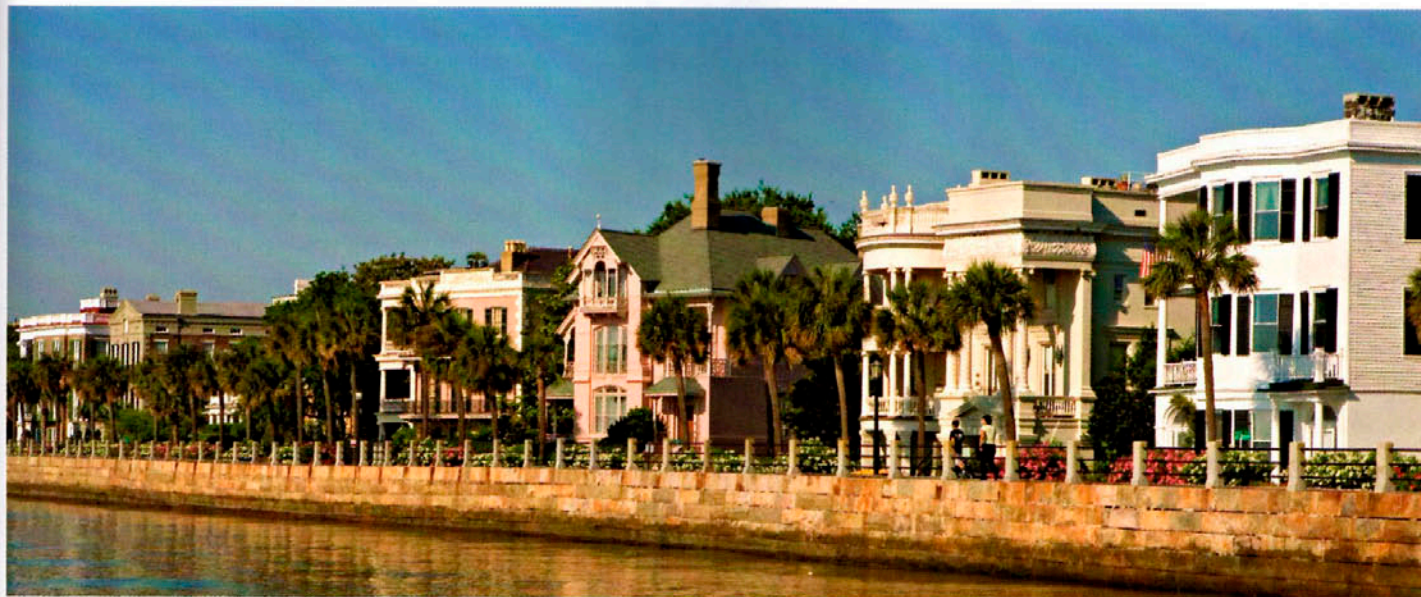


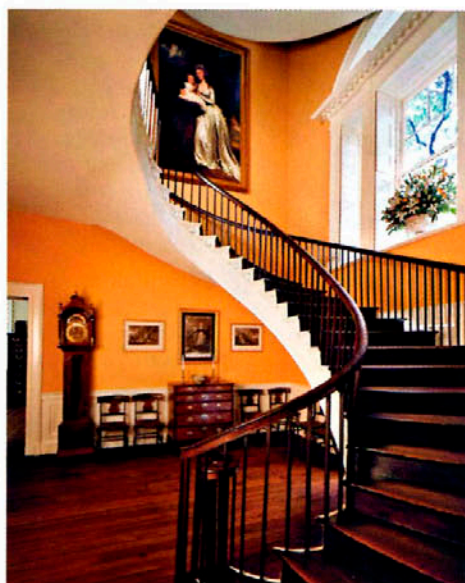
TRAVEL | CITY NOTEBOOK



Charleston | Pastel row houses, stylish boutiques, an abundance of art and antiques, and a profusion of spring blooms—Charleston's charms are many. Designer and shop owner **Muffie Faith**, chef **Mike Lata**, gallery owner **Ann Long**, and **Kitty Robinson**, executive director of Historic Charleston Foundation, divulge the town's top spots



SOUTH OF BROAD



NATHANIEL RUSSELL HOUSE



MIDDLETON PLACE



LEGEND

1. **Magnolia Plantation & Gardens** The oldest public gardens in the country. 3550 Ashley River Rd., 800/367-3517, www.magnoliaplantation.com.
2. **Hominy Grill** Fresh ingredients served in down-home environs. 207 Rutledge Ave., 843/937-0930, www.hominygrill.com.
3. **Charleston Farmers Market** Held Saturdays in Marion Square, April to December, 843/724-7309.
4. **Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge** (Cooper River Bridge) Connects the peninsula to Mount Pleasant.
5. **Fig** "In the spring, you can't beat their soft-shell crabs," says Ann Long of chef Mike Lata's restaurant. 232 Meeting St., 843/805-5900, www.eatatfig.com.
6. **St. Philip's Church** This 1680 church is the oldest Anglican congregation south of Virginia. www.stphilipchurchsc.org.
7. **Fort Sumter National Monument** The boat ride to the fort offers views of the harbor, city, and adjacent islands. 843/883-3123, www.nps.gov/fosu.
8. **Battery Park** The park, which includes White Point Gardens, sits where the Ashley and Cooper rivers meet.
9. **Nathaniel Russell House** The pièce de résistance in this 1808 museum house: a free-flying spiral staircase. 51 Meeting St., 843/724-8481, www.historiccharleston.org.
10. **South of Broad** One of the country's most desirable neighborhoods, with historic architecture and waterfront views.

“Charleston is a virtual architectural laboratory in an exquisitely beautiful 18th- and 19th-century environment. Your senses are heightened by the architecture, harbor views, cobblestoned streets, and gardens.” —Kitty Robinson

WHAT TO SEE AND DO

2009 Symphony Designer Showhouse "Tour Maison du Pré, a property with five historic houses dating to 1804," says Kitty Robinson. "Each room is decorated by a different designer, and the lunch is always delicious." March 19–April 19, www.csolinc.org.

Charleston Food + Wine Festival The country's best chefs, including locals such as Lata, Robert Carter, Brett McKee, and Bob Waggoner, come together with wine gurus, pit masters, and pastry chefs in this ultimate foodie event. March 5–8; 843/727-9998, ext. 4; www.charlestonfoodandwine.com.

Charleston International Antiques Show "Thirty-two

world-renowned dealers set up in an ideal setting in a city known for its antiques," says Robinson. March 20–22, 843/722-3405, www.historiccharleston.org.

Cooper River Bridge Run "Always the first weekend in April, the 10K run/walk draws 40,000 people," says Robinson. "The race starts in Mount Pleasant and ends in downtown Charleston. The views are spectacular and the competition is fierce and fun." April 4, 843/856-1949, www.bridgerun.com.

Drayton Hall A preservationist's delight, this pre-Revolutionary home is in near-original condition. 3380 Ashley River Rd., 843/769-2600, www.draytonhall.org.

Festival of Houses and Gardens "Sponsored by Historic

Charleston Foundation, this festival is, to me, the hallmark of spring, when 150 or so private houses, gardens, churches, and public buildings are open to the public to visit and enjoy," says Robinson. March 19–April 18, 843/722-3405, www.historiccharleston.org.

Gibbes Museum of Art "It has changing exhibitions of national importance, and its permanent collection features an exceptional selection of paintings by Charleston artists," says Robinson. The Beaux Arts-style museum opened in 1905. 135 Meeting St., 843/722-2706, www.gibbesmuseum.org.

The Hunley Muffie Faith suggests war buffs visit the Hunley, billed as the world's first successful combat submarine. Tours on

Saturday and Sunday; Warren Lasch Conservation Center, 1250 Supply St. on the old Charleston Navy Base; 843/743-4865; www.hunley.org.

Middleton Place "It is almost like having Versailles in your hometown," says Long. The 18th-century plantation boasts grand, geometrically planned gardens; green, sweeping terraces; and lovely views of the Ashley River. 4300 Ashley River Rd., 843/556-6020, www.middletonplace.org.

Mount Pleasant Farmers Market "Besides normal market goods," says Faith, "you can get an omelet made with fresh vegetables grown on Johns Island or fresh shrimp netted right here off the coast." Tuesday afternoons, April to

October; 843/884-8517, ext. 3497; www.townofmountpleasant.com.

Museum Mile "I highly recommend this history-filled walk," says Robinson. "It extends from the Aiken-Rhett House and The Charleston Museum (the oldest museum in the country) on the north end to the Nathaniel Russell House on the south end." www.charlestonmuseummile.org.

Town of Mount Pleasant Annual Blessing of the Fleet and Seafood Festival "The festival marks the opening of the state's first shrimp season of the year and is a nice occasion to be outside on the water, enjoying these little Lowcountry delicacies," says Lata. April 26; Mount Pleasant; 843/884-8517, ext. 3758; www.townofmountpleasant.com.

WHERE TO STAY

21 East Battery Bed & Breakfast "The carriage house at 21 East Battery, behind the Edmondston-Alston house, has the best address in town. Need I say more?" says Long. 21 East Battery, 843/556-0500, www.21eastbattery.com.

Charleston Place This Orient-Express hotel is "centrally located and has a nice spa," says Faith. 205 Meeting St., 888/635-2350, www.charlestonplace.com.

Kiawah Island Golf Resort Stay in a vacation house or villa, or luxuriate in The Sanctuary Hotel. "Many people first come to Kiawah for vacation and like it so much that they then consider moving here," says Robinson. 800/654-2924, www.kiawahresort.com.

The Mills House Hotel "A centrally located hotel in the historic district," says Robinson. The antiques-filled hotel is a replica of the original, which opened in 1853. 115 Meeting St., 800/874-9600, www.millshouse.com.

Planters Inn A luxury boutique hotel known for its spacious, elegantly appointed rooms and its top-notch restaurant, the Peninsula Grill. 112 North



1. WENTWORTH MANSION



2. BOB ELLIS

Market St., 843/722-2345, www.plantersinn.com.

1. Wentworth Mansion Five-star hotel in a historic mansion built circa 1886. Rich woods and ornate plasterwork adorn the interiors. Climb to the cupola for a great view. 149 Wentworth St., 888/466-1886, www.wentworthmansion.com.

WHERE TO EAT

39 Rue de Jean "Perfect for a classic night out in Charleston," suggests Faith. "Don't miss their mussels." 39 John St., 843/722-8881, www.39ruedejean.com.

Atlanticville "Many of the specials consist of local vegetables and seafood," says Faith. "I always get the wasabi tuna roll appetizer and fresh fish of the day." 2063 Middle St., Sullivan's Island; 843/883-9452; www.atlanticville.net.

Bowens Island Restaurant This oyster joint was named an America's Classic by the James Beard Foundation. Lata suggests it for dining with a view. 1870

Bowens Island Rd., Folly Beach; 843/795-2757; www.bowensislandrestaurant.com.

Burbage's Self-Serve Grocery "Homemade soups and sandwiches and other gourmet treats such as homemade barbecue, chili, and pimiento cheese," says Robinson. "Mr. Burbage is a beloved icon." 157 Broad St., 843/723-4054.

Caviar & Bananas "Our answer to Dean & Deluca," says Long. Find salads and sandwiches, artisanal cheeses, a coffee and tea bar, and all sorts of gourmet sauces, pastas, and olive oils. 51 George St., 843/577-7757, www.caviarandbananas.com.

Charleston Grill "If you want to feel like a rock star, enjoy killer jazz, and eat like a king, let general manager Mickey Bakst lead the way through your experience, and you'll never forget it," says Lata. 224 King St., 843/577-4522, www.charlestongrill.com.

Circa 1886 Fine dining in the carriage house of Wentworth

Mansion. Save room for the Peaches and Cream Soufflé or the Chocolate Hot & Cold. 149 Wentworth St., 843/853-7828, www.circa1886.com.

Cru Café "One of the best lunches in town," says Long. "Sit in or out, but call ahead. Chef John Zucker is wildly popular." 18 Pinckney St., 843/534-2434, www.crucafe.com.

Cypress Lowcountry Grille Known for its wine selection and exquisite cuisine. The restaurant's design also earns high marks. "The lighting is perfectly wonderful," says Robinson. 167 East Bay St., 843/727-0111, www.magnolias-blossom-cypress.com.

EVO Pizza "Great pizzeria that has embraced and expanded localism beyond fine dining," says Lata. 1075 East Montague Ave., 843/225-1796, www.evopizza.com.

Fleet Landing Restaurant "At the end of Market Street, looking out over the Charleston Harbor," says Faith. "They are

“I associate spring with the arrival of roe shrimp season, which starts in May. I always look forward to serving these sweet, tasty shrimp at Fig as soon as I can get my hands on them.” —Mike Lata

known for their fish tacos." 186 Concord St., 843/722-8100, www.fleetlanding.net.

La Fourchette "Delicious *pommes frites* and more in a lovely, intimate setting," says Robinson. 432 King St., 843/722-6261, www.lafourchettecharleston.com.

Fulton Five "The most romantic dinner location in Charleston," says Faith. 5 Fulton St., 843/853-5555.

The Glass Onion Says Lata: "The best po'boy in Charleston." 1219 Savannah Hwy., West Ashley; 843/225-1717; www.ilovetheglassonion.com.

Grill 225 "Within the magnificent Market Pavilion Hotel," says Robinson. "Enjoy an evening of elegant and fine dining—a gourmet's dream." 225 East Bay St., 877/440-2250, www.grill225.com.

Magnolias "Famous for their cream cheese brownie, they also have fabulous Lowcountry shrimp and grits," says Robinson. 185 East Bay St., 843/577-7771, www.magnolias-blossom-cypress.com.

McCrady's "Chef Sean Brock is getting accolades from across the country," says Long. Menus are inspired by what is growing on the restaurant's farm. 2 Unity Alley, 843/577-0025, www.mccradysrestaurant.com.

Muse Mediterranean fare. Chef Jason Houser is a star in Charleston's culinary scene. 82-A Society St., 843/577-1102, www.charlestonmuse.com.

Oak Steakhouse "My husband usually orders a Pittsburgh steak, and I especially love the eggplant Parmesan," says Robinson. 17 Broad St., 843/722-4220, www.oaksteakhouserestaurant.com.

Pane E Vino "A small Italian restaurant in the Upper King Street Design District. It's delightful and fun," says Robinson. 17 Warren St., 843/853-5955.

Pavilion Bar Suggests Long: "The rooftop bar at Market Pavilion Hotel is great for early drinks." 225 East Bay St., 843/723-0500, www.marketpavilion.com.

Peninsula Grill "It's all fabulous," says Long, "but be sure to meet Dennis Perry, the sommelier. Peninsula has the best cellar in town, and Bob Carter's kitchen never disappoints. Finish with the coconut cake." 112 North Market St., 843/723-0700, www.peninsulagrill.com.

Red Drum For those with a sweet tooth, try the desserts at this restaurant serving Texas-inspired food. 803 Coleman Blvd., Mount Pleasant; 843/849-0313; www.reddrumrestaurant.com.

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Sea Biscuit Café "The best breakfast," says Faith. "I always order the eggs Benedict, and someone usually gets pancakes and shares." 21 J.C. Long Blvd., Isle of Palms; 843/886-4079.

Slightly North of Broad (SNOB) "There's always a mix of locals and visitors," says Robinson. 192 East Bay St., 843/723-3424, www.mavericksouthernkitchens.com/snob.

Sugar Bakeshop "Delicious confections and pastries," says Long. 59½ Cannon St., 843/579-2891, www.sugarbake.com.

Taco Boy Taqueria/Cantina "For cocktails and a fun atmosphere," says Lata. 13 Center St., Folly Beach; 843/588-9761; www.tacoboy.net.

The Wreck of the Richard & Charlene When you pull up, you think, "This can't be it." But what it lacks in atmosphere, it makes up for with fresh seafood and sunset views. 106 Haddrell St., Mount Pleasant; 843/884-0052; www.wreckrc.com.

WHERE TO SHOP

Acquisitions Accessories, antiques, and new upholstery. 273 East Bay St., 843/577-8004, www.acquisitionsinteriors.com.

Ahern's Anvil "Sean Ahern does amazing custom ironwork," says Lata. 89 Brigade St., 843/722-4406, www.ahernsanvil.com.

Alexandra AD "I love their European antiques and accessories," says Long. 156 King St., 843/722-4897.

Amelia The shop of designer Amelia Handegan is a trove of finds from her travels, as well as her custom furniture. 471 King St., 843/722-9373, www.athid.com.

Anne's "Stylish, smart, avant-garde women's clothing," says Robinson. 312 King St., 843/577-3262.

Ann Long Fine Art "Ann has a sophisticated eye," says Faith. She specializes in classical realism and mid-20th-century modern. 54 Broad St., 843/577-0447, www.annlongfineart.com.

Antiques of the Indies Plantation and campaign furniture from the East and West Indies. 164 Market St., 843/577-6868, www.antiquesoftheindies.com.

Ben Silver "Ladies', men's, and children's clothing of the highest quality," says Robinson. 149 King St., 800/221-4671, www.bensilver.com.

Billy Reid "His things are perfect for the guy who wants to build a wardrobe with clothes you look forward to wearing," says Lata. 150 King St., 843/577-3004, www.billyreid.com.

2. Bob Ellis "I've been shopping for shoes there since I was a teenager," says Faith. 332 King St., 843/722-2515, www.bobellisshoes.com.

The Boutique Beautiful wedding and baby presents, lingerie, porcelain, and linens. 47 Broad St., 843/722-1441.

Carolina Galleries Works by contemporary Southern masters. 106-A Church St., 843/720-8622, www.carolinagalleries.com.

Charleston Cooks! Everything for the epicure. "They have a great selection of local cookbooks," says Faith. 194 East Bay St., 843/722-1212, www.mavericksouthernkitchens.com/cooks.

The Charleston Renaissance Gallery Focused on works of the American South. 103 Church St., 843/723-0025, www.fineart.south.com.

Circa Lighting A favorite of designers. 426 King St., 877/762-2323, www.circa.lighting.com.

Coleman Fine Art "Mary Whyte, represented here, paints settings reflecting Lowcountry culture," says Robinson. 79 Church St., 843/853-7000, www.colemanfineart.com.

Corrigan Gallery Many of Lese Corrigan's oil paintings focus on Charleston landscapes. 62 Queen St., 843/722-9868, www.corrigangallery.com.

Croghan's Jewel Box "A beautiful family-owned jewelry store with an extraordinary

reputation," says Robinson. 308 King St., 843/723-3594, www.croghansjewelbox.com.

Elizabeth Stuart Design "Great-looking antiques and furniture, which I aspire to someday fill my house with," Lata says of Faith's shop. 314 King St., 843/577-6272, www.esdcharleston.com.

Julia Santen Gallery "I love their vintage posters," says Lata. 188 King St., 843/534-0758, www.juliasantengallery.com.

Magar Hatworks "Leigh Magar's new location is a candy store of hats," says Long. 57 Cannon St., 843/577-7740, www.magarhatworks.com.

Robert Lange Studios The collections at this contemporary gallery feel incredibly current. 151 East Bay St., 843/805-8052, www.robertlangestudios.com.

RTW "The latest looks from the runways," says Long. 186 King St., 843/577-9748, www.rtwcharleston.com.

The Sylvan Gallery "Beautiful and varied exhibitions by select local and nationally known artists," says Robinson. 171 King St., 843/722-2172, www.thesylvangallery.com.

Ted's Butcherblock "All-natural, sustainable meats and gourmet items that I can't find anywhere else in town," says Lata. 334 East Bay St., 843/577-0094, www.tedsbutcherblock.com.

Tennille & Co. Pillows, tabletop items, children's clothing, jewelry, and handbags. 1644 Hwy. 17 N, Mount Pleasant; 843/856-4665; www.tennilleandco.com.

Vieuxtemps "Individually created porcelain pieces, wedding presents, and more in a friendly atmosphere," says Robinson. 180 King St., 843/723-7309, www.vieuxtemps.net.

Worthwhile "Unique nature-inspired gifts and clothing," says Lata. 268 King St., 877/454-0876, www.shopworthwhile.com. ♦

“The best way to see the gardens and the city is to rent a bicycle. You can cover more ground and even ride over the Cooper River Bridge.” —Muffie Faith

Geo. C. Birlant & Co. China and large antiques. 191 King St., 843/722-3842, www.birlant.com.

Golden & Associates Antiques "Beautiful antiques and a nice selection of chandeliers," suggests Faith. 206 King St., 843/723-8886, and 197 King St., 843/853-4706.

Hampden Clothing Fashions by Alexander Wang, Rag & Bone, Vena Cava, and more. 357 King St., 843/724-6373, www.hampdenclothing.com.

Mary Helen McCoy "French antiques in an inviting and exquisite setting," says Robinson. 120 King St., 843/577-6445, www.antique-french-furniture.com.

Pierre Deux For all things French Country. 279 King St., 888/743-7732, www.pierredoux.com.

Queen Charlotte Antiques Antiques and garden accessories. 61 Queen St., 843/722-9121.

The Shops of Historic Charleston Foundation Find Charleston-related gifts, nonfiction books about the city, and home furnishings inspired by local decorative arts and architecture. 108 Meeting St., 843/724-8484, www.historiccharleston.org.

South of Market Furniture, accessories, and lighting. "Great for garden items," says Long. 173 King St., 843/723-1114, www.southofmarket.biz.