

THE HORROR! **Stephen King** unveils a new play in Atlanta

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PAGE 123

Atlanta

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THE VANISHING
WHERE IN THE WORLD
IS JUSTIN GAINES?

GETAWAY

Greenville, S.C.

A case for the coolest Main Street in the South

by AMANDA HECKERT

WHILE DRIVING THROUGH downtown Greenville, South Carolina, after a recent visit to my parents' house nearby, my husband—who has called New York and L.A. home—turned to me and said, "I wouldn't mind living here one day." I was stunned to realize that I agreed with him. In the eight years since I left the Upstate, this stretch has somehow evolved into one of the Southeast's most vibrant Main Streets.

Once the "textile center of the South," Greenville's core dwindled with outsourcing and suburban flight in the seventies. But rather than accept the inevitability of urban decay, prescient city leaders reduced driving lanes, added curbside parking, and planted saplings along the sidewalks to make the area pedestrian friendly. With the addition of a world-class (and lately expanded) PEACE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS in the nineties, those early efforts finally paid off.

Visiting now, I spy lights twinkling in what has become a mature canopy of oaks and maples. Families, college kids, young professionals, and baby boomers alike throng Main Street's mile-long corridor, ducking in and out of specialty shops: cute boutiques, a dog bakery, art galleries, the always chaotic Mast General Store, and DARK CORNER DISTILLERY, offering the Palmetto State's first legal moonshine.

A brass quartet plays outside the WESTIN POINSETT, GREENVILLE. In fact, street performances—from concert series to October zombie walks—often enliven downtown plazas. The once-condemned Poinsett, carefully restored to four-diamond, Prohibition-era elegance, bewitched even George Clooney, who made it his home while filming *Leatherheads* nearby.

The Reedy—whose currents powered Greenville's early settlements and mills—buoyed the city again when Falls Park opened by its shoals in 2004. Here visitors can rent REEDY RIDES bikes and hop on the Swamp Rabbit Tram Trail, a new thirteen-plus-mile greenway that runs to neighboring Greenville Zoo.

Falls Park also forms a gateway to the revived historic West End, a once-derelict landscape of warehouses and rail yards. A free trolley rolls by, taking sightseers past native "Shoelless" Joe Jackson's house museum and five-year-old FLUOR FIELD—home to a



Check out Greenville's myriad festivals, such as May's Artisphere or September's Euphoria, a culinary and arts festival. Whenever you visit, watch for giant green "P" circles to find ample, artfully hidden parking garages.



RESTAURANTS

PEACE CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS 300 South Main Street, 800-888-7763, peacecenter.org
DARK CORNER DISTILLERY 241 North Main Street, 854-631-1144, darkcornerdistillery.com
WESTIN POINSETT 120 South Main Street, 854-421-9700, starwood-hotels.com
REEDY RIDES 12 West McBee Street, 854-619-2945, reedyrides.com
FLUOR FIELD 945 South Main Street, 854-240-4500, greenvillevine.com
SOBY'S 207 South Main Street, 854-232-7007, sobys.com
THE LAZY GOAT 170 River Place, 854-679-5299, thelazygoat.typepad.com
NOSE DIVE 126 South Main Street, 854-373-7300, nose-dive.com
AMERICAN GROCERY RESTAURANT 732 South Main Street, 854-232-7665, americangrocery.com
POMEGRANATE ON MAIN 618 South Main Street, 854-241-3012, pomegranateonmain.com
THE TRAPPE DOOR 23 West Washington Street, 854-451-7490, trappedoor.com
THE VELO FELLOW 1 Augusta Street, Suite 126, 854-242-9296, thevelofellow.com

Red Sox affiliate and a miniature Green Monster.

When hunger calls, I face a dilemma unfathomable a few years ago: too many buzzed-about, chef-driven restaurants. Greenville's dining revival took off in the late nineties when Carl Sobocinski opened nouveau Southern SOBY'S in a renovated cotton exchange. Now Soby's has its own farm, and its owners have other hits like the LAZY GOAT (with tapas such as bisteeya, a savory Moroccan pastry) and the NOSE DIVE gastropub. I finally settle on AMERICAN GROCERY RESTAURANT, known for sustainable seafood.

Another marvel: growing global eats. Popular downtown spots like chichi Persian POMEGRANATE ON MAIN and Belgium-focused the TRAPPE DOOR, with its 150-plus beers, are a byproduct of Greenville's influx of international firms. Michelin and BMW top that list, and the latter's Performance Driving School draws fast-lane fans from across the nation.

My night ends at West End's the VELO FELLOW, a public house with lovely craft beers—the names of which I struggle to hear over the din of young swains in suspenders and handlebar mustaches. But to me, seeing Greenville thrive is worth a bit of noise. ■