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VOLUME 4, ISSUE 10

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FREE

The Business of Downtown

Interviews with Raleigh leaders on the continued growth of business in Downtown Raleigh



SOLAS

Fred Benton gives high marks on dinner at Solas



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The "Business of Downtown"

Opinions on what it will take for downtown's continued growth

By Crash Gregg

Despite being in the midst of a global recession, Raleigh still has one of the strongest economies in the United States. While we've felt the shrinking budgets and wallet-tightening more in the last few months, it still hasn't impacted our area as severely as most cities.

There are many factors that may be insulating us in our own economic bubble: the recent aggressive and positive growth of downtown Raleigh, our wonderful ethnic and cultural diversity due in part to the many local colleges and the influx of international employees, the abundance of local and state governmental organizations, and the fact that the average-aged downtowner is young, active and optimistic.

With all this being said, we asked a varied panel of "invested and interested" local leaders and business owners what they think of the "business of downtown" – the collective of companies, shops, agencies, and an involved public – and what will be needed to ensure our future growth not only in these troubled economic times, but also in the years after.

In alphabetical order, our interviewees include:

Bo Dempster
Managing Partner: Poyner Spruill, LLP

Rick Jones
Managing Partner: The Mint, President: PBM Graphics

Steven Keup
General Manager: Raleigh Marriott City Center

Roger Krupa, Doug Grissom, Laurie Okun
Director, Assistant Director and Director of Sales, respectively: Raleigh Convention Center

Charles Meeker
Mayor: City Of Raleigh

G. Patel
Owner: Sono, The Oxford and Mura restaurants

Paul Reimel
DRA: Economic Development Manager

Harvey Schmitt
President/CEO: Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce

Lloyd Yates
President and CEO: Progress Energy Carolinas

George York
Executive Vice President: York Properties



Joseph "Bo" Dempster
Managing Partner: Poyner Spruill, LLP

< **BO DEMPSTER** > Our recent move downtown started out of necessity. We had been in the same building on Glenwood Avenue for 22 years. The lease ran out, but so had the room because as you can imagine, the practice of law had changed tremendously in two decades. Due to the physical limitations at our previous location, we started searching for a

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COVER AND LEFT PHOTOS:
Raleigh Wide Open 3 brought tens of thousands of visitors downtown. More events like RWO are needed to bring more business and revenue into the area.

UPCOMING ISSUES

Volume 4, Issue 11 - Holiday Gift Guide (Buy Local!)

Volume 4, Issue 12 - Downtown Visual Arts



The Downtowner is a local monthly print magazine dedicated to coverage of downtown Raleigh. Our online publication encompasses downtown as well as the surrounding area.

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new office about three years ago. We decided that we wanted to be in an area that was developing, that was vibrant—a place that would bring energy into our office and offer more of an opportunity for community interaction. We were presented with a lot of great options, and eventually this project idea (RBC Plaza) was presented to us. When I first presented the idea, the initial reaction was a negative one because many people felt it would be more trouble for us, an inconvenience, really. We've been suburban for so long; we had ample parking and a lot of freedom at our previous location. But after relocating, everyone kept talking about what a great decision and experience this is for our firm, including those who were initially hesitant. All of the fears and all of the worries have gone away. We've had none of the issues that we thought we would encounter by being downtown.

What has come out of the move is incredible; all of a sudden we're seeing people from this office get together and go to lunch, catch up with each other more than they were before and even run into people on the street that they know but would have never seen at our old office. It's exciting to be in this new environment, as corny as that sounds.

I think this space suits our firm's needs better. The office was designed with a lot of thought and planning to help the attorneys and staff work more comfortably and efficiently—and hopefully more pro-

ductively. I also hope that this move will bring the firm closer together and that people will have more time to get to know each other and interact more, both socially and professionally. And of course, client development opportunities are sure to come out of this relocation. Then of course there's the overwhelming support of downtown: I was thanked for signing a lease in downtown Raleigh. People would literally come up to me and say, "thank you making a commitment to downtown Raleigh." That was something I didn't expect of course, but it was a great validation of our decision because the thanks came from people whom I respect and think very highly of. There hasn't been a negative thing about our move. It's created a lot of excitement and energy in the office.

We've been welcomed by everyone from the Downtown Raleigh Alliance to other local businesses. We have a staff of 130, so I like to think we're giving back to these businesses by adding that many more people eating lunch downtown, shopping downtown, etc.

One sector I'd like to see more of in downtown is retail. I know everyone is trying hard to make that happen. Right now, the restaurants and businesses are here, and they do well. It's great to have those amenities, but the retail aspect is definitely lacking. I think from the standpoint of the people in this office, being able to visit stores and run errands during lunch breaks would be a tremendous asset. And I think it will come; it will just take some time to get here. As it stands now, we try to visit a lot of

the restaurants in downtown. I've been to Caffé Luna, which I love. I've been to The Mint, which has a great lunch and I've tried Martin Street Pizza. We're still exploring all the options downtown has to offer. We're also encouraging our employees to come down after hours and on the weekends because downtown Raleigh is an entirely different place then. There are so many places to go to and so many things to take advantage of. It's not expensive, and downtown is easy to get to and get around in.



Charles Meeker
Mayor: City of Raleigh

< **MAYOR CHARLES MEEKER** > Downtown Raleigh has been the Class A office market in the Triangle for some time and has remained as such. Now with

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STRAIGHT from **BROADWAY!** 08/09

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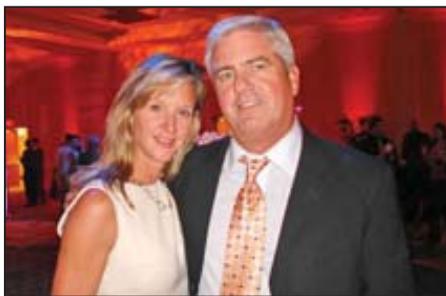
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RBC Plaza open and Site 1 (Charter Square) under construction, things are only looking more positive. In terms of entertainment and restaurants, we have the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts and countless restaurants between the Fayetteville Street district and Glenwood South, so really, we're the premier place for all kinds of entertainment in the Triangle. Another benefit to downtown business is the re-establishing of the Convention Center, which is off to a great start.

There are, however, two areas where we need to make some improvements. The first is retail; we don't have a lot of that downtown. The future of retail is more for independent businesses, not national chains. What we and the Downtown Raleigh Alliance are trying to do is make the area a hub for Raleigh and Triangle-based businesses. The second area we'd like to improve on is downtown residences. We're in the process of finishing a lot of new condos, so in that respect, the ball is rolling. Of course, we can't know for certain how well the current market will pan out, but if they all do as well as the RBC Plaza condos, things should be okay. The two new projects in the Glenwood South district, 222 Glenwood and West at North, are also doing well, but if that will continue, only time will tell. I think we're off to a good start with the current handful of projects under construction, but I think we're going to see the need for dozens more residential units in the future.

Ironically, the whole development infrastructure is designed for suburban development. There are all kinds of shopping centers and apartment buildings and chain stores in the suburbs, but we only have a handful of people creating similar businesses and residences downtown. So what we really need are entrepreneurs who are willing to put projects together in the center of the city. In a sense downtown development is harder because, of course, you can't buy a single out-parcel of land, and it's more complicated because the project is more condensed and on a smaller piece of land. However, we do need a new generation of developers who are willing to take on this task in order to further develop downtown. Look at our current developers: Greg Hatem by far has the most projects; Gregg Sandreuter and Roland Cannon have done some; the Reynolds are trying to do a second, as is Highwoods Properties—and that's about it.

Downtown Raleigh needs a new breed of developers who understand how to work in an urban environment. What a lot of people don't see is that starting a project downtown is less risky; once you have a good project, it stays good for a long time, unlike a suburban apartment complex or shopping center that can be outshined by a newer development that comes into the area. We see people from Atlanta and other larger, out-of-state places come into Raleigh all the time and develop outside of downtown. The only firm that has done a project downtown to my knowledge is Trammell Crow Residential and Halter Properties, who did 222 Glenwood. If we could have more developers do the same, along with a new generation of local ones, downtown Raleigh would be even more successful.



Rick Jones

Managing Partner: The Mint, President: PBM Graphics

< RICK JONES > The development of downtown Raleigh has finally been hit by the country-wide downturn in the economy. There have been some restaurants that were scheduled to come or were in the process of coming downtown that have actually backed out. Things that were on the block haven't happened. Downtown itself has yet to become the downtown we'd all been hoping for. Right now there are just not enough things in the area to keep people here after work. The majority of people who work downtown don't live downtown; they still reside in the suburbs. But on the bright side, more development is coming, which will attract more people.

Unfortunately, the reality is that it's going to take time to grow into the downtown we'd expected. It takes a lot of staying power to start a company and then to wait around for it to succeed. I do believe downtown businesses can still come in and prosper; it just takes a lot of financial strength to weather the storm of both the economy and development. At The Mint, we have that staying power and don't plan on going anywhere any time soon, despite what negative – and invariably damaging – speculations from uninformed critics may suggest.

The Convention Center and the new Marriott have obviously helped, but those alone can't revitalize downtown. I think all businesses downtown are in a similar scenario: We believe in downtown and have invested in it, but the economy is making it difficult for us to see a return right now. At The Mint, we're not changing anything in terms of what we offer to our diners, even in this downturn. We believe in giving people who are still going out and continuing to spend their money despite the poor economy the service and quality of food for which they're paying. We're not making any modifications that would adversely affect people's dining experience; instead, we're looking at the smaller things. For example, the lights and thermostat are turned off when we're gone—you know, the simple, common-sense practices your dad would repeat over and over when you were younger to save money.

There's a lot to manage in any business, and we've reached the point where we've come across some things that are beyond our control. What we need is help from the city in terms of parking and drawing more people downtown. I think these changes would positively impact downtown as a whole. When the streets are shut down for construction or events, downtown merchants suffer because people

can't park close to where you're located or even see that you're there and open.

Change is coming, that's for certain, but it's just at a much slower pace than we had anticipated. I think that during hard economic times, high-end businesses are going to be negatively impacted first because going out for a nice dinner is generally the first budget cut people make. Fine dining is unfortunately an experience reserved for the good times, but what we at The Mint are doing is making sure those who continue to come in for that special night get it.

We're here to stay. We didn't spend millions of dollars without the foresight to plan ahead for the months and years ahead. We've had to adjust our business plan slightly, just as everyone has in the current economy, but that's what being a business owner is all about. We know that downtown has a very bright and energetic future and we're excited to be part of it.



Steven Keup

General Manager: Raleigh Marriott City Center

< STEVEN KEUP > The Marriott is extremely lucky to be connected to the Raleigh Convention Center as well as to be located in the city's center near all the downtown restaurants. Our location allows us to cater to all the convention-goers and all the people who come into town to see a theatre show, symphony or ballet at the Performing Arts Center. We've actually extended our hours for the restaurant inside the Marriott, Posta Tuscan Grille, and for the bar, Bar Posta, in order to accommodate people who stay after shows as well as people who are looking for somewhere to go on a Sunday night.

We're excited about all the new downtown development under construction like the Plaza. We know that the project has been delayed, but whenever it opens, we can't wait to see that become yet another key landmark in downtown Raleigh. We continue to enjoy a great relationship with the Convention and Visitors Bureau as well as with the convention center sales team, and I believe that this cooperation between us will allow us to attract even more business to the area.

We also have good relationships with several downtown restaurants. When you're a new entity in the area, other restaurants and bars will either look at you as an adversary or as a partner, and I'm pleased

that we've been welcomed as the latter by all the local businesses downtown. I think that has a lot to do with the fact that we all have the same goal — to sell Raleigh as a destination spot as well as a good place to do business.

So far, business has been great at Posta Tuscan Grille. We had our best night ever November 4th when we hosted the Democratic Party on election night. We had about 2,000 people at the Marriott, which is the largest group we've had there since our grand opening gala when we had a crowd of almost 1,200. I think this was a great opportunity to showcase ourselves to people who probably didn't join us for the grand opening party.

We're looking forward to growing with downtown, and doing what we can to help promote and advocate business for everyone involved.

< **ROGER KRUPA, DOUG GRISSOM, LAURIE OKUN** >

Downtowner: What does the re-establishment of the Raleigh Convention Center (RCC) mean to downtown?

Laurie: The way that I see it, we're attracting people downtown, but what other businesses have to do is provide somewhere for these people to shop, etc.

Doug: I think the building of the convention center



**Roger Krupa, Doug Grissom
Laurie Okun (not pictured)**

*Director, Assistant Director and Director of Sales,
respectively: Raleigh Convention Center*

came at just the right time. If we would have built it back in 1993, as it had been planned, it would have been a disaster.

Laurie: I think even if we would have built it in 2007 it wouldn't have done so well. We had a delay because of the soil on the area where the center was being built, but I think that things happen for a reason. By opening later in 2008, we were lucky that more restaurants and area attractions had opened as well. And of course a major factor in our doing well was the opening of the Marriott downtown.

Downtowner: What else do you need in order to help the RCC continue in its success?

Roger: I think we know that we have to generate transient people to sustain downtown; we need people coming in and out at all times in order for down-

town businesses to do well. We have to fabricate ideas, events, etc., in order to draw people into downtown and then we need to have more downtown sights and shops in order to draw them out into our downtown once they get here.

Laurie: I think the Convention Center is always going to remain a catalyst for what happens downtown, whether it's from the visitor aspect or from the living aspect; what we need the most from people is their continued support. But in a broader term, what Raleigh really needs is an identity. This city needs a tangible identity; there are so many different elements of Raleigh that make us Raleigh, but it hasn't come together as a solid idea of what exactly Raleigh is.

Roger: Well, I see one identity emerging. When I think of Raleigh, I see Taylor and Ted, two of our younger employees who see Raleigh as a viable city. They see Raleigh as a really vibrant happening place; they really just think Raleigh has this vibe. I don't know what it is really. But they're just an interesting pair to talk to. One has a band, and Ted worked at Walnut Creek for awhile, so they sort of know the music scene and event management. They think Raleigh is on the cusp of being a hip place, and I think that's the identity Raleigh's going to have.

Downtowner: I agree. I think that's what's keeping this area's economy alive. There are a lot of people

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who are going out and spending money just as they were before the economic downturn. We also have a lot of smart, young entrepreneurs who are taking the initiative opening businesses downtown—and doing well—because they believe in the area's potential.

Laurie: You know, that goes right along with what Roger has been saying, about Raleigh having this hip, young vibe that a lot of cities lack.

Roger: Our business is to get people on the street, so if people present us with a concept that we think people will attend, we'll do it. It's our business to keep coming up with new ideas in order to keep bringing people in.

Doug: Our building is very modern and sleek, and I think it sells itself. But that's certainly not reason enough for us to think we can lighten up.

Laurie: I think that now that people see the Convention Center and see the layout, they want it for their event. Our personnel is working hard to try and keep up with all the events and requests, and now we have to choose wisely in regards to what we book. Now that everyone wants us, we're really lucky because we can pick and choose what will work best here. It's hard, though, having to turn someone away. But I think once we explain the situation, they understand. We tell them that the RCC is here because we promised to bring people out of their homes, to bring people to the downtown restaurants, to bring people to the area, so with that in mind, we have to book events that will guarantee these results.

Doug: One problem we have to deal with is parking. We have a parking garage with 950 spaces and will have 1,500 more soon. But if people come to an event, and they haven't been here in awhile, they're not going to know those spaces are available. If 5,000 people come to an event at the Convention Center and can't find a parking spot, they're going to wonder why the event was held downtown, and they may not come back. What we need is a way to shuttle them from all the different parking garages downtown, because otherwise, the only thing they're going to remember about downtown is that there's no parking and it's not accessible.

Downtown has come a long way, but there's a lot of growth left, and we're looking forward to being a part of it.

< **G. PATEL** >

One of the biggest reasons I chose to open two restaurants in downtown was the amount of activity that's going on in the area. Obviously you have to consider the future of the area where you want to start a business. From what I can see, this city is only moving up. Downtown is concentrated around Fayetteville Street, so we obviously wanted to open a place there. We're hoping for even more growth downtown, which I believe will come in time. Naturally, I'm disappointed that a lot of projects that were supposed to go up are not moving at the rate we had all hoped they would due to the current state of our economy, but I'm optimistic things will eventually progress as planned.



G. Patel
Owner: Restaurants Sono, Oxford (downtown) and Mura (North Hills)

What I think we need more of downtown is retail. I think we definitely need a clothing store, maybe a strong national anchor like Kenneth Cole or Gap that appeals to a large demographic. When Charter Square opens, if they have stores like Banana Republic or other places where people who work downtown usually shop, it would do a lot to boost downtown's appeal. I think having a supermarket in the area would do the same as well.

We're building an amphitheatre downtown, which I think is going to be a huge asset. We need something like the RBC Center downtown; something on that scale would really elevate the center city on the national radar. Another thing that would help is planning an event that occurs on a monthly basis throughout the year that would really help business and restaurant sales because of the foot traffic it would create. What has helped us so far is the opening up of the Marriott. The Convention Center has helped some, but not as much as we had hoped. I think one of the large problems is the competition with events scheduled for convention-goers in other areas like Research Triangle Park. I think that's an issue that needs to be addressed: how to keep them in the area once they arrive. All in all, though, I think downtown Raleigh's future looks strong.



Paul Reimel
Economic Development Manager: Downtown Raleigh Alliance

< **PAUL REIMEL** >

I was brought on board about a year ago to work specifically on economic development — overall, to be a champion and leader for downtown. So through economic development, marketing, advocacy and the Clean and Safe ambassador teams, the DRA is working throughout the 110 blocks of the business district.

In economic development, what we're trying to do is focus on business retention, target new businesses — small, medium or large — and expand the corporate presence downtown.

We've also taken on a retail strategy and implemen-

tation program, for which we hired Michael Berne from MJB Consulting from Manhattan. He'll be working through about April of 2009, and what he's trying to do is see what kind of retail niche we can carve out in downtown. The goal of this program is to support existing businesses as well as to recruit new ones. On his first trip he did a market assessment in terms of what we already have in retail space as well as what the vacancy rate is, and on his most recent trip, he did a competition analysis. We have Cameron Village, Five Points, Crabtree Valley and North Hills in close proximity to the core of the city which are all doing well, but the question for downtown is, "what can we feasibly do" to generate that same momentum and revenue?

We have a lot of retail spaces coming online, starting with RBC Plaza, Charter Square; the L Building will have first-floor space too. We're excited about these because we'll have active views on the ground level, which is crucial because you don't want pedestrians walking by vacant or unused first-floor spaces. We also have a lot to do in making sure that these retail spaces are filled. It's clear that for goods like apparel, it's tough for these stores to be the pioneer in the area because they generally like to be with other apparel shops.

Our plan isn't to sweep all 100 blocks with retail; that's just not practical. Instead, what we're doing is targeting a few primary and secondary streets like Fayetteville, Hargett, Wilmington and Salisbury. We want the area surrounding Fayetteville Street, the main core of downtown, to be a hot spot like Glenwood South — where some businesses open and some close — but the area always remains full.

We always hear from people that we need a full service grocery store downtown. The city has had several conversations in the past with different grocers who are looking for a certain number, whether it's 10,000 people who live downtown or some other solid, determining factor. The fact is, we're simply haven't reached those target numbers yet.

The DRA's main role is to support existing businesses, and I think that downtown Raleigh offers very unique venues, and I think people want to continue to see the unexpected. When you go downtown, you may not know every place you want to go over the course of an evening, and we want to help promote patterns of connectivity. Say, for example, you start in City Market and you end up wanting to go to Glenwood South. What we want people to look at is what's between the two areas that they would like just as much. I think events are a key part of getting people downtown, and we have a good variety: music, arts and cultural events, parades, etc.

City Plaza is really going to be a unique opportunity, and the DRA will be playing a key role in programming that location. It's a year away, but we're already looking towards having something there all the time — in the daytime, evenings and on weekends. I think that will help in creating a place to go in downtown Raleigh. A lot of our focus is going into making the Plaza very successful.

We've sponsored First Friday and the Farmer's Market and we're now working on promoting City Plaza. With the money we're getting next year, we plan on doing more with our Clean and Safe Ambassador's Program. It's our flagship program

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and also the most visible. What we do is try to arm them with as much information possible about downtown and at the same time, have them act as our eyes and ears on the streets. They give directions, provide recommendations and escort people to parking garages, which I think all help local businesses. A lot of the newer parking garages have asked for some ambassadors to do safety patrol, but we only have a few ambassadors, so it's nearly impossible to meet all of downtown's needs. We're very fortunate to be getting the funds to expand this program.

We're also working on the city on the circular buses, which will connect all the downtown districts beginning in January. There's going to be a meeting soon for input on what routes should be offered, and we encourage people to attend because this is a service mainly for residents and employees who need to get around during the day as well as at night and on weekends. This service will ideally be provided for free.

< HARVEY SCHMITT >

In the 15 years that I've been in downtown Raleigh, it's gone from sort of a quaint, niche area, to a cohesive, dynamic business environment with everything from high rises to quirky, street-level stores that you wouldn't even know existed unless you were walking around and exploring downtown. The energy has picked up a great deal, as well, because of the larger number of people that are out on the streets every day. I think the opening up of Fayetteville Street has exceeded everyone's expect-



Harvey Schmitt
President/CEO: Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce

tations; it's really opened the city up from an entirely different perspective among both locals and out of town people. That, along with the openings of the Progress Energy building, RBC Plaza, the convention center and the new hotel has given downtown more vitality. If you drive into downtown Raleigh today and hadn't been here in about five years, I think you would have a hard time recognizing it as the same city; the change has been that rapid and that significant.

As the regional marketplace has matured and become more sophisticated, I think downtown winds up being the centerpiece for that new sophisticated, urban look and feel. The downtown renaissance has offered a renewed curb appeal for the region, as well as more options for the community in terms of restaurants, recreation and entertainment. I think this new exciting atmosphere really reflects the renewed vibrancy of downtown itself. I think that over the next 12 to 18 months, downtown is going to go through a process of absorbing its new growth. With the Convention Center open-

ing up, there are new people on the streets at all hours. This helps entrepreneurs that are already in place as well as potential investors get a better feel for the new market. I think all this will yield another round of activity sometime over the next 18 to 24 months as people begin to see where the opportunities exist. Obviously our organization would be very interested in seeing more office development downtown, more corporations coming to the center of the city, more headquarters — all of which would generate a lot more traffic during the day and most likely lead to a lot more after hours too. We need to focus more on housing in the area, because the more businesses you have downtown, the more people want to live where they work and go out. We definitely need more retail, and I think we're getting to a point where we can sustain more retail. But the challenge we're going to face in the short term is the suspect economy. It's going to be harder for people to pull the trigger on making those investments until they get a better feel for financial stability.

But despite the economic downturn, we're still getting prospective businesses in. The fact that downtown Raleigh shows a lot better today is a huge benefit; the fact that we have more high-rise office space downtown generates more interest with companies. However, in the short term, I think we're going to go through a period where there will be people looking for either bargains or people who are going to be slow in deciding to make a big investment. It's going to be at least six months before the economy is stabilized. Downtown Raleigh is definitely on people's radars in terms of business, though. Even people who aren't looking

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for a downtown location want to see how downtown is doing because it is essentially the front door of the community. If they're relocating from another city, they need to know that Raleigh is a place that they and their employees would enjoy. The renewed downtown has been very helpful to us in making a case to markets on the move.

In comparing Raleigh to other national markets, I use the analogy that it's like a Nascar race. Raleigh was at the front of the pack in terms of successful economies in the country, but now there's been a wreck behind us, and the other places behind us are trying to get caught up from the wreckage. There's a caution flag out on the track, so Raleigh is still going around, but just not at its former pace. I think we're going to find ourselves red-flagged while the wreckage is being cleaned up, but our car—in this analogy our foundation—is still strong and remains undamaged. We were leading the pack on the way in, and we're going to be leading the pack on the way out. I'm very optimistic about where we are as a marketplace. A recent article in the *New York Times* showed that we were part of the 14 percent of MSAs (Metropolitan Statistical Areas) that were still growing as of August. Our biggest risk, however, is being complacent in our growth.



Lloyd Yates
President and CEO: Progress Energy Carolinas

< **LLOYD YATES** >

At Progress Energy, we're very excited about downtown and our downtown development. We're a Fortune 250 company that's been headquartered in downtown Raleigh since 1908. In the last ten years, this area has really come a long way. With the new Convention Center opening, as well as the Marriott and RBC Plaza, we're going to see even more happening in the area. I'm also optimistic that once the economy turns around, we'll see an influx of people moving to the city's center.

We're thrilled about the Edison project, which will bring an entirely different type of activity and entertainment to downtown: living space, office space and nice retail space as well. Personally, though, I think that in order for projects like this one to reach their full potential two things are needed: the first thing I think we need is a movie theatre. The reason I say this is because for people who live in North Raleigh, Cary, Holly Springs and other surrounding areas, coming downtown just for dinner isn't enough of a lure. But if downtown were to offer entertainment after dinner, especially on those nights when no events are scheduled at the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts, downtown businesses — especially restaurants —

would do as well as other Triangle areas that offer this combination, like North Hills and Brier Creek. In terms of residential living, we need some kind of supermarket downtown. I know there's a small one here already, but that's not enough for people. What we have is a chicken and egg situation: People won't move downtown until we get a market, and a market won't come downtown until we get more people. Somehow we're going to have to break that impasse.

But overall, if you look at downtown development, I think things are progressing well. Progress Energy plans to be here for the long haul, and we plan to participate actively in the development of downtown because, of course, our employees work here, and we want them to think of downtown Raleigh as a nice place to be. We have nearly 1,800 employees working downtown, and we want them to be comfortable in their environment as well as engaged in the happenings of the city.



George York
Executive Vice President: York Properties

< **GEORGE YORK** >

Looking at downtown Raleigh from a residential market standpoint, the condo market has slowed down a lot the past few months. A major factor driving the recent push for downtown was people wanting to live downtown again in order to be close to the city's restaurants and nightlife. But right now, relocating has essentially come to halt; no one's buying much of anything. I think it will take some time, anywhere from six to 18 months, before people start purchasing at the same rate as they were before the economic downturn. I have a feeling that it's going to be a lot of single young professionals who will have the purchasing power once financing becomes available to them, so I do expect sales to eventually pick up again.

With Progress Energy and now RBC coming downtown, Raleigh has a more corporate presence which I think sends a positive signal about the growth of downtown. People want to relocate their offices downtown; the office submarket has been one of the most highly-occupied markets in our area. I think the re-opening of Fayetteville Street has re-energized downtown and made the idea of living downtown more appealing. I think Gregg Sandreuter has an ambitious and very interesting project that over time will be the most dominant piece of Raleigh's skyline, and I'm looking forward to seeing that. The recent opening of the Raleigh Convention Center and the Raleigh Marriott also should have a positive impact on downtown businesses. We're seeing high-end restaurants like Fin's and The Mint opening up, which are easily the best

restaurants in our area. With the Convention Center being essentially booked, we're going to be having a steady flow of pedestrian traffic, which again will help guarantee a successful downtown.

Retail is my specialty, so in thinking about the retail growth of downtown over the next few years, I think it's going to be pretty stagnant. There will be some small opportunities, of course, with all the new buildings going up, but the way the economy is right now, downtown Raleigh's retail isn't going to be growing at a quick rate.

Downtowner: Does the absence of retail have anything to do with the lack of available first-floor, street-front leasing space?

George: Few landlords downtown are in a position to use their first floors the way that Progress Energy and RBC Plaza have done. A lot of the buildings downtown are older, so bringing them up to code would be very difficult to do in a cost-efficient manner. In this economic environment, it would have to be a nationally-known store that has the money or credit to get the money from a bank that would be able to open a shop downtown; unfortunately, it's not going to be a mom-and-pop store. This is due primarily to the fact that you have to spend a certain amount of money on a space in order to make it rentable, but if you spend all the money, you're not going to be able to pay your rent.

Downtowner: Is the retail sector harder to start up in than the restaurant one?

George: It's more expensive to build a restaurant and probably riskier because the majority of the investment doesn't go into inventory like it does in retail. If you look at Cameron Village or North Hills, those retail businesses are successful because they're surrounded by other retailers. People are making those shopping centers a destination because when they go, they may not know exactly what they want, but they know they have a handful of places from which to browse and shop. With that said, it's going to take a long time before downtown Raleigh is a shopping destination. Retail in downtown is going to take some people who are willing to take risks and put up shops alongside the restaurants, bars and art galleries that currently line the streets. At the moment, the only place downtown that has been successful with retail is Seaboard Station, and I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that there's enough of a variety among the shops that people can go there and get several things done at once.

The Depot has some retail space available, but most people still consider that on the fringe of downtown. The Mexican restaurant Jibarra will be opening in that area by the end of the year, which I'm really excited about because the one in North Raleigh was one of my favorites. Having another restaurant in that district will help increase the traffic in that area as well.

I think once the economy begins to turn around, there's going to be a renewed interest in condos like the RBC Plaza units and a huge interest in the Hue building. The Hue units start in the mid \$100,000s, which most people working downtown can afford, and it's centrally located, so it's also an ideal place to live. I think both of these residential condos are going to be very popular.



Shopping & Suburbia: The Changing Face of Fayetteville Street

By Raleigh City Museum Staff

designed as Raleigh's original main street and business district, Fayetteville Street has always assumed a symbolic role as the heart of downtown Raleigh. In its earliest days, several fires stagnated the development of the street, but soon businesses such as Briggs Hardware, which opened in 1874, solidified Fayetteville Street as a thriving commercial center. Before the advent of the automobile and suburbanization, Fayetteville Street also acted as a popular meeting place for people of all ages due to its central location.

One prominent Raleigh shop, Royster's Candy, served as an early Raleigh gathering place, specifically for children and teens. Raleigh residents, who enjoyed the shop's homemade candy until its doors closed in 1960, still fondly remember this city landmark. A Union soldier named Wierner began the original company as a grocery and confectionary business immediately after the Civil War. Arkansas Delaware Royster and Vermont Connecticut Royster (their father enjoyed naming all of his children after states) began as Wierner's employees and eventually took over the business in 1873. The store was located on 207 Fayetteville Street and retained the name Royster's Candy throughout the store's almost century-long run.

Another example of a historic shopping landmark is Jolly's Jewelers. Jolly's specialized in repairing and selling jewelry as well as optical goods. In fact, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, most optometrists were jewelers, not doctors. Jolly's Jewelers still exists today in North Hills Mall but originally began at 128 Fayetteville Street. Benjamin Rush Jolly first began his business in 1881 and Jolly's jewelry store remains one of the oldest family-run businesses in Raleigh.

In the mid-twentieth century, the tone of downtown consumer culture changed dramatically with the advent of more automobiles, the creation of malls such as Cameron Village and the development of suburbs. Some sources cite Cameron Village, with its spacious parking and shops, as the catalyst for the decentralization of downtown Raleigh. In response to suburbanization, city planners in 1975 decided to convert Fayetteville Street into a pedestrian walking mall. Just two years later, the Fayetteville Street Mall was completed, where it remained a pedestrian walkway until 2005.

As part of the larger downtown revival movement, Fayetteville Street was transformed once again in 2005 to accommodate automobile traffic. With the completion of the new convention center and current projects such as City Plaza opening in 2009, Fayetteville Street once again is reassuming its rightful place as Raleigh's social epicenter.

Shopping is just one aspect of Fayetteville Street's growth. Here in the Raleigh City Museum's store we offer an array of Raleigh-related souvenirs ranging from postcards to T-shirts for visitors and residents alike. The museum also supports local artisans as we now carry handcrafted pottery and jewelry by Earthen Vessels, Rockhouse Pottery, Lee Spivey Design, Black Cat Beads, Sandra McEwen, and many others. The revitalization of Fayetteville Street reminds us that there is more to downtown than just working. Dining, shopping and exploring historical landmarks are just a few steps away.



Jolly's Jewelers downtown store in 1913



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By Fred Benton
Food Editor

Thus far the story of Solas, a superb restaurant and entertainment complex in an unassuming brick

building, is about its being the “in” place, the hot spot for Raleigh’s bar crowd who are lured there by its cosmopolitan, plush setting. It’s the Capital City’s version of Studio 54. But for me, a casual dresser who doesn’t do well at “in” places, Solas seemed like an intimidating place. But my initial fears were assuaged once I stepped into the first-floor dining room – the food editor fit in, after all.

Solas, the restaurant, has an ephemeral, aerial feel. It reminds me of what heaven must look like: runners of sheer white cloth hanging from the ceiling that flutter softly separating tables along a glass wall, lighting perfectly adjusted to make everyone look their best, and crisp-white table napery.

But the real star here is the food, pre-



Aptly named, the Hot Rock is an interactive small plate appetizer

pared by Executive Chef Cliff Vogelsberg. Publisher Crash Gregg, interior designer Cara Warner and I started our dinner with a panoply of “small plates:” Fried Lobster (\$15) which was succulent in its tempura batter coating; Hot Rock (\$13) which is a small square of lava stone, sizzling hot upon which skewers of large raw

shrimp and tenderloin of beef are literally cooked in front of you; Forestiere Tart (\$12) with its plethora of wild mushrooms (hence the designation “forestiere”) and camembert cheese; Mussels (\$12) in shell sauced with a curry cream that was redolent with spices that give a fiery finish (perhaps a tad too hot for some) and my

favorite of the evening — Foie Gras (\$15) on pear beignets with touches of rhubarb compote. (Though, in my opinion, the beignets were a bit tough. I would nix them and be more generous with the rhubarb. But the foie gras was exceptional!)

A table-favorite entree was the Bison Rib Eye (\$32). I have fussed to friends – and probably in this column – that since Winn-Dixies closed in the area, I haven’t had a good rib eye steak. But the bison – or as Crash calls it, “desert cow” – came through. I first tasted bison at Dakota Grill in Morrisville, which is famous for its bison burgers, which I think are the best burgers in the area.

The entree I found most savory was the Arctic Char (\$26) which our knowledgeable waitperson explained tastes like red salmon but has a rainbow-colored skin like a trout and is less fatty than salmon. The Arctic Char was delicious and cooked to perfection in macadamia nut brown butter.

Continued on page 11

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Continued from page 10

The side dishes we sampled all complimented the entrees wonderfully. I give plaudits and raves to the Creamy Lobster Risotto (\$10), which could be a delectable meal all by itself. Risotto is the most tedious of all the rice dishes mainly because to make it work, you have to sauté the rice and add the liquid very slowly, all the while stirring and stirring. (I'm too lazy to cook it at home.)

The risotto at Solas won my heart with its intense lobster flavor and big chunks of lobster. Yum! An interesting side dish is White Truffle Fries with Horseradish Ketchup (\$7). This

is a dish that if eaten mindlessly, could be mistaken for just potato fries. Only the most discriminating palate will be able to detect its intrinsic earthiness and slight sweetness.

I happily recommend Solas for dinner. While I didn't make it to the lounge and rooftop, the large crowds on both floors suggest that Solas' second and third floors are as good a place for drinks as the first floor is for dining.

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10 QUESTIONS: Jim Lavery



For our most recent edition of **10 QUESTIONS**, we met with Jim Lavery for lunch at 42nd Street Oyster Bar to ask him ten business and personal questions. Jim is the General Manager of Broadway Series South and the Progress Energy Performing Arts Center, home to Broadway Series South, Carolina Ballet, North Carolina Symphony, North Carolina Theatre, the Opera Company of North Carolina, Hot Summer Nights at the Kennedy, and some Raleigh Little Theatre, Pinecone, and Theatre in the Park shows.

1 How did you decide to become involved in the performing arts?

JIM LAVERY: I actually have my master's degree in sports administration, so I never really had a desire or goal to be in the performing arts. But I do like facility management, so when the new arts center [Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts] opened, they needed someone to run it, and I was chosen to be that person. I was just in the right place at the right time.

Now the Broadway Series is exploding, and I have four theatres to run (Memorial Auditorium, Fletcher Opera Theatre, Meymandi Concert Hall and Kennedy Theatre in the back). On the left side is Fletcher Opera Theatre, which has 600 seats. It's a really intimate theatre with a big stage; it's designed for the ballet. In the middle is Memorial Auditorium with 2,300 seats — the grand old lady. It's hosted everything from ACC basketball games to the bigger Broadway shows. Then on the right is Meymandi Concert hall, which has 1,600 seats and is home to the NC Symphony. Meymandi has great acoustics and a shoebox design with three levels. Then in the back we have a blackbox theatre called Kennedy Theatre, which is home to Hot Summer Nights. Sometimes Burning Coal Theatre Company performs there; it's a more avant-garde, cutting-edge type theatre.

2 Broadway is big business; dramatic arts are big business. Do you think the dramatic arts should be publically funded, and if so, why?

There's never enough money to pay artists according to what they deserve. In any community you go to, there's always some kind of public funding whether it's for a venue or whether it's helping with the budget. What we do is offer discounts to certain non-profits. You have to encourage funding for the arts and, unfortunately, the money isn't always there. This isn't like the NFL, where there's billions of dollars, but it's just as worthwhile in entertaining and serving the community. I've seen some unbelievably talented kids come through our building who are just earning equity scale. I don't think they're paid enough for their creativity — for the way they sing, the way they act, the way they dance. Unfortunately, I think society is too celebrity-driven; we've had shows where the celebrities have sold the tickets, but not at the same level as the rest of the cast. You pay money to see celebrities, and sometimes you get disappointed, but other times you actually get pleasantly surprised.

3 Given the wide acclaim and success of Broadway Series South, what has been the biggest disappointment and the most fun?

One of the shows that I was disappointed didn't do better was Disney's *Aida*, which was written by Elton John and Tim Rice. It was a fabulous show — great music, just a great show all-around. And of course *Lion King* is still a feather in our cap. It went on for seven weeks and was a huge box-office success; it sold out almost every show.

Right now I'm really looking forward to *Jersey Boys* in June and July of 2009. That runs for four weeks, and it's more of an adult-oriented show.

4 Is there any show in the 2009 season that you're excited to have gotten because it was a hard show to land?

A Chorus Line. It was just revived in New York City, and we were lucky enough to get it for its first national tour. We're one of the few cities to get it in its first round; we just had the right dates and the right connections. You have to remember that *A Chorus Line* was written in the 60s, yet it's still very current with what's going on now; it still addresses issues we face today — things don't change a lot.

5 Have you ever booked a show at Broadway Series South that you thought was just a big disappointment that didn't live up to what you thought it would be?

Yeah, last year with *White Christmas*. On the West Coast and in the Midwest, that show pulled incredible numbers. It had a huge cast, a well-written script and an amazing set and costumes. But it just didn't sell well here. *All Shook Up* was another one. That one played in Times Square and was a great show with lots of good Elvis music. But when it got here, they seemed to cut a lot of corners and a lot of stuff was left out.

6 What's your favorite show on Broadway Series South?

Les Miserables. I didn't think I would like that show, and it actually played four times before I actually enjoyed it. My second favorite is *Aida*; I really like the music in that one.

7 What's your favorite show from NYC that you'd love to bring to Raleigh?

Young Frankenstein. It is hilarious! If you like Mel Brooks, you'll love it. It's just slapstick funny.

8 What's your favorite feel-good food on a cold winter night?

Definitely chili.

9 What's your favorite TV show?

I watch the Discovery Channel a lot. I like Planet Earth and Deadliest Cats.

10 What's your favorite sport?

Ice hockey then soccer. I played college hockey and a little bit in Canada.

■ RD

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Jason Craighead



By Kim Weiss

Jason Craighead is the model of upward mobility in the local arts world. While his paint brushes have

been in constant motion over the past decade, so has his rise from “emerging” artist to well-established and critically-acclaimed artist. His career, like his work, has been about momentum and progress. And there’s no better proof of that than what he accomplished over the past two months.

In October, the painting he donated to the Works of Heart auction, the Triangle’s premiere charitable auction to benefit the Carolina AIDS Alliance, drew the largest bid in the annual event’s 18-year history.

This month, Jason is one of only three featured artists in the Fayetteville Museum of Art’s new major exhibition titled “The Energy of a Line.” The show opened November 7 and will run through January 11, 2009.



Since 1998, Jason has been creating a constantly evolving body of work in his small downtown Raleigh studio that has gained the respect – and representation – of some of the finest art galleries in this state and beyond, including Somerhill Gallery in Durham, Broadhurst Gallery in

Pinehurst, and Ann Irwin Fine Art in Atlanta, Georgia. He has had recent conversations with two other major Atlanta galleries.

This body of work landed him a major exhibit in the Municipal Building’s Block Art Gallery in downtown Raleigh this year – which he shared

with artist Tricia McKellar - that resulted in the City of Raleigh purchasing the largest painting in the show. It is also the reason Somerhill Gallery will present a solo exhibit of his work next fall.

Somerhill’s Joseph Rowand explained the appeal and importance of Jason’s work: “I am struck by Jason’s ways of simplifying or magnifying a thought or an experience into comprehensible, imaginable form,” he said. “With line, emerging forms, and juicy painterly passages on canvas, Jason does what a gifted artist is supposed to make us do — to make us stop and better ponder what we might not otherwise.”

For the third consecutive year, Jason received the 2008 Metro Bravo Award for best regional artist from *Metro Magazine*. *Metro’s* art critic and fellow fine artist Louis St. Lewis wrote of Jason’s work: “If you have never seen [Jason’s] paintings before, they have the definite vibe of abstract expressionism, and they conjure up ghosts of

Continued on page 15

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everyone from Motherwell to Franz Kline to Cy Twombly.”

While the momentum has been growing around his art work, his reputation as a leader in the Raleigh arts community has solidified. He serves on the City of Raleigh Arts Commission’s Public Art Committee. He co-owned Glance Gallery on Martin Street, a significant member of the downtown arts scene at one time. He has also served as a juror and signature artist for Works of Heart and Artsposure and as a juror for the Visual Art Exchange.

A native of Panama City, Florida, Jason lives and works in a historic, third-floor walk-up in downtown Raleigh

that he shares his wife, Meg, their two cats and a host of fellow artists and other friends who drop by regularly.

To create the largest piece for the Fayetteville Show – which is 8 ft. x 12 ft. – he borrowed some space in Purple Armchair on North West Street. His regular studio is actually a small, spare room in his apartment where an old carpet keeps dripping paint off the hardwood floor and a CD player keeps music going in the background. Two walls are covered in boards and backdrops, where he pins up his canvases for painting – at least two at a time – before stretching them onto frames. Through the studio’s window, he has a panoramic view of the heart of the downtown district with its cranes and construction – elements of



the urban fabric that once inspired lines and shapes in his paintings. He’s quick to point out that that period has passed.

“I’m detaching from ‘things,” he said one October afternoon as he stepped back to study one piece he created for the Fayetteville show. “The work is asking me just to discuss space and line.”

He describes his new direction as “the ultimate transitional moment for me, and I feel these pieces are representative of that transition. I’m allowing myself to become my work and all that

I am. I’m no longer afraid to do what I’m doing – to let out whatever needs to be let out. I’m finding space and creating rhythm, and letting my work become the pure thing that it is.” Then he offers what has become something of a mantra for him: “With less fear comes more freedom.”

“The Energy of a Line” includes the work of painter Gerry Lynch and sculptor Seth Hicks. For more information, visit www.fayettevillemuseum.org.

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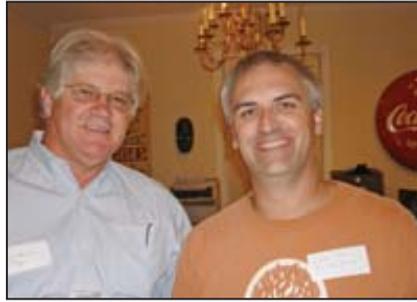


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*Notated photos courtesy Katy Warner.
Others by Raleigh Downtowner staff

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The Oxford: Raleigh's First Gastropub

By Crash Gregg

With Yancey's recent closing downtown, a large gap was left in the new Fayetteville Street prime-time curb appeal. In just four weeks, local restra-preneur G. Patel took over the space and transported the old jazz club over the big pond straight to London. Patel has had two other successful openings in Raleigh: Mura in North Hills and Sono, which sits on Fayetteville Street just to the right of Oxford.

Fashioned after the famed gastropub Eagles in London, Patel chose the British-style bar over several other ideas, including a sports bar. "Even though sports bars can be very popular, the traffic density revolves around sporting events. I wanted to introduce something in downtown that would be busy all the time. After searching for themed ideas, we settled on the English gastropub concept — a casual yet more evolved ver-



sion of a typical British pub with more upscale food."

The popular gastropubs in London are generally very small and intimate, but the Oxford's size, approximately 7600 square feet, will accommodate

the growing downtown crowd it hopes to attract. Patel plans on rotating the menu periodically to test out different foods and to keep customers' curiosity fresh. Initial menu items will include small plates such as Roasted Garlic Hummus with fresh vegetables, Smoked Chicken Empanadas, Calamari, and various soups and salads including Fried Goat Cheese Salad and a superb Caesar Salad. Entrees include Bangers and Mash (boar and cranberry sausages, garlic mashed potatoes, sautéed spinach and onion gravy), The English Channel (Newcastle beer battered crispy cod fillet with malt cole slaw and citrus rémoulade), and Portsmouth Penne with fresh vegetables, garlic and olive oil.

The beer list is quite extensive and includes a large array of pilsners, dark and light lagers, porters, stouts, wheats, amber ales, Belgians, goldens, browns, pales, Scotch ale, Lambics, and ciders. Beer prices are surprising good for downtown, which is sure to draw in beer fans who want more for their dollar (or English Pound, which the menu prices are displayed in).

The restaurant is composed of three areas: dining, bar and the parlor room, an intimate casual setting with large LCD television, huge British flag painted wall, and a fiber optic light studded ceiling — one of the remaining decorative accents from Yancey's. The main dining area occupies the center area, and the bar encompasses the majority of the left wall. Beside the bar is a lounge area consisting of several leather couches and chairs.

The Oxford is Raleigh's first gastropub and Patel believes that it may be the first gastropub in North Carolina. There are well-known popular gastropubs in Chicago and Atlanta, and The Oxford hopes to follow in their British-inspired footsteps.

The Oxford

319 Fayetteville Street
Downtown Raleigh
919.832-6622
www.oxfordraleigh.com

Visit our website and search for "oxford" for more photos.

■RD



Urban Living in Downtown Raleigh



By Melissa Santos

Remember how proud you were when you first learned to ride a bike? And remember how excited you were when you got your license, and soon after, your first car? But for some people, automotive transportation didn't necessarily translate into independence or imply reaching a milestone so much as signifying a sign of dependence, becoming a memory not quite so cherished. Though their reasons for switching from four wheels to two (or two feet) may vary, downtowners Melissa Limes, Matt Fern and Henry Newell are proof that with some personal life adjustments, the automobile addiction can be kicked.

You may recognize Melissa Limes as the occasional fairy-winged Raleigh Rickshaw driver or as one of the Raleigh Downtowner's delivery people (our neatest & fastest to date), but you probably don't know that she's one of the most eco-friendly and pollution-conscious people around. Shortly after



Melissa Limes in costume for the NC Museum of Natural Sciences' Bugfest event earlier this year

moving downtown, she experimented with the idea of becoming car-independent, instead walking and biking everywhere, and a few months later, she decided to go cold turkey, selling her car. (Or as she likes to see it, riding herself of a two-ton liability.) Melissa estimates that she was spend-

ing about \$3,000 a year on gas, maintenance and other car expenses – a big percent of her income – and she was also concerned about the amount of pollution she was responsible for producing.

Like Melissa, Matt Fern – who works at Seaboard Wine and is a regular contributor to the Downtowner's "Uncorked" column – also felt that the cost of owning a car negated its benefits.

While he decided to keep his car, he says the decision to stop using it was easy to make once gas prices rose to nearly four dollars a gallon; suddenly it occurred to him that maybe he didn't necessarily need his car for the short two-mile work commute from Mordecai to Seaboard.

Henry Newell, an intern architect/designer who also lives and works downtown, had a similar epiphany: his one-and-a-half-mile trip to work took ten minutes on a bike, but double that in a car if he factored in the extra time wasted circling the block for a parking space. (He would fail to find architectural allure in a parking deck.) For Henry, ditching four wheels for two was simply a matter of practicality: "Not only am I getting exercise, saving money and polluting less, but I'm also saving time."

Sure, anyone who lives downtown could walk or ride a bike to work, but can he or she really live downtown? Live, as in being completely self-sufficient on vendors and businesses within biking or walking distance for necessities like groceries, clothes, toilet paper and household supplies? Unfortunately for Henry, Capital City Grocery and Taz's have yet to listen to his suggestion of stocking underwear, meaning that he has to occasionally forage outside of downtown for clothes and other household supplies. He also uses his car to visit his family

Continued on page 21

David, I'm jealous. Everyone's raving about the new dishes. What about me?

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Continued from page 20

out of town, but in total, these trips only add a few hundred miles to his odometer every few months. Matt is also fortunate to live near Capital City, where he can buy food by the pound and toilet paper four rolls at a time, though he admits if it weren't for this store, he would probably be forced to "steal it roll by roll from local businesses." (He was just joking of course. No one would intentionally use that rough business toilet paper at home.) But for those looking for an easier and practical solution, Melissa suggests

Henry Nowell biking into work downtown



shopping online, where you can buy anything you want—even a jumbo pack of toilet paper, delivered for surprisingly cheap.

And according to these three, giving up your car doesn't mean giving up your social life. In fact, they all say they're even more active post-auto. Most of Melissa and Matt's friends live or work downtown, meaning they never have to venture far for entertainment. Henry, too, agrees that it's easier to make friends when you have to walk or bike places. (Though he confesses he drives to Chapel Hill occasionally for shows — but always in a carpool, of course.) But for Melissa, it's not the new-found popularity she enjoys the most about being sans car, but the re-discovery of her surroundings. When she had a car, she was aware of the complaints being made about the pollution and dependence automobiles lead to, but that never stopped her from hopping into her own to pick up some milk a block away. But now that she's riding her bike most places, she's learning that "the world expands when you're actually in it—that being out in the open opens your eyes to the architectural details of houses, the smell of flowers, the sights and sounds of the city and its people." As soon as she stopped "lugging around an oversized box of steel and glass," she started to realize



Matt Fern at work in Seaboard Wine

that the journey was actually part of the destination.

However, all three admit that walking and biking does have its inconveniences. For instance, Melissa and Henry would like to use public transportation, but both agree that they believe it's easier said than done, as figuring out the bus schedule requires more research than they've had time to do. This should change in January 2009 when the city implements connector buses that will make it easier to navigate between all of the downtown districts — for free. But until then, trips via bus are actually a no-brainer and can be planned online by visiting www.gotriangle.org. Just enter your

starting destination, desired end location and the time you wish to arrive, and the website does the rest, giving you which bus number to board and what times the bus runs.

Henry and Matt also have a gripe about the lack of downtown retail options for men. "Sure Rite-Aid sells some clothes," Matt says, "but how many cheeky slogan T-shirts does a guy really need?" Matt also pointed out that traveling by bike isn't something anyone can do even if he or she wanted to, because the city isn't designed to handle a large amount of non-car traffic due to its lack of bike lanes. And all agree that biking or walking everywhere has its downside, especially when it's raining — which is why it's nice to have friends who carpool or drive near your house on the way to work.

But for Melissa, Henry and Matt, the hassles are easier to deal with than gas prices and repairs, parking and adding to their carbon footprint. For these downtowners, breaking free of their car dependence marks another monumental moment in their lives, one on which they can look back and think, "I remember when I stopped relying on my car, and how much better my life was."

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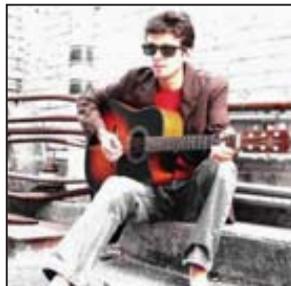
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The Deep South Local Music Review

Each month, we look at three local bands within a wide range of music types, from rock to reggae, country to classic. You won't find any negative or bad reviews here, just bands worth hearing in your favorite local music hangout. Enjoy the reviews, check out the bands when they're in town and be sure to mention you read about them in the Raleigh Downtowner Deep South Local Music Review.

Artist: **Chuck Phillips** Album: **In Progress** Genre: **Rock** www.myspace.com/chuckphillipsmusic



Ever since he heard his first Beatles record at the early age of four, music has played an integral part in Phillips' life. And instead of naming a particular sound or genre as his favorite, this singer/songwriter is drawn by anything that's interesting. His complex and poetic musical narratives are evidence of this in their channeling the sonic myths of Bob Dylan and the urban folk of the late 60s and early 70s.

After much encouragement from friends and family, Phillips created an album of original songs appropriately titled *In Progress*. It's a result of an extended period of recording with the assistance of a borrowed drum set and the free recording software that Phillips illegally downloaded on his laptop. (Hey, it worked.)

Despite the inevitable kinks that go along with recording tracks in such a manner, he's not complaining; he prefers his music with a few "rough edges." According to his Myspace page, the Rolling Stones early-60s recordings remain some of his favorites due to their "fabulous grainy, treble quality."

Artist/Album: **The North Carolina Symphony** Genre: **Symphony Orchestra** www.ncsymphony.org

You won't find it on iTunes' Top 100, and it sure ain't rock and roll. What it is for sure, however, is musical artistry at its finest.

With its home in Raleigh's Meymandi Concert Hall at the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts and an outdoor summer venue at Regency Park in Cary, the N.C. Symphony has appeared at the Kennedy Center, the Orchestra Hall in Chicago and twice at Carnegie Hall in New York. Since the arrival of Music Director Grant Llewellyn just four years ago, the orchestra has grown in stature and sophistication since its founding in 1932.

The most recent of the symphony's five recordings, *Sketches: 2004-05*, features the compositions of its bass trombonist, Terry Mizesko. David Hartman, previously an anchor for ABC's Good Morning America and currently for documentaries on PBS and the History Channel, is the host for the symphony's monthly radio broadcasts on NPR.

Leonard Slatkin, music director of the National Symphony Orchestra, calls it "a phenomenal orchestra; you should be very proud of every person on this stage." So Raleigh, please tip your hats.



Artist: **Dynamite Brothers** Album: **Clap Along with the Dynamite Brothers** Genre: **Punk/Rock** www.myspace.com/dynamitebrothers



The Dynamite Brothers began as a blues revival duo in the summer of 1998 with Scott Nurkin (drums/vocals) and Mitch Rothrock (guitar/vocals). After a few years of playing house parties, clubs and various venues across the South, the guys added Shane Hartman (bass) in 2002.

Just one year later, the guys released their first full-length CD, *Clap Along With the Dynamite Brothers*, which was co-produced and engineered by Neal Spaulding of the \$2 Pistols at Neal's R-15 studio in Chapel Hill. The record includes guest appearances from sax master Tim Smith of the Squirrel Nut Zippers, Countdown Quartet and the Jumpstarts; Scott McCall of \$2 Pistols and Kenny Roby; April Howell of Hobex; Zeb Holt on keyboards; and Ned Brownlow on percussion.

With influences from Hendrix to Prince to the Four Tops, their formerly blues-focused tracks have evolved over the years to include the sounds of soul, punk, funk, garage rock and jazz. "I Can't Win Pt. 2" channels the riffs of The Who's "My Generation," while "Tellin' Stories" rivals the current sounds of the Black Keys.

The Deep South Local Music Review is written by Dave Rose with contributions by Elizabeth Barrett. Dave is the co-founder and co-owner of Deep South Entertainment. Formed in 1995, Deep South Entertainment is a record label, artist management company, and concert event production company with offices in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Nashville, Tennessee. Deep South is best known locally as producers of the Bud Light Downtown Live summer concert series, featuring national recording artists. Their latest addition to downtown Raleigh is Deep South-The Bar. Elizabeth is a UNC student working part time for Deep South and the Downtown Live concert series.



What Gen Y & Z are listening to...

By Elizabeth Barrett (Deep South Entertainment)

Wonder what music college and high school students are listening to and downloading onto their iPods? Each month we'll give you a quick look as to what you're likely to hear blaring out of dorm room windows on college campuses and out of car windows throughout the Triangle.



Artist: **Black Kids**
Album: **Partie Traumatic**
(Alternative/
Indie Rock)

www.myspace.com/blackkidsrock



Artist: **Vampire Weekend**
Album: **Vampire Weekend**
(New Wave/Punk)

www.myspace.com/vampireweekend



Artist: **The Allman Brothers Band**
Album: **A Decade of Hits 1969-1979**
(Rock)

www.allmanbrothersband.com

EVENTS CALENDAR

ON STAGE CALENDAR

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November 6 - 23

 Burning Coal Theatre Presents Hysteria

By Terry Johnson
Directed by Jerome Davis

BURNING COAL

The North Carolina premiere of a wild, raving farce. Sigmund Freud is having a recurring dream and in that dream, is a crazy Spaniard by the name of Salvador Dali. But that isn't all. There is also a scantily clad young woman who has come to exact revenge. But upon whom? And why?

Hysteria is an exuberant surprise, but not only because of its wonderfully skewed, not inaccurate take on a couple of 20th-century icons... Like all good farce, it's constructed with the precision of a watch, though the work is as unexpectedly resonant as a crazy sonnet.

November 7 - 23

 Raleigh Little Theatre Presents Bunnica.



By Jon Klein;
Directed by Kathleen Rudolph; Music by Chris Jeffries

(Based on the book by James Howe) Musical. It was a dark and stormy night ...everything was going well for Chester and Harold, the Monroe family's cat and dog, until Bunnica showed up. Could this sweet little bunny actually be a vampire? Bunnica is a comedic family tale about acceptance, with a side order of mystery. Told from the perspective of the family's song and dance team, a very cautious cat and daft dog, this musical is entertaining for audiences of all ages. Protect your vegetables!

November 18 - 23

 Broadway Series South Presents Annie



Leapin' lizards! Annie is coming to Raleigh! The timeless tale of Little Orphan

Annie is back, giving a whole new generation the chance to experience this classic musical about never giving up hope. Boasting one of

Broadway's most memorable scores, including "It's the Hard-Knock Life," "Easy Street," "N.Y.C." and the ever-optimistic "Tomorrow," Annie is a delightful theatrical experience for the entire family. Don't miss this all-new production that Variety calls "a winner!" Special Performances Times: Tuesday - Friday at 7pm; Saturday 2 & 7pm and Sunday 2 & 7pm. www.broadwayseriessouth.com

November 26-30

 Carolina Ballet Presents Messiah



One of Robert Weiss' crowning achievements, (hailed by the Frankfurter

Allgemeine Zeitung as "Choreography Europe Needs to See"), this masterwork returns after a five-year absence from the repertory, following its successful run in Philadelphia by Pennsylvania Ballet. The Philadelphia Inquirer raved, "Messiah rises in dance divine. A transcendent performance..." A joyous celebration of live music, theater and dance to Handel's magnificent score for families to enjoy together during the Thanksgiving holiday. Chamber musicians along with voices from the North Carolina Master Chorale complete this extraordinary experience. www.carolinaballet.com

December 1

 Broadway Series South Presents Mannheim Steamroller Christmas



Leapin' lizards! Annie is coming to Raleigh! The timeless tale of Little Orphan Annie is

back, giving a whole new generation the chance to experience this classic musical about never giving up hope. Boasting one of Broadway's most memorable scores, including "It's the Hard-Knock Life," "Easy Street," "N.Y.C." and the ever-optimistic "Tomorrow," Annie is a delightful theatrical experience for the entire family. Don't miss this all-new production that Variety calls "a winner!" Special Performances Times: Tuesday - Friday at 7pm; Saturday 2 & 7pm and Sunday 2 & 7pm. www.broadwayseriessouth.com

December 2 - 7

 Broadway Series South Presents Chicago, Starring Tom Wopat



Come on, babe - experience it live and in person! The one, the only Chicago!

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Continued on page 25

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Continued from page 24

– a razzle dazzle tale of sin and celebrity. And now, you can see it live. The recipient of six Tony Awards, two Olivier Awards, a Grammy and thousands of standing ovations, Chicago is the sensation that just keeps getting bigger and bigger.

All Broadway Series South shows will be playing in Raleigh Memorial Auditorium. For ticket information, visit www.broadwayseriessouth.com

December 5 - 21

Raleigh Little Theatre Presents Forever Plaid: Plaid Tidings



Forever Plaid: Plaid Tidings is a brand-new show that offers the best of Forever Plaid tied-up in

a nifty package with a big Christmas bow on top! Filled with Christmas standards that have all been "Plaid-erized," our boys are back to do their Christmas Special. At first they aren't sure why they've returned, but a phone call from the heavenly Rosemary Clooney lets them know that they're needed to put a little harmony into a discordant world. Sprinkled among the Christmas offer-

ings are audience favorites like their riotous three minute and eleven second version of "The Ed Sullivan Show" - this time featuring the Rockettes, the Chipmunks and The Vienna Boys Choir, and a Plaid Caribbean Christmas which puts the "Day-O" in Excelsis! This is one holiday treat that is truly "heaven-sent!" Tickets to Bunnicula and Forever Plaid: Plaid Tidings on sale now from www.etix.com or from the RLT Box Office at 919.821.3111.

December 9 – 17



Theatre in the Park Presents A Christmas Carol. Written, directed by and starring Ira David Wood III

Theatre in the Park's original musical comedy adaptation of A Christmas Carol, based on the book by Charles Dickens and adapted for the stage by Ira David Wood III, first premiered in 1974. It has been performed each year since, and has become the theatre's major fundraiser. Approximately 30,000 people attend the local production run in Raleigh, North Carolina.

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ROBERT WEISS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Have a Holly Raleigh Christmas CD

Christmas will be here before you know it. For the music lover on your holiday shopping list, the third volume of the Have a Holly Raleigh Christmas CD is now available at local retailers and makes the perfect stocking stuffer.

With each CD purchase, you're not only helping to promote local musicians, but also support tomorrow's budding musicians at the Community Music School (CMS). All proceeds from the sale of the CD benefit CMS, a non-profit organization in Raleigh dedicated to providing music lessons and instruments to low-income children in Wake County.

"Community Music School gives children with limited financial means the opportunity to experience music education," said Katherine Pellack, President of Community Music School. "To make our program affordable, we charge only \$1 per music lesson. We rely on contributions and community support to sustain our programs and are honored to be chosen by Sir Walter Records as the benefi-

ary of this year's CD fundraiser." Since 1994, CMS has positively impacted more than 1,000 local youth through its music education programs, the largest of which is PLAY (Private Lessons for At-Risk Youth). The school also offers music programs for low-income students with special needs like autism and learning or emotional disabilities, as well as

independent studies which aid students with college auditions or preparation for a music career.

This year's CD features 14 original holiday tunes as well as some old favorites, recorded by popular local bands and singer/songwriters like Terry Anderson & the O.A.K. Team, Brantley Family Band, Day Action

Band, Don Dixon, Killer Filler, and many others. Musical styles include rock, classical, blues, Americana, Caribbean and Latin pop.

"We are grateful to the musicians who generously donated their time and talent to this year's CD," said Stephen Votino, one of the producers and co-founder of Sir Walter Records, LLC. "Our goals of the Have a Holly Raleigh Christmas CD project are to raise awareness of the many talented musicians we have in the Triangle area and provide much-needed financial support to charitable organizations that further music education."

CDs are on sale for \$10 each at many Triangle retail stores and will also be sold at events during the holidays.

For more details about the Have a Holly Raleigh Christmas CD project and to view our holiday events and growing list of retail stores, check out www.hollyraleighchristmas.org. For more information about CMS, visit www.cmsraleigh.org.



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BEST OF THE BEST! And now our new READER POLL!! (see below)
Fred Benton knows the Triangle! Benton, long-time lifestyle journalist covering the Triangle for over 20 years, has definite ideas about businesses that he feels are particularly consumer-friendly and offer superlative product and service. This list is the sole property and decision-making of Fred Benton and BetterlivingNC Productions and is not affiliated with the Raleigh Downtowner. This list is a companion information guide that Benton presents on WCKB radio and is heard throughout southeastern NC.

Angus Barn - Glenwood Avenue, close to RDU International Airport, 787-3505. *The BEST steaks!*

42nd Street Oyster Bar - 508 West Jones Street, Raleigh, 831-2811. *42ndstoysterbar.com BEST Seafood Salad!*

The Point at Glenwood - 1626 Glenwood Avenue at Five Points, Raleigh, 755-1007. *BEST Reuben Sandwich!*

larrybeans.com - 828-1234. *Your web site for BEST coffees.*

Lilly's Pizza - Five Points, Raleigh, 833-0226. *lillyspizza.com BEST pizza! BEST house side salad! BEST beer selection!*

Waraji Japanese Restaurant - Duraleigh Road, corner of Duraleigh and Pleasant Valley roads, 783-1883. *"If you knew sushi like I know sushi." BEST sushi! warajirestaurant.com*

Nina's Ristorante - 801 Leadmine Road, Harvest Plaza, 845-1122. *BEST NY-style Italian!*

Trish the Dish Catering - Raleigh, 852-0369. *Fabulous fun food for the budget-minded!*

Cafe Tiramisu - North Ridge Shpg Ctr, near Ace Hardware, Falls of Neuse Road, 981-0305. *BEST stuffed pork chop! BEST fried cheese souffle!*

William and Garland Motel - Hwy.58, Salter Park, 252-247-3733. *BEST budget-friendly family accommodations on the Crystal Coast!*

READER EMAIL POLL: At what restaurant do you feel you get the best value for your money? Please send your vote to betterlivingnc@yahoo.com.

The Black Mountain Inn - 828-669-6528. *Best in Black Mountain! Pet-friendly! www.blackmountaininn.com*

The Lamplight Inn - Henderson 252-438-6311. *Pet-friendly, great breakfasts! www.lamplightbnb.net*

Springfield Inn - a bed and breakfast, 252-426-8471, springfield@springfieldbb.com. *In Hertford, BEST breakfast! Farm-fresh everything!*

Dakota Grill - 9549 Chapel Hill Road (Hwy. 54), intersection with Cary Parkway, 463-9526. *BEST exotic burger (double bison burger), and BEST chili for pepperheads.*

Simpson's Beef & Seafood - at Creedmoor and Millbrook roads, 783-8818. *BEST prime rib! BEST coconut shrimp!*

Apex Chiropractic - Apex, 362-9066. *I could hardly walk. Acupuncture saved my life!*

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- Mussels with Masuman Curry Cream

CHOICE OF TWO SALADS

- Mixed Green with Pecan Vinaigrette and Goat Cheese
- Caesar Salad with White Anchovies
- Beet and Feta Salad with Champagne Vinaigrette
- Duck Consommé with Vegetable Paysanne and Duck Confit

CHOICE OF TWO ENTREES

- Grilled Filet Mignon (6 oz.) with Cognac-Truffle Butter
- Fall Vegetable Risotto with Wild Mushrooms and Root Vegetables
- Bronzed Tuna Steak (6 oz.) with Shiitake Merlot Reduction & Garlic Aioli
- Seared Wild Boar Chop (8 oz.) and Hedgehog Mushroom Glaze
- Sautéed Sea Scallops with Charred Tomatillos and Corn Salsa

CHOICE OF TWO SIDES

- Grilled Asparagus with Gruner Butter
- Loaded Yukon Gold Potatoes
- Creamy Lobster Risotto
- White Truffle House-cut Fries with Fines Herbes
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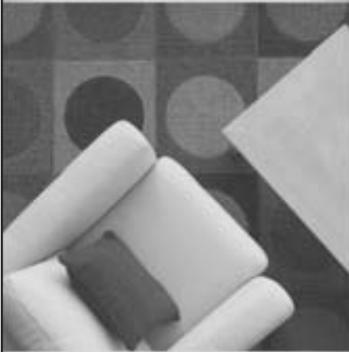


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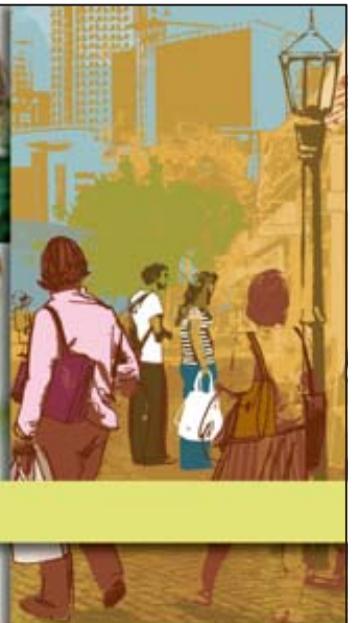
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Autumn Wines “Fall” into Place



By Kerry L. Smith

autumn’s cooler temperatures, shorter nights and seasonal harvest often make us crave something different than the crisp, clean and refreshing wines of summer. As our autumn wine-buying habits show, we tend to favor the fuller body and more complex flavor of red wines. But that doesn’t mean all selections should be red. Instead, consider these variations for the season:

< Gewurztraminer >

This is a white wine originating from Tramin, Italy, which can be quite distinct and complex. “Gewurz,” which means spicy in German, describes the wines most commonly recognized trait, but it can also have beautiful floral and tree fruit tones balanced along with its zesty character. Because it is dynamic and full of flavor, it can go with a multitude of foods and flavor profiles. This makes it a natural choice for your Thanksgiving dinner and its plethora of side items. Try one from the French region of Alsace. (There are also nice ones from Germany and the US, but don’t settle on the cheapest one; you’ll just be disappointed.)

< Chardonnay >

Forget about “ABC” (Anything But Chardonnay). Sure, it’s the most widely-planted grape varietal in the world, is over-produced, and in many cases, uninteresting and overdone. However, it’s remarkably impressive in the winery, and in the right hands can be a fantastic expression of wine at its best. It’s commonly a fuller-bodied white which pairs well with creamy sauces and soups—perfect for autumn. Chard is also nice with an array of fowl, from chicken to turkey and even quail when prepared certain ways. Try a less expensive Burgundy from the Macon or St. Aubin. If you want to splurge or impress, get a Burgundian Meursault or a single vineyard Chardonnay from the Russian River Valley of California.

< Dry Rose >

Yes, I know Dry Rose is usually associated with warm-weather days on the patio, a combo that I have to admit, is hard to beat. But we must look past that comfortable stereotype and consider it as a complimentary wine for autumn’s food offerings. Good examples in this style have red fruit tones with the weight and acidity of a white wine. Because of this, they have incredible versatility in food pairing, making them lovely starters and early course matches to any and all of fall’s harvest. Try any Dry Rose from Southern France, Spain or one from a smaller California producer.

< Red Bordeaux >

Red wines from this storied region are my favorites anytime of year, but their class, elegance and beautifully blended character seem ideal for a season transitioning from hot to cold. Depending on the appellation, Bordeaux is either primarily Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot, with a combination of other grapes possibly blended in. They make fantastic headliners for fall feasts, providing great depth of fruit and subtle powdered spice notes. Look for Cru Bourgeois or Haut-Medoc’s for more value, or step up to a Cru Classe if you want to experience the best.

< Syrah or Malbec >

When the door opens and the cold evening air hits you, you need a wine that packs an equal wallop. Both Syrah and Malbec bring dark fruit and tannin to the equation. Smaller producers make better hand-crafted offerings that will warm you up on the coolest of autumn nights while also complimenting hearty dishes like roasts, steak and wild game. Of

the wide ranges available, some of my favorites are Malbec from Argentina, Syrah from Northern California and the Northern Rhone Valley of France, Syrah blends from Southern France, and Shiraz from the Barossa in Australia.

The world of wine is a vast one, and I hope these suggestions will make your table and evenings as inviting and enjoyable as the season itself.

■RD

Kerry Smith has worked in the wine field in the Triangle for the last 12 years, including ten years running the Wine Cellar at the Angus Barn and General Manager for Total Wine. Kerry is currently the sales manager for Tryon Distributing, a state-wide wine and beer wholesaler. Kerry became a Certified Wine Educator in 2002, a distinction few hold from the Society of Wine Educators.

Below: The vast wine inventory at Solas

Photo courtesy jbaz.net





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