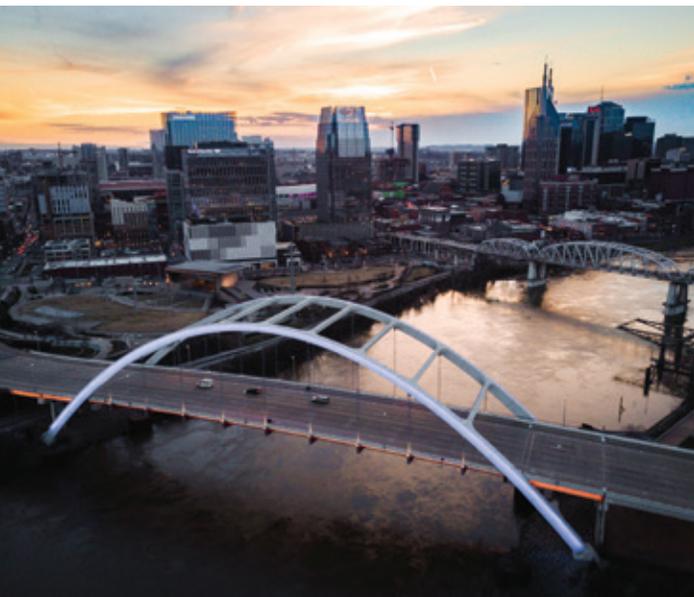


MUSIC CITY SINGS

Nashville beckons with top-notch restaurants, a happening downtown and unrivaled music history

BY TERESA K. TRAVERSE



Tennessee's largest city has become a popular destination (especially for bachelorette parties and weekends with the girls) in recent years, and it's easy to see why. Nashville is home to legendary music venues, vibrant neighborhoods and a thriving dining scene. Discover what makes Music City sing.

What to See

Downtown Nashville is teeming with popular attractions. Start your journey with a stroll down lively Broadway. On this street, pop in and out of various honky-tonks—highlights include Robert's Western World and Tootsie's Orchid Lounge—where you can hear musicians playing mostly modern country tunes for free. Tips are encouraged. Artists like Elvis Presley, Emmylou Harris, Tom Petty and Johnny Cash have all played at the storied and can't-miss Ryman Auditorium. It's where bluegrass was born and the place where Johnny and June Carter Cash first met. A former church complete with wooden pews and stained glass windows, the Ryman is renowned for its acoustics. Strolling around the Ryman is a living history lesson. Learn more about its deep music history roots at various exhibits.

No visit to Nashville would be complete without stopping by the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. The 350,000-square foot museum tells the story of country music. The core exhibit is *Sing Me Back Home: A Journey Through Country Music*. Additional museum highlights include Presley's 1960 Gold Cadillac and Hank Williams's cowboy boots. See plaques on the walls of musicians who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame. The museum also houses historic RCA Studio B where the likes of Presley, Dolly Parton and the Everly Brothers have all recorded. A separate fee is required to see Studio B. Leave downtown and head to lush Centennial Park. The urban park's most notable attraction is the Parthenon, a recreation of the one in Greece and an art museum with 63 paintings. You can't miss the 42-foot statue of Athena housed inside.

Where to Shop

Nashville's 12South neighborhood is one of the liveliest areas in the city. It's renowned, in part, for its boutiques. Highlights include Reese Witherspoon's stylish clothing boutique Draper James. Housed in a blue and white striped building, find dresses, blouses and accessories in prints and plaids. Additional shopping options include White's Mercantile, a pet-friendly modern general store that sells everything from handcrafted leather bags to organic dog treats. Local jewelry designer Judith Bright also has an eponymous shop in the neighborhood. Find rings, necklaces, bracelets and

earrings. One of her signature creations is her wire-wrapped rings, which can be customized.

Located just outside of 12South is Fox's Donut Den. Head here to snag a fresh donut from this shop that's been in business since 1973. Nearby is another legendary spot, The Bluebird Café. Taylor Swift was discovered here back in 2004 when she was just 14. Hear live music at this storied venue nearly every night.

Where to Eat

One of the most recent national food trends is Nashville hot chicken. Head to the restaurant where it all began when you visit Prince's Hot Chicken. Pick your spice level that ranges from plain to XXX Hot and then enjoy a sandwich, whole chicken, leg, breast or tenders. Hattie B's is another stand-out hot chicken option. Don't skip the sides like fries and mac n' cheese. For more upscale dining, acclaimed chef Sean Brock opened Audrey in honor of his grandmother of the same name back in October of 2021. She inspired Brock's love of Appalachian-inspired cooking. Enjoy modern Southern fare like Jimmy red grits, foie gras and bay laurel, Edwards' Surryano ham and sorghum and a beet and black walnut tart for dessert.

Where to Stay

The grand Hermitage Hotel opened in 1910. Walk up the stairs and find a breathtaking lobby complete with stained glass on the high ceilings, gold walls and intricate wall decor. The Hermitage features a total of 122 guest rooms. The 1,500-square-foot Presidential Suite features a separate king bedroom, a formal living room area, a marble powder room, unbelievable soft beds by Duxiana, an oversized Jacuzzi tub, custom Molton Brown bath amenities, a butler's pantry and a full dining table. The on-site Drusie & Darr restaurant is helmed by celebrated French Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten and opened in late 2021. The contemporary and elegant spot's menu features black truffle pizza, roasted black sea bass and Maine lobster. For a more casual spot, The Pink Hermit is a great option. Find coffee and pastries in the morning and a wine bar-vibe in the evening.

For more modern lodging, consider the Thompson Nashville. Every room at the Thompson features floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking downtown and the city's Gulch neighborhood, just south of downtown. In-room amenities include hardwood floors, plush bathrooms, a custom bar, a full bath with brass fixtures and even a Marshall Bluetooth speaker. One of the three dining establishments on property, the L.A. Jackson bar is on the top floor of the hotel. Enjoy a craft cocktail or try the signature frose here.

