

PLUS: A GUIDE to NC OYSTERS

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BONUS 48-PAGE
PULLOUT

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Thanksgiving dressing (*here, we don't call it stuffing*)
takes center stage on North Carolina tables P.78

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Carrboro

This funky, free-spirited town in Orange County has long been shaped by the university down the street, but these days, it stands on its own.

photography by ANAGRAM PHOTO



Main Street is lined with colorful shops, music venues, and restaurants. At Acme Food & Beverage Company, you can try the Carolina crab cakes and The Parkway cocktail – made with Bulleit bourbon, mountain apples, and local ginger.



It happens in the blink of an eye: You're driving down Franklin Street, when suddenly the road curves around a bend, Crook's Corner in the rearview, and spits you out in a different place entirely. Carrboro unfurls itself quickly, colorfully — a slice of small town just when you need it.

In 1882, Chapel Hill officials decided to build a new train station. They picked a spot directly to the west, just one mile from the University of North Carolina, far enough away that the noise wouldn't disturb those on campus. The area known as West End soon carved out its own identity as a mill town, and academia spilled over the railroad tracks, bringing new growth. Although the neighboring

towns share a common collegiate thread, today their personalities diverge. If Chapel Hill is your classy, argyle sweater-wearing professor, Carrboro is your coolest, quirkiest friend wearing a band T-shirt. Here, live music venues attract national acts and award-winning restaurants entice out-of-town foodies. Carrboro is certainly an old Southern town — but it's one that's just as hip as it is homey.



At CrossTies BBQ, diners eat pulled pork and fried green tomatoes in vintage train cars, a nod to the property's history. In the 1900s, it was home to a railway station.



Clockwise: Try the chicken salad at beloved Carrboro eatery Neal's Deli. Like his father, legendary chef Bill Neal, owner Matt Neal likes to put his stamp on classic dishes. Across the street at Steel String Brewery, you'll find creative and seasonal beers inspired by the agriculture of the Piedmont.





Clockwise: Bring your coat to pick a pepper at the Carrboro Farmers Market. Now in its 40th season, the market is held every Saturday at the Town Commons. At Johnny's Gone Fishing, a coffee shop and music venue, an iced coffee pairs perfectly with dessert — and a puzzle.



CARR MILL MALL

Today it's home to favorite eateries, like Elmo's Diner and Venable Rotisserie Bistro. But the sprawling red-brick building has a blue-collar backstory: Built in 1889, it was a textile mill for more than seven decades. When town officials considered demolishing the mill in 1975, the community banded together to preserve this symbol of their history.

