



greenville

Big flavors in a small *Southern town*

BY LYNN SELDON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN O'HAGAN



IN LESS THAN 25 YEARS, THE GREENVILLE, SOUTH Carolina, dining scene has gone from downtrodden to sparkling. Nationally recognized revitalization efforts have brought Main Street and environs back from the dead, with weekly summer concerts, a 32-acre park in the middle of town, superb shopping, and riverfront dining.

One of the most obvious differences in today's Greenville is the vibrant restaurant scene. There has been a complete shift from fast-food fixes to a large number of diverse restaurants and chefs that rival anything found in the region.

SOBY'S NEW SOUTH CUISINE

This is the one that started Greenville's restaurant revitalization. Opened in 1997 by namesake copartner and cofounder Carl Sobocinski, Soby's attracts locals and visitors with a bustling atmosphere framed by brick walls and a busy bar. The menu offers chef Shaun Garcia's takes on Southern favorites, like the Gullah Shrimp & Grits, which features wild American shrimp, Anson Mills grits, and Caw Caw Creek bacon. Many of the ingredients used nightly are grown on Garcia's nearby 10-acre sustainable farm. Around the corner, **Soby's on the Side** features freshly baked breads and pastries and breakfast and lunch to eat in or take away for a picnic along South Main Street.

207 S. Main St.

864-232-7007

Lunch, Dinner, Sunday brunch

sobys.com



DEVEREAUX'S

This contemporary jewel for locals and visiting corporate bigwigs from BMW and Michelin (both companies have North American headquarters here) features impeccable dishes from chef Spencer Thomson, who many believe might be South Carolina's next James Beard winner. Thomson crafts each night's dishes on the basis of the best available ingredients, each bringing incredible flavor and creativity to the table. When the black grouper graces the menu, it always sells out. Other summer favorites are the heirloom-tomato gazpacho and the crab-cake-encrusted grouper with roasted Roma tomato and spinach zucchini lasagna rolls.

25 E. Court St.
864-241-3030
Dinner
devereauxsdining.com



THE LAZY GOAT

Located right on the banks of the Reedy River, with equally enjoyable views inside and out, is The Lazy Goat, another of Sobocinski's downtown treats. Chef Victoria Moore (named in *Esquire* magazine by writer John Mariani as one of his "Breakout Chefs to Watch") delivers a tapaslike menu, including ever-changing meats and cheeses plates and a variety of "Graze & Nibble" options meant to be shared. Don't miss the harissa-spiced hummus; grilled calamari; minted lamb rib-eye; and duck, duck, goat pizza, which is topped with duck confit, drunken goat cheese, a duck egg, arugula, and sour cherry vinaigrette.

170 River Pl.
864-679-5299
Lunch, Dinner
thelazygoat.com

▶▶ The Lazy Goat Gelato Shoppe is now open and located below the restaurant. ◀◀





RICK ERWIN'S WEST END GRILLE

Restaurateur Rick Erwin brought this well-respected chophouse to downtown Greenville in 2005, and it remains an outstanding choice for steaks and seafood. One can't go wrong with the 20-ounce bone-in rib-eye, as well as appropriate sides like succotash and sauces (green peppercorn highly recommended). Those not into red meat will love chef Jason McCarthy's crab cakes served with crawfish risotto and beurre blanc. Erwin also owns and operates the **Nantucket Seafood Grill** in the new Courtyard Greenville Downtown.

648 S. Main St.
864-232-8999
Dinner
rickerwins.com

AMERICAN GROCERY RESTAURANT

Continuing the tasty charge down southern Main Street, front-of-house charmer and sommelier Darlene Mann-Clark joins husband and chef Joe Clarke to present a true farm-to-table experience that regularly lures those in the know. Joe works wonders with local "groceries" like trout, rabbit, and whatever else he likes and gets that day.

732 S. Main St.
864-232-7665
Dinner
americangr.com



PHOTO COURTESY KEITH DRINGGERS

GET EUPHORIC ◀◀◀

If anything defines the Greenville food scene beyond the world-class restaurants, it's Euphoria. Founded by restaurateur Carl Sobocinski and rocker Edwin McCain, Euphoria features food, wine, and music through a variety of events. Highlights include cooking demos (often accompanied by live music); restaurant wine dinners featuring guest and resident chefs; a premier wine tasting; wine seminars; and the landmark "Taste of the South" night that features food from Greenville's best restaurants and a concert by Edwin McCain. (He typically invites other musicians as well.) The dates for 2011 are September 22-25. euphoriagreenville.com

MORE TIME TO DINE?



BARLEY'S TAPROOM & PIZZERIA

Locals love this casual place in a former 19th-century hardware and feed store that has more than 50-plus beers on draft. Ask the bartenders for local recommendations, including anything from nearby Thomas Creek Brewery. Creative New York-style pizzas provide a perfect pairing.

25 W. Washington St.
864-232-3706

Lunch, Dinner

barleystaproom.com/greenville

HIGH COTTON

With floor-to-ceiling glass walls overlooking Reedy River, High Cotton's striking space is as alluring as chef Anthony Gray's great food. Part of Maverick Southern Kitchens—including Charleston's famed Slightly North of Broad and the original High Cotton, as well as Mount Pleasant's Old Village Post House—High Cotton features locally sourced seafood, meats, and produce prepared in maverick ways (like Gray's Sunburst Farms trout, which is served with sweet potato rice pilaf, Marcona almonds, leeks, and ginger brown butter). Be sure to check out the list of High Cotton's farmers and sources right on the menu.

550 S. Main St.
864-335-4200

Lunch, Dinner, Sunday brunch
mavericksouthernkitchens.com





LARKIN'S ON THE RIVER

The she-crab soup is dreamy, as is the historic location at the Peace Center for Performing Arts in the old Gower Coach Factory, along the Reedy River. You'll find aged steaks, Caesar salads made tableside, fresh fish, an impressive wine list, and incredible outdoor dining, particularly during weekly summer concerts.

318 S. Main St.
864-467-9777
Lunch, Dinner, Sunday brunch
larkinsontheriver.com



POMEGRANATE ON MAIN

The colorful kabob combinations (Soltani) are the order of choice at this Persian restaurant, located on the southern end of Main Street, which has sublime seating inside and out. But you'll also find mirza ghasemi—a blend of eggplant, tomato, and garlic—daily seafood specials, and its famous pomegranate martini.

618 S. Main St.
864-241-3012
Lunch, Dinner
pomegranateonmain.com

local food finds

If you need something to keep you busy between meals, check out these fun food finds.

Greenville Culinary Tours: What foodie can resist these new tours offered by Greenville History Tours and the Table 301 Restaurant Group? The 2½- to 3-hour tour visits five destinations with high-profile chefs cooking regional ingredients at each. Held on Tuesdays and Saturdays, these tours are a bargain at \$39. (864-567-3940, greenvillehistorytours.com)

Carolina First Saturday Market: This bustling Saturday market has a little of everything from more than 50 area farmers and restaurants. It's open from 8:00 a.m. until noon, May to October. (Main Street between Washington and Court, saturdaymarketlive.com)

Fluor Field at the West End: This contemporary minor-league diamond gem features the Greenville Drive, an affiliate of the Boston Red Sox. Forget the standard ball-park concession fare, and head to the **Spinx 500 Club** down the right field line for restaurant-style service and food with a Southern accent. (Just watch for foul balls.) (945 S. Main St.)

The Cook's Station: This sprawling space is a food lover's heaven, with everything for the kitchen, from appliances to cookware and from accessories to gourmet foods and wines. (659 S. Main St., thecooksstation.com)

Michelin on Main: Michelin's North American headquarters is in Greenville, and this retail store sells everything Michelin (except the tires). Culinary tourists will love the selection of Michelin Guides, which have been published since 1900. (550 S. Main St., #102)



PHOTO COURTESY GREENVILLECVB.COM



TASTEMAKERS

greenville

| where to stay *(and eat!)*



HAMPTON INN & SUITES GREENVILLE RIVERPLACE

With rooms (many with balconies) overlooking the river, rocker and road warrior Edwin McCain calls this the "best Hampton Inn in America." It's across from **The Lazy Goat**, and guests can charge their dinner to their hotel account.

171 River Place
864-271-8700
hamptoninn.com





THE WESTIN POINSETT

This 1920s historic Main Street hotel is in the heart of downtown, and its renovation was a landmark event in the revival of the area. You'll find many original details yet all the modern luxuries today's travelers expect. Little touches like chilled "spa" water with fresh fruit that greet you on warm summer days reinforce the great hospitality. The hotel's **Spoonbread Restaurant** has a tasty Southern accent, while Carl Sobocinski's newest gastropub venture, **Nose Dive**, is adjacent. [f](#)

120 S. Main St.
864-421-9700
starwoodhotels.com



Longtime Southern Foodways Alliance member Lynn Seldon is based on the North Carolina coast but makes frequent forays to favorite South Carolina foodie destinations like Greenville, Charleston, and many restaurants (and meals) in between.

Savor Charlotte

Look closely at Charlotte and you'll discover a lot. A lot of indulging at our five-star restaurants. A lot of flirting at our electrifying clubs. And a lot of exploring at our museums and galleries. Find a lot more at 800-231-4636 or charlottesgotalot.com. **Charlotte's got a lot.**