



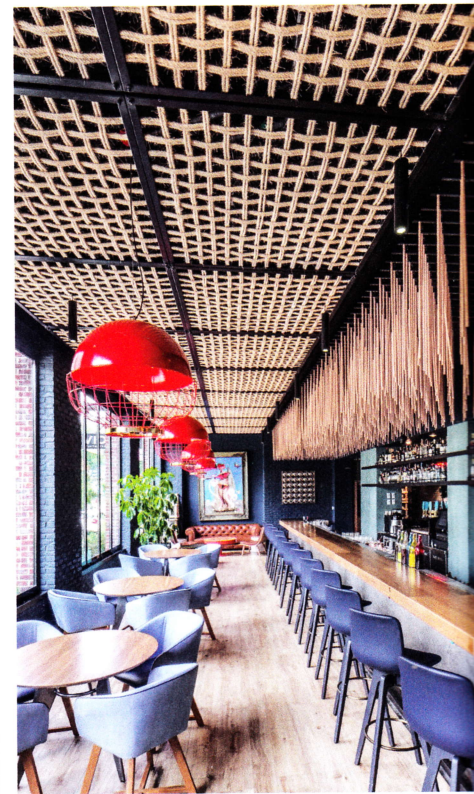
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200 and Counting

The *GT* team marks another milestone issue with reflections on travel. p. 38



Southern Hospitality

Raleigh boasts a business-friendly environment and culinary treasures. BY RON BERNTHAL

AROUND TOWN:
 (Left to right) AC Hotel Raleigh North Hills restaurant, The Kitchen; Vidrio restaurant; and North Carolina Museum of Natural Science

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EARLIER THIS YEAR, WHEN Amazon announced the top 20 finalists of 238 U.S. candidate cities hoping to host the company's second North American headquarters, Raleigh made the final group. About the same time, Apple announced plans to build another U.S. corporate campus, with Raleigh among several cities under consideration.

North Carolina Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland said the area is a "natural fit" for both projects. He pointed to the presence of other tech leaders such as IBM, Cisco, Red Hat and SAS Institute as proof the region is business-friendly and could support such large operations.

North Carolina's hospitable, laid-back capital city quietly emerged as one of the country's most dynamic business cities. "Last year *Forbes* named the Raleigh metro region as the nation's No. 2 Best Place for Business and Careers in 2017," said Michael Haley, executive director, Wake County Economic Development, which oversees business development in Raleigh and surrounding areas.

Known as the City of Oaks, Raleigh's tree-lined streets and friendly Southern ambience belie its economic diversity, with major employers like WakeMed Health & Hospitals and Duke Energy joining the tech leaders. BB&T Insurance Services, Carquest, First

Citizens Bank and Golden Corral also maintain headquarters here.

The city and its suburban communities are fast-growing leaders in information technology, life sciences, clean tech and advanced manufacturing. In 2017 the city saw major corporate expansions at Credit Suisse, INC Research, Citrix and MetLife and the arrival of innovative tech companies such as Trilliant Networks, which moved its global headquarters from Silicon Valley to the Raleigh suburb of Cary. Infosys, a huge multinational from India, will open its North Carolina Technology and Innovation Hub in Raleigh's Brier Creek this year.

The city is perhaps best known as one of the three anchors of Research Triangle Park, the largest and most prominent research park in the country. Located between Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, RTP covers 7,000 acres, houses more than 200 companies and employs more than 50,000 workers.

In addition, Raleigh offers a high quality of life with more than 160 miles of greenways, numerous museums, a brand-new bike share program and 85 music venues — not to mention on-going mixed-use projects creating lovely live-work environments near the center, especially in the revitalized Warehouse District. The Dillon, scheduled for completion this year, is a \$150 million, 227,000-square-foot mixed-use project. Its 18-story office tower boasts 40,000 square feet of street-level retail and restaurant space, and two six-story apartment buildings include a parking deck. The landmark project makes up an entire 2.5-acre city block across from the new Union Station, and the office tower occupies the site of the 1912 Dillon Supply Co. warehouse, incorporating one of its old brick walls into the building.

The \$90 million Union Station, a steel and glass multimodal



Half of the bicycles in Raleigh's new 30-station, 300-bike share program include small electric motors.

SCENIC DRIVES

Using highways and local roads, head 48 miles (55 minutes) south to rural North Carolina and visit the Bentonville Battlefield, the site in March 1865 of the last full-scale action of the Civil War in which the Confederate Army mounted a tactical offensive, the largest battle ever fought in North Carolina. The Harper House still stands on the grounds; downstairs rooms replicate a functioning Civil War field hospital, while the upstairs features period furnishings. Nearby Four Oaks, founded in 1885, retains a relaxed atmosphere. Friendly merchants and a historic downtown make this town of 1,800 residents a nice place for tasty eastern North Carolina-style barbecue. Afterward, follow the Blue Gray Scenic Byway, Gen. Sherman's path as he marched from Bentonville to Goldsboro after the battle. Begin the winding byway at I-95, Exit 90 on US 701 South; turn left on Devils Race-track Road.

The Uwharrie National Forest is a federally designated national forest located 88 miles (1.5 hours) west of Raleigh. The 50,645-acre forest derives its name from the ancient mountains atop which most of the forest sits. The Yadkin River marks the region's western border, the Great Pee Dee River the northern boundary. Scenic Route 24/27 bisects the forest, going through the tiny town of Troy with its beautiful six-mile hiking trail and historic Main Street marketplace.

rail terminal, will open soon, with long-distance Amtrak and regional train service beginning later this year. Replacing a 1950s-era Amtrak terminal, its 43,000 square feet include office, retail and restaurant space.

Southern Living called Raleigh a "culinary mecca," and its reputation as a foodie city grows each year. When noted local caterer and chef Coleen Speaks opened Hummingbird (it's small, like the bird) in late 2017, with its sea-green tile walls, yellow bar stools, white marble-top bar, New Orleans-style cocktail bar and café atmosphere, it capped a year of excellent restaurant debuts in the city. Hummingbird serves lots of cinnamon-sugared ricotta fritters, seafood po' boys and tasty hot and cold small plates. Serving three meals daily, it is part of Lynwood Brewing Concern's trendy but unpretentious dining, retail, gallery and unique business complex located within a former mid-century A&P grocery distribution center and warehouse near Downtown Raleigh.

The Downtown Raleigh Alliance reported city food and beverage sales hit \$223 million in 2017, beating the 2016 record by \$21 million. Other 2017 dining debuts include Vidrio, offering the flavors and soul of a Mediterranean kitchen with a menu infused with imported specialties and local ingredients; and Brewery Bhavana, a family-owned brewery, taproom, dim sum restaurant, library and flower shop all in one, making *Bon Appétit's* list of The Hot 10 Best New Restaurants in America.

The Morgan Street Food Hall and Market, Down-

town Raleigh's first food hall, opened this spring in the Warehouse District, a 22,000-square-foot space offering 60-plus culinary shops with chef-driven specialty foods. Vendors range from fully outfitted kitchens providing cooked-to-order meals and snacks to specialized shops selling food and related items. Indoor/outdoor spaces host curated art, music and large-scale special and culinary-themed events.

Hotel growth in Raleigh and Wake County surged in recent years, with new properties and major renovations a boom for leisure and business travelers. The 379-room Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley, the second-largest full-service hotel in the city, completed a \$37 million renovation and expansion covering all guestrooms, meeting and dining spaces. The 400-room Raleigh Marriott City Center, across the street from the Raleigh Convention Center, is the city's largest property. Two eclectic hotels opened last year just 10 minutes from the downtown: the 135-room AC Hotel by Marriott North Hills and The StateView, a 156-room Marriott Autograph Collection property on the campus of North Carolina State University.

Raleigh-Durham International Airport offers 400 daily flights to more than 50 non-stop destinations, including four international airports: Toronto Pearson, Cancún International, London Heathrow and Paris Charles de Gaulle. Terminal 2 received a design award from the American Institute of Architects and serves more than 11 million passengers a year.