

**SAVANNAH MAGAZINE**

PRESENTS

**INCREDIBLE • FANTASTIC • SPECTACULAR**

**BEST OF SAVANNAH**

**2017**

**EATS • BARS • SHOPPING • FUN**

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**131 WINNERS IN ALL**

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**BY ALLISON STICE BULKA**

**HOW IT WORKS:**

THE BEST OF SAVANNAH WINNERS WERE DETERMINED BY READER VOTES ALONE. ONLY ONE BALLOT PER PERSON WAS ACCEPTED; DUPLICATE BALLOTS AND THOSE WITHOUT A VERIFIABLE NAME AND ADDRESS WERE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED. SAVANNAH MAGAZINE DOES NOT CONTROL HOW INDIVIDUALS CAMPAIGNED.

# EATS

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## CHEF

**Mashama Bailey** spent part of her childhood in Savannah, cut her teeth in celebrated New York City kitchens, and circled back in 2014 to open The Grey with founding partner John O. Morisano. Since then, the executive chef has elevated our city's culinary scene with her fine-meets-comfort cooking style.

*Runner-up: AJ Baker, Sundae Café*

## CATERER

Green Restaurant Association-certified **Thrive** sprouted from chef Wendy Armstrong's international travels and love for the outdoors. Her nourishing and eco-minded food, customized by season, culture and dietary preference, is sourced from more than 20 local farms.

*Runner-up: Susan Mason*

## APPETIZERS

Housed in a former warehouse by the river, amid heart-of-pine beams and ballast stones, the **Shrimp Factory** is an ideal spot to spoil your dinner with traditional Southern starters. Popular selections run the gamut from crab cakes to fried green tomatoes, and shrimp lovers can order them drenched in coconut, cocktail or buffalo sauce.

*Runner-up: Jazz'd Tapas Bar*

## BREAKFAST

Rise and shine with a hearty breakfast skillet, a bowl of smoked cheddar grits or a stack of pancakes mixed with granola—called crunchcakes in **J. Christopher's** parlance. The Atlanta-born chain recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, yet some consider its Savannah location (a converted Historic District garage) the restaurant group's heart and soul.

*Runner-up: Clary's Café*

## BRUNCH

Three cheers for brekkie! Whether your beverage of choice is a cold brew, a matcha latte or a glass of bubbly, you can count on the stylish and sunny **Collins Quarter** to brighten up your morning. Its brunch dishes are prepared with a Down Under twist, including the avocado smash, brioche french toast and an egg, ham, cheddar and maple aioli sandwich aptly named the "G'day."

*Runner-up: B. Matthew's Eatery*

## BUSINESS LUNCH

A former service station expertly redone by Daniel Reed Hospitality, **Soho South Café** serves American lunch staples for a lively crowd. Network over classic offerings like a pimento cheese sandwich with tomato soup and a glass of sweet tea, or request a large table for that team-building meeting—the best ideas begin

over a basket of tater tots.

*Runner-up: Treylor Park*

## CHEAP EATS

The hibachi lunch and dinner specials at Japanese fusion restaurant **Ta Ca** includes enough starters and sides that you practically get two meals for the price of one. Bonus points for the affordably priced rolls at the sushi bar.

*Runner-up: Jalapeños Mexican Grill*

## COFFEE HOUSE

Jennifer Jenkins' empire started here at **Foxy Loxy Café**: part bakery, part coffeehouse and part Tex-Mex cantina in the Thomas Square neighborhood. Locals love the café for its art shows, musical performances and events in the ivy-covered courtyard—not to mention the Perc coffee and stocked pastry case.

*Runner-up: Savannah Coffee Roasters*





*Atlantic*

NO  
PARKING  
ANY  
TIME





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**BEST NEW RESTAURANT**

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# Atlantic

*Runner-up: Hitch*

**L**AST NOVEMBER, Jason Restivo set out to create a neighborhood eatery—and, by all measures, he succeeded. You’ve experienced this firsthand if you’ve put your name in for a table at Atlantic and found yourself waiting with a drink in the warm glow of the patio’s fire pit. When the weather is right, it’s the most pleasant wait in town.

Atlantic is the kind of place where you’re bound to see someone familiar waving at you from across the boisterous subway-tiled dining room, built inside a former service station on the corner of Drayton and Victory. On any given night, you’ll catch Restivo himself greeting guests from table to table, checking on their dinners and recommending wines. After all, he says, he didn’t open the spot so everyone else could have all the fun.

Chef Lauren Teague designed the menu with four categories—garden, breads, bowls and plates, all ideal for sharing. Dishes change based on inspiration and the seasonal produce she receives from area farms. From one visit to the next, you’ll likely find something new to enjoy. This evolution represents just what Restivo was hoping for: a day-over-day opportunity for the restaurant to keep getting better.

Atlantic operates from a solid foundation, namely, Teague’s experience at 22 Square in the Andaz Hotel and Restivo’s time spent at Savannah stalwarts Garibaldi and The Olde Pink House. Restivo says he found the courage to venture out on his own in his collaboration with Teague, his business partner Ida George, and his wife, Jennifer. After years watching Jason help other restaurateurs succeed, Jennifer “pushed me toward the ledge,” he says, “and said, ‘It’s time! I believe in you!’”

The leap paid off: Atlantic regularly fills its 1,800-square-foot space, and Restivo gets to fulfill his dream of coming to work every day in jeans and Converse sneakers.

“This is what I want to do every night for the rest of my life,” he says. Pushing away your empty plate and buoyed by the camaraderie, you’re right there with him.

# BARS, BOOZE & BEER

## BAR

**The Grey** proffers European wines and vintage cocktails at a horseshoe-shaped bar beneath the main restaurant's Art Deco dome, as well as in the Diner Bar, a sleek nod to the former Greyhound station's 24-hour lunch counter. The Diner Bar features a bar menu full of retro small bites, though we say you can't go wrong with a dozen oysters and a glass of bubbly.

*Runner-up: Jen's and Friends*

## CRAFT BREWERY

Savannah's first microbrewery, **Southbound Brewing Company**, offers tours and tastings of its signature and seasonal brews in an industrial space on East Lath-

rop Avenue, along with lively events like Pints and Poses yoga. Try their Scattered Sun Belgian Wit and Hop'lin IPA year-round or order a specialty brew like Moonlight Drive Imperial Coffee Stout, made with locally roasted Perc beans.

*Runner-up: Service Brewing Company*

## LIQUOR/ PACKAGE SHOP

Operating in two locations, locally owned **Habersham Beverage** stocks wine, liquor and craft beer favorites in wall-to-wall warehouse style, with friendly staff to lend a helping hand.

*Runner-up: Johnnie Ganem*

## NIGHTCLUB

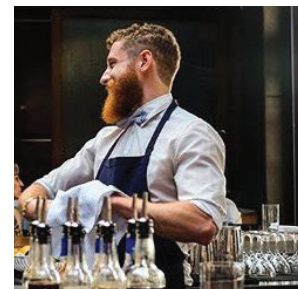
There's no better place in Savannah to let loose and bust a move than the expansive **Club 51 Degrees**, which spins a mash-up of music on multiple levels: Latin on the first floor, hip-hop on the second and house, electronica and dubstep on the third.

*Runner-up: Club One*

## PUB

Pretend you're Irish all year round at **O'Connell's**, where the pints and picklebacks are served by bartenders who will soon have you singing the praises of Irish whiskey over bourbon.

*Runner-up: Moon River Brewing Company*



## IN MEMORIAM:

### Scott Waldrup

*general manager, The Grey*

If you read about Scott online or in the newspapers, all I can say is that all of it is true.

He was kind.

He was thoughtful.

He was generous.

He was passionate.

He was smart.

He was curious.

He was absolutely hilarious.

And, in case you didn't know it, Scott was gay.

He was that rare person who was simultaneously an idealist and a cynic.

He had a relentless smile that his well-coifed red beard made futile efforts to conceal.

He loved Speedo Sunday.

He loved his family: his parents Terry and Dave, his sisters Jen and Stacey.

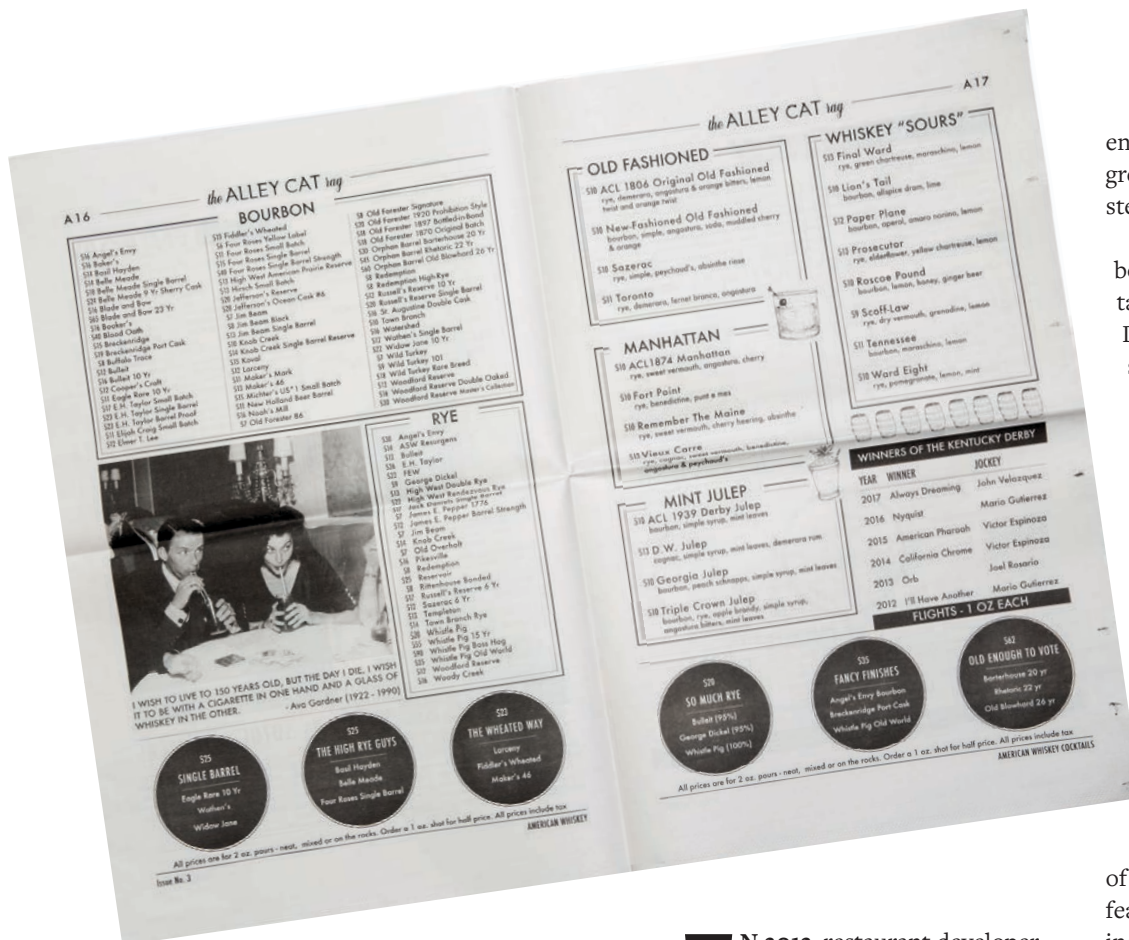
And he loved his soul mate Tart with a childlike giddiness that made the rest of us take note and give our own soul mates an extra squeeze every now and then just to try and keep up with him.

Scott shined in everything he did—as a friend, colleague, son, partner, brother, mentor, mentee, activist and activator.

Scott was pure goodness, plain and simple.

—John O. Morisano,  
*founding partner of The Grey*





## BEST NEW BAR

# Alley Cat Lounge

Runner-up: Artillery

IN 2013, restaurant developer Pila Sunderland led Scott Marshall down a hatch to the basement that would become the Alley Cat Lounge. “It was like a scene out of a horror movie,” Marshall says. “There was hardly any light, three or four inches of silt, and bricks on the floor no one had stepped on in more than 100 years. I fell in love.”

Sunderland is a restaurant developer and, after decades of bartending, Marshall’s drinks knowledge could fill a book. But when it came to designing a menu, instead of printing a stuffy leather-bound tome for their subterranean speakeasy, they opted for something a little more playful. The result is a 32-page newspaper

entitled the *Alley Cat Rag*, which greets patrons as they descend the steps and sidle up to the bar.

Drawing from Marshall’s own bottomless expertise and the talent of local writers like Jackson DuMouchel, the paper unfolds in sections devoted to each spirit; excerpts on drinking culture from authors including Carrie Fisher, Thomas Pynchon and William Faulkner; black-and-white vintage photographs of imbibers like Ernest Hemingway and Ava Gardner; the history behind drinks from the martini to Madeira wine; dissertations on the nuances of tequila, sotol and mezcal; quotes from famous boozehounds; cartoons; word searches, and, of course, a full accounting

of the extensive back bar, which features more than 500 products, including 107 cocktails and 29 tasting flights.

Judging by the Alley Cat’s double-down on doormen for crowd control, it seems Savannah patrons were on the prowl for just this blend of meticulous know-how and merrymaking—and if there’s anything that encapsulates the bar’s breadth, range, quirk and character, it’s not a particular beverage, but this broadsheet.

“We are making drinks as fast as we can,” Marshall says. “And we’re constantly evolving.”

Should you find yourself intimidated, take Marshall’s pick, the classic Manhattan, which dates back to 1806. It’s the only drink he mixes at his own home—a quintessential barman’s favorite.







**BEST BARTENDER**

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# Sidney Lance

Pacci Italian Kitchen

*Runner-up: Summer Ivanowski at Spanky's (Southside)*

**You've been at the Kimpton Brice Hotel since 2014, so we figure you're the person to ask: What makes a great bartender?**

It's not just about making a drink—it's making an experience that people come back for. We're all entertainers. Nine times out of 10, people come to the bar for good conversation.

**You like to make your own ingredients. What kind of concoctions do you work up?**

I make my own syrups, infusions, shrubs and bitters. It helps save money on flavored spirits and it's a conversation piece. Customers will ask, "What's that bottle with the grapefruit behind the bar?" and then you educate them. When

you get crafty, you expand your knowledge and your creativity.

**What's the best drink you've ever invented?**

It started with a wildberry cognac syrup. I cooked down blueberries and raspberries with a little water, sugar and cognac. I shake tequila and Aperol over crushed ice and float it with the syrup. Because of its violet reddish color with orange on top, we call it the Bloody Sunrise. We also create cocktails for customers every day. We love to find out what they like so we can mix them up something special.

**Ever tried a recipe that didn't work out?**

All the time. Once, for a cocktail competition, I decided to try a mezcal-infused pineapple. I used a turkey injector and let it sit for

a couple of days. When I went to make the drink, and I don't know if it was the pineapple or the mezcal, but it tasted horrible! I pulled myself out of the competition.

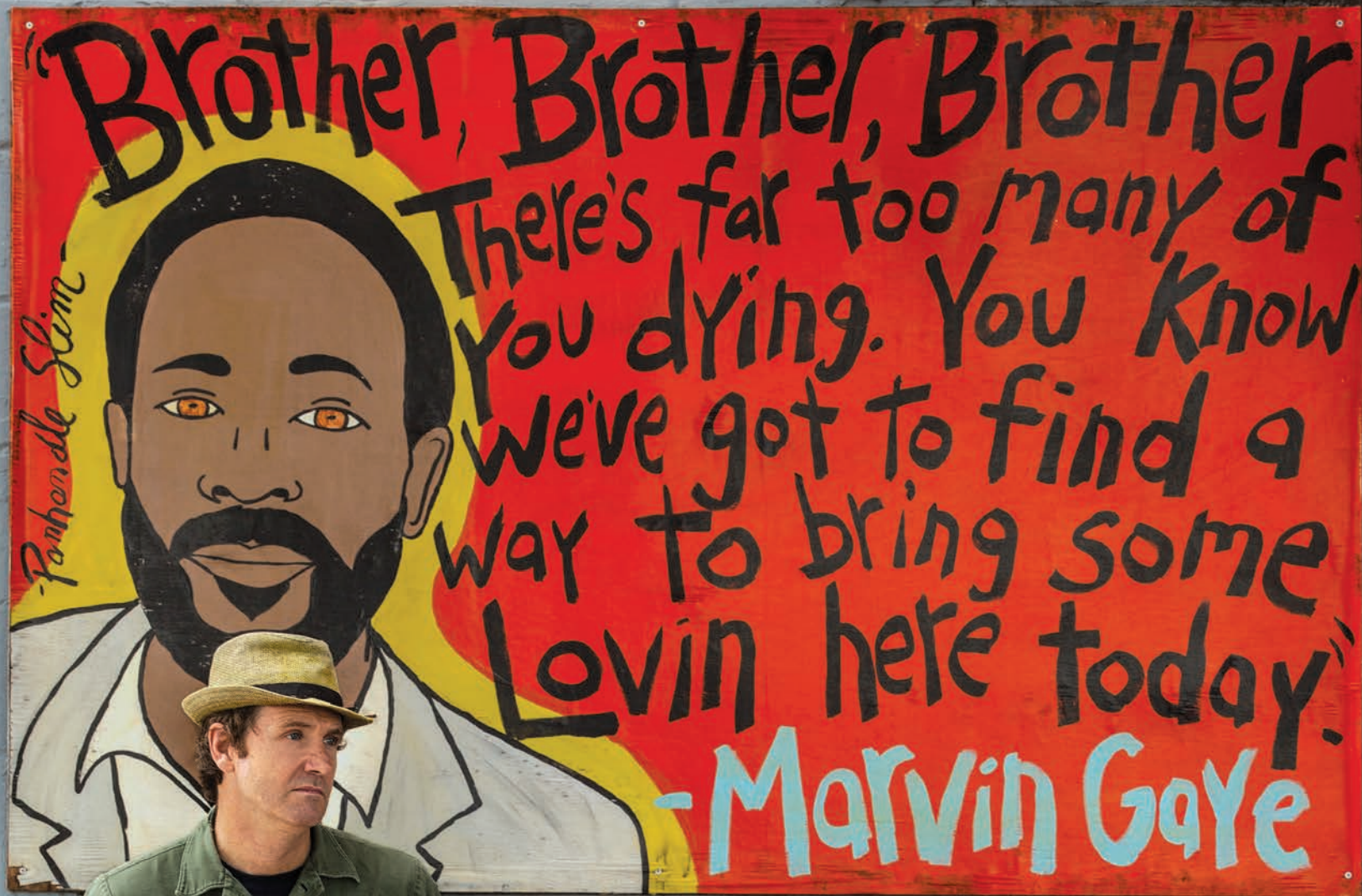
**If you could only drink one thing forever, what would it be?**

I'm a big bourbon guy. I'd sip on Blanton's whiskey over Pappy Van Winkle any day.

**Has anyone ever tipped you with something other than cash?**

I got more than double the tab in cash for my birthday one year, but that's nothing compared to the relationships I've built. When I travel, I discover I'm so rich with friends and people I know, and that means more to me.







# CULTURE

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## ARTIST

Prolific folk artist **Panhandle Slim** accents his big, bright portraits of acclaimed celebrities and activists with a single storytelling quote. Iconic images of Maya Angelou, Nina Simone, Jimmy Carter and others inspire guerrilla installations all across town, leaving Slim's Technicolor mark.

*Runners-up: (two-way tie)*  
*Tiffani Taylor*  
*Bellamy Murphy*

## ART GALLERY

For the past decade, contemporary gallery and artists' cooperative **Kobo Gallery** has featured a beautifully curated collection, exhibiting locally made art along with one-of-a-kind jewelry and wares.

*Runner-up: A.T. Hun*

## MUSEUM

The **Telfair Academy**, said to be the oldest public art museum in the South, provides

a spectacular walk through Savannah history. Built for the Telfair family in 1818, the neoclassical Regency mansion features 19th century furnished rooms, as well as 19th and 20th century American and European art, including paintings, decorative arts and sculptures.

*Runner-up: Jepson Center for the Arts*

## BAND

**Liquid Ginger** has been honing their high-energy vibe and eclectic shows since 1999. The band of six, helmed by frontwoman Ginger Fawcett, mashes up musical sounds and styles for a dynamic live experience.

*Runner-up: Velvet Caravan*

## CHARITY EVENT/ FUNDRAISER

Each spring, hundreds of Savannahians step up to the fight against cancer by participating in the **American**

**Cancer Society's Relay for Life**, which honors lost loved ones, celebrates survivors and raises money for American Cancer Society research and programs.

*Runner-up: Ronald McDonald House's Wine, Women and Shoes*

## FESTIVAL

From country to folk to jazz to chamber, the **Savannah Music Festival** delights and unites audiences, artists and fans of all stripes in a joyous two-week celebration of music. The nearly 30-year-old event is performed in venues around the city each spring.

*Runner-up: Savannah Food & Wine Festival*

## INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE

It's easy to get lost in a book and even easier to get lost in the aisles of **E. Shaver, Bookseller**. The quaint bookstore on Madison Square features seven tiny rooms, each devoted to various topics ranging from

popular fiction to local and regional history. The shop also hosts authors' events and reader meetups, and passersby can catch the occasional glimpse of an indolent cat napping in the display windows.

*Runner-up: The Book Lady*

## GROUP TO VOLUNTEER FOR

Savannah is passionate about animals, and it shows. Volunteering for **The Humane Society for Greater Savannah** makes a difference in the lives of thousands of animals in its care. Opportunities include dog walking, becoming a foster parent, pitching in at the shelter, donating to the wish list or thrift store and, for younger philanthropists, reading aloud to pets in the Nuzzle Buddies program.

*Runner-up: One Love Rescue*