

SNAPSHOT: RALEIGH

Tri-City Standout

By Emily Storrow

Raleigh's identity hasn't always been easy to pin down. As North Carolina's capital city, it has the legislative aura and shiny high-rises you'd expect. It's also part of the Triangle—the tri-city region touted for research, academia, and innovation. But where Durham has its signature grit and Chapel Hill its calling card as a college town, Raleigh has long come off as the buttoned-up older sibling who had her life together. So what is it, then, that draws us to the City of Oaks? In a word, it's the people. And perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in its culinary community, a deeply diverse group of folks as dedicated to their city as they are their kitchens, who push the Southern food narrative forward by exploring both its roots and intersections with other cultures.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROOTS

While Raleigh's dining scene has turned heads in recent years, it didn't come out of nowhere. In 2007, Ashley Christensen opened **Poole's Diner**, a new-age lunch counter with an ever-changing blackboard menu of comfort food rooted in regional ingredients. More than a decade later, it's still cranking out plates like heirloom tomato pie drizzled with sherry vinaigrette and seared flounder atop succotash and fried avocado, plus a can't-miss macaroni au gratin. Her fleet has grown to seven in recent years with **Poolside Pie**, which slings Neapolitan-style pizza, and **Beasley's Chicken + Honey**, where each perfectly crisped piece of fried bird gets a drizzle of the sweet stuff.

Another deep-rooted local, Scott Crawford recasts the Southern larder as art form. Think compressed melon carpaccio at **Crawford & Son**, and a butternut squash tarte tatin dressed up with camembert and sorghum, scallion, and sage at his French bistro **Jolie**.

Meanwhile, Raleigh native Sean Fowler has built a temple to all things Southern and seasonal in **Mandolin**. In addition to area purveyors, restaurant ingredients are sourced from Fowler's own Mandolin Farm, planted north of the city.

ADDING TO THE POT

Raleigh's transplants are weaving new flavors into the city's culinary fabric. Look for **Garland**, which is the cardamom and curry playground of Cheetie Kumar. The Indian-born chef explores the commonalities between



Raleigh's extensive art collection is nearly rivaled by the city's expanding culinary community.



POOLE'S DINER

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF NCMA; COURTESY OF NCMA; COURTESY OF THE UMSTEAD; JESSICA CRAWFORD PHOTOGRAPHY; ANGIE MOSIER



NORTH CAROLINA
MUSEUM OF ART



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Southern and pan-Asian food traditions through their many shared ingredients—think rice, okra, tomatoes, and cane sugar. **Jose and Sons** in the Warehouse District brings a Latino vibe with its braised collard green tamales. At **Centro**, Angela Salamanca's love letter to fresh, regional Mexican flavors, it's hard to resist the institution's twenty-plus ingredient mole. And at **St. Roch Fine Oysters + Bar**, you'll find a solid selection of North Carolina oysters, as well as a nod to New Orleans with dishes like red beans and rice and 'gator bolognese over rigatoni.

DRINKING IT IN

Heirloom Brewshop is a teahouse-meets-sake-bar in a sleek, bright space that is built for lingering. Or, savor a cold brew while soaking in the

sunshine on the patio outside **Yellow Dog Bread Co.** Inside the cool confines of **Foundation**, a hip hideaway, you'll find a solid whiskey selection and **Person Street Bar** can supply you with a good North Carolina brew.

WHERE TO RETREAT

Set a few hours aside to explore the **North Carolina Museum of Art**, home to an impressive permanent collection of modern and classical works, including a Rodin sculpture garden. Then, find your way to **The Umstead** in nearby Cary—its 16,000-square-foot spa and art collection are just the ticket, as is a multi-course meal at **Heron's**. Closer to town, the **Guest House Raleigh** is set in an 1880s-era house that was relocated and turned into an eight-bedroom boutique hotel offering cozy digs right downtown.



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