

Columbia LIVING

May/June 2023

Full of *Life*

Artist Ija Charles in
front of her downtown
Columbia mural,
“Black Wall Street”

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The ultimate gift: a road map for funeral wishes

by X. Alexandra Chastain CFP®

“Facing death with a sense of practicality, equanimity, and clarity is the ultimate gift you can leave your children, friends, and loved ones” – Coventry Edwards-Pitt, Aged Healthy, Wealthy & Wise

Mrs. Edwards-Pitt continues by saying, “one of the very kindest things a person can do for his or her family for emotional peace of mind is to contemplate how he or she would like the end of life to unfold and to communicate those wishes openly, honestly, and uniformly with every family member who might have an emotional investment in the outcome.” Abacus believes this advice also includes funeral and burial wishes.

While no one wants to dwell on his or her own immortality, your death is inevitable. You do not have control over the time or circumstances of your death; however, you can exert control over your future by planning the way in which your loved ones remember and celebrate you. Arranging these details ahead of time is a gift to your family and friends when they are aware of your post-death wishes. Having a road map takes the stress of making tough decisions away from your loved ones and gives them a sense of serenity and peace of mind when mourning your loss. A pre-determined plan also makes it easier for your loved ones to be in agreement about your wishes. Have the difficult conversation and record your wishes to ensure your family and friends understand and can execute your plan.

Have the conversation

Talking about your death and funeral and burial plans can feel scary and difficult. However, a talk around these issues before a sickness or illness is easier for planning since there are no “extra” emotions for the parties involved. How should you begin the conversation around your post-death wishes? Determine whether or not your family would rather have a more formal or informal discussion. You may want to schedule a family meeting in which you review all your wishes, or you may opt to have an informal conversation by mentioning another person’s death and how that circumstance has made you think about your own plans.

Record your wishes

Write down what you want. A template form like Funeral and Burial Wishes from beginthetdiscussion.org is a place to start. Make sure you tell your family where your decisions are recorded. The location, such as a filing cabinet, USB drive or fire-proof safe, should allow for easy access after your passing.

You may wish to consider the following as you make your plans:

Write the obituary

Many individuals choose to write their own obituary. If you are not comfortable with this task, consider listing items you wish to be featured in your obituary. Create a list of newspapers or websites where the obituary is to be published.

Funeral or memorial service

- **Do you wish to have a funeral or memorial service? Name individuals you wish to be involved in making the arrangements. Designate a location for the service.**
- **Will the service be religious or secular? Would you like a viewing or wake?**
- **Do you want an open casket (or closed) if you are buried?**
- **If there will be pallbearers, whom do you want to serve?**
- **Do you want speakers at the service?**
- **Do you want flowers at the service?**
- **What music or songs would you like played?**
- **Do you want any scripture or readings?**
- **Do you want friends and family to send flowers, or would you prefer memorials be sent to a certain organization(s)?**



Alexandra X. Chastain CFA | Columbia, SC

X. Alexandra Chastain, CFP® serves as the leader of Abacus’s Financial Advisory Team which coordinates the creation, research and implementation of strategies and processes that will enhance our client’s overall wealth. As a principal at Abacus Planning Group, Inc. Alex also advises over 40 clients, helping them make smart financial decisions to reach their goals.

Alex graduated from the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Finance and earned her CFP® designation in 2004.

Burial service

Do you want to be buried? If yes, think about the following:

- Do you want to be embalmed or not?
- List the location of the plot in the chosen cemetery. [Make sure to include original paperwork for ownership of the plot.]
- What color and type of casket would you like? In what clothes do you wish to be buried?
- Record what you would like listed on your tombstone.

Do you want to be cremated? If yes, consider the following:

- Do you want to be interred? [Include documentation for ownership of space at a columbarium or mausoleum]
- Do you want your ashes scattered? [Include specific details and/or maps of locations where you want your ashes spread.]

Hopefully making these decisions around funeral and burial wishes will give you a sense of control over your life. Pre-planning is truly a gift as your loved ones are able to remember you peacefully and celebrate your life during an emotionally charged time.

Features

MAY | JUNE 2023

21

Summer Fun

All ages will find great new ways to amuse, entertain, and enjoy the long days of summer.

By Meredith Hawcroft

31

A Grand Migration

This California couple found a dream setting and built a forever home that welcomes family and friends.

By Katherine Pettit

37

Super Lawyers

The annual list of award-winning attorneys



Photo JAY BROWNE



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11

Buzz

12 Summer Stories

Whether you're hitting the road or planning a staycation, these four novels will give you hours of pleasure – and expand those horizons.



13 Full of Life

Ija Charles can do anything she sets her mind to do. Her art is spectacular, starting with murals around town.

18 Bridge to the Wild

At the new Riverbanks Zoo and Garden Aquarium guests explore temperate and tropical forests, trek through the desert, and wind their way from land to sea in a glorious immersive journey.

24 A Healthy Balance

Shepherding renewal and growth in the historic Rosewood neighborhood, Matthew Marcom loves what's happening here.



27

Well Styled

28 Uniquely Inclusive

At The Ratio by Body Math, patients benefit from a group of medical professionals who provide great care in a body-positive environment.



49

Food + Drink

50 Dining Out

The War Mouth offers exceptional food seasoned with history and served with a side of community building.



52 In the Kitchen

Tombo Grille's chef shares recipes to make at home for family and friends or a romantic dinner.

58 Restaurant Guide

The best places to enjoy a quick bite, or perhaps a romantic interlude.



60

Travel

60 Epicurean Playground

As a former capital, Marrakech was home to Morocco's elite. Their extravagant riads and palaces have been repurposed to dazzle guests who happily endorse it as the city of luxury.



Fundamentals

9 Reader Services

10 Editor's Letter

64 The Last Reflection



24



ON THE COVER »

Artist Ija Charles in front of "Black Wall Street," one of her many murals in and around Columbia.

Photo Joshua Aaron Photography



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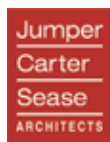
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publisher's letter

Hello, and welcome to the May-June 2023 issue.

I'm Katie Gantt, the new publisher of Columbia Living. Some of you may remember me from my time as managing editor circa 2020 through early 2022. The team and I collaborated on some outstanding issues during that time, including a couple of my favorites: the May June 2020 issue, which was published at the onset of COVID in Columbia, and the September October 2020 issue titled "The Dark Side of the Spoon: Deliciously Dark Recipes." Both had dynamic covers.

I've always immensely enjoyed consuming magazines. As a pre-teen in middle school, I spent countless hours at the once and former Barnes and Noble on Harbison Boulevard (now Nordstrom Rack for those of you who are new to the area in the last ten years or so), scouring the pages of Vogue, Marie Claire, Glamour, and countless other titles, missing not a detail. In college, I majored in English and dreamed of being a magazine editor in New York City. Then I discovered how much rent is in NYC compared to an average editor's salary, and the dream was deferred. But it eventually came to fruition anyway, though the details filled themselves in a little differently than I'd originally imagined. They usually do, and things work out better than I hope.

After career hopping throughout my twenties, I landed the editor job at Lexington Life and Irmo Chapin Life magazines, and something clicked. They tell you that when you find "the one," you'll "just know." I just knew.

I spent the next four years with those publications stretching and growing professionally as I learned the ropes of the industry. Sharing an office with the publisher allowed me to see firsthand what that role entailed, but of course, everything looks different from the outside looking in. My first few months of actually being a publisher have been exciting, scary, gratifying, frustrating, and mostly just challenging. But a challenge is what I was looking for!

As my vision for Columbia Living continues to come together, I hope you will find the magazine mainly retains its original focus and simply improves in the details.

Thank you to the magazine's staff for their hard work during this transition and our advertising sponsors for their continued support.

And thank YOU for reading Columbia Living!

Katie Gantt, Publisher



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Buzz

YOUR LOCAL RUNDOWN ON NEWS AND CULTURE

Making it Anywhere

Artist Ija Charles is making a powerful impact in the Capital City.



See page 13

Summer Stories

Planning your summer vacay and need a good read?
Spend some carefree hours with these entertaining novels.

The Love Con

by Serissia Glass

Looking for a cute vacation read? Well, look no further than Serissia Glass's *The Love Con*!

When Kenya (Keke) Davenport makes it to the final round of *Cosplay or No Way*, a competition reality show, she has to enlist her best friend, Cameron Lassiter to be her cosplay partner, which wouldn't be such an issue if she hadn't already told most of America that the two were much more than friends. How is she going to make it up to Cameron for forcing him to pretend to be her boyfriend for all the world to see? Especially when she kind of likes the sudden change in their dynamic? What's more is that Cameron's got some secret feelings of his own.

Can these two come together for the win and much more? Fans of all things nerdy will love this lighthearted, slightly spicy read.

—Review by Savannah Green, Richland Library Main, Research & Readers' Advisory



The First Bright Thing

by J.R. Dawson

Step back in time starting in the 1920s with a traveling, magical circus under the big top as the "Sparks" share their magic to entertain audiences far and wide.

Rin, the ringleader, is an aging queer Jewish woman who has the ability to time travel and is married to the beautiful, forever-young acrobat Odette. Together, along with friend Mauve, they are essentially attempting to stop WWII from happening, all while fending off the evil circus king. Threads are literally woven throughout time as we meet Edward on the front lines of WWI and his wife Ruth, who have special abilities of their own.

Intrigue, action, magic, strong character development, and a few fun yet slightly dark twists keep the reader engaged throughout for an enjoyable read. Dawson's dramatic writing style makes her an author to watch. For fans of *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* and *The Night Circus*.

—Review by Morgan Ryan, Richland Library Sandhills



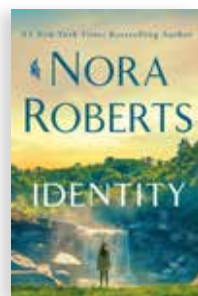
Identity

by Nora Roberts

Morgan Albright had never really had a chance to belong since she grew up as an Army brat and as her mother, after the divorce, couldn't seem to settle anywhere.

Deciding that she really wants to plant roots she settles in a friendly neighborhood near Baltimore while working two jobs in order to achieve her goals including owning her own bar. However, when tragedy strikes and Morgan's life is threatened she is forced to move home to Vermont to build back her life, to strengthen her relationship with her mother and grandmother, and to fall in love and dig those roots deep into the Vermont soil. As always Nora Roberts delivers a whopper of a romantic suspense read with which to while those lazy days away.

—Review by Chantal Wilson, Richland Library Main, Research & Readers' Advisory



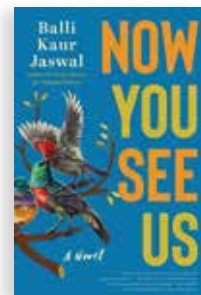
Now You See Us

by Balli Kaur Jaswal

Corazon was forced to flee the Philippines and return to Singapore, carrying with her a terrible secret. Donita is new to Singapore and works for the fussiest and meanest employer. Angel, a caregiver for an elderly gentleman, is nursing a broken heart.

When one of Donita's friends, a fellow domestic worker, is accused of murder, the unlikely trio comes together to try to clear her name. This entertaining and heartbreaking tale is an enlightening look at Filipina domestic workers in Singapore and a dramatic whodunit. Sure to please lovers of *The Bandit Queens*.

—Review by Megan Mathis, Richland Library Main, Research & Readers' Advisory





"Puzzling Memories" puzzle mosaic

Full of Life

Artist Ija Charles has created 20+ (and counting) murals around the Columbia area. And there's much more.

By KRISTINE HARTVIGSEN

Columbia artist Ija Charles, age 26, did not always command upwards of \$20,000 to paint murals like "Black Wall Street" on the 1400 block of Main Street. Commissioned by the City of Columbia and its Parks and Recreation Foundation, the

mural captures the once-thriving downtown district that teemed with successful black-owned businesses for about a century, from the mid-1870s until around 1970.

Ija remembers a time when she created her own pigments out of colorful berries and plants because her family could

not afford to purchase art supplies. She remembers a time when she actually lived in her car. So she never forgets to be grateful for the success and independence she enjoys today.

"I first started doing art when I was a kid. It was therapy for me. I grew up humble. We

*"You Don't Know
Me" acrylic*



didn't have many resources," she says. "I painted with what I had."

In preparing to paint "Black Wall Street," Ija spoke with some business owners from that era, including a woman who operated a beauty shop in one of the buildings. She also listened very carefully to her benefactors, who shared historic documents and photos of the district in its heyday.

"The people who commissioned me explained how very important it was," she said. "I was determined to capture the feeling. ... They gave me full imaginative freedom to create whatever I saw for it."

Ija chose to paint the buildings mostly in grayscale with some pops of color, but the color literally bursts out through the people. "The people are in color because it brings the community from the past to the present. It was a full-circle event."

Years ago, while attending Westwood High School in Columbia, Ija gravitated toward more mature friends. In fact, the teachers roundly embraced the smart but quiet young girl. They encouraged her to challenge herself and reach farther and farther for success.



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"Fresh Cut" barber equipment mosaic



"Nostalgic" hair mosaic

"Growing up, I always looked younger than I was," Ija recalls. "I hung out with teachers more than my peers. My teachers saw something in me. They put me into programs that cultivated my spirit."

Those activities included Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Student Council, and Palmetto Girls State. During Spirit Week at Westwood, she designed all the school's banners and posters. She was quickly getting noticed for her phenomenal artistic talent. Then the school commissioned her to design a mural for the school gym. It was a first for the self-taught young artist.

"I was a smart kid, but I got bored," she says. "Art became a hustle for me where I got my money."

After graduation, Ija moved to Louisiana, where she worked as a cake decorator and painted faces at Mardi Gras events. It was lucrative work that she enjoyed. But the pull of family and Columbia prompted her return.

"When I came home, I wanted to show people that you can make it anywhere. I was working at Cracker Barrel as a cashier. When the machines were down and there was a small wait, I would pull out my portfolio and show people my work and give out business cards to get projects," she recalls. "I lived in my car for three months. I was able to leave Cracker Barrel and worked at Verizon, where I sold phones — and artwork. ... Eventually, I didn't need a side gig anymore and became a full-time artist."

Her first public mural in the Midlands, titled "Full of Life," appears at the Interactive Art Park at 425 Meeting Street in West Columbia. In vibrant, camera-ready colors, it portrays all the exhilarating things a child might imagine. Another of her well-known murals is "Cayce Wonders" at 1212 State Street, featuring a young Black girl with a gigantic afro, upon which iconic scenes from the area are superimposed. To date, Ija has 20+ (and counting) murals around the Columbia area.

Against the odds, Ija has developed into a thriving entrepreneur who can make art her full-time career. Her acumen was evident as far back as high school when she was in the FBLA, and her art business plan was chosen for a national competition in Chicago.

"Cola Kid"
acrylic



Ija received national attention in 2021 when the NFL chose her as one of 16 artists from around the world to participate in an "Artist Replay" event, in which selected artists could choose to draw someone who had contributed to or been influential in their community for display at the Super Bowl. She chose (Cleveland Browns) quarterback Deshaun Watson (a Georgia native who played at Clemson). She followed that up with a show at Columbia Metropolitan Airport, part of its series exhibiting local artists in a highly traveled walkway leading to the boarding gates. And business has been booming ever since.

"Right now, I am doing everything myself. I am looking for a team with the same level of commitment and tenacity that I have with my artwork," she says. "I have talked to a lot of people who have done this for a long time. I make sure my business is handled and I am taking care of myself. But in the beginning, it was a hot mess!"

Ija truly appreciates the art community in Columbia for both its creativity and inclusion. She enjoys large public art because of its accessibility. It is free, and it is large, out in the public. One doesn't have to enter a museum to see it.

"If it weren't for my community, I wouldn't be as confident and successful as I am at this age," she says. "I think it always has been part of me. My parents always had my back and let me lead the way."

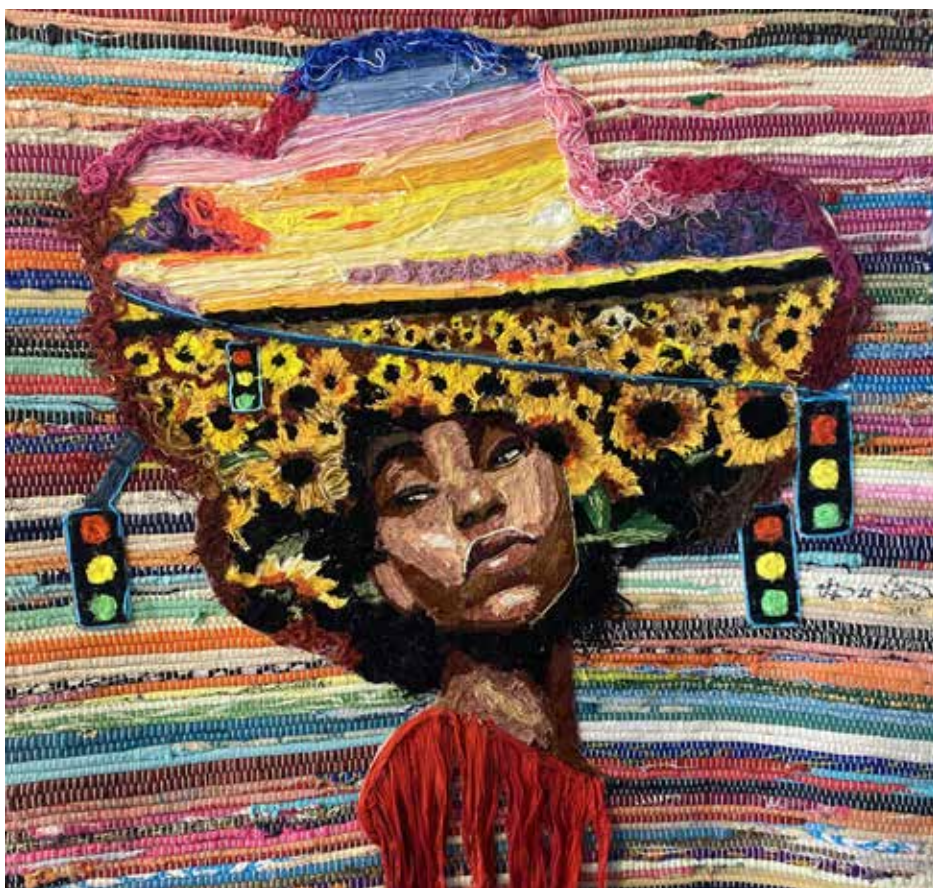
As an artist and businesswoman, Ija believes in the imperative of mentoring. "In the beginning, I did have criticism. One thing I tell kids that I mentor is that it's not that they don't like you; some people just cannot see your vision."

Furthermore, after thriving in Louisiana and returning home, Ija is determined to prove to everyone that an artist can make it anywhere, especially in Columbia. She is decidedly upbeat, sharing that light with everyone around her.

"No matter the cards you are dealt," she says, "even if you can't play the game, build a castle." 🏰

Discover more about the artist:
ijacharlesart.com

(L): "Blooming Thoughts" yarn embroidery





The brand-new desert biome highlights arid habitats of the Western hemisphere, especially in the desert southwest.

Bridge to the Wild

Riverbanks Zoo and Garden is front and center in its wildlife conservation efforts.

By KATIE GANTT » Photos FORREST CLONTS

The newly opened 20,000-square-foot Darnall W. and Susan F. Boyd Aquarium & Reptile Conservation Center, housed at Riverbanks Zoo and Garden, allows guests the opportunity to explore temperate and tropical forests, trek through the desert, and wind their way from land to sea in an immersive journey with discoveries around every turn.

The 10 million dollar renovation project, made possible by The Boyd Foundation, has transformed the heart of Riverbanks into a state-of-the-art animal care facility – providing guests with an engaging experience that places Riverbanks' critical role in wildlife conservation at the front and center.

The highly anticipated project took four years from concept to completion and features new and innovative conservation labs showcasing work previously only experienced during behind-the-scenes tours. The coral lab, for example, showcases colonies of corals rescued off the coast of Florida near Key West.

Coral reefs make up less than 1% of ocean habitats but are among Earth's most biologically diverse places. Florida's Coral Reef stretches approximately 360 miles from



Dry Tortugas National Park west of the Florida Keys to the St. Lucie Inlet in Martin County. The outbreak of a mysterious disease has destroyed the vast majority of stony corals along the 360-mile stretch, and it's spreading rapidly, impacting multiple species, and causing an alarming loss of life. The corals in Riverbanks' care will help preserve genetic diversity and aid in future restoration efforts on the Florida Reef Tract.

In the Terrestrial Lab, guests can view endangered reptiles and amphibians from around the globe. The space highlights Riverbanks' work supporting populations of geckos worldwide. For over two decades, the zoo has demonstrated significant success in hatching more than 2,000 leaf-tailed geckos and has received multiple awards for its work with this unique species native to Madagascar.

More than 12,000 animals reside in the Aquarium & Reptile Conservation Center, representing more than 300 species, including 80 species of reptiles and amphibians, 147 species of fish, and 106 species of invertebrates. Seventeen endangered species can be seen in and around the center, including the radiated tortoise, Grand Cayman blue iguana, Chinese crocodile lizard, Mangshan pit viper, symmetrical brain coral, and the thick-billed parrot. New and returning species added to the collection include the moon jellyfish, Western diamondback rattlesnake, red diamond rattlesnake, Vietnamese mossy frog, and many more.

The center's brand-new desert biome highlights arid habitats (arid means having little or no rain and being too dry or barren to support vegetation) of the Western hemisphere, especially in the desert southwest. The immersive habitat features a variety of desert dwellers, including tortoises, rattlesnakes, and Gila monsters, as well as thick-billed parrots, burrowing owls, and much more. Guests enjoy new floor-to-ceiling views of their favorite reptilian residents and will be mesmerized by a giant wall of otherworldly moon jellies. Soon, they will have the opportunity to meet a captivating giant Pacific octopus named Susan in honor of generous benefactor Susan Boyd and her favorite animal.

The opening of the Darnell W. and Susan F. Boyd Aquarium & Reptile Conservation Center is the second project in



A young visitor looks in awe at the coral lab.



Visitors will be mesmerized by a giant wall of moon jellies.



The corals in Riverbanks' care will help preserve genetic diversity and aid in future restoration efforts of the Florida Reef Tract.



Soon, guests will have the opportunity to meet a giant Pacific octopus named Susan in honor of generous benefactor Susan Boyd and her favorite animal. Susan is pictured with a stuffed octopus at the center's official ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Phase One of Riverbanks' innovative vision to build a "Bridge to the Wild." Phase One, a \$32 million-dollar investment, includes the Aquarium & Reptile Conservation Center, the white rhino habitat (which opened in 2020), significant infrastructure improvements, and two exciting projects that will be announced in 2023.

Phase Two includes a transformational expansion of the zoo's footprint that will optimize the guest experience, increase opportunities for guest engagement, better connect guests to conservation, and highlight the beauty of the Saluda River. This expansion includes an orangutan habitat, a South Carolina nature preserve, enhanced lion and tiger habitats, and a one-of-a-kind multipurpose facility on the banks of the Saluda River. Once complete, "Bridge to the Wild" will transform both sides of the Saluda River into the state's leading conservation resource.

The Darnall W. and Susan F. Boyd Aquarium & Reptile Conservation Center will be open during regular Riverbanks hours and is included with general admission and membership. Visit Riverbanks.org to learn more and plan your visit. 🐾

About The Zoo

- Riverbanks Zoo and Garden is home to over 2,000 animals and one of the nation's best public gardens.
- The zoo opened on April 25, 1974, and for nearly five decades, has connected individuals, families, and school children with the natural world.
- The zoo receives more than one million visitors annually.
- It is the largest gated attraction in South Carolina.
- It is the most visited zoo in the Southeast.
- USA Today and TripAdvisor voted it a Top 10 Zoo in the United States.
- More than 50% of Riverbanks' paid visitors are tourists living 50+ miles outside of Columbia – 20% live out of the state.

About The Darnall W. and Susan F. Boyd Foundation

The Darnall W. and Susan F. Boyd Foundation promotes and supports projects of specific interest to the Boyd Family, such as education, beautification, and the creation of outdoor recreational opportunities, as well as enhancements to benefit the quality of life for citizens of Columbia and the Midlands.

The Boyd Foundation has made various projects in the Midlands possible, including Boyd Plaza at Columbia Museum of Art, renovations of facilities at Riverbanks Zoo, Boyd Island on the Saluda Riverwalk, South Carolina Waterfowl Association facilities, and many projects and facilities at Historic Columbia.



At Chesterbrook Academy, the fun lasts all year long.

By MEREDITH HAWCROFT

Long summer days provide families the opportunity to engage in new adventures, but sometimes it can be hard to step out of the ordinary routine and decide what to do. Continue reading for fun suggestions on activities that will get you and your loved ones out of the house and making special memories together all summer long. Whether you prefer nature, athletics, education, or dining out, Columbia has just the thing!

Chesterbrook Academy

chesterbrookacademy.com

Chesterbrook Academy features action-packed summertime opportunities for campers ages 5-12 years old. They've designed the perfect, comprehensive camp experience, complete with all of the fun, enriching activities children love, and the important safety measures and flexible hours parents expect. According to Chesterbrook's principal Ramona Shimmel, campers will enjoy field trips, sports and games, swimming, exciting STEM projects, arts, crafts, music, dance, and drama all in a welcoming environment. At this camp, students will grow more independent, develop social skills, and learn – all while having fun and making new friends!

Each week, students in rising kindergarten through 6th grade explore science and nature, become involved in creative and performing arts, and participate in sports and games. The camp features a unique selection of indoor and outdoor activities and field trips that take advantage of resources in the local area including the EdVenture Children's Museum, the petting zoo, and a balloon artist!


Camp is available beginning the week of June 6th and extends through the week of August 7th. Families can opt to enroll students for the entire summer or can pick select weeks depending on their needs. Offering camp on a week-by-week basis allows for a flexible fit in families' schedules.

Chesterbrook Academy additionally hosts Kindergarten Enrichment for 4 and 5-year-olds. The program gives rising kindergarteners a jump-start on literacy and math skills while also providing opportunities to practice kindergarten etiquette through authentic play and collaborative learning. Students have a blast engaging in inquiry-based, hands-on activities that build upon foundational skills such as science and engineering.

Eudora Farms

eudorafarms.net

Eudora Wildlife Safari Park, located in Salley, South Carolina, offers convenient wild adventures all summer long. The three-mile-long drive-through safari offers visitors the chance to view and feed over 300 exotic animals including zebras,



Visitors of all ages are fascinated by the snakes in the Riverbanks Zoo and Garden Aquarium.

giraffes, bison, llamas, and ostriches all from the comfort of their vehicle. Wagon rides are also available for guests wishing to be even more exposed to the animals and the beautiful park environment. A knowledgeable tour guide makes the experience more educational. Whether you choose to ride in your own car or a safari wagon, this unique experience will surely create lasting family memories.

Riverbanks Zoo and Garden **riverbanks.org**

Columbia's wild gem, Riverbanks Zoo and Garden, is home to more than 3,000 incredible animals that represent over 400 species from around the globe. Visitor favorites include the King Penguin, Leopard Shark, American Alligator, African Lion, Amur Tiger, Reticulated Giraffe, Southern White Rhinoceros, and Western Lowland Gorilla. The scenic zoo property includes a lush 170-acre botanical garden that boasts natural habitats, educational exhibits, and picturesque river views. Other interactive activities such as the Farmyard petting zoo, Wild Adventures Rock Wall, and Endangered Species Carousel provide hands-on fun that children of all ages will remember for years.

Richland Library **richlandlibrary.com**

With 13 bustling facilities located across Columbia County, Richland Library offers a wide array of learning options for residents of all ages, making it the perfect place to beat the summer heat. For adults and seniors there is foreign language conversation, group sewing, computer literacy assistance, book clubs, crafts, and more. Teens and children also have numerous options for interaction such as film pro-

duction workshops, family story time, and the End of School Year Blast! at noon on June 3. An abundance of other enriching daily library events can be found on the Richland Library website.

Adventuring at Congaree National Park

nps.gov/cong

If you and your family are seeking wilderness adventures this summer, look no further than Congaree National Park. Located right in Columbia's backyard, the 20,000-acre park is the largest remaining intact expanse of old growth bottomland hardwood forest remaining in the southeastern United States. Numerous creeks break off from the Congaree River, providing an abundance of locations to explore while fishing, canoeing, or kayaking. Congaree National Park also boasts hiking trails, an observation boardwalk, and campsites. Completing activities such as these can qualify visitors of all ages to earn an official Congaree National Park Junior Ranger badge!

Museum Hop

scmuseum.org
columbiamuseum.org
edventure.org

Even though school may be out of session, learning doesn't have to stop! Swing by one of Columbia's family-friendly museums for a day of educational, inspirational fun. The South Carolina State Museum has four floors of exhibits, a state-of-the-art observatory, a digital dome planetarium, and a 4D theater. The Columbia Museum of Art is the perfect location to indulge creativity by viewing art from

around the corner and around the world. Finally, the EdVenture Children's Museum hosts activities that promote play and inspire a love of learning, making it perfect for young guests. All three museums offer summer camps.

Columbia Fireflies

milb.com/columbia

For classic summer fun, come out to Segra Park to cheer on Columbia's home team – the Fireflies. The Fireflies are the minor-league affiliate of the Kansas City Royals. Numerous home games will take place during the coming months, offering plenty of opportunities to take in all the sights and smells and tastes of America's favorite pastime as you "root, root for the home team." The stadium has plenty of delicious dining options as well as a gift shop to purchase your official Fireflies fan gear.

Soda City Market

sodacitysc.com

Inspired by traditional European street markets, Columbia's Soda City Market is your chance to feel like you're abroad this summer while still supporting vendors from the Southeastern United States. This is a producer-only market, meaning that all vendors make or grow their own products. The market hosts over 400 vendors every year with an average of 150 vendors making an appearance each Saturday. Soda City boasts they have everything you need to nourish your brain, body, and belly. The food trucks are an especially big draw with a variety of unique cuisine options to mix into your weekend routine.

Picnic at the State House

southcarolinaparks.com/education-and-history/state-house

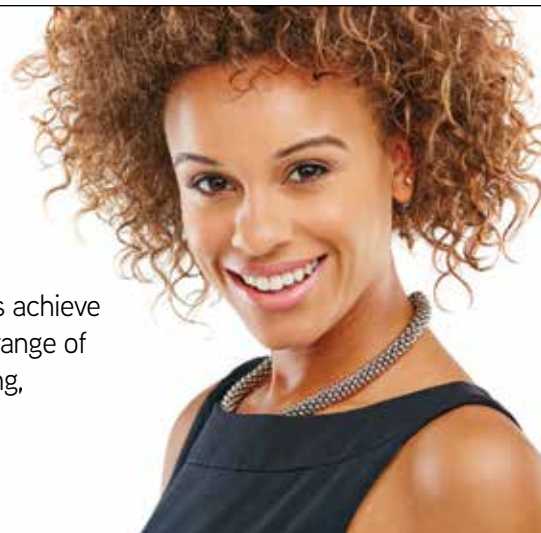
For a dose of free, historical fun this summer, consider indulging in a scenic picnic at the State House. The State House is conveniently centered in downtown Columbia and serves as the seat of state government in South Carolina. The building, known for its signature large front steps and Greek revival style, is surrounded by picturesque landscaping, winding sidewalks, and historical monuments, all of which combine to create the perfect picnic backdrop. Free self-guided tours of the State House are available Monday – Friday and make the perfect activity to follow your meal. 🍷



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**LEARN
MORE**





Rosewood Crawfish Festival

A Healthy Balance

Shepherding renewal and growth in the historic Rosewood neighborhood, Matthew Marcom loves what's happening here.

By WARREN MCINNIS HUGHES » Photos WILLIAM HUGHES

On a recent spring afternoon, business was brisk at Pelican's SnoBalls on Rosewood Drive in the popular intown neighborhood. Affable and efficient owner Matthew Marcom bantered with customers as he quickly oversaw orders for multiple flavors.

Students, mothers, and workers lined up for a refreshing cold treat at the business owned by the North Carolina native, who chose the location as a franchise opportunity.

Marcom is also president of the Greater Rosewood Merchants Association (GRMA), an important position as the area balances its commercial growth with a friendly neighborhood atmosphere that both old and new residents cherish. Now flourishing, the area rivals the growth of nearby Shandon, Devine, and Millwood corridors.

People flock to popular special neighborhood events like the annual Rosewood



Crawfish and Arts and Music Festivals and even a Mardi Gras celebration. The 2023 Crawfish Festival set for May 6 at the SC State Fairgrounds features music, food, arts and crafts, and a family-friendly 'Lil Crawdaddy Carnival with special activities for youngsters.

Yet on any day of the week, patrons go not only to Pelican's, but also to new stops like Starbucks and longstanding destinations like Rosewood Natural Foods and Deli Market.

The bustling thoroughfare is home to a musical arts academy, a major supermarket, a dairy bar, bakeries, art, gift and jewelry stores, fitness centers, restaurants, and drugstores, with more on the horizon.

The convenience and ambiance also make it a popular residential area where newcomers join others who have lived there for years. The construction of the multipurpose Fifth and Sloan retail and housing project by Cason Development Group is emblematic of the growth that has come to the area.

Marcom's leadership skills are important as the established old neighborhood transforms into a lively commercial destination that presents both opportunities and challenges.

"Rosewood is growing a lot right now. Filling commercial vacancies and encouraging the right kind of developments is important," he says. "Our goal is to continue to connect opportunities to people who can take advantage of them, enhancing Rosewood along with it."

"We are seeing more new businesses become engaged and contribute to the awesome community. We are working to in



MATTHEW MARCOM

- » **Birth:** Garner, NC
- » **Family:** Wife Krista, three children: son, age seven; two daughters, age five and seven months
- » **Education:** Wake Technical Community College, Associate in Arts degree
- » **Occupation:** Territory Developer, Multi-Unit Franchisee for Pelican's SnoBalls
- » **Community Service:** President, Greater Rosewood Merchants Association
- » **Hobbies:** Skateboarding at Owens Field Park; coaching his son's Little League team; helping others take the jump to start a small business.

southern drawl

*Rosewood area
Crawfish Mural, by
McClellan Douglas*



crease that involvement as much as possible.”

Marcom is called upon to use his diplomatic and negotiating skills to strike the right balance among sometimes competing issues that various interest groups have. “Rosewood is experiencing growing pains right now,” Marcom observes. “The diversity of commercial property types, layouts, and sizes can make finding the right fit challenging for them.”

Also, he adds, “The mix of rental and college population in our neighborhood is ever growing and naturally creating some conflicts. Residents and businesses are grappling with questions about what a healthy balance is.”

Yet, the potential for further and responsible growth is abundant, he says. “Rosewood still has plenty of space to grow and is alive with strong amenities and activities from its new businesses to the weekend events. Another chief appeal is our proximity to everywhere else.”

For visionary leaders like Marcom, possibilities for imaginative growth abound. As an example, he points to the Barney Jordan Boat Landing on the Congaree River.

“A lot of people restrict Rosewood to a few blocks close to Harden Street and Rosewood Drive, but it is a much larger community than that.

“For example, we foresee some exciting development all along the corridor from Devine Street to the boat landing,” he says. The river location, which many discover by surprise, is conveniently located at 611 Rosewood Dr., reached by following Rosewood Drive southwest all the way to the end. Operated by the Richland County Recreation Commission, the landing has a dock, a boat ramp, and picnic tables with inviting views of the Con-

garree River.

City Roots, a family-owned urban organic farm, a popular destination with a devoted following, is nearby. Its agritourism feature also draws visitors to the location at 1005 Airport Blvd.

The convenient Jim Hamilton-LB Owens Airport serves as a premier aviation business gateway for Columbia’s downtown with quick access to all capital city locations. Hunter-Gatherer Brewery is in the historic Curtiss-Wright Hangar, the original headquarters of the airport, before the new terminal opened in 2005.

For recreation, the City of Columbia’s Owens Park near the airport is home to a 15,000-square-foot outdoor skate park and other diversions. Although near Rosewood Avenue, the thick woods of the park trails provide a rural experience.

As for his personal vision, Marcom says, “I think Rosewood has a bright future. It has come so far from what I’ve been told it used to be in decades past. New businesses and developments are coming, but it looks to be mixing very well with the old and revered along Rosewood. We can hold onto the charm of the corridor while encouraging the improvements we’d all like to see.”

Eclectic is a frequent term Rosewood enthusiasts use to describe their favorite area, he says. “It appeals to so many because it remains comparatively affordable, convenient, uncongested, and safe.” By eclectic, he says, “There is a great mix of franchises, mom-and-pop and hole-in-the-wall businesses that make up a wonderfully diverse corridor.

The area contends with the same issues of traffic, congestion, and urban issues of any downtown area.” However, “The connection between community

stakeholders and neighbors here is fantastic,” he adds. “From businesses supporting each other to the volunteer ‘Rosewood Rangers’ looking out for neighbors, Rosewood is an amazing community to be a part of with tons of opportunity,” he says.

Road safety is an important issue for the GRMA. “Our sidewalks along Rosewood are very close to lanes of traffic, which can be a hazard. I would love to see more space for traffic-calming measures other than lights and speed limit changes, but we are limited on space,” he said.

Marcom grew up in the Raleigh, NC suburb of Garner. In the years following high school, he grew to know and love the founding family of Pelican’s SnoBalls, the Johnsons, (especially the patriarch, Adrian). With an attractive offer, he decided to take advantage of an opportunity to open a franchise for the company, choosing Columbia for the new location.

Now as a multi-unit franchisee and territory developer for most of SC, he owns and operates four locations in Columbia, caters countless event bookings each year, and serves the corporate office in other franchise operations.

Overall, he has assisted in the opening of more than 30 locations for Pelican’s, in which he takes justified pride. He especially appreciates the patronage it has enjoyed locally. “We couldn’t have asked for a better place to put our first store and begin our family and territory,” he says.

The location at the top of the hill on Rosewood Drive gives him the perfect location to not only serve his customers but also to keep up with the locals on what’s going on in the neighborhood, “The sun shines and lines show up because it just feels like a great day for a SnoBall. It’s wonderful.” 🌊

Well Styled

medical spa

The Ratio by Body Math

*Medical professionals help clients reach
a balanced, proportional ratio in their
bodies to increase personal confidence.*



See page 28



Uniquely Inclusive

At The Ratio by Body Math, patients benefit from a group of medical professionals who provide great care in a body-positive environment.

By MEREDITH GRACE HAWCROFT » Photos JAY BROWNE

At The Ratio by Body Math, patients benefit from a group of highly talented medical professionals who strive to help men and women reach a balanced, proportional ratio in their bodies to increase personal confidence and body-positivity. This medical spa utilizes the latest technology to provide a variety of effective treatments, including highly sought-after laser liposuction and fat transfer, and body sculpting. The Ratio is proud to offer innovative, world class care to the South Carolina Midlands and surrounding communities.

Dr. Mariangela Rivera is the board-certified general surgeon at The Ratio. Her credentials are impressive enough to reassure even the most apprehensive patients; they include a medical degree from the prestigious Yale School of Medicine and a fellowship at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York. During her fellowship, Dr. Rivera studied head and neck surgery and microsurgical reconstruction with research expertise ranging from robotic surgery to melanoma.

After moving to Columbia to get away from the frigid New York winters, she settled into life on a small working farm as well as the operating room at Prisma Health Surgical Oncology – Richland where she continues her specialization in head and neck procedures for cancer patients. Dr. Rivera's role at The Ratio, which she refers to as her "passion project," provides a positive, light-hearted contrast to her other surgical work. She finds great joy in performing procedures that exercise her creative abilities and make people feel like the best version of themselves.

Dr. Rivera's efforts are closely supported by her teammate Brooke Summerlin – the Certified Scrub Tech and Director of Operations at The Ratio. Summerlin gained six years of experience in a trauma operating room before transitioning to outpatient care. She will soon add a master's degree in healthcare administration to her list of qualifications. Brooke is present for nearly every single appointment and serves as the primary point of contact for anything patients may need to have the most positive med spa experience possible.

This talented care team is what truly sets The Ratio apart. Dr. Rivera has admitting privileges at two local hospitals, so she is personally able to handle any unique situation that may ever arise during or post-operation. Patients can rest assured knowing they are receiving care from the best educated, most qualified medical personnel possible.

In addition, the medical team's mindset makes The Ratio a uniquely positive environment. Dr. Rivera and Summerlin reaffirm to all patients that their bodies are perfect the way they are. They note that the treatments they offer are never necessary to be beautiful but instead are designed to enhance the natural beauty that already exists as they create symmetry and balance. Creating confidence and improving self-worth are keys to how The Ratio operates. Dr. Rivera notes, "The industry can often be negative and tell people hurtful, untruthful things about their bodies. At The Ratio, I'd hate to give anyone the impression their body isn't enough. But if you need an extra boost to truly feel like enough, then I'm here to help."

Dr. Rivera has indeed helped patients feel increasingly confident and has helped improve their self-worth. She has



*Dr. Mariangela
Rivera
and Brooke
Summerlin*



*Dr. Rivera administers
IV therapy to patient.*



Waiting room at the Ratio sets the tone for a great experience

observed patients' self-confidence skyrocket as a result of treatments and the facility's personable care. She said, "At first, some patients don't want to take their clothes off for the appointment, but then by the third follow-up, they are practically taking their clothes off as they come in the door." Some patients use treatments at The Ratio as a launchpad to kickstart healthy habits; others use these treatments to celebrate bodily changes and finish up stubborn areas following weight loss. Regardless of whether this is a beginning step or the final step to boost body confidence, patients are sure to love their results.

The most impactful enhancements The Ratio offers precise body contouring through laser liposuction, fat transfer, and body sculpting. Laser liposuction is instrumental in creating the great results patients have seen. The laser is gentle enough to break up the fat cells while maintaining the viability to place that fat elsewhere. The viability is much higher with this procedure than with traditional liposuction meaning that you can take more fat from areas you don't want it and then repurpose it in other areas where you want more lift and volume. For instance, you can remove stubborn back fat and move it to your bum for a perfectly smooth bikini-ready silhouette. This allows patients to simultaneously improve two areas of their body.

As a new mom, Summerlin decided to undergo a procedure herself last October and feels extra confident and comfortable in her own skin as a result. "I feel so much better, and now my body

image is not something that's weighing on my mind all the time. It gave me the freedom to have one less thing to be concerned with," Summerlin said.

One element of the procedure Summerlin appreciated was not having to go under general anesthesia. Dr. Rivera collaborates with patients during procedures to help ensure they achieve their desired results. Summerlin was able to emphasize exactly how she wanted to look and could not be happier with how Dr. Rivera brought that vision to life.

The Ratio also improves self-esteem through anti-wrinkle injections that keep your face youthful and smooth. Dr. Rivera's research-heavy background led her to offer Xeomin injections. This FDA-approved treatment is double-filtered, so its active ingredient contains only what is needed. Dr. Rivera notes that this helps reduce the chance of allergens and immunity. Over time, some patients become immune to other wrinkle injections, but that's not the case with Xeomin. Affordable, long-lasting Xeomin helps reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles and also helps prevent them from appearing in the first place, so it is the perfect solution for preventative care as well as restorative treatment. Whichever treatment you choose, the body-positive community at The Ratio by Body Math wants you to look and feel your best, so you can live the happiest, most confident life possible. 🌿

Theratiobybodymath.com

*The inviting modern
farmhouse look features
clean lines and just a touch
of wood at the entry.*

A Grand Migration

A happy accident introduced this California couple to the Midlands. They fell in love with lake living and now, more family members are making the move.

By KATHERINE PETTIT » Photos JAY BROWNE

Because Rod and Janna McLeish work from their house, they can live anywhere. Although California was home, the couple had been looking around and when they visited Janna's brother in Charlotte, North Carolina, they decided to travel to Charleston and enjoy a few days there. On the way down I-26, they passed a sign for Lake Murray and agreed to check it out on their return trip. They liked the area, including a Costco nearby, on their must-have list. Thus began a relatively quick process of meeting a realtor and finding a homesite on the water.

"At first we thought we'd buy an existing home," Rod said. "Then we came to the conclusion that we wanted a new con-

struction, to make it entirely our own." This is the fourth home the McLeishes have lived in and they plan to make it their last. They better stay put, because Janna's brother is building a home next door, their daughter along with her son and daughter have already bought in the Chapin area, and another two brothers plus a niece have moved, all originally from California to on or near the shores of Lake Murray.

Their compound is near Prosperity but rural, which suits the McLeish family just fine. "When you've come from Los Angeles, driving an hour to a fine restaurant for dinner or to Charleston for the weekend is quite normal for everyday life," Rod said. When they are at home, they're often in their two home offices,

Just a step away from the living area, the side porch set-up presents a year-round room for reading, watching television, and chatting with friends.



and lately, they've become quite the birdwatchers.

"Our children can't believe we've become birders," said Janna, pointing out two ospreys perched in a tree on the waterfront.

They wanted a home that would maximize their views and give them a comfortable home base where the family could visit as often as possible and the couple could work and play year round. First, they needed an architect. After a couple of interviews with different possibilities, they selected Michael Haigler. He had designed the home next door to their property and they liked his approach.

"We spoke with him several times and loved his ideas," Rod said. "We could communicate easily and we chose a modern farmhouse style because we had lived in one before and really liked the look and flow."

And so the process began.

"Sometimes, we'd make a suggestion and he would gently say he didn't think it was a good idea. Other times he'd enthusiastically build on a suggestion or bring us one of his own." It took shape fairly quickly. There are 180 degree water views, but the boat dock is off to the side, out of sight from the porches, decks and windows.

"We maximized the views by staking out the footprint of the house and doing minor rotations for the best views," explained Michael. "Rod was the lead communicator formulating the wish lists and integrally involved in ongoing design and material decisions.

The result is a modern approach to a farmhouse using contemporary materials."

The exterior is Hardie® Plank painted Extra White in a satin finish. The trim is a semi-gloss Extra White. All the paint in the home is from Sherwin Williams. The house showcases its surroundings with vertical casement windows, black trim and cedar posts. The front door opens into a large room centered by a generous Amish dining room table that can easily seat 12. Chairs and benches allow for flexibility. Most of their new wooden furniture came from Sugar Creek. The natural wood offers a charming contrast to the Extra White walls in an eggshell finish, and the gray porcelain tile floors.

Lights, fans and plumbing came from Ferguson and Build.com, also owned by Ferguson. Some favorite art pieces were collected during travels. About half of the furnishings are new.

The ceiling trusses are anchored with black bolts and accents from lighting and the ceiling fans.

To the left is the sitting area with large television and gas fireplace. The Palissandro Dark porcelain tile has been discontinued and they were only able to buy just enough for the interior fireplace wall. Rod and Janna think that maybe, just maybe, this is their favorite area in the home.

Lakeside features a large covered porch and dining table with grill at the ready. "We use this outdoor room all the time," Janna says, smiling.

There's a dry bar area inside and through a door, the porch with another fireplace with the same configuration of television and gas fireplace, surrounded by Epic Imperial Matte tile



The dining table is rustic with all eyes on the wood, purchased from Sugar Creek.

that reaches up to the pine wood ceiling. A door opens to the lakeside covered deck and those views.

On the other side of the porch is a bedroom outfitted in accordance with ADA guidelines to accommodate their wheelchair-bound granddaughter and her mother, who have relocated nearby and visit often. The entire first floor of the home was designed with accessibility in mind, including flush thresholds and ramps.

Back in the great room on the other side of the dining table is the open kitchen. Rod calls it the ‘clean’ kitchen and says the ‘dirty’ kitchen is behind the wall. It is open, but a massive island offers delineation with a quartzite surface and stools for lounging. The backsplash is white subway tile, oversized with textured sides and surfaces.

“We wanted the light color, enhanced with texture to keep things interesting,” Rod said. A farmhouse sink and

stove top allow prep, plus floor-to-ceiling cabinets hide stuff yet keep everything instantly accessible.

Around the corner is the butler’s pantry – what Rod jokingly calls the dirty kitchen. The heavy lifting happens here, with two ovens – one traditional and one steam – a microwave, huge refrigerator freezer and another of Rod’s favorite things, a beverage fridge that keeps juice, sparkling water and artisanal beer chilled and ready.

Butler’s pantries have gained favor in recent years, allowing a place to hide those pots, pans and dishes after a meal. A barn door painted in ‘favorite jeans’ blue conceals the pantry when preferred and adds a pop of color.

The primary bedroom is just beyond, with the second barn door opening to the couple’s walk-in closet. A new king-sized bed from Sugar Creek looks out the large windows onto the water. (The house was positioned close to the setback, affording water views with no land visible in sev-







*Family and friends can
enjoy spectacular island
seating as dinner and
drinks are prepared.*

The main bath features an inviting soaker tub after the day on the water ends.



eral areas.) The large shower, soaker tub and double sinks offer options at the end of the day. Another door to the closet is accessed from the bathroom.

In the hall a door leads to the garage, and a mudroom area provides cubbies for shoes and such. “We didn’t realize how much red clay is in the area,” Rod said. A half bath is available for guests. Windows bathe the rooms in light, with not a screen to be found. “We have them stored but don’t feel the need to install them,” he said.

In the hall beside the stairs is a larger than normal closet matched by another one on the second floor, exactly the same size and in the same location. It was designed by the architect as a ready-made elevator shaft if ever needed.

Upstairs are the two home offices with a bathroom in the hall and another guest bedroom with bath facing the water. Toward the front of the house is the FROG, complete with two sets of double bunk beds and a rock climbing wall which their grandchildren use to scamper up to bed.

“We haven’t quite completed the wall, but that and a few odds and ends will finish this room for company.” This will be their second summer in the home and three grandkids will spend several weeks – more time than last year.

(There’s so much to do on and off the water.)

In all, there are four-and-a-half bathrooms, three bedrooms, a FROG that can sleep eight, and the two offices with closets, which could become bedrooms if the need arises. (One has a balcony that offers a close-up view of the ospreys and other birds who like the area as well.) An outbuilding follows the design aesthetic and will eventually become a gym, plus storage.

For now, Rod continues to work part time, handling business for a nephew who builds many of the upscale pools you see on HGTV in the Los Angeles Area. Janna continues her fulltime career managing financials for UCLA Health. About once a month, the couple heads to a great restaurant in Columbia, or occasionally Charleston. The rest of the time they are content to work and play from the house, welcoming family and enjoying the perfect home in an idyllic setting, with room for everyone. 🌿

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A photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip, set against a background of many thin, wavy strips of light-colored paper that create a textured, undulating surface. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and shadows.

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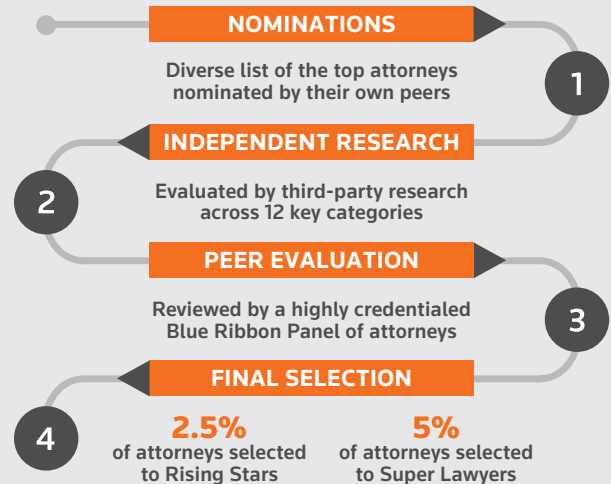
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OUR PATENTED SELECTION PROCESS



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TOP 25

AN ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF THE LAWYERS WHO RANKED TOP OF THE LIST IN THE 2023 SOUTH CAROLINA SUPER LAWYERS NOMINATION, RESEARCH AND BLUE RIBBON REVIEW PROCESS.

TOP 10

ASHMORE, BEATTIE B.
Beattie B. Ashmore, Greenville

COOKE, JR., M. DAWES
• *Ranked Number Two* •
Barnwell Whaley Patterson & Helms, Charleston

EPPESS, FRANK L.
Eppees & Plumblee, Greenville

GRAY, ELIZABETH VAN DOREN
Robinson Gray Stepp & Laffitte, Columbia

JOYE, MARK C.
• *Ranked Number Three* •
Joye Law Firm, North Charleston

LIGHTSEY, WALLACE K.
• *Ranked Number One* •
Wyche, Greenville

SWERLING, JACK B.
Law Office of Jack B. Swerling, Columbia

TRAXLER, THOMAS W.
Carter Smith Merriam Rogers & Traxler, Greenville

WALKER, G. TRENHOLM
Walker Gressette & Linton, Charleston

YARBOROUGH, JR., DAVID B.
Yarborough Applegate, Charleston

Applegate IV, William E., Yarborough Applegate, Charleston

Ashmore, Beattie B., Beattie B. Ashmore, Greenville

Bannister, James W., Bannister Wyatt & Stalvey, Greenville

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Administrative Law	S-3
Alternative Dispute Resolution	S-3
Antitrust Litigation	S-3
Appellate	S-3
Banking	S-3
Bankruptcy: Business	S-3
Bankruptcy: Consumer	S-3
Business Litigation	S-3
Business/Corporate	S-4
Civil Litigation: Defense	S-4
Civil Litigation: Plaintiff	S-4
Civil Rights	S-4
Class Action/Mass Torts	S-4
Closely Held Business	S-4
Constitutional Law	S-4
Construction Litigation	S-4
Creditor Debtor Rights	S-5
Criminal Defense	S-5
Criminal Defense: DUI/DWI	S-6
Criminal Defense: White Collar	S-6
Elder Law	S-6
Eminent Domain	S-6
Employee Benefits	S-6
Employment & Labor	S-6
Employment Litigation: Defense	S-6
Employment Litigation: Plaintiff	S-6
Environmental	S-6
Environmental Litigation	S-7
Estate & Trust Litigation	S-7
Estate Planning & Probate	S-7
Family Law	S-7
Franchise/Dealership	S-8
General Litigation	S-8
Government Finance	S-8
Government Relations	S-8
Health Care	S-8
Insurance Coverage	S-8
Intellectual Property	S-8
Intellectual Property Litigation	S-8
Mergers & Acquisitions	S-8
Personal Injury General: Defense	S-8
Personal Injury General: Plaintiff	S-8
Personal Injury Medical Malpractice: Defense	S-10
Personal Injury Medical Malpractice: Plaintiff	S-10
Personal Injury Products: Defense	S-10
Personal Injury Products: Plaintiff	S-10
Professional Liability: Defense	S-10
Professional Liability: Plaintiff	S-10
Real Estate	S-11
Securities & Corporate Finance	S-11
Securities Litigation	S-11
State, Local & Municipal	S-11
Tax	S-11
Transportation/Maritime	S-11
Workers' Compensation	S-11

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CONTINUED ON PAGE S-4

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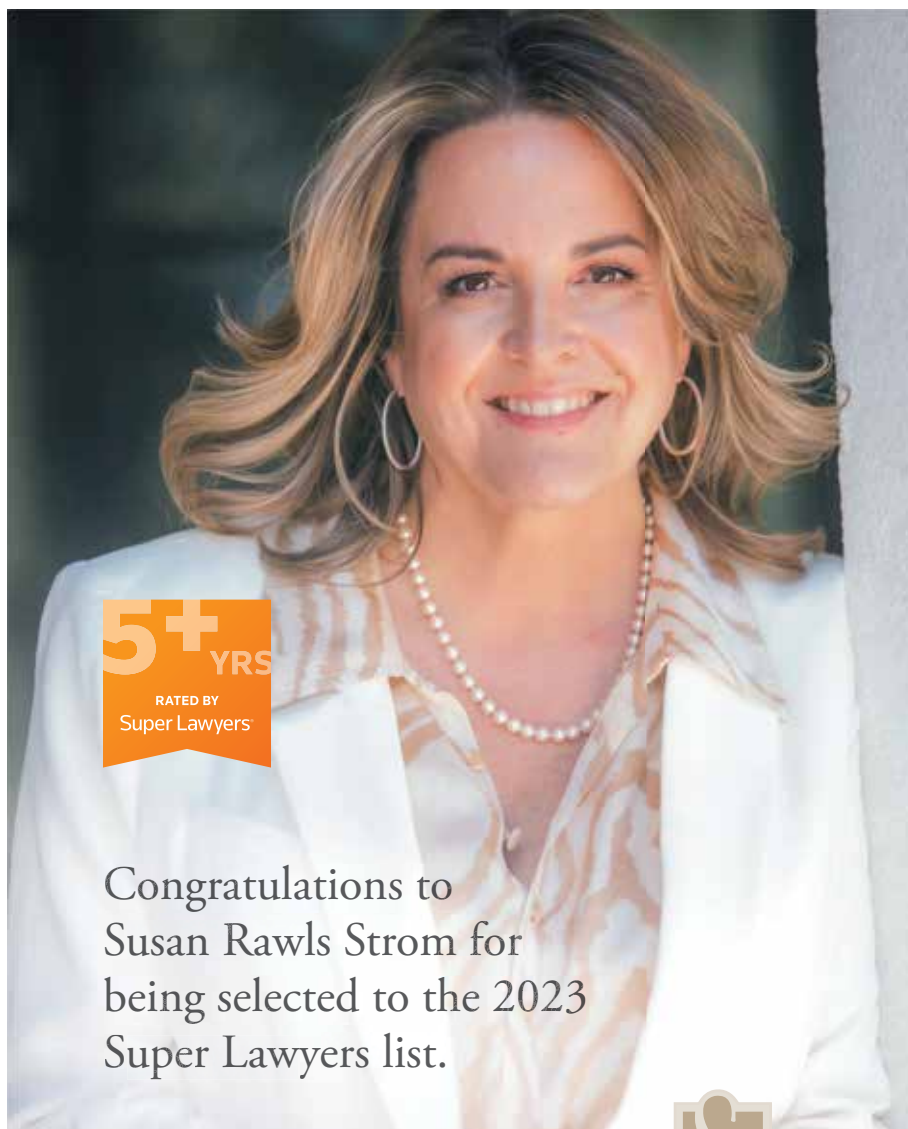
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FAMILY LAW

John O. McDougall is the senior partner of the law firm of McDougall Self Currence & McLeod LLP, with offices in Columbia and Sumter, South Carolina. He is a past president of the South Carolina Bar, South Carolina Trial Lawyers Association, South Carolina Bar Foundation and American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Foundation as well as a past vice president of the USA Chapter of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. He is a Diplomate in The American College of Family Trial Lawyers and named in *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Family Law. He has been admitted to practice in the United States District Court for the District of South Carolina and Supreme Court of the United States.

SOUTH CAROLINA 2023

FAMILY LAW RISING STARS
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CONTINUED ON PAGE S-10

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Maxey, Will, Pracht Injury Lawyers, Greenville

McCumber, Andrew, Slotchiver & Slotchiver, Mount Pleasant

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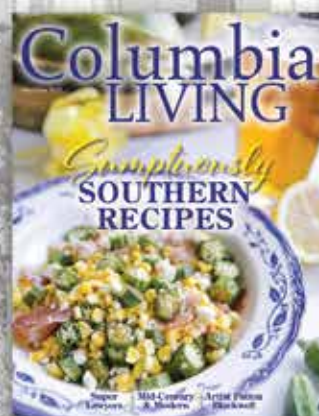
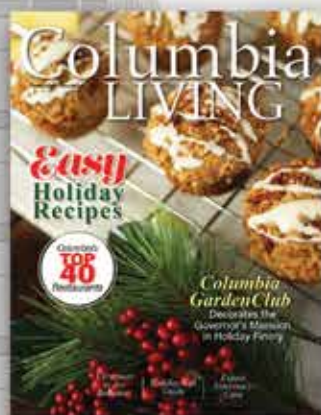


CRIMINAL DEFENSE

Jonathan Harvey has spent four years as an assistant solicitor (state court prosecutor) and as an assistant attorney general in the South Carolina Attorney General's Office. This experience gives him a unique insight into the criminal justice system, as he has handled cases on both sides of the table. In addition to this experience, he has almost three decades of experience defending clients in state and federal courts. His background provides unique insight into the criminal justice system.

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Food+Drink

dining out | in the kitchen | restaurant guide

Local Favorite Tombo Grille

Scallop Crudo is just one of the great recipes provided by the Forest Acres favorite.

*See page 57 for
this recipe.
Begins page 52*





*Pork Belly Burnt Ends over
Congaree Milling Co. Grits*

The War Mouth

Exceptional food seasoned with history and served with a side of community building

By ANNE WOLFE POSTIC

Cottontown, established in the 1890s, is one of Columbia's oldest planned suburbs. The neighborhood has always been remarkable, its tree-lined streets and beautiful homes drawing people in, so the recent surge in local business is unsurprising. In 2015, The War Mouth opened at the beginning of that resurgence, joining well-loved, established businesses and restaurants. It became a new hot spot where neighbors could gather. The War Mouth, with a menu full of creative-takes-on-classic dishes from the Midlands and the Pee Dee, has lured enthusiastic diners from farther afield.

Porter Barron of Columbia opened the restaurant with his childhood friend Chef Rhett Elliott at the helm. Barron and Elliott shared a vision, bringing whole hog barbecue to a full-service restaurant where people could gather for a meal, a drink, or a convivial hang. Former sous chef Harold Pendleton stepped into the executive chef role

in 2022 when Elliott became ill. Though Elliott passed away earlier this year, Pendleton continues to honor his memory in the kitchen and outside manning the smoker. The War Mouth is the place to go for local favorites made with care and an eye to history.

The smoker, where all the magic happens, is behind the restaurant, where there's plenty of room to hang out. That's a good thing because traditional smoking takes at least 12 hours. Unlike a slow cooker, which can be filled and then left unsupervised for hours until the meal inside is ready, a smoker has to be tended. Pendleton and other members of The War Mouth family stay until the wee hours monitoring the turkey, brisket, wings, or whole hogs as they're transformed into the smoky, tender delicious meats that appear on the menu to delight diners. This work is a labor of love, always undertaken with plenty of conversation, nerding out over culinary history and technique, and laughs – and maybe a little bourbon to make the mood merrier.

The sides accompanying those delectable slow-smoked meats are just as important. Classics like Hoppin' John, collard greens with ham hock, fried okra,

The War Mouth
1209 FRANKLIN STREET
803-569-6144
Thewarmouth.com

*Locally Foraged Morel
Madeira over Tidewater
Rice Grits*





(Top) Branding of the custom-made Chef Boards for Charcuterie; (bottom L-R) War Mouth Chicken Bog with Carolina Gold Rice; Carolina Heritage Farms Whole Hog, Pit-Smoked BBQ; tray of locally foraged Morel Mushrooms.

and squash casserole are usually on the menu, though the restaurant's focus on local produce brings plenty of seasonal changes. Most of these dishes are familiar to anyone raised in the South, but these might be even better than Grandma's. But please don't tell her, because the risk of starting a feud that lasts for years is far too great.

At The War Mouth, community and family are key, and they most definitely wouldn't want to bear the responsibility for starting a fight. The food may even be inspired by family favorites because Pendleton loves to peruse local cookbooks for ideas. His enthusiasm for the history of Midlands and Pee Dee cuisine is evident in every dish.

The menu also includes snacks (like deviled eggs and house-made pork rinds), small plates (including locally foraged mushroom tart and crawfish beignets), and cheese and charcuterie boards, perfect for sharing during a lively happy hour. Speaking of happy hour, visitors may recognize Will Green, formerly of the beloved dive bar, The Whig. Since its closing late last year, he's been doing a little consulting and pouring behind the bar at the War Mouth. His well-prepared cocktails and vast knowledge of the beverage industry perfectly complement the restaurant's menu. That knowledge, paired with a friendly devotion to the customer experience, will only make the War Mouth even more

beloved, the perfect neighborhood spot to frequent any day of the week.

In addition to lunch and dinner, the War Mouth offers catering for off-site events as well as event hosting in the restaurant. It's a great option for corporate gatherings. Delicious food and a fun scene will have coworkers bonding and enjoying themselves in no time at all. And who doesn't love a family event where no one has to do the cooking or the cleaning?

The decor is welcoming and eclectic. From vintage movie posters and local art on the walls to the collection of cypress knees over the bar, each piece tells a story. Those stories make for great conversation. The cypress knees, for example, are a nod to Barron and Elliott's love for fishing the Pee Dee River.

The river originates in the Appalachian Mountains, crossing through North Carolina and northeastern South Carolina's Pee Dee region before emptying into Winyah Bay in Georgetown County. Like the river, The War Mouth has followed a winding path since its inception. The restaurant has survived a lot, from the untimely death of Chef Elliott to the pandemic, which many spots didn't survive. Through it all, they've soldiered on, with a commitment to community, excellent food, and an atmosphere where anyone and everyone feels at home. 🌿

the NEIGHBORHOOD RESTAURANT in Forest Acres

Think about it. Combining comfort food with creative cuisine may well be the best of all possible worlds, especially when it's time to celebrate a special occasion. For more than 20 years, Tombo Grille has been an award-winning favorite: for the food, yes, but also the friendly staff, great wine and delicious cocktails.

We convinced owners Gini Mason and Len Henderson and Chef Jarrod Simms to share a few of their special recipes with us. Try them at home. We know you will love them. Then, make plans to dine there soon and see what's on the menu for May and June.

By KATHERINE PETTIT » Photos CARTER WADE PHOTOGRAPHY



STEAK SAUCE

Cilantro lime butter

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 bunch cilantro
- 1/2 lb butter room temp
- 2 limes, juice and zest
- 1 tablespoon, garlic minced
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- S&P to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Buzz all ingredients in food processor till smooth.
2. Melt over steak, fish chicken and even vegetables.

*Keeps in refrigerator for 7 days.
Freezes well.*



GRILLED CORN AND VEGETABLES

Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- 3 ears fresh corn, shucked
- 1 red bell pepper, cut in 1/2 and seeded
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cut in 1/2 and seeded
- 1-2 zucchini sliced 1/2" thick
- 1 red onion, sliced 1/2" thick
- Cotija cheese crumbled
- S&P to taste
- Season w olive oil and your favorite bbq rub

DIRECTIONS

1. Grill vegetables on each side to get a little char. Cool enough to handle and cut.
2. Toss w juice of a lime and a little salt and pepper.
3. Sprinkle w cotija cheese (*If you can't find cotija, crumbled dry feta cheese will work*)







FIG SALAD

Goat cheese, orange and grapefruit supremes, arugula, shaved fennel, candied hazelnuts, citrus vinaigrette
Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pint of fresh figs, quartered
- 4 oz goat cheese, crumbled
- 1 bag arugula
- 2 oranges, supremed
- 1 grapefruit, supremed
- 1 head fennel, shaved thin
- 1/2 cup candied hazelnuts, crushed (*available at specialty markets – option: toast hazelnuts instead*)

CITRUS VINAIGRETTE

DIRECTIONS

1. Juice from the oranges
2. Juice from the grapefruit
3. 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
4. 1 tablespoon honey
5. 2 tablespoons white balsamic
6. 1/4 cup olive oil
7. S&P to taste
8. Blend well and reserve

BASIL GIN SMASH

INGREDIENTS

- 3 leaves fresh basil, muddled
- Juice of half a lemon
- 2 oz of Hendrix Gin
- 0.5 oz of Bittermilk No. 2

DIRECTIONS

1. Add all ingredients to shaker, shake and strain into glass.
2. Add ice.
3. Finish with lemon twist and fresh basil.





FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE CAKE

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

- 225 g butter
- 500 g dark chocolate
- 100 g sugar
- 7 eggs
- Pinch of salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F
2. Melt butter, chocolate and a pinch of salt, mix well and set aside to cool to room temp.
3. Whip eggs and sugar till doubled (*about 10 min*) in stand mixer fitted w whisk attachment.
4. Fold 1/2 of the chocolate and butter w the egg mixture, then add the other 1/2.
5. Spray 8" round cake pan w non-stick spray and press plastic wrap. Make sure it has as little wrinkles as possible. Pour batter into cake pan and bake in a water bath for 35–45 min.
6. Refrigerate overnight and pull plastic wrap off. Cut to desired size and garnish with raspberries and powdered sugar or whatever you would like.

Note: Grams to ounces conversion tables available online

SCALLOP CRUDO

Scallops, radishes, coconut ginger broth, cilantro oil

Serves 4


INGREDIENTS

- 8-U10 scallops, sliced very thin
- 2 radishes, shaved thin
- 2 cans unsweetened coconut milk
- 2 limes zested and juiced
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, minced
- Cilantro leaves (*keep best for garnish and use most for the oil*)
- Fresno chili, sliced thin
- S&P to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. For coconut broth in a blender:
2. Add coconut milk, juice and zest of 2 limes,
3. Minced ginger and a pinch of salt and pepper
4. Blend well

CILANTRO OIL & ASSEMBLY

1. Blend 1½ cup cold oil with remaining cilantro in blender, strain through coffee filter
2. Place crudo on one side of plate and add coconut broth beside it. Drizzle cilantro oil around the plate. 



Restaurant Guide

Use our restaurant listings to find the best eating and drinking in Columbia.

Locations: (BL) Batesburg-Leesville; (C) Chapin; (D) Downtown; (DS) Devine Street; (F) Five Points; (FA) Forest Acres; (I) Irmo; (L) Lexington; (N) Northeast; (R) Rosewood; (V) Vista Area; (W) West Columbia.

American

Café Strudel (L) 309 S Lake Dr., 490-0895 (W) 300 State St., 794-6634. Great atmosphere and food.

Cola's Restaurant (V) 1215 Assembly St., 451-0051. The dinner menu is eclectic and evolving and includes lamburger, beef short ribs, shrimp succotash.

Liberty Tap Room & Grill (D) 828 Gervais St., 461-4677 and (I) 1602 Marina Rd., 667-9715 American and ethnic steak, chicken and seafood. Downtown offers a handcrafted brew pub. Lake Murray accessible by boat or car. Lunch and dinner.

Sound Bites Eatery (D) 1425 Sumter St. 708-3085. A variety of fresh options and delightfully curated creations. Lunch.

Tombo Grille (FA) 4509 Forest Dr., 782-9665. Forest Acres dinner hotspot serving incredible food, wines, and high-gravity beer.

Upper Crust (N) 843 Polo Road, #4, 888-6282. Pizza is the specialty, plus fresh salads, sandwiches and funky quesadillas.

Asian

Basil Thai (D) 702 Cross Hill Rd. Suite 300A, 782-0716. Award-winning cuisine with a welcoming feel. Lunch and dinner.

Boku Kitchen + Saloon (D) 916 Gervais Street, 708-8577. Colorful and inviting, the décor enhances its Pan-Asian cuisine and artfully crafted cocktails. Small plates and full-sized entrees also offer lighter options.

Duke's Pad Thai & Noodle Bar (W) 904 Knox Abbott Dr., Cayce, 661-6455. Cozy family-friendly restaurant with a bright neighborhood vibe brings fresh Thai flavors and a customizable noodle bar for dine-in or takeout.

Mai Thai Cuisine (WC) 2249 Sunset Blvd., 939-4795. Traditional Thai dishes and a bubble tea bar.

Miyo's (D) 922 S Main St., 779-6496; (FA) 3250 Forest Dr., Suite B, 743-9996; (I) 1220 Bower Pkwy., Suite E-2, 781-7788; (N) 715 Fashion Dr., 788-8878; (V)

701 Lady St., 255-8878; (L) 5594 Sunset Blvd., Suite D & E, 957-9888. Unique Asian flared foods, sushi, fine teas, and specialty entrees. Hours vary by location.

SakiTumi Grill & Sushi Bar (V) 807 Gervais St., Suite 103, 931-0700. Serving up award-winning sushi with fresh ahi tuna. Grill menu includes steak, chicken, and beef. Dinner.

Camon Japanese Restaurant (D) 1332 Assembly St., 254-5400. Hibachi-style seafood, steak and chicken. Dinner.

BBQ

Hudson's Smokehouse (L) 4952 Sunset Blvd., 356-1070. Voted some of the best BBQ in all of Columbia, offering full menu and Southern buffet. Lunch and dinner.

Little Pigs (N) 4927 Alpine Rd., 788-8238. Large buffet with everything BBQ and all the sides. W-Sun.

Shealy's (B-L) 340 East Columbia Ave., Batesburg-Leesville, 532-8135. Full menu, plus buffet for Q tasting. Buy the sauce, too. Closed Wed and Sun.

Deli/Café

DiPrato's (F) 342 Pickens St., 779-0606. New York-style delicatessen serving Mediterranean and Italian cuisine with signature sandwiches, soups, and salads. Lunch.

The Gourmet Shop (F) 724 Saluda Ave., 799-3705. A local favorite, serving homemade sandwiches, soups, salads, and desserts. Menu includes turkey pesto, chicken salad, and smoked salmon. Lunch.

Momma Rabbit's (L) 5082 Sunset Boulevard, Lexington. 356-1330. Great food with a Southern flair has made this family enterprise into a dining destination.

Rosewood Market and Deli (R) 2803 Rosewood Dr., 256-6410. Wide variety of menu selections such as coconut shrimp, gumbo, pasta, soups, and salads. Low carb healthy dishes available.

smallSUGAR (V) 709 Gervais St., 722-7506. Serving breakfast and lunch every day. Fresh bakery products, breakfast bowls, lunch bowls, sandwiches and more.

Caribbean

Legacy Caribbean Bar & Grill 215 O'Neil Ct., 708-8481. No-frills Jamaican food serving wings, oxtail, meat curries, and other Caribbean staples in a casual environment.

Pon Di River Caribbean Bar and Bistro 2344 Broad River Rd., 638-4220. Caribbean comfort foods w/ delicious island flavors.

Fine Dining

Al's Upstairs (W) 300 Meeting St., 794-7404. Romantic, elegant Italian restaurant overlooking the Columbia skyline. Entrees include fresh fish, steaks, chops, pasta, and lamb. Dinner.

Hampton Street Vineyard (D) 1201 Hampton St., 252-0850. Offering an array of cuisines with seafood, pastas, beef, and chicken. Menu changes quarterly. Lunch and dinner.

Motor Supply Bistro (V) 920 Gervais St., 256-6687. Serving up innovative food with a menu that changes twice daily. Lunch, dinner and Sun brunch.

Ristorante Divino (V) 803 Gervais St., 799-4550. Authentic Northern Italian cuisine, serving homemade pastas, seafood, duck, and beef. Dinner.

Saluda's (F) 751 Saluda Ave., Columbia, 799-9500. Upscale second-story bar and restaurant provides fine dining, fine wine pairings, and a cozy-classy experience overlooking the iconic Five Points fountain. Dinner.

Terra (W) 100 State St., 791-3443. Great neighborhood restaurant serving wood-oven pizzas, quail, red drum, steaks, and salads. Dinner.

French

Black Rooster (WC) 201 Meeting St., West Columbia, 724-2853. Casual "Frenchish" restaurant with an amazing rooftop bar overlooking the river. Steak Frites, Mussels, and much more.

Italian

Alodia's (I) 2736 North Lake Dr., 781-9814. (L) 101 W Main St., 957-1986. Authentic Italian dishes with a romantic flair, including time-honored favorites and updated versions of the classics. Lunch and dinner.

Il Giorgione Pizzeria & Wine Bar (DS) 2406 Devine St., 521-5063. Experience Italy firsthand at this authentic pizzeria & wine bar. House-made Panini, pizzas, pasta, mozzarella & desserts. Lunch and dinner.

Travinia Italian Kitchen (L) 5074 Sunset Blvd., 957-2422; (N) 101 Sparkleberry Crossing Rd., 419-9313. Contemporary Italian cuisine serving fresh pasta, soups, chicken, pizza, veal, and seafood. Lunch and dinner.

Villa Tronco (D) 1213 Blanding St., 256-7677. Enjoy casual fine dining in Columbia's oldest Italian restaurant. Old world charm with authentic recipes. Lunch and dinner.

Mediterranean

Gervais & Vine (V) 620 Gervais St., 799-8463. Spanish-styled Mediterranean wine and tapas bar offering a wide selection of beers, outside seating and a menu with culinary influences from across the region. Dinner.

Mexican

La Fogata (C) 105 Amicks Ferry Rd., 932-2475; (I) 11210 Broad River Rd., 542-7273 (W) 2805 Sunset Blvd., West Columbia, 791-8540. Fresh Mexican food served up by genuinely smiling faces. San Jose Mexicano Restaurantes (BL, C, FA, I, L, NE, R) Locations can be found throughout the Midlands. Fresh, authentic Mexican food with all the flourishes, including lunch specials, combination plates and desserts. Hours vary.

Seafood

Blue Marlin (V) 1200 Lincoln St., 799-3838. Serving dishes with a Cajun and Creole influence. Menu includes seafood, steaks, and chicken. Lunch and dinner.

Pearlz Oyster Bar (V) 936 Gervais St., 661-7741. Fun, eclectic restaurant serving the freshest seafood in a casual dining atmosphere. Dinner.

The Oyster Bar (V) 1123 Park St., 799-4484. Columbia's original oyster bar, serving the freshest Gulf oysters, steamed or raw, soups, and shrimp and grits. Dinner.

Southern

Mr. Friendly's (F) 2001 Greene St., Suite A, 254-7828. Serving new Southern cuisine including seafood, chicken, beef, and wild game. Sophisticated yet casual, extensive wine list and a wide variety of micro-brew beer. Lunch and dinner.

Poogan's Southern Kitchen, 4605 Forest Dr. #1. 803-745-8220. An expanding southern legend that remains true to its lowcountry roots. Lunch and dinner.

Steaks and Seafood

Chophouse of Chapin (C) 301 Columbia Avenue, Chapin. 723-2351. Steaks, plus

seafood and pork, served with seasonal items and sauces. Dinner.

Cowboy Brazilian Steakhouse (D) 1508 Main St., 728-0887. A unique, all-you-can-eat Churrascaria located in the historic Kress Building. Featuring a full salad bar, Brazilian hot dishes and 16 different types of meats sliced at your table. Full bar and wine cellar. Dinner.

Griffin Chophouse (L) 924 E Main St Lexington, 957-0863. Start with brisket candy, then choose from great cuts of beef, homemade appetizers, innovative salads and more. Lunch and dinner.

Halls Chophouse (D) 1221 Main St., Columbia, 563-5066. Family-owned high-end dining with a rich interior setting, offering up steaks cooked to perfection and choice seafood dishes. Dinner.

Rusty Anchor (C) 1925 Johnson Marina, 749-1555. Located on Lake Murray. A picturesque and unique lakeside dining experience, specializing in fresh seafood and steak. Outside dining available, full bar. Dinner.

Ruth's Chris Steak House (D) 924-A Senate St. (in the Hilton Hotel), 212-6666. USDA prime beef, chops, chicken, and fresh seafood. Reservations recommended. 🍷



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EPICUREAN PLAYGROUND

By KATE CHERNYSHEVA

As a former capital, Marrakech was home to Morocco's elite. Their extravagant riads and palaces have been repurposed to dazzle guests who happily endorse it as the city of luxury.

With ambassadors like Madonna and Chrissy Teigen, Marrakech seems like the perfect exotic destination, where Hollywood stars are treated like royalty. It's like a real-life movie set, in the Red City. What sets Middle Eastern hospitality apart is that every guest is treated like a VIP, regardless of their influence or status. And Marrakech offers a world of possibilities to indulge in unique experiences without breaking the bank – even for the ordinary wanderer.

Few destinations offer unique contrasts the way Marrakech does. Inside Medina's cats-cradle of medieval lanes, (the original walled settlement), you can be surrounded by the mysterious air of an ancient empire, laced with spice aromas wafting through the souk. Through an inconspicuous door is often a mosaic-tiled riad – a hotel which began its life as a traditional home with an interior courtyard.

Camels carry visitors into the depths of the Sahara Desert to experience nomadic life in a luxury camp. Hot air balloons take guests soaring above the Atlas Mountains, just in time for sunrise. Wanderers often find snake charmers and street performers in colorful long unisex coats called djellabas, attracting crowds in the middle of Jemaa El Fna Square. And tired travelers can opt for a rejuvenating spa treatment in a hammam.

A water seller in Marrakech

Jemaa El Fna Square



The old town of Marrakech

Shopping for ceramics in Marrakech



How will you live out your Arabian Nights fantasy in Marrakech?

Stay in a Palatial Style Hotel

A royal stay in Morocco conjures images of elaborate mosaics, tall arches, open-air courtyards with fountains and a plunge pool, colorful throw pillows, and flowing curtains. There is no better way to taste Moroccan-style luxury than by staying at one of Marrakech's many riads.


Hundreds of stunning options suit every budget. Jemaa El Fna Square Riad has had its fair share of Instagram appearances. It's a peaceful oasis amidst the vibrant and chaotic blur of the medieval amusement park that is Jemaa El Fna Square. Expect to be greeted every day with mint tea and rose petals in your room.

On the other hand, La Mamounia tips the luxury scale in its favor. Regarded as one of the best hotels in the world and a favorite for many celebrities, from Winston Churchill to the Kardashians, La Mamounia is the embodiment of Moroccan luxury. Every room is assigned a personal butler, and every polished tile shouts exclusivity.

But regardless of the number of stars in any hotel, Moroccan hospitality surpasses all expectations. Your breakfast will include more dishes than you can count, served wherever you like – from the privacy of your room to the roof terrace where you can admire the view of the towering minarets and the Atlas Mountains, which, by the way, nearly every hotel in Marrakech has, thanks to building regulations.



Jardin Majorelle is the home of fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent. The villa is surrounded by a lush botanical garden featuring exotic plants and trickling fountains.



Riad Jemaa El Fna and Spa

Experience the Sahara Desert

A trip to Morocco guarantees memories that will tug at your heart for years. One experience, impressive from start to finish, is glamping in the middle of the Sahara Desert.

Not only do you get to enjoy your creature comforts in such a remote place, but you'll be pampered with a stay in nomad-style luxury tents that even come with air-conditioning. Personal service and gourmet dining are non-negotiable inclusions.

Spend your day dune bashing, sandboarding, and riding a camel to visit

a Berber village. Enjoy a home-cooked tagine, gaze at the Milky Way in the night sky, and wake up to watch the ever-changing colors of the desert.

Rejuvenate in a Hammam

A hammam is an ancient purification ritual held in a spa-style steam bath. It's a quintessentially Moroccan experience. Private hammam rooms and an elaborate menu of treatments give a hotel its luxury bragging rights.

The fundamentals include pore-opening steam and vigorous exfoliating with a kessa glove and black olive soap

before being doused with cold water. Royal Mansour, one of the best spas in Marrakech, suggests pairing this ritual with Moroccan argan oil massage. Completely rejuvenated in your fluffy robe, you'll be floating into the orange blossom-scented relaxation area post-procedure to enjoy the breathtaking spa design, greeted with mint tea. A weekly treatment like that should definitely gift anyone with Madonna's youthful appearance. Okay ... maybe not. But it's no wonder why Moroccans have such impeccable skin and hair.

Indulge in Moroccan Cuisine

The Moroccan culinary world is sure to conquer your liver. Yes, that's right. In Morocco, it is the liver that symbolizes love, not the heart, because the liver aids digestion and promotes well-being. And the food is the highway of one's expression of love, carrying strong cultural values.

The dishes represent a unique blend of Arab traditions, inspiration from Southern Europe, and a combination of fragrant spices. And Marrakech is an epicurean playground. While hearty tagines and pastillas are plentiful, the city overflows with fine dining and fusion restaurants. If La Mamounia didn't make the cut as your overnight host, do make a dinner reservation at Le Marocain, will allow access to palace interiors and



*La Mamounia's
luxurious
interior*

Photos DREW REICHAUT



Morocco Up Close and Personal

Columbia resident Drew Reichart recently returned from a solo trip to Morocco. He shared some thoughts with *Columbia Living*.

Why Morocco?

I use Instagram to look for interesting places and unfamiliar cultures. I kept coming back to Morocco. It's colorful and so very different.

Where did you travel?

I stayed in Marrakech for several days at the beginning. It was chaotic in the crowded squares but very friendly. I heard music one day and found a snake charmer with three cobras and the handler playing music. He finally convinced me to sit down next to the snakes. It was fine, but I was nervous. Looking back, I probably shouldn't have agreed.

The square was filled with vendors calling out to the crowd, people on horseback, and lots of people walking around. Lots of colorful clothing. Chaotic is a good word to describe it.

Where else did you visit?

I really enjoyed Essaouira, a relaxed coastal town just a few hours from Marrakech. On the way, I passed a tree filled with goats, eating from the branches. I couldn't believe it. It was fascinating. Essaouira felt welcoming and is definitely a working town – with great food.

Close by was a preserve and I rode a camel there – very interesting.

What about the food?

Because so much food is eaten by hand, bread is very important and everywhere I went the bread was different and absolutely wonderful.

Other towns?

I went to Casablanca, and I know it's touristy but I found a re-creation of Rick's Café from the famous movie. It really was a wonderful place with great food and a super atmosphere. I bought several drinking glasses there to bring home as souvenirs.

I also went to Tangiers where I could see Spain. It's a big, bustling city but I enjoyed the international feel it had. Every place had rooftop restaurants which were always a lot of fun.

Advice for other travelers considering Morocco?

Do your homework. I was a bit uncomfortable at the thought of how I, a tall Catholic guy, would be received there. Everybody was so friendly, and I noticed right away that it is a very tolerant country, toward people of different backgrounds and different faiths. Of course you need to be careful in any large city, but I found the experience fabulous and would recommend it to anyone.

The heaviest thing I carry when traveling is empathy. – Drew Reichart

an unforgettable French and Moroccan dinner after, followed by a stroll through the hotel's iconic gardens.

Explore Marrakech's Magic Gardens

Marrakech is home to some of the world's most impressive gardens. One that stands apart is Jardin Majorelle, a cobalt blue and vibrant yellow home of the fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent who took inspiration from the villa's unique colors, purchased it to save it from destruction, and restored it to its current glory. The villa is surrounded by a lush botanical garden featuring exotic plants and trickling fountains. It's the perfect respite after a day exploring the city beyond the walls.

Take a Hot Air Balloon Ride over the Atlas Mountains

Once you've marveled at Marrakech on the ground, it's time to go sky high, as aerial views of the Atlas Mountains appear on the horizon.

Although to catch the sunrise you have to get up before the crack of dawn, the exhilaration of floating above the majestic plains is surely more effective than coffee. From high above, you start to see why Marrakech is called the Red City and what seemed like an assault on the senses below is actually organized chaos. Afterwards, breakfast is served in a nomad-tent, with, of course, mint tea. ☪

Celebrating Mother's Day Your Way

By ANNE WOLFE POSTIC



I miss my dad on Mother's Day. He always had us over to celebrate my mom and me, letting my own husband off the hook, a gift in itself. Dad would fire up the grill and Mom and I would sip white wine while everyone else did the work. So ... it really wasn't any different from any other night they had us over, but there was steak!

And I miss my mother, because Mother's Day was one of many days I enjoyed the heck out of her company. She never made a big deal about being celebrated. If we asked what she wanted, she always had the same answer, which I've adopted. "I just want y'all to clean your rooms and be nice to each other." Which reminds me I should have celebrated her more, which makes me sad. But that isn't all that different from any other random day. Mom's been gone for almost twelve years; Dad for almost nine.

If you've lost someone you love, you know the grief never disappears. It's more manageable than when it was raw, in the hours, days, and weeks after they died. It can come rushing back all at once, for no reason at all, no need for a special day.

I was watching a "Law and Order" episode about an aging, drug-addicted sex worker with a heart of gold. Something she said reminded me of my mom, which made me laugh because my mom had very little in common with the woman. (Specifically, she was not a sex worker. And a few glasses of pinot grigio a week, a little more in the summer, does not an addict make.) I laughed harder, imagining how she would have smirked when I told her about it. Then we would have laughed together until we cried. I started sobbing, on a random Wednesday, several years after she died. It happens.

On Mother's Day, I lay low. Going out for brunch isn't appealing. Honestly, that's less about seeing happy mothers and more about my anxiety over crowds and high decibel levels. (I also stay in on Valentine's Day and New Year's Eve because who doesn't love eating cheese for supper while drinking whatever you want for roughly a third of what you would pay in a restaurant? And you can do it all in stretchy pants. I love stretchy pants!)

I avoid social media because seeing people doing fun things with their parents can sting. I don't begrudge anyone their joyful moments because I had plenty of those! But scrolling through an online feed of moment after happy moment can be overwhelming. It can also be a reminder that there are other people like me, because they post gorgeous pictures accompanied by eloquent stories about their wonderful parents. Their grief is so much prettier than mine. And frankly, they also seem to have had better photographers. Or maybe they're just better looking? Social media: a great way to connect. Also? The devil.

If missing my parents wasn't enough, I feel guilty for being snarky and wanting to crawl in a hole on Mother's Day. I don't want to turn it into "Feel Sorry for Mom Day," forcing my children to feel guilty. Well, guess what. I may have done just that. And guess what else. That's just fine.

Grief is complicated. Mother's Day is one day out of 365, one in 366 in a Leap Year. My children won't be scarred for life if it isn't perfect. (And if they are, maybe they can be writers! And sell their brilliant novels. And buy me a beach house for Mother's Day!) It's as good a day as any to feel a little sad, or a lot. And those social media posts will survive without me adding one more 'like.' They really are moving, but I can read heartwarming stories and look at sweet photos another day.

This Mother's Day, I'm playing golf. Fun Fact: Mother's Day is the emptiest day on the golf course, probably because many mothers demand their partners cancel the tee time for just this one Sunday. Some mothers play golf, too, but most of them are nicer than I am and go out for brunch with their children instead. Maybe my children will play with me, but no guilt if they don't. Because it's just a day. I'll finish the day with fancy snacks, definitely wearing stretchy pants. Lucky for me, my kids love fancy snacks and stretchy pants as much as I do. So bring on the foie gras, fancy cheese, and Champagne. Happy Mother's Day! Which is not an order. I want you to do Mother's Day however you want. But also? I just want you to clean your rooms and be nice to each other. 🌸

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