

The Entertaining Special GARDEN & GUN

THROW THE ULTIMATE
BRUNCH,
TAILGATE, AND
COCKTAIL
PARTY

SOUL of
the SOUTH
AUGUST /
SEPTEMBER
2023

HUNT A
CUSTOM
DECOY
SPREAD

DENNIS
QUAID'S
NASHVILLE
REVIVAL

A FLY
FISHERMAN'S
ALASKAN
ADVENTURE



Hungry? See page 91!

Benne seed pancakes with apple butter, whipped ricotta, and honey.

The Southern Agenda

GOINGS-ON IN THE SOUTH & BEYOND



★
Editors' Choice

OUTDOORS

Glimpse a Rare Late-Blooming Azalea

STEWART COUNTY, GEORGIA

Near the end of summer, the floor of Providence Canyon blazes deep scarlet when the plumleaf azalea—the rarest azalea in the eastern United States—bursts into fiery splendor. “It blooms after everything else is finished,” says Reba Bolton, an interpretive ranger at the canyon, part of a state park about an hour’s drive from Columbus. “It normally

SOUTHERN AGENDA

begins around July and goes through early fall. We have to stay on constant watch because once it starts blooming, the plumes start blowing up.” Dubbed Georgia’s Little Grand Canyon, Providence formed in the late 1800s after farmers using unsustainable methods caused massive erosion. Today hikers meander along trails through the chasms and pinnacles that look like a painted desert—not at all like the rest of the Peach State. The plumleaf prefers a habitat so specific, it only grows in small pockets in Southwest Georgia and eastern Alabama. “It likes to be near creek beds and on steep ground with good drainage,” Bolton says. The canyon’s sandy, acidic soil is just right for the shrub, which can grow up to twenty feet tall. “We have other native azaleas like the piedmont azalea,” Bolton says. “People often get them confused and ask me if that’s the plumleaf and I say, *no, it’s pink!*” Take it from Bolton, you’ll know the bright red plumleaf when you see it.

■ gastateparks.org/providenc Canyon

OUTDOORS

Alabama

RAPID EFFECT

The bouncing, bubbling, wave-whipped currents of the new **Montgomery White-water** park’s man-made channels rage in stark contrast to the smooth, serene flow of the adjacent Alabama River. And while the pumped white-water courses are the centerpiece of the 120-acre outdoor recreation facility in the state capital, they aren’t the sole attraction. Raft guide manager Anthony Lopez, who got his start guiding at Charlotte, North Carolina’s U.S. National Whitewater Center, is stoked about all its offerings: green spaces, trails, a restaurant and beer garden, an outdoor concert venue, and those Class II-IV roller-coaster rapids. “The adventure channel has six significant angle changes and really weaves and bends,” he says, “calling for more technical guiding.” Yet Lopez looks beyond paddling skills when hiring his crew. “A great guide is a good storyteller,” he says, “connecting with the rafters and connecting them to each other, creating a fun, but also a really communal, experience.”

■ montgomerywhitewater.com

HISTORY

Arkansas

SWEET RIDES

At the **Museum of Automobiles** in Morrilton, curator Tommy Hoelzeman scored the enviable job of periodically taking the collection of fifty-odd vehicles out for a spin. “You can’t just crank them up and move them a hundred yards,” he explains. “You’ve got to warm them up a little bit, see if the brakes work, all that, otherwise it’ll all deteriorate.” He’s in charge of such novelties as an ’81 DeLorean (sans the flux capacitor of its *Back to the Future* twin); a 1951 Cadillac that the museum’s founder, Winthrop Rockefeller, piloted down from New York to Arkansas; a 1914 Cretors Popcorn Wagon from when “popped corn” was still a nation-sweeping novelty; and a pair of 1923 Climbers, the last known vehicles from Arkansas’s only automobile manufacturer, the short-lived Climber Motor Corp. The core collection always remains on display. In addition, collectors will flaunt their prized 1960s Ford Econoline vans and pickups on September 3, and a slew of Airstreams will set up camp on October 26—good to know if you’re into rare mid-century gems.

■ museumofautos.com



OUTDOORS

Florida

NESTING INSTINCTS

When a storm blew a young crested caracara falcon out of its cabbage palm nest this past spring, a South Florida Water Management District team rushed the fallen fledgling to Jupiter’s **Busch Wildlife**

Sanctuary, which is celebrating forty years this year and is open to the public, with walking paths and animal observation areas. A close examination at the sanctuary's wildlife hospital revealed that the caracara was a bit dehydrated but otherwise healthy enough to go home. With the original nest wind strewn, the sanctuary worked with the management district to build a makeshift one right underneath the original; the parents were spotted back home with their offspring the following day. "Nest disturbances are not uncommon," says Christen Mason, the sanctuary's operations director. "If this happens in your yard, you can create a new nest using a basket, plastic strawberry container, or other container with holes. Secure the 'nest' to the tree as high up as possible, line it with leaves or grass clippings, and place the baby in it. The parents will continue to take care of their baby in this new nest."

■ buschwildlife.org

FOOD

Kentucky

FRIED AND TRUE

Little known outside of Louisville, the **rolled oyster** holds a special place in the pantheon of Southern fried food. Traditionally made from three oysters deep-fried in a batter of egg, milk, and cracker meal, the softball-sized snack seems unremarkable—until you take your first bite. Kentucky native and writer Ronni Lundy once described the taste as "steamy and sexy, ocean-tanged, barroom-sullied, low rent, and high art." As with many masterpieces, there's controversy about the rolled oyster's origin story, says Louisville food critic and editor Marty Rosen. One version attributes the delicacy to Phillip Mazzoni, an Italian immigrant and saloon owner who first offered it as a giveaway to drinkers in the 1880s. Others trace it to Al Kolb's bar, which opened in 1865. Both taverns have long since closed, and a few years ago, some feared that rising oyster prices would do in the dish completely. But you can still find rolled oysters on the menu at Louisville-area taverns including Check's Café, KingFish, Hungry Pelican, and Mike Linnig's. "It's about as good as bar food gets," Rosen says. "When you bite through

the hard shell, you get a sudden explosion from the perfume of the oyster."

■ checkscafelouisville.com
■ mikelinnigsrestaurant.com



FOOD

Louisiana

SWAMP SOIREE

You never know who will show up along the road encircling Lake Martin in Breaux Bridge. Chef Bill Briand of Fisher's in Orange Beach, Alabama, remembers when he traveled over for a gig a few years ago and first saw the swampy Shangri-la that rose before him there: "All the Spanish moss hanging from oak limbs surrounded this quaint old house that looks like it's been there forever," he says of Maison Madeleine, an 1840 French Creole cottage turned bed-and-breakfast. For one of Maison Madeleine's **Secret Suppers**, Briand cooked whole pompano over a live fire and shucked Murder Point oysters alongside Lafayette, Louisiana, chef Jeremy Conner. Tickets disappear quickly for the dinner series, which features dishes from the South's favorite chefs and serenades from musicians whose ranks draw from Grammy winners. Two weeks before each shindig, Maison Madeleine reveals all the headlines, heightening the anticipation. After a summer hiatus, the monthly evenings of clandestine cookery return in September.

■ maisonmadeleine.com/secret-suppers

FOOD

Maryland

THE CREPE BEYOND

Nestled along the Chesapeake Bay, the tiny town of Easton received a dose of French charm with the recent opening of P. Bor-

dier, a creperie and patisserie. The cuisine harkens back to Brittany, a hilly French peninsula known as the birthplace of the crepe. The restaurant uses Le Beurre Bordier butter, exclusively made in Brittany, and menu highlights include sweet, zingy citrus crepes, as well as savory buckwheat crepes with ham, Brie, chive butter, and mustard crème. "When I was asked to design the restaurant, my imagination immediately flew to Paris," says interior designer Shaun Jackson. With a cozy 315 square feet to work with, Jackson layered rose-hued wallpaper with lush tropical imagery, custom millwork, and checkerboard floors. A glass case teems with tarts and pastries such as the Cherry, an oversize confection filled with cherry compote, kirsch mousse, and devil's food cake.

■ pbordier.com

CONSERVATION

Mississippi

PRIMORDIAL WONDERS

Paddlefish, also known as spoonbill catfish, are relics swimming in our waters—more than a hundred million years ago, they coexisted with dinosaurs. Native to the Mississippi River basin, the threatened boneless fish with its impossibly long, paddle-shaped snout (called a rostrum) roams from New York to the Gulf of Mexico eating zooplankton. For a long-term study of its populations, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks tagged paddlefish eight years ago at Moon Lake in northwestern Mississippi, and the long-lived individuals continue to pop up. "We had one that traveled two thousand miles all the way to South Dakota, and that was upstream," says Dennis Riecke, the department's fisheries coordinator. In the springtime, paddlefish, like their relative the sturgeon, are under threat as people harvest them for their caviar, but come summer, the adults head back downstream, and their tiny fry hatch by the thousands; fifty baby paddlefish weighed together equal a single gram. Lucky survivors grow an inch per week, and years later can stretch to seven feet long and weigh nearly two hundred pounds.

■ mdwfp.com
■ msaquarium.org

ARTS

North Carolina

CLOSE TO HOME

"Nina Simone's legacy needs a physical place that enshrines her contribution to our nation and where her legacy will live on," says Brent Leggs, the executive director of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. In 1933, Eunice Kathleen Waymon was born in Tryon, North Carolina, and less than two decades later, she launched her genre-blending musical career under the now famous stage name. In 2017, four Black artists (Adam Pendleton, Ellen Gallagher, Rashid Johnson, and Julie Mehretu) bought the three-room, 650-square-foot clapboard home where she grew up for \$95,000 to save it from demolition. Following a recent fundraising art auction curated by Pendleton and tennis star Venus Williams, this summer and fall will see a full restoration of the home. But a traditional house museum stuffed with artifacts guarded by velvet ropes is not in the plans, Leggs says. "Our vision is to create a place of education, reflection, and inspiration, open for art residencies and creating opportunities for youth, artists, and scholars." Simone, sometimes called the "high priestess of soul" after her 1967 album of that name, was much more than a performer—she was a lifelong civil and women's rights activist. "The physical preservation of her personal history and the chance to learn more



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broadly about the historic Black community where the house sits will honor not only her legacy,” Leggs says, “but also the legacy of those who were handed her torch.”

■ savingplaces.org

CONSERVATION

South Carolina

JEWELS OF THE MARSH

From July into September, quarter-sized baby **diamondback terrapins** clamber from their nests above the high-tide line of South Carolina salt marshes. The continent’s only turtles that live in such brackish estuaries, the terrapins once abundantly roamed the tidal creeks, pluff mud, and spartina grasses along the Eastern Seaboard. “They are so variable in coloration; their shells can be orange or green or brown or black, with a pattern that looks like diamonds,” says Andrew Grosse, the state herpetologist for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Over the years, their populations have taken repeated hits—first because they starred in turtle soup along with sherry, and now due to entanglement in crab traps, car strikes, and coastal development. Grosse and his colleagues have raised and released young terrapins to boost numbers, developed crab traps that keep terrapins out, and conducted surveys to understand their habitats and movements. “Most people don’t know they are out there,” Grosse says, “but if you kayak or boat into a tidal creek early in the morning, look for little heads popping up in front of you.” You can report any sightings to SCDNR to help with the research.

■ dnr.sc.gov

OPENING

Tennessee

A NEW FLAME

Chef Erik Niel was born in Texas, but he was raised in Louisiana and has made his name as the chef-owner of Chattanooga’s heralded Main Street Meats and Easy

Bistro & Bar. But Texas smoke has never left his taste buds. “I realize that I am in Tennessee, where barbecue means something different than it does in Texas,” he says. Later this summer, when he opens his newest restaurant, **Little Coyote** in Chattanooga’s historic St. Elmo neighborhood, he’ll pay homage to barbecue traditions that have long inspired him, including smoked meats and fish from Tex-Mex, Cuban, Caribbean, and Southwestern cuisines. Tequila and mezcal cocktails will complement chuck eye steak slow-smoked like brisket, as well as pork-stuffed tortillas with chimichurri. Amanda Niel, his wife and restaurant co-owner, incorporated Southwestern elements into the design—copper accents, ample houseplants, and turquoise-tinged terra-cotta tiles—and the new place sits mere steps away from the incline railway that carries passengers straight up Lookout Mountain.

■ littlecoyote.com

DRINK

Texas

GRAPE NEWS

Winemaking in Texas traces back to the mid-1600s, when Spanish missionaries planted the continent’s first vineyard near what is now El Paso. Today the state boasts eight American Viticultural Areas and more than four hundred wineries, many of which take part in **GrapeFest** in Grapevine, the largest wine festival in the Southwest, September 14–17. There you can sample grenache, tempranillo, and Viognier while hearing firsthand how Texas winemakers have learned hard-won lessons. “A grapevine can live for over one hundred years,” says Paul Bonarrigo, the CEO of Messina Hof Winery in Bryan. “During that time, droughts come and go, and we have experienced multiple droughts in the past. Therefore, it is less about modifying the grapevine and more about adjusting our practices to be smarter in the way we manage our resources.” Greg Bruni, a winemaker with Llano Estacado Winery in Lubbock, agrees. “To do well in a hot, dry climate [like in the Texas High Plains], the method of irrigation becomes important,” he says. Bruni credits drip and subsurface systems that deliver a controlled amount

of water and nutrients to the roots of each plant. “This practice can save up to thirty percent in water and fertilizer.” We’ll drink to that.

■ grapevinetexasusa.com/grapefest

MUSIC

Virginia

A GIRL CAN DREAM

Sixty years after Patsy Cline died in a plane crash, her hometown of Winchester is still “Crazy” about her. On the Saturday before Labor Day, Winchester residents throw the **Patsy Cline Music Festival** to mark the September 8 birthday of the legendary singer, known for such searing songs of longing and heartbreak as “Walkin’ after Midnight” and “I Fall to Pieces.” This year the city plans to dedicate the new Patsy Cline Block Party, and the family’s small wood-frame home, declared a National Historic Landmark in 2021, will offer tours and share tidbits about her humble roots and rise. “All four of her family members slept in one bedroom,” says Hannah McDonald, director of the Patsy Cline Historic House. Visitors can see the singer’s favorite white cowboy hat, and the stage costumes she designed and her mother sewed.

■ visitwinchesterva.com

ART

Washington, D.C.

POWER OF PLACE

“What stories remain untold on the National Mall?” asks a new exhibition, *Pulling Together*, which will be unveiled August 18. It’s been sixty years since Martin Luther King Jr. led the March on Washington, and in commemoration, six visionary artists created large-scale artworks to answer that question. “The National Mall is our country’s most memorable symbol of American democracy and site of our shared struggle for freedom,” says curator Salamishah Tillet. One of the monumental works is *The Soil You See* by multimedia artist Wendy Red Star. Her giant transparent finger-



“Free Bird” Five-O

Lynyrd Skynyrd recorded (*Pronounced ‘Lěh-‘nérd ‘Skin-‘nérd*) in Doraville, Georgia’s Studio One, spreading Southern rock around the globe upon its release in August 1973. Fifty years later, musicians shout out the debut album’s tracks that still soar.

“Lynyrd Skynyrd is the perfect combination of talented songwriting, musicianship, and raw vocals that no one had ever heard until their debut album,” says Texas country star Johnny Lee. “**Free Bird**” will forever be one of the best songs with a guitar solo that still leaves me begging for more.”

“I started listening to their music at a young age and always admired the lyrics to ‘**Simple Man**,’” says the Virginia-raised artist Makenzie Phipps. “It was one of the very first songs I learned, and even today I still play it.”

“‘**Tuesday’s Gone**’ is a quintessential ‘I must be going now’ song,” says bassist Kevin McManus of the Shootouts. “The melody just weeps, and the arrangement is not only poignant but incredibly thoughtful. It does not feel like a seven-and-a-half-minute song, like how saying a painful goodbye never seems long enough.”

“Lynyrd Skynyrd’s legacy can be wrapped up in two words: ‘**Free Bird**,’” says singer William Lee Golden. “The song has become an anthem for all Southern rock.”

print features the names of the Apsálooke (Crow) Nation chiefs who signed treaties with the U.S. government between 1825 and 1880. “It’s an honor and a great opportunity,” Red Star says, “to highlight the voices of Indigenous peoples throughout history and our contributions that have shaped the United States.”

■ beyondgranite.org

CONSERVATION

West Virginia

RODENT REVIVAL

Karen Powers has a soft spot for **Allegheny woodrats**. “I love working with these adorable rodents,” says Powers, a wildlife ecologist at Radford University in Virginia. “When we find their caches, they’ve taken anything colorful or shiny, from flags to coozies to handkerchiefs to people’s keys—they’re so curious.” The squirrel-sized, round-eared rodents live in rocky areas and caves in deciduous forests, and last summer researchers trapped five in Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. “It was an exciting discovery,” Powers says. “They are facing a triple threat from habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and a roundworm, and we thought they hadn’t been able to survive there.” Allegheny woodrats still have a stronghold in Virginia, but with plummeting numbers elsewhere, including in West Virginia, attendees at a recent woodrat symposium hatched a plan for two zoos to start captive breeding. This summer, Powers and her partners will be out trapping and taking ear clippings for genetic analysis, looking for healthy, diverse candidates.

■ www.nps.gov/hafe/index.htm

—Susan B. Barnes, Larry Bleiberg, Caroline Sanders Clements, Jordan P. Hickey, Carrie Honaker, Jennifer Kornegay, Lindsey Liles, Lia Picard, and Cora Schipa

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