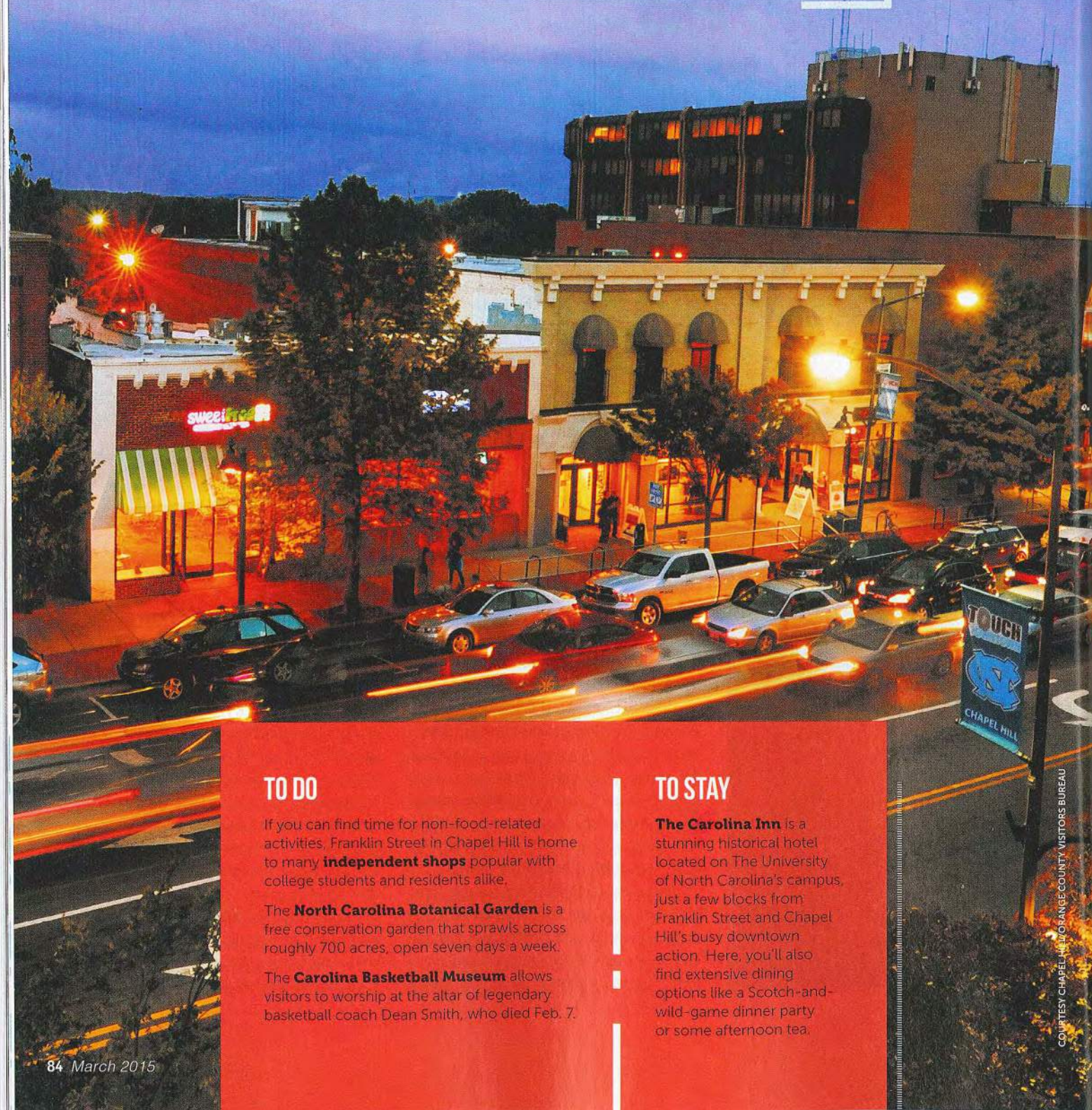


# CAROLINA CUISINE: CHAPEL HILL (AND THE TRIANGLE)

BY CATHERINE AMOS CRIBBS



## TO DO

If you can find time for non-food-related activities, Franklin Street in Chapel Hill is home to many **independent shops** popular with college students and residents alike.

The **North Carolina Botanical Garden** is a free conservation garden that sprawls across roughly 700 acres, open seven days a week.

The **Carolina Basketball Museum** allows visitors to worship at the altar of legendary basketball coach Dean Smith, who died Feb. 7.

## TO STAY

The **Carolina Inn** is a stunning historical hotel located on The University of North Carolina's campus, just a few blocks from Franklin Street and Chapel Hill's busy downtown action. Here, you'll also find extensive dining options like a Scotch-and-wild-game dinner party or some afternoon tea.

**D**riving down Interstate 85 is mindless tedium, but fear not — salty biscuits, peppery vinegar barbecue and James Beard winners await you in North Carolina's Research Triangle.

Chapel Hill is about two-and-a-half hours from Richmond, but your trip should start north of town at **Allen & Son Bar-B-Q**. You might wonder whether your GPS will work amid the farms, but have faith. For a classic Carolina flavor, get the chopped pork seasoned with tangy vinegar sauce. Class it up at **ONE**, *The News & Observer's* 2014 Restaurant of the Year. ONE features contemporary dishes in a posh setting, where acorn squash wedges are served with house-made feta, pumpernickel crumbs and honey; for a chic take on pork and beans, pork belly with sorghum glaze is served with Brussels sprouts, butter beans and frisée. In the adjacent bar, I ordered the Fig-n-Rye, a delightfully spicy blend of Rittenhouse Rye, fig preserves, chocolate bitters, Blenheim Ginger Ale and lemon.

Along with the rest of the Triangle, I started my next day at the busy **Rise Biscuits and Donuts** in nearby Durham. Favorites included pomegranate mousse and a crème brûlée-filled doughnut topped with caramelized sugar, but don't ignore the daily biscuit specials, like the indulgent pork chop biscuit with caramelized onions and Sriracha mayo. For a light mid-morning snack (ha!), we hit up University of North Carolina institution **Time-Out**, open 24/7, for one of its justifiably famous fried chicken and cheddar biscuits.

Staving off a nap, we ventured farther down Chapel Hill's Franklin Street for lunch, where we kept it casual at **Al's Burger Shack**: a tiny spot where ingredients are king. The Classic featured bright and fresh lettuce, tomato, onions, pickles and house-made sauce on a local pasture-raised beef burger and grilled bun.

We ended the day at **Lantern**, home to chef Andrea Reusing, the 2011 James Beard Best Chef: Southeast winner. Lantern features



From top: Rise Biscuits and Donuts' batch of crème brûlée; Al's Burger Shack; ONE's Fig-n-Rye cocktail

Southern ingredients prepared in elegant pan-Asian styles, like the bento box with sake-and-tea-cured wild trout, alongside an extensive wine list grouped by body and style. If you're feeling adventurous, get the wild salt-and-pepper shrimp — to be eaten with the shells on, like soft-shell crabs.

You can't visit the Triangle without appreciating Durham's foodie culture, even if you're just imbibing. **Fullsteam Brewery** is hugely popular among craft beer enthusiasts, and **Cocoa Cinnamon** is perfect if you're missing your Lamplighter fix. Get the Dr. Bartlett Leonidas Snipes Durham, aka "Dr. Durham," a vanilla ginger latte topped with black lava salt.

But don't skip out on Raleigh, either — with food and music festivals, the state's 30,000-square-foot farmers market (open daily) and 2014 James Beard Best Chef: Southeast winner Ashley Christensen's restaurant empire. **Beasley's Chicken + Honey**, Christensen's tribute to comfort food, showcases fried chicken drizzled with honey that's sweet down to the bone. Eggs Beasley skips the chicken, with poached eggs on top of creamed collard greens stacked on cornbread. With gravy. Lawd.

I celebrated the successful weekend with a trophy — the Best In Show Saison — at **Trophy Brewing Co.**, an intimate nano-brewery that produces beer for its restaurant, growler fills and occasional bottle releases. Get a flight with one of their specialty pizzas and count down the days until your next visit to the Triangle.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DURHAM CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU; LEIKR: COURTESY ONE RESTAURANT

COURTESY CHAPEL HILL ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU