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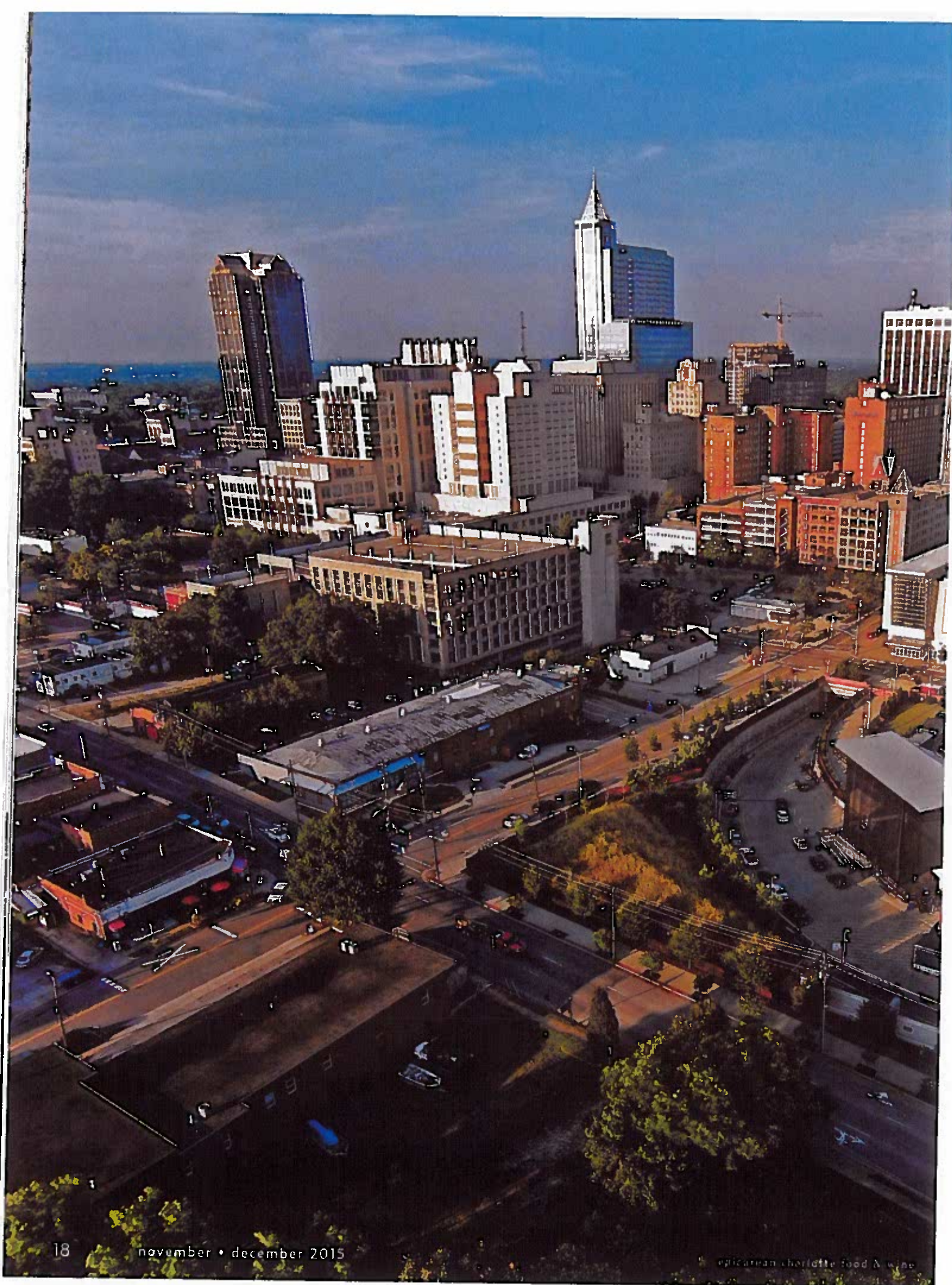
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in the capital city

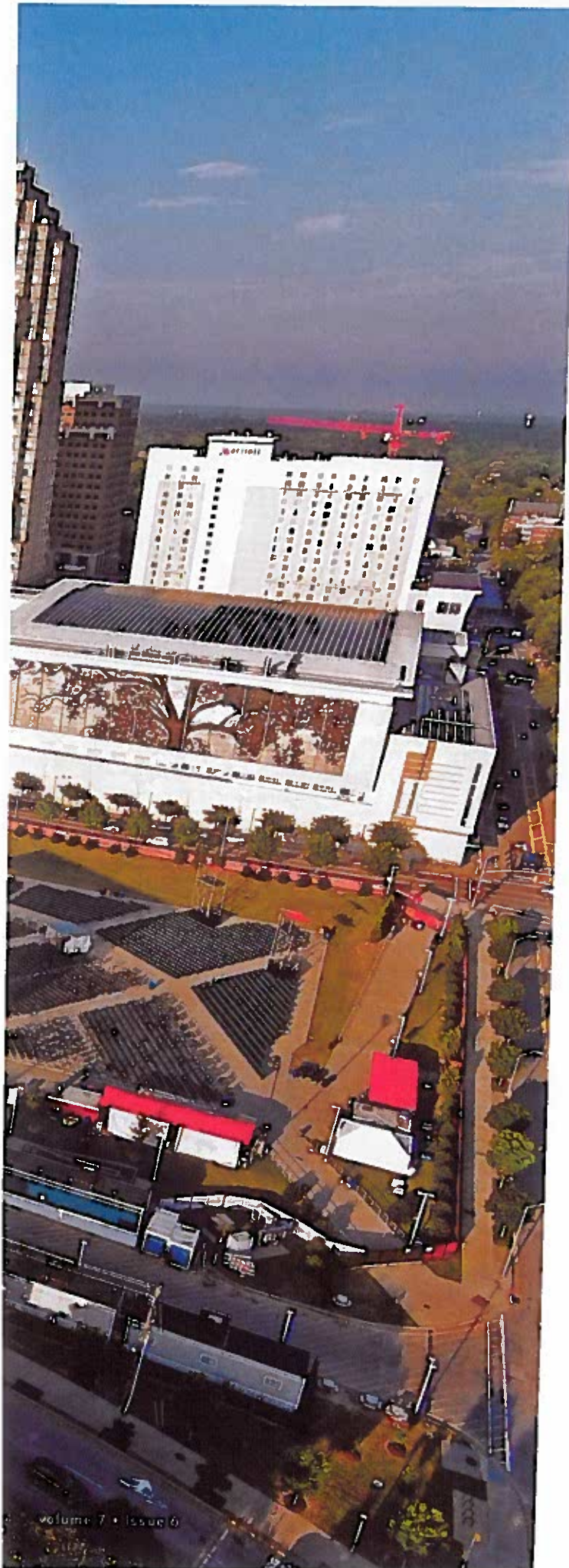
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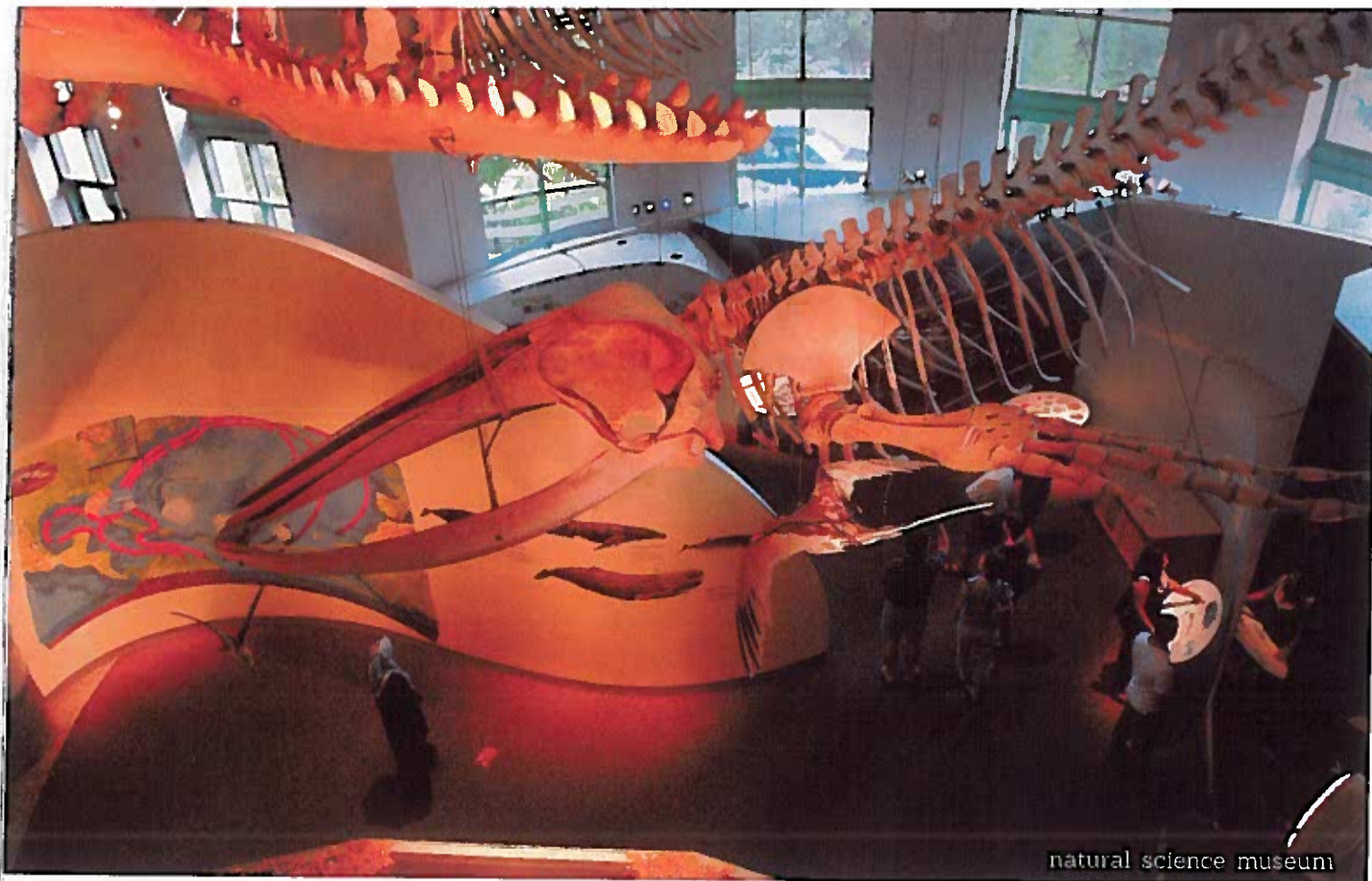


# relish good times in the capital city

by zenda douglas

**i**f you grew up in North Carolina, you may well have climbed onto a long, yellow bus with your schoolmates and headed to Raleigh to see all the trappings of state government—the state capitol building, the legislative building and the executive mansion. If you haven't been back to Raleigh in recent times, you may not realize that the sights and sounds around government buildings, though still completely worthy of a trip, represent the tip of the iceberg that is made up of hundreds of reasons to visit this smart and savvy city.





This year has been another award-winning year for the city of Raleigh, which has claimed the number two spot among the Best Large Cities to Live In according to *WalletHub*, fifth on the list of Best Local Food Scene according to *USA TODAY* and *10 Best's Readers' Choice*, and second among the Top 10 Music Cities Other Than Nashville according to *Music From The Row*.

In fact, it might be fair to call the City of Raleigh the City of Accolades. High rankings have poured in for virtually every aspect of life in the City: "America's Best City" according to *Businessweek.com*; "#2 Among the 10 Fastest-Growing U.S. Cities" according to *CNNMoney*; one of "America's Coolest Towns" according to *GQ Magazine*; and "Top 10 Tastiest Towns in the South" according to *Southern Living*. It's been called the "City of Oaks" because of its tree-lined streets and commitment to green space, and the "Smithsonian of the South" for its high caliber of free museums. Raleigh is the state capitol of North Carolina, and its Capitol Building is among the "10 Amazing State Capitol Buildings," according to *Conde Nast Traveler*.

Raleigh sits in the middle of the state and is about a three-hour drive from Charlotte. It's easily accessible by plane, train or automobile. The city is surrounded by 11 smaller towns, each with its own history, unique downtown, concerts in the park, golf course communities and one-of-a-kind retail. Greater Raleigh includes Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, Morrisville, Rolesville, Wake Forest, Wendell and Zebulon.

The long list of what makes Raleigh cool includes unique and award-winning restaurants, four-star hotels, concert amphitheaters, theater and opera companies, professional sports, a nationally-recognized symphony, world-class museums, vibrant festivals, beautiful golf courses and greenways, and all the history you can take in.

Raleigh has an astonishing list of free activities and attractions, so your travel time in the Capital City doesn't have to break the bank. There are more than 40 free things to see and do. Here are just a few of the places you can visit for no money down: the [North Carolina State Capitol](#); the [North Carolina Executive Mansion](#); the [African American Cultural Center & Art Gallery](#); [Artspace](#); [Legends of Harley Drag Racing Museum](#); the [Bass Lake Park & Environmental Education Center](#); [JC Raulston Arboretum](#); [City Market](#) and their free First Friday Concerts; [Nutzilla](#), the City of Oaks' enormous acorn; the [North Carolina State Farmer's Market](#); and the [North Carolina State University Solar House](#), just to name a few.

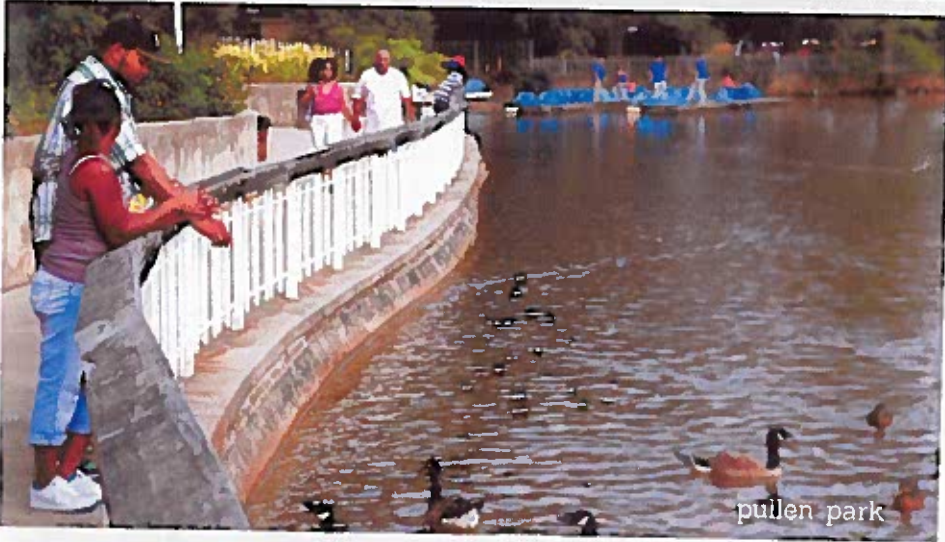
Then there are the museums—a depository of the state's history, an innovative exhibitor of our natural world and a world-class collection of art—all for free.

The [North Carolina Museum of History](#), an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, explores more than 14,000 years of North Carolina history, from the earliest inhabitants through the 20th century. Participate in interactive displays that are part of [The Story of N.C.](#) exhibit, and explore more than 3,000 square feet of space dedicated





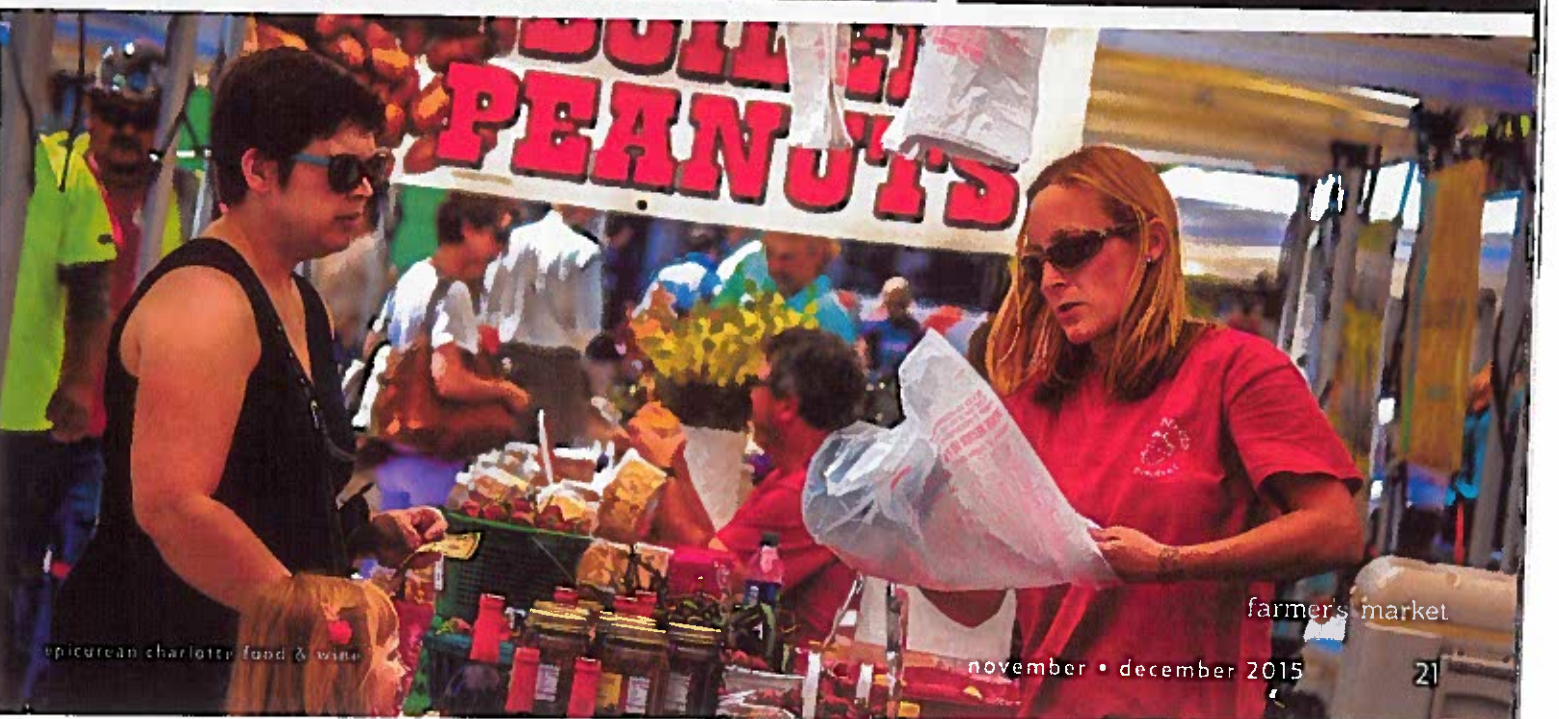
n.c. state capitol



pullen park



executive mansion



farmer's market





to the **N.C. Sports Hall of Fame** exhibit, where you can learn about over 300 sports legends and the impact of sports in the state.

Become enthralled with the natural world at the Southeast's largest natural science museum, the **North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences**. The museum offers seven floors of immersive exhibits, plus live animals, 3D movies, a three-story multimedia theater, working research labs and hands-on investigation labs.

The **North Carolina Museum of Art** is poised to inspire. One of the premier visual arts museums in the South, it features a dramatic gallery building, which houses more than 30 Rodin sculptures and is a center for special exhibitions. There is also a 164-acre museum park onsite.

Numerous other museums help to make up Raleigh's rich cultural landscape. Spark your own imagination as you explore cutting edge art and design at the ever-popular **Contemporary Art Museum**, or CAM. Guided tours are available every Sunday at 2 p.m. Be sure to be on hand the first Friday of each month for food trucks and entertainment. CAM is located in Raleigh's Warehouse District, a trendy six-block area adorned with repurposed red-brick warehouse spaces.

Pack up the kids and head for **Marbles Kids Museum**, a vibrant, hands-on, minds-on children's museum in downtown. Children of all ages can imagine, discover and learn in dozens of interactive exhibits. You'll also find North Carolina's only giant-screen IMAX theatre here.

History runs deep in Raleigh, and there are numerous sites where you can visit and feel like you're part of it. History buffs will love wandering through the **Joel Lane Museum House**. Colonel Lane was a founding father of North Carolina's capital city and an officer in the Wake County militia during the American Revolutionary War. Visitors can get a glimpse of old Raleigh by visiting **Historic Oakwood**, a 30-block historic neighborhood of lovingly-restored Victorian and early 20th-century

homes—many of them with beautiful gardens—through which visitors can walk or drive.

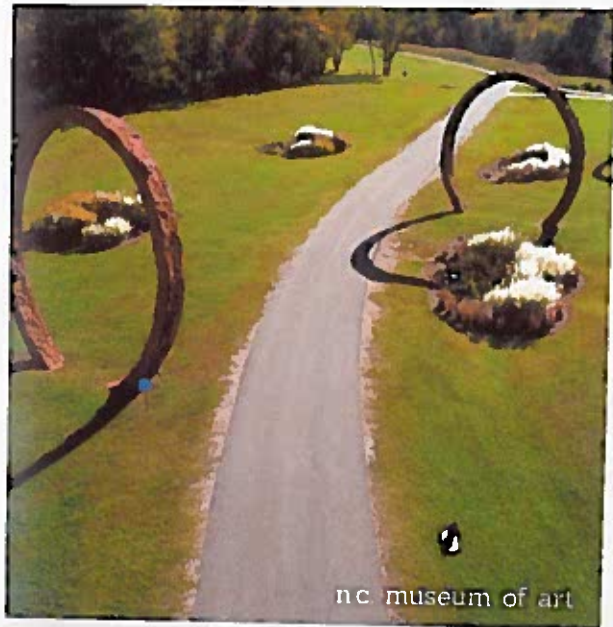
Raleigh also ranks high as a top cultural destination due in part to its high caliber art, symphony, ballet and theatre. Here, you can enjoy the **Carolina Ballet**, become enthralled with opera at the **North Carolina Opera** or tap your toes to the **North Carolina Symphony**. All of these are housed within **The Duke Energy Center for the Performing Arts**, a place that produces big-budget, professional shows. Make plans to see a play at the **Raleigh Little Theatre** or **Theatre In The Park**, well-known for its modern rendition of the Charles Dickens classic "A Christmas Carol."

Raleigh's music scene has exploded in recent years, bringing in a host of nationally-touring rock stars and local indie groups. No matter what your musical tastes, you'll find something that suits you. Stay abreast at who's playing at the **Walnut Creek Amphitheatre** or the **PNC Arena**. For an outdoor experience, bring your blanket to the **Koka Booth Amphitheatre** or the N.C. Museum of Art's **Joseph M. Bryan, Jr. Theater** in the Museum Park. Don't forget to experience the area's newest outdoor live music venue, **Red Hat Amphitheater**. All in all, Raleigh claims more than 80 live music venues.

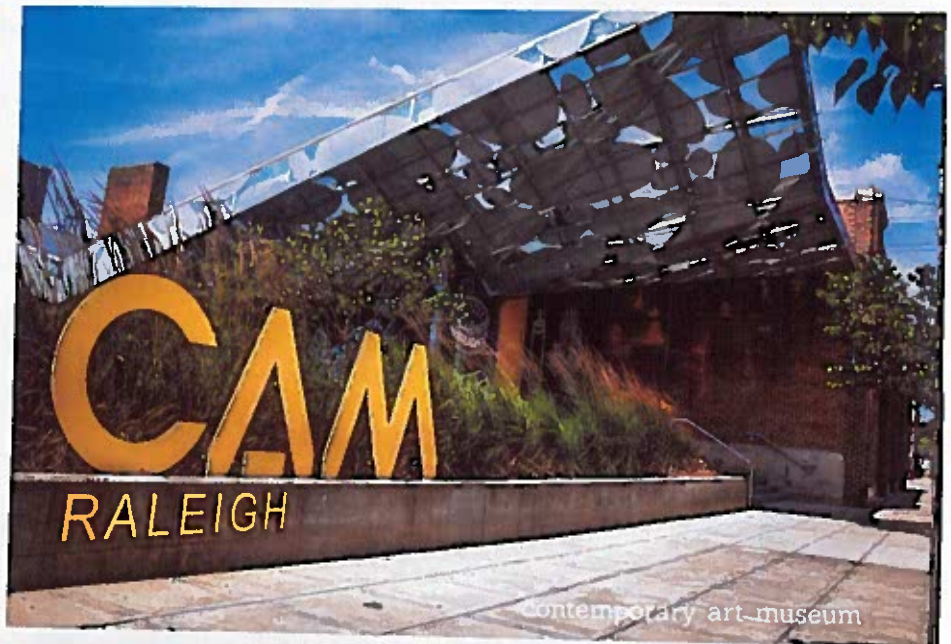
The Raleigh area has also earned an unprecedented reputation as a professional and collegiate sports destination. Not only is there an exciting array of collegiate sports, but there's also professional hockey (**Carolina Hurricanes**), baseball (**Carolina Mudcats**) and soccer (**Carolina RailHawks**). You may also be surprised to learn that Raleigh is one of the best places for mountain biking in the Southeast. **Falls Lake State Recreation Area** is a well-known place to traverse a trail. Or hike down some of the **American Tobacco Trail's** 22 miles, which run throughout the Raleigh area.

As you can see, Raleigh is a city that the whole family can enjoy.





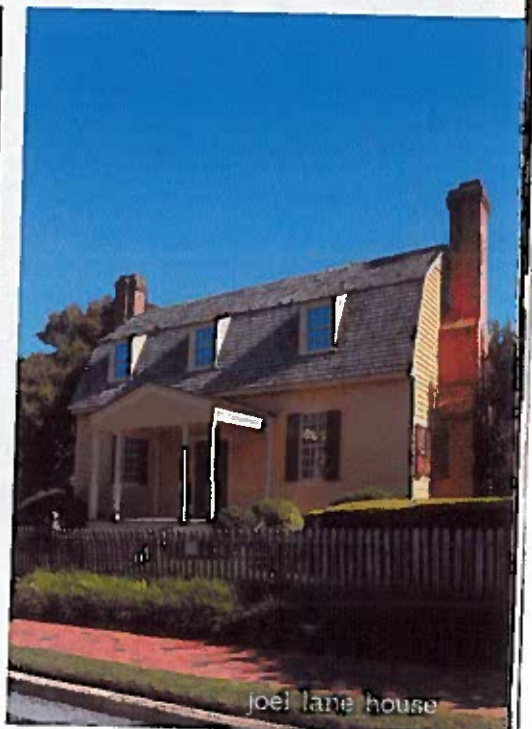
nc museum of art



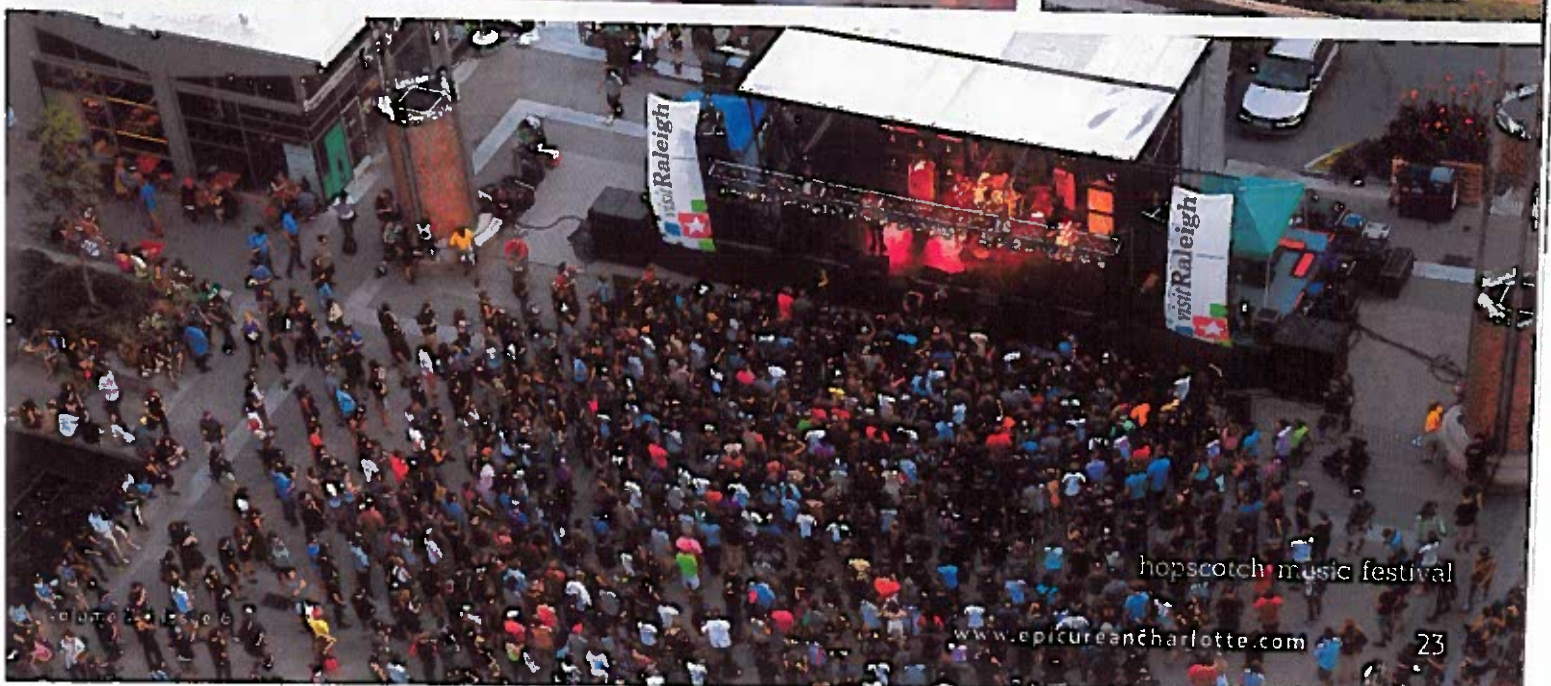
contemporary art museum



carolina ballet



joel lane house



hopscotch music festival



# relish good eats and drinks in raleigh



fox liquor bar



poole's diner

Raleigh's culinary scene is growing strong, and chef and entrepreneur Ashley Christensen is at the center of it. Christensen owns a string of unique and innovative restaurants, all in the downtown area. She brought home the gold in 2014 by winning the Best Chef in the Southeast award from the James Beard Foundation.

Don't let the chalkboard menus at **Poole's** fool you. This restaurant serves up simple fare that is also sophisticated and artful. Poole's works with local growers and artisans whenever possible to showcase their crafts as well as their own. Under Christensen's talented leadership, Poole's is the latest reincarnation of the 1950s Poole Luncheonette, possibly Raleigh's first downtown diner. Today, the environment is retro-chic with a double horseshoe bar and red leather banquettes paired with modern elements such as lucite chairs.

The **Beasley's Chicken + Honey** name says it all. Just throw in the waffles at this restaurant, which takes comfort food to a whole new level. Offering great Southern food with a twist, be sure to check out the chicken pot pie with milk gravy and a cornmeal crust, the creamed collard greens and the Berkshire pork shoulder meatloaf. How about some crispy cheese grit fries with chow chow and malt aioli? Yes, please!

At **Chuck's**, it's all about the burger. House-ground, flat-top-seared, 100 percent Chuck burgers are finished with amazing toppings like Wisconsin buttermilk bleu cheese, roasted poblano chilis, Tennessee sorghum dijon and roasted tomato malt vinegar slaw.

**Joule Coffee + Table** offers up not only a variety of uplifting coffee concoctions, but also a highly-rated brunch that includes tasty sweet potato hotcakes. Bring on the night at **Fox Liquor Bar**, where the variety of handcrafted cocktails will make your head spin. Pair up a cocktail with the highest quality cheeses and meats. Christensen's newest venture, **Death + Taxes**, is dedicated to the technique of cooking with wood fire. Whether you choose from this elegant restaurant's menu from the sea, on the land or of the land, your meal will be expertly prepared.

The up and coming North Person Street District is attracting a lot of attention with restaurants such as **The Station**, where you can find great sandwiches and burgers, outdoor seating and a host of local beers. The hot, trendy, upscale restaurant **The Stanbury** is there, with its farm-to-table Southern focus. Person Street also has a **Wine Authorities** store. Next door to that, chef Scott Crawford, formerly of The Umstead Hotel and Spa, has recently opened **Standard Foods**, a combination restaurant and grocery story with an intensely local focus. Standard Food's own backyard feeder farm (Raleigh City Farm) and whole animal butchery program will play leading roles in both the N.C.-centric restaurant and neighborhood grocery.

There are a host of other wonderful restaurants scattered about Raleigh. Patrons at **ORO Restaurant & Lounge** choose from a delicious





downtown farmer's market

raleigh city farm

variety of menu options that are designed to be shared. Bring your friends and enjoy the stream of dishes that are brought to the table throughout the meal. ORO also caters to vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free needs, so you can be sure there's something for everyone.

**Mandolin** is the culinary brainchild of Raleigh-native Sean Fowler, formerly the chef at the AAA, 5-Diamond, Farrington House in Pittsboro, NC. His philosophy is to keep his cooking and the restaurant's ambiance close to home. Meats, poultry, seafood, produce and specialty products are sourced from a large group of North Carolina farmers, ranchers and artisans. Try the grilled Heritage Farms pork chop, country fried steak, pan-fried catfish or the cauliflower, mushroom, potato croquettes.

If you find yourself craving Laotian cuisine, or even if you've never heard of it, make your way over to **Bida Manda**—it's worth the trip. Bida Manda is the Sanskrit ceremonial term for mother and father; the owners named the restaurant in honor of their parents in Laos. Try the chicken or pumpkin curry or the stir-fry cashew ginger chicken. The atmosphere is as unique as the food, with salvaged wood from old barns and churches and three tons of hand-tied sticks from Western North Carolina.

For an all around lovely experience—the restaurant is as artfully decorated as the cuisine is creative—visit **Garland**. You'll want to travel through the menu from top to bottom. Be sure to try the Pakora, bird nest fritters made of farmer's market vegetables and spicy chickpea and rice batter served with tamarind and cilantro-mint chutneys. The lamb curry comes with local summer squash, turnips and kohlrabi, Old Milburnie baby carrots, new potatoes, green garbanzo beans, coconut milk broth, cardamom basmati rice, pickled onion and whipped coconut cream. Korean sticky rice completes the dish of Bo Ssam, Korean pear glazed Heritage Farms pork belly served with local butterhead lettuce, garlic chips, white kimchi, chili sauce and pickled shitakes.

The **Angus Barn** has been an indelible part of Raleigh's history since 1960, a long and amazing run for any restaurant. Its dedication to fine dining is captured in every detail. Over 13,000,000 diners can't be wrong—that's how many people the famous red barn has served over the years. The Chateaubriand is legendary, and diners will walk away with fond memories, whether there for a special evening out or a major-scale event.

Raleigh loves its beer, and with over 15 breweries scattered around the city, there's plenty to go around. Whether you are a beer connoisseur or just thirsty for a local beer, Raleigh's got a beer hot spot for you. Consult the **Raleigh Beer Trail** for a list complete with addresses and phone numbers. Many of these breweries allow for tours.

Be sure to save an afternoon or evening to visit **The Raleigh Beer Garden**. This new establishment has set a world record with 366 beers on tap. Pick your comfort zone with two large indoor and outdoor floor spaces, plus a rooftop area, and don't leave without pairing up your beer selection with gourmet comfort food.

Check out one of Raleigh's coolest new bars, **The Anchor Bar**, which serves up classic cocktails "without the attitude" and a decent selection of craft beers.

Bon Appetit and bottoms up! 🍷

