http://wtoc.com)

*Runner-up: WSAV*