

# BEST *of* BAMA

## AWARDS 2017

Your votes have been tallied, and we've got the winners!

In the following pages, we reveal readers' choices for the best of the best of Alabama's entertainment, restaurants, people, and places from our Tennessee border to the shores of the Gulf.

Who do you think should take the title of Best of Bama in 2018? Tell us! Visit [alabama-magazine.com](http://alabama-magazine.com) to cast your vote!

TEXT BY  
BENJAMIN RICHMOND

### Amphitheater

#### Amphitheater at The Wharf Orange Beach

251.224.1020 [amphitheateratthewharf.com](http://amphitheateratthewharf.com)

Huge, loud, and incredible, this 10,000-seat facility has people on their feet all night listening to their favorite bands. Adding to its amazing history of iconic bands and artists, this summer, Alabama, Music & Mudbugs, Brantley Gilbert, Jimmy Buffet & The Coral Reefer Band, Journey, Florida Georgia Line, and Kenny Chesney are all playing while Green Day and Eric Church start this fall in September. Go ahead and reserve tickets for this astounding venue, as some shows are already sold out, and be sure to look at what else The Wharf has to offer.

### Art Festival

#### Fairhope Film Festival Fairhope

251.517.5270 [fairhopefilmfestival.org](http://fairhopefilmfestival.org)

The Fairhope Film Festival is a four-day film festival held during the second weekend in November, hosting feature films, documentaries, and shorts selected from the finalists of the past year's film festival competitions. Only the best of the best are shown here for those who can appreciate the art. Parties and events are hosted "Southern-style," and many of the film-makers participate during screening.

### Art Museum

#### Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts Montgomery

334.240.4333 [mmfa.org](http://mmfa.org)

Founded in 1930, the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, located within the Blount Cultural Park, is the oldest fine arts museum in the state as well as the finest. They claim to provide a "unique and sophisticated setting to showcase dreams and make business occasions truly memorable." Admission is free, so anyone is welcome to go see some of the finest art in the Southeast. Aiming to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art of the highest quality, the exhibits there are a sight to behold.

### Golf Course

#### Ross Bridge Birmingham

205.949.3085 [rtjgolf.com/rossbridge](http://rtjgolf.com/rossbridge)

The Ross Bridge Golf Course, part of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, is a challenging yet beautiful golf course set in the terrain of Shannon Valley. One of the longest trails in the world, it sports two stunning lakes connected by a magnificent waterfall. Known for its excellent par-three shots, what makes this trail most unique is the combined beauty and challenge of each of the 18 holes. For the second year in a row, it was chosen as Alabama's best golf course.

### Heritage Tour

#### American Village Montevallo

205.665.3535 [americanvillage.org](http://americanvillage.org)

The Liberty Experience at American Village provides guests a trip into our country's past during the struggle for independence and self-government. Tour the National Veterans Shrine, visit the country's only full-scale replica of the Oval Office, explore the Randall Museum, and much more. This historic site instills the values of liberty and



AMERICAN VILLAGE

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL CLEMMER

PHOTOGRAPH BY ARDEN UPTON



ROSS BRIDGE

good citizenship in people of all ages. Veterans and children age 4 and under can attend this patriotic wonder for free.

### Historic Landmark

#### U.S. Space & Rocket Center Huntsville

256.837.3400 [rocketcenter.com](http://rocketcenter.com)

The U.S. Space & Rocket Center is a place where anyone can be an astronaut for a day. Opened in 1970, the center has had more than 17 million people come through its doors and is home to multiple training camps that teach hundreds of thousands of students each year. With more than 1,500 items such as America's first satellite, two theaters including an IMAX, and many interactive exhibits, the U.S. Space & Rocket Center is out of this world.

### Performing Arts

#### Saenger Theatre Mobile

251.208.7261 [mobilesaenger.com](http://mobilesaenger.com)

Living up to its reputation as "Alabama's greatest showplace," Mobile's Saenger Theatre is an architectural beauty with state-of-the-art sound, making it a wonder to behold. The theater opened in 1927 and was saved from destruction by the University of South Alabama in 1970, having been restored by The Center for Living Arts in 2000 for more than \$6 million. Today it seats 1,921 people for numerous concerts, lectures, special events, and an annual summer movie series.



## Bakery

### Edgar's Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, and Huntsville

205.968.4031 edgarsbakery.com

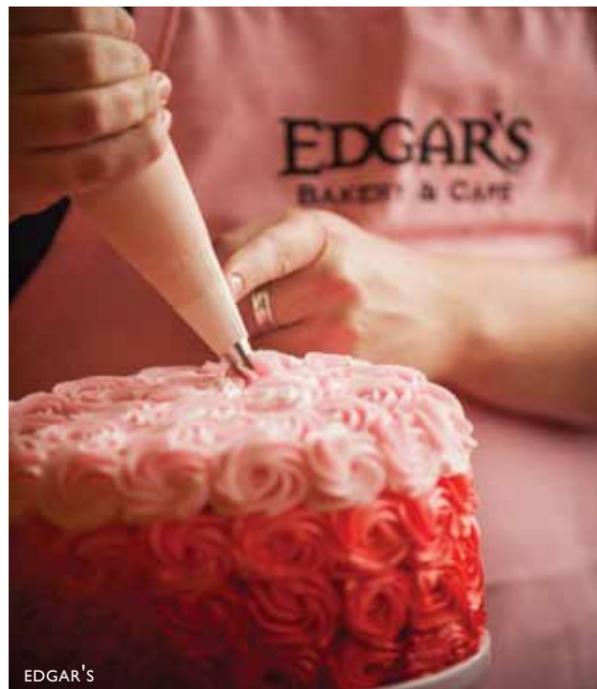
Most famous for their strawberry cake, Edgar's is the winner for the second year in a row. Terry and Dottie Smith opened their first location in Birmingham in 1998, offering an assortment of decadent baked goods from wedding cakes to chocolate cheesecake bars, as well as a variety of market items, extensive breakfast and lunch selections, and several catering options.

## Bar

### The Collins Bar Birmingham

205.323.7995 thecollinsbar.com

Known for its tailor-made crafted cocktails and loved for its food and service, The Collins offers a fun and exciting time that's impossible to find anywhere else. The iconic paper airplanes that hang from the ceiling and many other unique decorations make it a favorite watering hole for locals with a casual vibe.



## BBQ

### Dreamland Huntsville, Birmingham, Mobile, Tuscaloosa, Montgomery, and Northport

800.752.0544 dreamlandbbq.com

Dreamland has a rich history, opening in 1958, the same year that Paul "Bear" Bryant started coaching at the University of Alabama. Its legendary ribs and barbecue sauce have created loyal fans ever since. John "Big Daddy" Bishop built the original Dreamland by hand, creating a home-like atmosphere that continues at all of its locations to this day.

## Brunch

### Grand Hotel Point Clear

251.928.9201 marriottgrand.com

Located along the Gulf Coast, this grand resort's famous Sunday brunch has earned its spot for the fourth time in a row as Alabama's best brunch. With an expansive exterior, elegant interior, breathtaking scenic view of the bay, golf courses, tennis courts, marina, spas, food both gorgeous and delicious, and more, the Grand Hotel is well worth the stay.

## Burger

### Callaghan's Irish Social Club Mobile

251.433.9374 callaghansirishsocialclub.com

For six years in a row, Callaghan's has retained its claim to Alabama's best burger, a title it may never relinquish. This laid-back pub is considered by some to be the best in America, and nothing makes their incredible burgers taste better than the fantastic drinks served and the great bands that come and play.

## Café

### Irondale Café Irondale

205.956.5258 irondalecafe.com

Irondale Café, also known as the Original Whistle-stop Café, has history stretching back to 1928. Although the café has been wildly popular since it

opened, it didn't grow famous until the movie *Fried Green Tomatoes* came out in 1991, after which customers flocked to it. It now serves about 700 slices of green tomato a day.

## Chef & Fine Dining

### Frank Stitt & Highlands Bar and Grill Birmingham

205.939.1400 highlandsbarandgrill.com

Open since 1982, Stitt and his acclaimed Highlands Bar and Grill has continued to astonish guests with its French-inspired Southern dishes. This restaurant has helped place Birmingham on the map for fine dining and earn its title as the best in Alabama.

## Coffee

### Karma's Coffee House Cullman

256.841.5936 karmascoffeehouse.com

Opened in 2015, this coffee house has already won over readers with its coffee, hot teas, smoothies, and more. With a friendly staff, a nook for kids, free Wi-Fi, and an open stage with ready instruments for music, a relaxing time is easy to find here.

## Dive Bar

### Rattlesnake Saloon Tuscumbia

256.370.7220 rattlesnakesaloon.net

Rattlesnake Saloon is filled with cowboy boots, music, and good times for crowds of people every day. Uniquely located under a bluff, they have everything a saloon needs: great food, cold beer, and a hitch for your horse. Make a reservation at Seven Springs Lodge next door and experience sleeping in a silo!

## Seafood

### Fisher's Orange Beach

251.981.7305 fishersobm.com

This two-story restaurant overlooking the Orange Beach Marina offers the best seafood in Alabama.



With a place for everyone, the dockside first floor is more casual and family-oriented, while the upstairs is more upscale, offering exquisite dining and a beautiful bar with craft cocktails and fine wine.

## Steak

### Acre Auburn

334.246.3763 acreauburn.com

Acre is located just 3 blocks from the heart of the Auburn community, Toomer's Corner, and uses locally grown ingredients and their on-site garden to provide a fresh experience that keeps guests returning. Their collaboration with the university and local ranchers provides responsibly farm-raised meat for Alabama's best steak.

## Sushi

### Master Joe's Fairhope

251.928.8668 masterjoesrestaurantgroup.com

A third-time winner of Alabama's best sushi, Master Joe's is a staple of the Fairhope community as well as the Alabama community at large. Master Joe, the head chef and owner, has more than a decade's worth of training in Japan, which he applies to American ingredients to cook up a beautiful and delicious dining experience that you won't find anywhere else.

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drink

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PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT RAUSCH

PHOTOGRAPH BY JERROD BROWN

## Antiques

### Charles Phillips Antiques and Architecturals Theodore

251.973.2885 charlesphillipsantiques.com

With eight barns full of about 50,000 square feet worth of antiques, you never know what you'll find at this hidden gem. Charles Phillips, who claims to be the "Junk Man" of the family, travels to Europe and other locations to find what he needs and crafts pieces sought by people across the country. Truly the best antiques in Alabama.



CHARLES PHILLIPS

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN DEVRIES

## Bridal Boutique

### Finery Huntsville

256.429.3429 fineryboutique.com

Finery is a bridal boutique in historic downtown Huntsville, offering the highest quality designs in Alabama. In their own words, their aesthetic displays an "unabashed marriage of Parisian parlor meets Rock & Roll attitude." Everything from bridal gowns, headpieces, and silk turbans to lingerie and more is all carefully selected and created. They offer event styling packages and see brides by appointment.

## Children's Clothing

### Once Upon a Time Homewood

205.870.7776 onceuponatimebaby.com

Open since 1996, Once Upon a Time is owned by designer Linda Flaherty, who works with her youngest daughter, Sarah. They specialize in baby layettes and offer much more, from nursery furniture and crib linens to on-site monogramming, providing a unique and customized shopping experience.

## Gift Shop

### Table Matters Mountain Brook

205.879.0125 table-matters.com

Table Matters rests in the center of Mountain Brook Village. Specializing in pottery and china from across the globe and incredible table linens, they also have a bridal registry and host special events such as book signings and designer trunk shows.



TABLE MATTERS

## Jeweler

### Anna Cate Huntsville

256.858.1478 annacatejewelry.com

This upscale jewelry store offers something for everyone from the high-end collector to the artistic dabbler. Currently featuring 22 designers, Anna Cate delivers magnificent jewelry at modest prices. Bringing home fashion jewelry from around the world, this unconventional store is the best of its kind in the state.

## Linens

### Three Sheets Homewood

205.871.2337 threesheetslinen.com

Three Sheets is a gorgeous and classy linen store in the heart of Homewood. They offer the best luxury linens in Alabama from leading brands like Litner, Legacy, Bella Note, and more. Visit this incredible location to see everything else that they offer from home furnishings to scented candles.

## Mall

### Bridge Street Huntsville

256.327.8400 bridgestreethuntsville.com

For the third time, Bridge Street Town Center's mall has won readers' purses, wallets, and hearts as Alabama's best mall. With more than 70 stores, an

excellent 14-screen theater, a train and carousel, a 5-acre lake and walking trail, and musical and entertainment events, a trip here guarantees a good time.

## Men's Boutique

### Shaia's Birmingham

205.871.1312 shaias.com

Impeccable service, top-notch brands, and premium items make it no surprise that Shaia's has been named Alabama's best men's boutique for the third time in a row and the fourth time overall. This store offers a wealth of design and fashion knowledge, aiming to make customers feel at home when they come in and look like gentlemen when they leave.

## Women's Boutique

### What a Girl Wants Cullman

256.775.3722 whatagirlwants-cullman.com

With a flair for fun, this friendly boutique is all about their customers, offering a variety of clothing and accessories to satisfy customers no matter their fashion taste. Southern spirit, hospitality, and fair prices have elevated this store to the best of its kind in Alabama.



WHAT A GIRL WANTS

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Shopping



BRIDGE STREET

BEST of BAMA

AWARDS 2017

Shopping