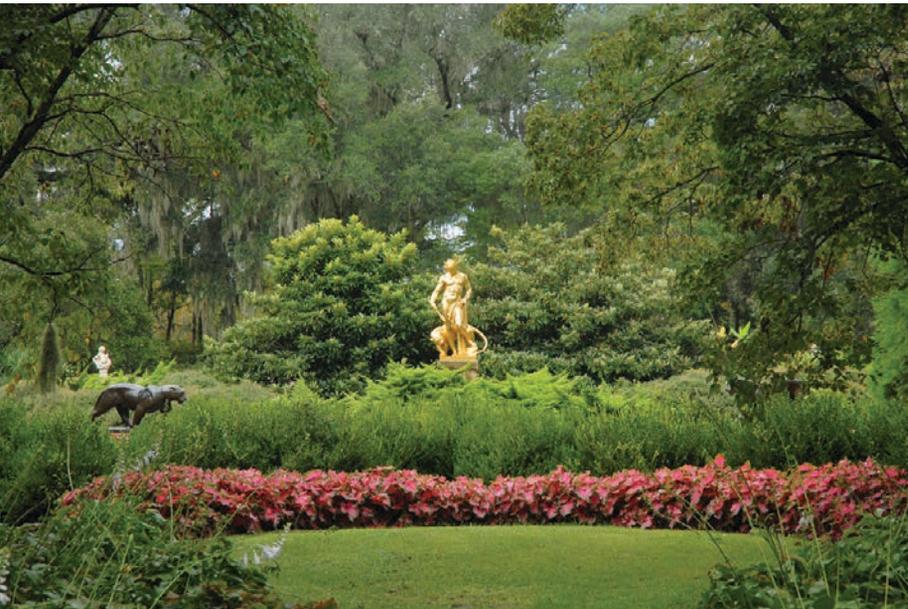


[COVER FEATURE]



GREAT





FROM THE VIBRANT VIBE OF CITIES LIKE NASHVILLE AND RALEIGH TO THE LAID BACK LUXURY OF COASTAL DESTINATIONS LIKE BALD HEAD ISLAND AND MURRELLS INLET, SOME OF THE SOUTH'S TOP SPOTS ARE NOT FAR BEYOND YOUR DOOR. WE'VE FOUND THE BEST PLACES TO STAY, THINGS TO DO, AND DISHES TO INDULGE IN ON YOUR NEXT SOUTHERN GETAWAY.

ESCAPES



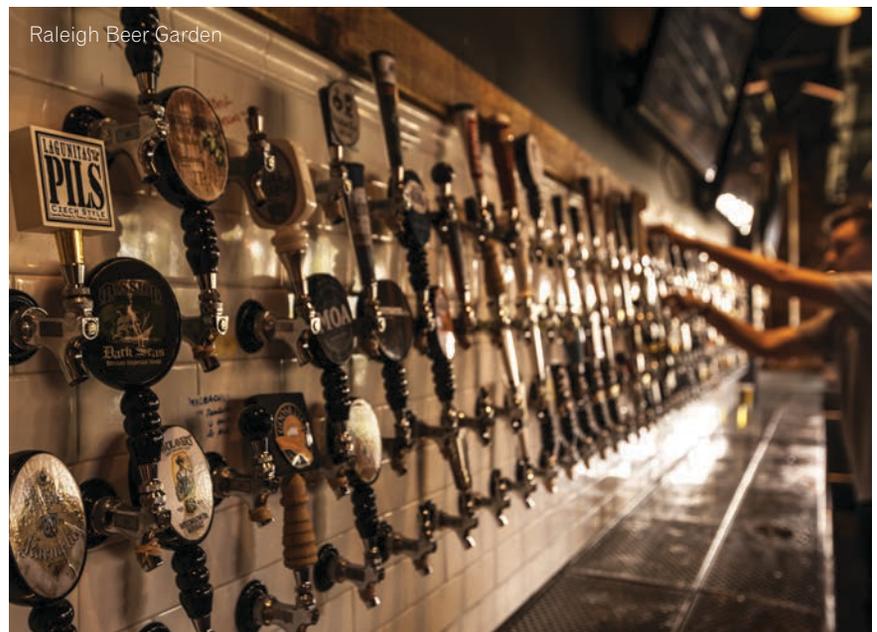
REVIVED RALEIGH

THE CAPITOL CITY HAS FAST BECOME
A MUST-SEE TRAVEL DESTINATION



When Charlotteans think of Raleigh, they most often think of it as the state's capital. It's where former Charlotte mayor and now North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory lives. It's where NC State University is. Most people in Charlotte don't necessarily think of Raleigh as a destination city where the food scene is thriving and the nightlife is cool. They don't see Raleigh as a city rich with arts and culture, and boasting a strong music presence.

But those people need to reimagine the state's capital. Because in the last decade, Raleigh (along with its neighboring Triangle counterparts Durham and Chapel Hill) has transformed into a city that goes beyond its boring political town reputation. In fact, in addition to holding its spot as one of the top 10 places to live in the U.S. (the "city of oaks" ranked as the third-best city for young families by financial research site Value Penguin), Raleigh is fast becoming a rival destination to, yes, Charlotte. It's time to schedule that overnight trip and dive into all that Raleigh has to offer.



STAY

Sure, most of the well-known and highly-praised places to stay in the Triangle are in Durham and Chapel Hill (read: **21c Museum Hotel** and the **Carolina Inn**, respectively), but to really dive into Raleigh, it's best to stay right in the middle of the action in downtown at the **Sheraton Raleigh Hotel**. Its proximity to Fayetteville Street, the city's main drag, and nearby museums, nightlife, and dining make it an ideal home base for exploring the city.

EAT

Start your morning at contemporary patisserie **lucettegrace** with a homemade pain au chocolat, pecan pie croissant, or buttermilk scone coupled with one of the best cups of coffee you'll find in the Southeast. But save room for lunch at **Standard Foods**. The brainchild of Scott Crawford (a three-time James Beard Foundation semi-finalist for "Best Chef: Southeast") Standard Foods boasts farm-to-table dishes that incorporate some of the state's and Southeast's best ingredients. Access to its in-house butcher means you can expect a seriously mouthwatering charcuterie featuring house-cured lardo, corned beef tongue, and rabbit terrine. For dinner, head to **Death & Taxes**, the latest restaurant from James Beard Award-winning chef Ashley Christensen. Dedicated to the art and technique of cooking with fire, each dish—meant to be served family style—boasts a subtle smoky flavor. Wrap up the night and head to **The Green Light**. This secret bar—you need to push a hidden bookcase to get access—inside **The Architect** feels like a tiny speakeasy with its dim lighting, cozy leather banquettes, and dark wood accents. The drinks—artisanal cocktails crafted with fresh fruit and syrups—are the highlight.

DO

Walk off the sugar high by heading to one of several museums with free admission such as the **North Carolina Museum of Art** and **NC Museum of Natural Sciences**. (Be sure to walk past the state capitol and read the statue signage to brush up on your southern history.) Afterward, head back over to the Warehouse District where you'll find a plethora of contemporary art at the **CAM Raleigh**, **Raleigh Denim**, a local-gone-national best-selling denim line made in the U.S., and the can't-miss **Videri Chocolate Factory**. (Do yourself a favor and grab some of Videri's sea salt dark chocolate.) Wrap up a day of exploring with a beer or hard cider flight at **Raleigh Beer Garden**. This new-ish biergarten is so much more than a biergarten. Live music, out-of-this-world-food, and a Guinness World Record 370-plus draught beers (144 of which are from North Carolina), make it a destination. And word on the street is the owner Niall Hanley is scouting places for a second location in Charlotte. —Blake Miller



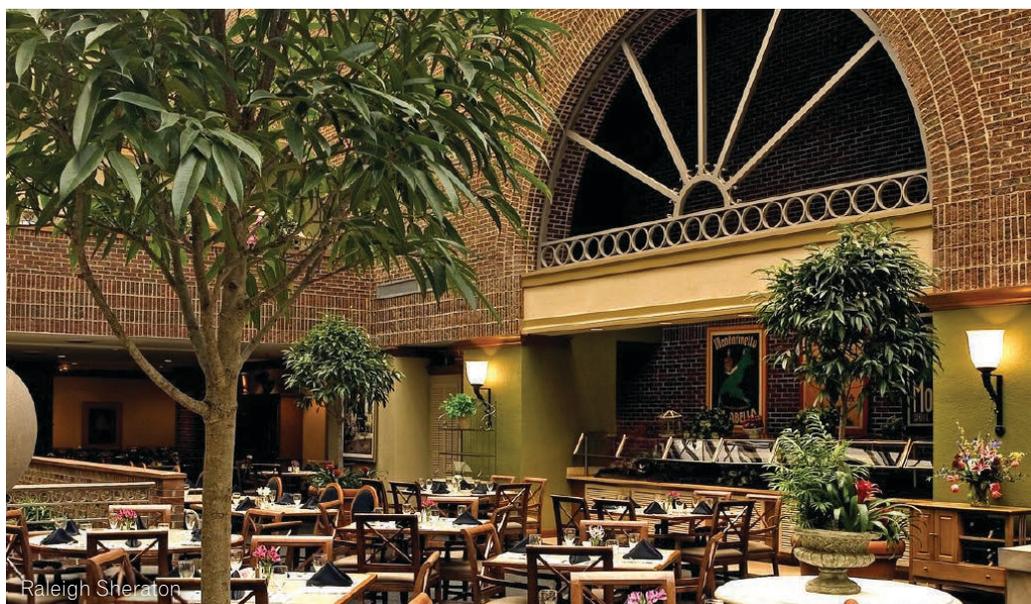
CAM Raleigh



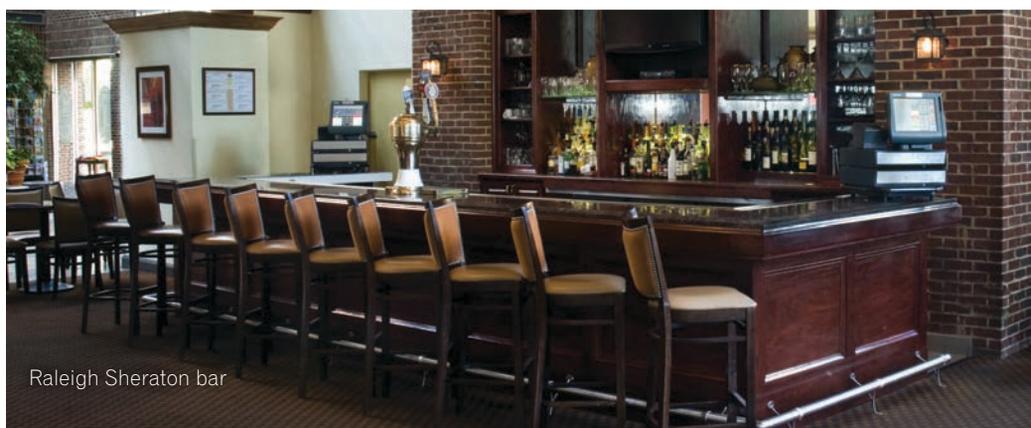
Raleigh Denim



Videri Chocolate Factory



Raleigh Sheraton



Raleigh Sheraton bar