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Carolina Living™

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO EXPLORING NORTH CAROLINA

Weekend in Raleigh

The City of Oaks is spreading its branches with new museums, restaurants, and attractions. Now's the time to check out the capital city

COURTESY KAREN MALINOFF/NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF ART

North Carolina Museum of Art's new \$72.3 million addition

MARCH

SPEND A WEEKEND IN THE NEW AND IMPROVED RALEIGH 2

FOUR NC RESTAURANTS WITH SIGNATURE TAKES ON FRIED CHICKEN 8



**LEFT: North Carolina
Museum of Art
BELOW: Second Empire
Restaurant and Tavern**



Driven by the ingenuity of the Research Triangle and the energy of nearby universities,

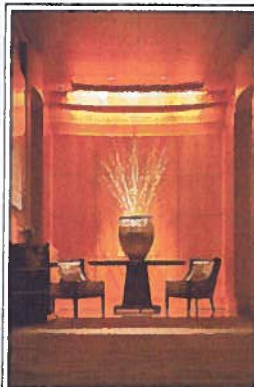
Raleigh is booming with fresh museum additions and unique eateries such as Market Restaurant and 18 Seaboard, as well as a bevy of one-of-a-kind art galleries, lounges, hotels, performance spaces, and boutiques. Recently, the North Carolina Museum of Art settled into a new \$72.3 million addition (which boasts an entire gallery of Rodin sculptures), while over in the Warehouse District, the paint has barely dried on the new Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh. And next month the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences is set to open an 80,000-square-foot Nature Research Center wing, which will demystify cutting-edge science by combining public

exhibitions with working laboratory space. The building's multimedia hub is a three-story model of the Earth, towering above West Jones Street.

"The revitalization of downtown has done so much for Raleigh," says newly elected mayor Nancy McFarlane. "Investments in our infrastructure and cultural amenities—expanded sidewalks, new museums, public art, an updated

convention center—have spurred incredible growth. The Raleigh state of mind is progressive innovation and creativity with a side of Southern sweet tea."

So if you haven't been to Raleigh in a while, you'll likely be asking, "When did this acorn sprout into a full-grown tree?" We've got you covered with an extensive three-day guide to maneuvering through the capital city's booming branches. ⇨



WHERE TO STAY

THE UMSTEAD HOTEL AND SPA

Service as high-end and genuine as anywhere you'll find in the city (from \$279); theumstead.com

RALEIGH MARRIOTT CITY CENTER

A fine fit for folks who want the consistency that comes with a reliable chain (from \$149); marriott.com

THE OAKWOOD INN BED & BREAKFAST

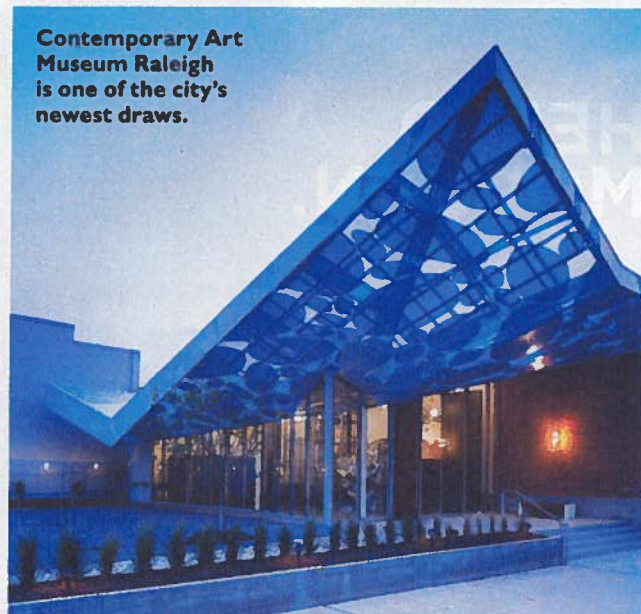
Antique furnishings and breakfast options such as pancakes and shirred eggs (from \$139); oakwoodinnbb.com

THREE DAYS IN THE CITY OF OAKS

A FOOLPROOF ITINERARY TO ENJOY THE NC CAPITAL'S BEST RESTAURANTS AND ATTRACTIONS



Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh is one of the city's newest draws.



FRIDAY

10 a.m.

1. The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

Even before the expansion, which opens next month, it was the Southeast's largest natural-history museum. Its four floors house a world of exhibits including dinosaurs and the butterfly-packed Living Conservatory. The addition of the Nature Research Center, though, changes the game. Along with new labs with themes such as paleontology and geology, Earth and space observation, and biodiversity, its signature globe is actually a multimedia presentation space accessible to all of the state's public schools remotely (free admission). naturalsciences.org

1 p.m.

2. Market Restaurant

Calling it local doesn't do this laid-back bistro justice. Fresh herbs grow on the terrace. The mushrooms are from nearby Umstead State Park. Honey comes from bees living in hives on the roof and is shared with neighbor Escazu Artisan Chocolates—the proper next stop on your itinerary, by the way. For lunch, owner and chef Chad

McIntyre suggests the roasted goat shoulder with pepper jelly served over sweet potato gnocchi (\$16). Don't leave without trying the Crack Fries tossed in truffle oil and fresh herbs and topped with Asiago (\$8). eatatmarket.com

3 p.m.

3. Contemporary Art Museum Raleigh

Opened one year ago, this avant-garde, non-collecting museum is located in the Warehouse District in a space that once housed produce. Today it shelters a continually rotating raft of international artists who stretch the way we look at and think about the function and shape of imagination. This month's exhibition, "Born Digital," features the work of digital and new-media pioneers (\$5). camraleigh.org

6 p.m.

4. 18 Seaboard

This farm-to-fork establishment combines high-end Southern dishes with an easygoing atmosphere. Owner and head chef Jason Smith, a downtown-Raleigh native, makes constant rounds to check on customers. If the weather is fair, grab a seat on the mezzanine terrace and dig in

to the Cracklin' Pork Shank served with blue cheese grits (\$18). 18seaboard.com

9 p.m.

5. Foundation

Designed and owned by an architect, this downtown, basement-level (hence the name) watering hole isn't dark as much as it is atmospheric—and you'll earn major street cred for even knowing about it. All beverages are domestic, and all drink ingredients are fresh. The Tar Heel (\$9)—Cruzan Black Strap Rum, house-made ginger ale, and lime—is a great way to cap off the evening. foundationnc.com

SATURDAY

9 a.m.

6. Mecca

The Dombalis family opened this diner in 1930. They still own it and have maintained its original interior decor—including the tile floors and FDR portrait hanging behind the counter. Courthouse regulars from across the street still crowd the joint for classic breakfast choices such as the Western Omelet (\$7) with ham, cheese, tomatoes, and bell peppers. In recent years, Mecca has also become a hip place to have a late-night cocktail. mecca-restaurant.com

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11 a.m.

7. Artspace

A block south of downtown's Moore Square Park, Artspace shelters a collection of 34 artists spread across a century-old building, which was once a livery. Today, collectors and patrons can roam from studio to studio, watch the creative process (in nearly every medium), take art classes, and shop. artspacenc.org

1:30 p.m.

8. Taste Carolina Gourmet Food Tours

This tour is a great way to learn about downtown's gastronomic highlights and get a better grip on Raleigh's history and architecture. Enjoy a handful of restaurant stops with dish tastings, wine, and question-and-answer sessions with chefs and owners (\$45). tastecarolina.net

5 p.m.

9. The Raleigh Wine Shop

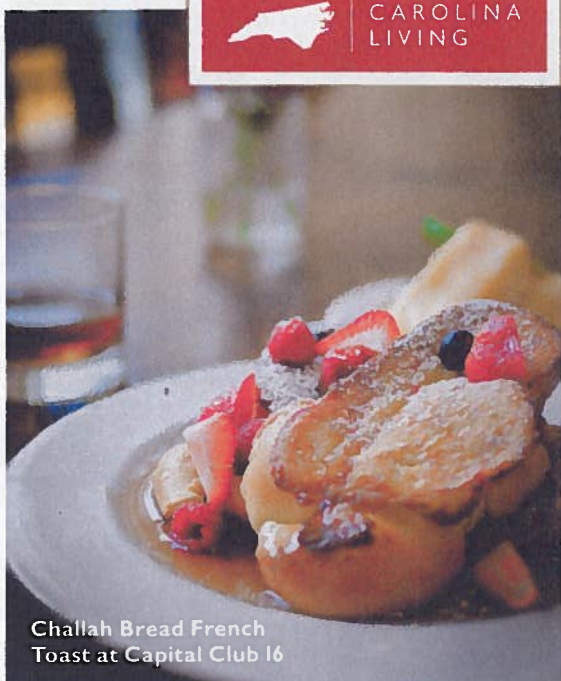
The shop's three gregarious owners (also the only three employees) take great pride in helping patrons discover that perfect wine from their 450 labels, which are divided by international region. After you've made your selection, grab a stool in the back of the store, which opened less than a year ago, purchase a wine card, and serve yourself a glass from one of 12 continually changing selections. theraleighwineshop.com



COURTESY JANEKA AUTRY/ARTSPACE



CAROLINA
LIVING



Challah Bread French
Toast at Capital Club 16

7:30 p.m.

10. Second Empire Restaurant and Tavern

Sited in the 133-year-old Dodd-Hinsdale House, Raleigh's elder culinary statesman is still a watermark. The interior is awash in hand-carved wood and Second Empire Victorian style. Book a table upstairs for more formal affairs, or reserve a spot in the jazzier, ground-floor dining room and tavern. Either way, executive chef Daniel Schurr recommends the Roasted Five Spice Pennsylvania Duck Breast served with kalamata olives, a Yukon gold potato-and-grilled artichoke hash, and spicy Fresno chile (\$29). second-empire.com

SUNDAY

11 a.m.

11. Capital Club 16

Co-owner and Culinary Institute of America-trained chef Jake Wolf classifies his cuisine as traditional American with a heavy dollop of European influence. His food is scrumptious, but the restaurant's lived-in vibe (it was once a literary society) makes this joint special. Grab a marble table under the Art Deco building's street-facing, floor-to-ceiling windows and order the brunch-time poached Eggs Norwegian with smoked salmon and hollandaise (\$10). capitalclub16.com

12. 1 p.m.

North Carolina Museum of Art

The crown jewel in the state's fine-art tiara, the NCMA, which added a 127,000-square-foot west building two years ago, displays 800 to 900 of its 5,000-piece catalog. The museum's strengths include its old masters collection, scores of Italian Renaissance works, and one of the largest Judaica displays in an art museum in the country. But the coup de grâce is its sculpture-laden, 164-acre art park—the biggest in the country (free admission). ncartmuseum.org

MARCH 2012 CAROLINA LIVING 7

Now Open. Scotts Creek by Pulte.

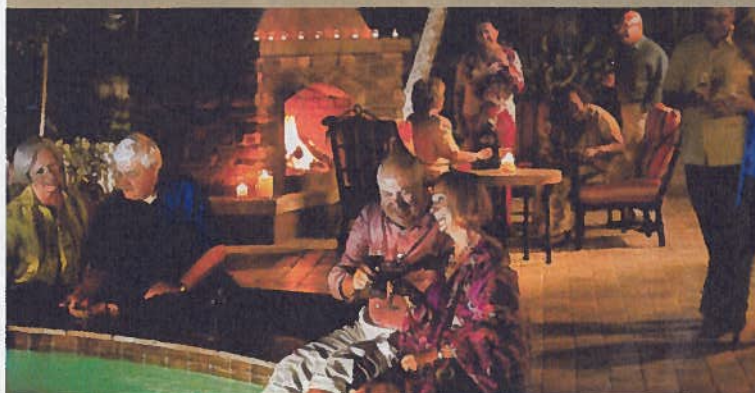


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