

ADVENTURE & TRAVEL

ATLANTA

THE NEW NEW SOUTH

THERE MAY BE no better moment in Atlanta than the start of spring. Warm breezes sweep across lawns, sidewalk cafés and front porches. The dogwood trees burst into bloom—their faux-snowy show marked this weekend with the annual Dogwood Festival in Piedmont Park.

This year, many visitors will also come to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the publication of “Gone with the Wind” or the 150th year since the start of the Civil War, but Atlanta is far from frozen in time. Over the last half-dozen years, the town has experienced a transformation more dramatic than the welcome change in seasons. It now boasts underground dining clubs, experimental chocolate shops and boutiques both funky and chic. Once-neglected downtown finally feels fresh, lively and full of food—a whopping 45 restaurants have opened there since 2008.

The central neighborhood of Midtown was long desolate and undesirable, despite being home to the High Museum of Art and the Fox Theater. Today, it's overflowing with new condo developments. The High doubled in size several years ago, and launched partnerships with major institutions such as the Louvre and New York's Museum of Modern Art. In 2007, the nearby Alliance Theatre cemented its place as a performing arts hotspot with a regional Tony Award. At night, new clubs offer first-listens of what could become the next big hip-hop track, Atlanta being the home turf of stars like Usher and Outkast.

The Luckie Marietta District had major attractions like the Georgia Dome, Philips Arena and Centennial Olympic Park—but felt aban-

doned after dark. When the Georgia Aquarium, the world's largest, opened several years ago, it helped spark a development boom. And once-drab industrial Westside has become one of the hippest parts of town, with pricey warehouse lofts, start-up companies and buzzed-about restaurants like *Bacchanalia* and Miller Union.

Atlanta once called itself “the city too busy to hate.” Now, it just might be the busy city to love.

—Timothy W. Martin and Carrick Mollenkamp

PLUS, DON'T MISS...

- **Morningside Nature Preserve:** A little-known 30-acre haven for hiking and cycling. atlantaga.gov
- **Sister Louisa's Church of the Living Room and Ping Pong Emporium:** **8** Artist Grant Henry's surreal bar has good eats, a ping pong table and an organ for “community karaoke.” 404-522-8275
- **Holeman & Finch Public House:** **10** Locals know they make only 24 burgers each night and arrive early for the 10 p.m. “burger time.” holeman-finch.com
- **Museum of Design Atlanta:** **5** The 6,500-square-foot Museum of Design Atlanta opened last month across from the High Museum of Art, adding another attraction to the Midtown arts district. museumofdesign.org



[editorial]



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The Designer
Kay Douglass
Interior decorator; owner of the home furnishings and antiques showroom South of Market



The Writer
Kathryn Stockett
Author of the best-selling novel "The Help"; Atlanta resident

His and Hers: **9** Sid Mashburn and **7** Ann Mashburn. This dynamic duo puts together tailored, well-edited clothing collections for their boutiques for men and women. They even have an atelier for alterations. *1198 Howell Mill Rd., sidmashburn.com, annmashburn.com*

Open Space: **6** Piedmont Park. A great place to take a picnic and check out the local scenery on a pretty day. *piedmontpark.org*

Fresh Picks: Peachtree Road Farmer's Market. Local producers bring their goods to the parking lot behind the Cathedral of St. Philip. *Saturday mornings April through December, 2744 Peachtree Rd., peachtreeroadfarmersmarket.com*

Snack Bar: Alon's Bakery & Market. It's in the middle of the walking neighborhood in Virginia Highland. Eat in or grab an authentic French croissant or gourmet sandwiches to take out. *1394 N. Highland Ave., alons.com*

Industrial Eatery: **2** Bocado Restaurant. A neighborhood restaurant in a warehouse-type space. Everything is worth trying: the fish specials, perfect vegetable sides, crab fritters and the heirloom tomato salad. *887 Howell Mill Rd., bocadoatlanta.com*

Sole Search: Sabot. The charming mother/daughter owners have Atlanta's best collection of trendy shoes every season. *45 Irby Ave., sabotshoes.com*

Food for Flight: One Flew South. An eclectic restaurant and bar in the airport. The BLT is amazing. I eat there and skip the airplane food. *Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, Terminal E, oneflewsouthatl.com*

Sweet Dreams: **1** The Mansion on Peachtree. On my daughter's birthday we took 10 8-year-olds for a swim/sleepover party. Elegant but not outrageously expensive. It's also a great place to write—the walls are thick and nobody bothers you. *3376 Peachtree Rd. N.W., rwmansiononpeachtree.com*

Stationer: Sam Flax South. They have every color and texture of pen, paper, notebook and wrapping paper. I buy my pens and pencils here, then I put them in a drawer and end up using my computer. *1460 Northside Dr., samflaxsouth.com*

Poultry Excuse: Kroger. I get my fried chicken—and much of my writing material—at the location in Brookwood Square. It will blow your mind—the chicken, the divorces. I once heard a pregnant woman tell her husband it wasn't his baby. He went right ahead and ordered an eight-piece box. *1745 Peachtree St. N.E., kroger.com*

Secret Meals: For Food's Sake. Anyone can join this underground supper club; a few days before each event, members are notified of the location. Once it was actually in a graveyard. Generally it's a well known Atlanta chef using local, organic ingredients. Plus excellent wine. *forfoodsake.org*



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The Chef
Richard Blais
Winner of "Top Chef: All-Stars"; creative director of Flip Burger Boutique

Comfort Food: **3** Empire State South. I love the look of this restaurant, and chefs Hugh Acheson and Ryan Smith put out tasty southern food. *999 Peachtree St., empirestatesouth.com*

Sweets Surrender: Sugar Coated Radical. My wife loves their funky chocolates, especially the massaman-white chocolate combo. *680 Drewry St., sugarcoatedradical.org*

Green Acreage: Atlanta Botanical Gardens. My wife and I got married there. Now our daughter Riley loves the children's garden, especially storyline. The annual membership is a steal. *1345 Piedmont Ave. N.E., atlantabotanicalgarden.org*

Divine Dining: **Bacchanalia.** Michelin-star quality in Atlanta; the service is impeccable. A little known fact: You can order a la carte from the four-course menu at the bar. You'll find us there once a month. *1198 Howell Mill Rd., starprovisions.com*

Java Stop: Octane Coffee. A hip place for a meeting or to bang out some recipe work. Close to my restaurants and brews a great cup. *1009-B Marietta St., octanecoffee.com*

DIY Design: **4** Bang-On. A small shop in Little Five Points where you can design your own T-shirt. I couldn't wear branded clothes on "Top Chef" so I made a lot of my own tees here for my trip. *1152 Euclid Ave., bang-on.com*



The Star
Cee Lo Green
Atlanta-born Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter, record producer and actor

Hip Haute: Moda 404. I'm a regular. Lee Brockwell and Kwassi Byll-Catarina pack the store with shoes and clothes from hot designers—Dolce, Alessandro Dell'Acqua—and vintage sunglasses. My latest purchase was a custom black leather motorcycle jacket. *3145 Peachtree Rd., moda404.com*

Old-School Grub: Piccadilly. A cafeteria chain that serves old-fashioned food like smothered pork chops and baby lima beans. They have an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet on weekends. *Several locations in and around Atlanta, piccadilly.com*

Creole Corner: Chanterelle's Cafe and Catering. It's not big and it's not fancy, but they have some of the best soul food in Atlanta. The chef, Al Bridges, changes his menu every day. Everyone loves the shrimp Creole. *646 Evans St. S.W., 404-758-0909*

Lap of Luxury: Phipps Plaza. This mall has all the high-end designers, from Giorgio Armani to Jimmy Choo, in one place. *3500 Peachtree Rd. N.E., simon.com*

In Concerts: Tabernacle Atlanta. A hundred years ago it was a church and now it's a live-music venue. When Goodie Mob did a reunion concert, we played it there. *152 Luckie St., tabernacleatl.com*

