

January 17, 2013

36 Hours in Durham, N.C.

By INGRID K. WILLIAMS

THE tobacco and textile industries left their imprint on Durham long ago, but now the historic brick mills and repurposed factories form the backdrop of North Carolina's re-energized Bull City. Recently, artist studios and upstart galleries have multiplied in the flourishing downtown area, where new bakeries, pizzerias, tapas bars and food trucks — and trailers and buses and even the odd tricycle — seem to surface at every turn. Since Big Tobacco is dead, consider this cool mix of culture and food the new Durham blend.

Friday

3:30 p.m.

1. CAMPUS TOUR

Durham is hardly a college town, yet its identity remains inextricably linked to Duke University. The university's West Campus is the quintessential collegiate setting, with grassy quads and lovely neo-Gothic buildings lorded over by the stately stone facade of the 210-foot-tall Duke Chapel. Nearby are the Sarah P. Duke Gardens (420 Anderson Street; 919-684-3698; hr.duke.edu/dukegardens), 55 meticulously maintained acres bursting with diverse flora. Stroll along the circuitous walking paths that curl around the gorgeous gardens' grassy slopes and placid ponds, keeping an eye out for the majestic resident great blue heron. From the gardens, it's not far to the Nasher Museum of Art (2001 Campus Drive; 919-684-5135; nasher.duke.edu; \$5). Housed in a cluster of modern, monolithic structures, this on-campus museum hosts an

impressive slate of exhibitions focusing on contemporary and visual art, like the current “Collecting Matisse and Modern Masters” show that runs through Feb. 10.

6:30 p.m.

2. SPANISH COURSES

If authenticity trumps atmosphere where your appetite is concerned, head to Los Comales (2103 North Roxboro Street; 919-220-1614), a no-frills taquería where the posted menu is in Spanish only, and the television is most likely tuned to ESPN Deportes. The succulent tacos al pastor on homemade corn tortillas (\$1.75) and oozing cheese-and-pork pupusas (\$3) are reason enough to overlook the simple setting, as are the refreshing aguas frescas (try the melon flavor, \$1.75) and spicy chorizo tacos (\$2) topped with salsa verde, cilantro and pico de gallo from the salsa bar.

9:30 p.m.

3. FULL STEAM AHEAD

On any given night, evidence of the Bull City’s youth-driven renaissance is on display at the intersection of Rigsbee Avenue and Geer. On one corner sits Motorco Music Hall (723 Rigsbee Avenue; 919-901-0875; motorcomusic.com), a garage bar and music venue that has hosted everything from indie bands and improv nights to all-female Mexican wrestling events. Across the street is the cavernous Fullsteam Brewery (726 Rigsbee Avenue; 919-682-2337; fullsteam.ag), where picnic tables are packed with people sipping house-brewed beers like hickory-smoked porter and sweet potato lager made from local tubers. Pair your pint with a snack from one of the food trucks usually parked outside. Try a warm Pigs ’n’ Figs sandwich (with fig, speck and goat cheese; \$6) from the American Meltdown truck (americanmeltdown.org; Twitter: @AmericanMLTDWN) or juicy pork-filled buns (\$5) from the Chirba Chirba

Dumpling truck (chirbachirba.com; Twitter: @ChirbaChirba) are solid bets. Close out the night with a nightcap at the newcomer Kotuku Surf Club (703 Rigsbee Avenue; 919-294-9661), a laid-back bar that opened down the block in December 2011.

Saturday

10 a.m.

4. MARKET IN THE PARK

Roam the Durham Farmers' Market (501 Foster Street; 919-667-3099; durhamfarmersmarket.com), which takes over the pavilion at the recently cleaned-up Durham Central Park (durhamcentralpark.org) on Saturday mornings. From beets to beef, everything sold comes from producers within 70 miles of the market. For breakfast, try a hearth-baked loaf from Loaf, a stall so popular that it opened a nearby bakery (111 West Parrish Street; 919-797-1254) in 2011. Or seek out Monuts Donuts (monutsdonuts.com; Twitter: @MonutsDonuts), a trike peddling sublime handmade cake and yeast doughnuts with seasonal flavors like pumpkin chai and maple bacon bourbon.

11 a.m.

5. ART BELT

After the market, pop into the neighboring Upfront Gallery at the Bull City Arts Collaborative (401 B1 Foster Street; 919-949-4847; bullcityarts.org), where recent exhibitions included a collection of vintage radios and fine-press books created by the in-house graphic design and letterpress studio Horse & Buggy Press (horseandbuggypress.com). Piqued your interest in the thriving local arts scene? Then proceed to Golden Belt, a former textile factory with handsome brick buildings that were recently converted into artist studios, lofts and galleries. Admire the sculptures at the Liberty Arts Gallery (923 Franklin Street; 919-260-2931; liberty-arts.org),

where you might also spy artists at work molding metal, glass, wood and stone. Then tour the LabourLove Gallery (807 East Main Street; 919-373-4451; labourlove.com), which opens at noon and showcases paintings, photography and other diverse projects from local artists.

1 p.m.

6. MOTOR TO MORTAR

A growing trend in town is for food trucks to parlay their street success into brick-and-mortar storefronts. Only Burger (3710 Shannon Road; 919-937-9377; onlyburger.com) was the pioneer of this motor-to-mortar route, opening a location in 2010 that serves the same juicy burgers topped with fried green tomato and pimento cheese (\$6.75) that made their sought-after truck famous. For dessert, seek out another mobile food purveyor headed down the same path: the Parlour (theparlourdurham.com; Twitter: @parlourdurham) is in the process of expanding from a kitted-out mini school bus to a permanent ice cream shop (at 117 Market Street). The ice cream sandwiches (\$4) made with soft chocolate chip cookies and handmade salted butter caramel ice cream are superb.

3 p.m.

7. LOCAL LABELS

Trendy brands like A.L.C. share space with local labels at Vert & Vogue (905 West Main Street; 919-251-8537; vertandvogue.com), a boutique in a renovated former tobacco warehouse. The shop is now the spot to find men's button-down shirts from the store's own line, skinny jeans from the cult brand Raleigh Denim and structured Mill & Bird leather bags that are handmade in Durham by a local designer.

6 p.m.

8. SOUTHERN COMFORTS

If crispy fried chicken atop pillowy waffles weren't decadent enough, at Dame's Chicken & Waffles (317 West Main Street; 919-682-9235; dameschickenwaffles.com) every plate comes with a flavored butter "shmeat" and a side. Order the Quilted Buttercup (fried chicken, sweet potato waffles and a maple-pecan shmeat; \$10.75) and do not skip a side of the heavenly Triple Mac and Cheese. For a digestif (you'll need one) head down the block to Whiskey (347 West Main Street; 919-682-6191; whiskeydurham.com), a smoky speakeasy-style lounge that opened in 2009. Sink into one of the leather club chairs, order a bourbon and should the mood strike, sample the bar's own House Stick from Bull City Cigars (\$15).

8:30 p.m.

9. NIGHT AT THE THEATER

Durham's cultural calendar got a huge boost from the 2008 opening of the \$44 million, 2,700-seat Durham Performing Arts Center (123 Vivian Street; 919-688-3722; dpacnc.com). Step inside the sparkling glass structure to see a show right off Broadway or to catch a concert — coming performers include Smokey Robinson, Diana Krall and B. B. King. For more intimate stage productions, try the nearby Manbites Dog Theater (703 Foster Street; 919-682-4974; manbitesdogtheater.org). Or head to the historic Carolina Theater (309 West Morgan Street; 919-560-3030; carolinatheatre.org) to see a classic flick like "King Kong" or a documentary about Harry Belafonte.

Sunday

11 a.m.

10. BAVARIAN BRUNCH

In southern Germany, Guglhupf is a type of Bundt cake. In southern Durham, Guglhupf is the name of a cozy bakery and cafe (2706 Durham-Chapel Hill Boulevard; 919-401-2600; guglhupf.com) whose German-inflected brunch menu runs from bircher muesli and grilled Nutella sandwiches to pan-fried schnitzel with salad. Try the charcuterie platter of house-cured sausages and meats (\$10.50), which comes with an overflowing basket of fresh bread from the adjoining bakery.

1 p.m.

11. PUTTING AROUND

The sport of disc golf, which trades balls and clubs for plastic flying discs (Frisbee is a brand name) thrown at elevated baskets, has been increasing in popularity around town. One beginner-friendly course winds through the woods of Cornwallis Road Park (2830 Wade Road; free). If you already know what jump putts and anhyzers are, try the 22 professional-caliber holes of the challenging course at Valley Springs Park (3805 Valley Springs Road; free). Either way, expect to encounter tranquil nature and friendly locals happy to point you toward the next hole.

IF YOU GO

The **King's Daughters Inn** (204 North Buchanan Boulevard; 919-354-7000; thekingsdaughtersinn.com), adjacent to Duke University's East Campus, occupies a handsome brick building that dates from the 1920s. Formerly a retirement home for elderly women, the inn was renovated and converted into a boutique hotel that opened in 2009 with 17 graceful rooms and suites. Doubles from \$190.

The **Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club** (3001 Cameron Boulevard; 919-490-0999; washingtongdukeinn.com), situated just off Duke's West Campus, is the grandest hotel in town

with an 18-hole golf course and 271 rooms and suites decorated in English-country style.

Doubles from around \$199.



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