This story, which ran in our December issue, is part of a series about great college towns to visit.

The Town: Charlottesville

The School: University of Virginia

Drive Time from NoVA: 2 hours, 10 minutes
What Makes it Great

American history, Southern charm, stunning architecture and world-class wines beckon in this charming town in Albemarle County nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Founding father Thomas Jefferson’s stamp can be found everywhere, from his neoclassical home and grounds at Monticello to the University of Virginia, which he founded; both are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Don’t miss a glimpse of the latter’s iconic Rotunda, the centerpiece of the campus; you can also see the room where Edgar Allan Poe lived when he was a student and some of the nation’s most historical documents at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library. Jefferson was a huge oenophile, and though he failed at making wine, today the region is world-renowned, with more than 35 palate-piquing wineries, such as Glass House Winery, located in a tropical conservatory, or Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards, where you can enjoy an elevated pairing menu at The Vintner’s Table. But two other U.S. presidents also called the area home, and tours of James Madison’s Montpelier and James Monroe’s Highland, both on the National Register of Historic Places, are great ways to immerse yourself in the architecture and history of the era. Carve out some time to stroll down the historical pedestrian Downtown Mall: One of the longest of its kind in the
entire country, it features more than 120 restaurants and shops open year-round. And restaurants like Oakhart Social and the aptly named The Local Restaurant prove why Forbes has referred to Charlottesville as the “locavore capital of the world.”

Must-Do’s

• Grab an everything bagel with cream cheese at Bodo’s, which prides itself on authentic New York-style water-boiled bagels made from scratch.

• If bronuts are more your thing, MarieBette Café & Bakery has received accolades for the sweet treat that’s a mash-up of brioche and a doughnut.

• Take a hike on Humpback Rocks, located just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, with views of the surrounding valley and hardwood forest.
• Ponder Virginia’s first immersive art exhibit, a whimsical installation called *The Looking Glass*, at IX Art Park, followed by a walk around the outdoor art park.

**Where to Stay**

The Quirk Hotel is C’ville’s first boutique art hotel, located on West Main Street in two historical former 19th-century homes. Rooms are uniquely decorated in a chic vintage style with pieces from local artists, and dining options include locally sourced fare and craft cocktails at the Pink Grouse and curated global whiskeys at sophisticated lounge Bobboo. Recently renovated, Boar’s Head Resort is one of the town’s most well-known accommodations. Its 168 rooms and suites are joined by a luxury spa; Audubon-certified Birdwood Golf Course (UVA’s official course); 600 acres with trails, lakes, ponds and wetlands; and several dining options, including the farm-inspired restaurant The Mill Room.

*This story originally appeared in the December issue. For more stories like this, subscribe to our monthly print magazine.*