

# BEST *of* BAMA

## AWARDS 2019

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 2020? Tell us! Visit [alabama-magazine.com](http://alabama-magazine.com) to cast your votes!

TEXT BY  
SAVANNAH CLAY AND CECILIA WOOD

### Amphitheater

#### Tuscaloosa Amphitheater Tuscaloosa

[tuscaloosaamphitheater.com](http://tuscaloosaamphitheater.com)

With nearly 7,500 reserved seats and a total capacity of almost 8,500—including a stage-front pit that's standing room only—the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater hosts famed musical acts ranging from country to pop to rap and children's performers. The July and August Coca-Cola Concert series will bring Mary J. Blige, Dierks Bentley, Flo Rida, Kidz Bop, and more.

### Arts Festival

#### Orange Beach Festival of Art Orange Beach

[orangebeachal.gov](http://orangebeachal.gov)

For more than 45 years, the Orange Beach Festival of Art has marked the first rite of spring. It is a celebration of visual, performing, musical, and culinary arts. With more than 100 artists working in a variety of media, there is plenty for festival-goers to see, hear, touch, taste, and experience. This event returns March 14 and 15, 2020.

### Art Museum

#### Huntsville Museum of Art Huntsville

[hsvmuseum.org](http://hsvmuseum.org)

Perched in Big Spring Park in downtown Huntsville, this museum hosts a variety of permanent and traveling exhibits and also serves as a magnet for cultural activities. The permanent collection comprises more than 3,200 objects, primarily focused on 19th- and 20th-century American art with an emphasis on works from the Southeast. African, Asian, and European art from cultures that have been influential on American art, is the museum's secondary focus.

### Garden

#### Bellingrath Gardens Theodore

[bellingrath.org](http://bellingrath.org)

Enjoy 65 acres of year-round floral pageantry in a Southern estate garden. There is always something blooming at

Bellingrath. Summer is all about roses, hydrangeas, and beautiful tropicals, while fall brings spectacular cascading chrysanthemums. In winter, more than 400 varieties of camellias will abound, and in spring gorgeous azaleas are everywhere.

### Golf Course

#### Greystone Country Club's Legacy Course Birmingham

[greystonecc.com](http://greystonecc.com)

This private course is the second of two courses built at Greystone Golf & Country Club, making it the first and only 36-hole equity club in Alabama. Carved naturally from a visually dramatic landscape of placid lakes, meandering streams, and undulating Appalachian hills, the Legacy Course requires unwavering physical and mental acumen. This course was also named by *Golfweek* as one of America's Best Residential Courses.

### Heritage Tour

#### Eufaula Pilgrimage Eufaula

[eufaulapilgrimage.com](http://eufaulapilgrimage.com)

For 54 years, the annual Eufaula Pilgrimage has wowed tourists from far and wide. Featuring daytime tours as well as candlelight tours, this showcase of antebellum homes has won Best Heritage Tour three times before. Historic homes such as the Shorter Mansion and Fendall Hall are among dozens of homes and structures that were spared in the Civil War. The Eufaula Heritage Association presents both a spring tour and a Christmas tour.

### Historic Landmark

#### USS Alabama Battleship Mobile

[ussalabama.com](http://ussalabama.com)

Located at the USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park and previous home to a crew of 2,500 courageous Americans, this 45,000-ton WWII odyssey culminated as it led the American Fleet into Tokyo Bay on September 5, 1945. Nine Battle Stars for



GREYSTONE'S LEGACY COURSE

meritorious service were awarded the "Mighty A" during her brief three-year tenure as the "Heroine of the Pacific." She ended up in Mobile as a National Historic Landmark and a memorial to millions.

### Performing Arts

#### Alabama Theatre Birmingham

[alabamatheatre.com](http://alabamatheatre.com)

Showcasing live music, classic movies, shows, and events, this historical venue elicits unparalleled nostalgia. The beautifully ornate Alabama Theatre has been the Showplace of the South since 1927. July and August will feature classics including *The Sound of Music*, *Top Gun*, a *Grease* sing-along, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Steel Magnolias*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

### Zoo

#### Gulf Coast Zoo Gulf Shores

[alabamagulfcoastzoo.com](http://alabamagulfcoastzoo.com)

Also known as the "Little Zoo" for its starring role in the 2006 hit documentary series *The Little Zoo That Could* on Animal Planet, this park is home to more than 600 animals, consisting of 199 species, 31 sub-species, and eight endangered species. Spread over 7 acres with wide pathways, and providing up-close views of the resident animals, this zoo also has shaded picnic areas, rest stops, a seasonal concession stand, and a gift shop.





## Bakery

**Edgar's Bakery**  
Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Huntsville,  
Trussville  
edgarsbakery.com

Edgar's is a full-service bakery featuring desserts of all kinds—custom cakes and cupcakes, cookies, brownies, pastries, pies, and a variety of breads. But the deliciousness doesn't stop there. This three-time Best of Bama winner also features a deli and market with menus for breakfast, lunch, and catering.

## Bar

**Brennan's Irish Pub**  
Birmingham  
brennansirishpubbham.com

Located in downtown Birmingham's historic Five Points South neighborhood, Brennan's serves traditional Irish food alongside favorite Irish beverages such as Guinness and Tullamore Dew Irish Whisky. They open at 11 a.m. and serve Irish breakfast for those who need to get rid of a hangover. Brennan's features live music nightly.

## Barbecue

**Jim 'n Nick's BBQ**  
Statewide  
jimnicks.com

Jim 'n Nick's started cooking pork "low and slow" in 1985 when Nick, along with his dad, Jim, reclaimed an old pizza parlor where they opened their first flagship eatery. Today, with 34 restaurants in seven states, Jim 'n Nick's has become a Southern institution. From their classic pulled pork plate to their signature sides and sauces, Jim 'n Nick's does barbecue right.

## Brunch

**Odette**  
Florence  
odettealabama.com

Serving elevated American fare with both Southern and international influences, Chef Josh Quick

has created a menu that features locally sourced ingredients in a contemporary and inviting atmosphere. Their famed Chicken and Waffle is made with hot chicken thighs, a roasted garlic-brown rice waffle, fried egg, and bourbon maple syrup.

## Burger

**Callahan's Irish Social Club**  
Mobile  
callaghansirishsocialclub.com

This Irish pub serves burgers, sandwiches, and brunch with a full bar, live music, and a dog-friendly patio. Callahan's has claimed the Best Burger in Bama for eight years running according to the readers of *Alabama Magazine*. This legendary pub has also won other national awards such as Best Bar in America by *Esquire Magazine*, among others.

## Butcher

**Smith Farms**  
Cullman  
smithfarmsalabama.com

Since 1955, Smith Farms has perfected the art of curing pork using only real hickory wood to smoke ham, bacon, and sausage. It began as a small roadside stand, and today, Smith Farms has gained acclaim throughout the country for producing truly unique, "Southern-tasting" products.



SPRINGHOUSE

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RUSSELL LANDS



CALLAHAN'S IRISH SOCIAL CLUB

## Café

**Chez Lulu**  
Mountain Brook  
chezlulu.us

This funky French café serves up tarts, soups, and gourmet sandwiches on bread from their on-site Continental Bakery. Located in the English Village of Mountain Brook, this unique eatery offers a fun French-Bohemian atmosphere and flavors as unique as its ambience.

## Chef

**David Bancroft**  
Auburn  
acreauburn.com

Owner and executive chef of two prized restaurants in Auburn—Acre and Bow and Arrow, Chef David Bancroft was the 2018 South nominee for Best Chef by the James Beard Foundation and the winner of the Food Network Iron Chef show-down in 2017. Bancroft is a rising culinary star who is putting Auburn on the foodie map, and this marks his second time to be voted Best Chef by the readers of *Alabama Magazine*.

## Coffee

**Karma's Coffee House**  
Cullman  
karmascoffeehouse.com

This three-time Best of Bama winner is located in Cullman's historic Warehouse District. Specializing in espresso drinks, they also offer chai, matcha, smoothies, chillers, and much more. The shop has a large meeting table in the back for groups, and a kid-friendly nook set up with chalkboard tables to keep the little ones busy.

## Fine Dining

**SpringHouse Restaurant**  
Alexander City  
springhouseatcrossroads.com

With this restaurant's cozy, rustic decor, Executive Chef Rob McDaniel treats diners to local cuisine with casual elegance. The James Beard Foundation has named McDaniel a Best Chef South semi-finalist for the past five years. In a magnificent open kitchen with a wood-fired oven, McDaniel produces an ever-changing menu of locally sourced steaks, seafood, and produce.

## Seafood

**Hot and Hot Fish Club**  
Birmingham  
hotandhotfishclub.com

Hot and Hot Fish Club takes a modern approach to blending French, Southern, and California styles of cooking. Renowned Chef Chris Hastings is passionate about sourcing only the freshest ingredients from the local farmers' harvest, artisans, and fish purveyors. Menus are defined by the season and change regularly.

## Steak

**Village Tavern**  
Birmingham  
villagetavern.com

This two-time Best of Bama winner for Best Steak is located at the Summit in Birmingham. Delectable steak offerings include prime rib, filet mignon, ribeye, New York strip, and top sirloin, which can be set off with a variety of rich toppings.

## Sushi

**Master Joe's**  
Fairhope, Orange Beach  
masterjoesrestaurantgroup.com

This is an unrivaled jewel of Eastern Shore cuisine. The sushi rolls are works of art for both the eyes and the palate. While the menu has typical rolls like California and spicy tuna, it's the chef's specialties that make Master Joe's stand out.



## Linens

### Red Land Cotton Moulton

redlandcotton.com

With its roots in the rich soil of North Alabama, Red Land Cotton products are made with high-quality homegrown cotton. Their cotton comes from the Yeager family's cotton gin, where the family ensured that every part of the production process created the best pieces possible. Their products are heirloom-inspired and include bed sheets, bath towels, and other home linens.

## Mall

### The Shoppes at Eastchase Montgomery

theshoppesateastchase.com

The Shoppes at Eastchase is conveniently located on the east side of Montgomery. The shopping center includes a variety of shopping destinations, including Bath & Body Works, Dillard's, LOFT, and more. If you get hungry while shopping, there are plenty of restaurants to choose from, such as convenient options like Moe's Southwest and Panera Bread, as well as finer dining options like Firebirds Wood Fired Grill and Bonefish Grill.



AUBERGINE

## Men's Boutique

### The Locker Room Tuscaloosa

locker-room.biz

The Locker Room is part of a 50-plus-year tradition that started with founder Alex Gatewood. The clothing store includes traditional business clothing as well as trendier options that appeal to nearby college students. If you attend a home game in Tuscaloosa, you're sure to see plenty of people in the crowd wearing items from this shop.

## Women's Boutique

### Platform Cullman

platformcullman.com

This boutique is located in the Historic Warehouse District of Downtown Cullman. It features clothes, shoes, and accessories for girls and women of all ages. The boutique is known for trendy fashion at affordable prices.

## Outlet

### Grand River Leeds

shopsograndriver.com

The Outlet Shops of Grand River is located minutes from Birmingham and features outlet stores of popular brands: Nike, Coach, Levi's, and more. The outlets boast low prices and amazing sales. You could spend a day checking out all the deals—don't forget to make time for lunch at one of their quick restaurant choices.

## Antiques

### Aubergine Fairhope

aubergineantiques.com

Ann Fargason established Aubergine Culinary Antiques and Oriental Rugs in 2002 as the second location of Crown & Colony. The owners make frequent trips to Italy, Germany, Belgium, England, and France in search of antiques to sell in their shop.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN DEVRES

PHOTOGRAPH BY COURTLAND RICHARDS



CHAPEL FARM COLLECTION

The store is known for its competitive prices, and inventory turns frequently.

## Bridal Boutique

### Heidi Elnora Birmingham

heidielnora.com

Heidi Elnora is the Alabama-based designer behind the boutique. Her bridal boutique includes three diverse collections: Build-A-Bride for a bride who wants a customized design process, Hello Darling for the free-spirited bride, and Heidi Elnora for the elegant bride. Each gown reflects Heidi's Southern background and displays exquisite attention to detail.

## Children's

### Born Boutique Montgomery

bornboutique.com

Born Boutique, located in Montgomery, is a locally owned shop that aims to help customers find the perfect outfit for every occasion in a child's life. The boutique features collections of clothing made for every holiday, as well as toys and stuffed animals.

## Gift Shop

### Chapel Farm Collection Fairhope

chapel farm.com

Having won Bama's Best Gift Shop in 2016 as well, Chapel Farm's motto is "goods for giving and gracious living," and its products reflect that sentiment. Founded by two sisters-in-law and their mother-in-law, the collection includes clothing, home decor, and art. This 2016 Best of Bama winner is the perfect stop to find gifts for any occasion.

## Jeweler

### Grogan Jewelers Florence, Huntsville

groganjewelers.com

The Grogan jewelry legacy began in 1915 when Elisha A. Grogan founded Grogan Jewelers in Florence, Alabama. At over 100 years old, the independent jeweler has remained true to its promises of a lifetime warranty with every piece, an on-site jeweler with same-day repair capabilities, and interest-free financing with no money down. The store is known for its beautiful pieces as well as its attentive customer service.

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