

BEST *of* BAMA

AWARDS 2026

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 northern border to our shores of the Gulf.

Who do you think should take the title of Best of Bama in 2027? Tell us!

Visit alabama-magazine.com to cast your vote!

Advertising Agency

24 Communications
Montgomery
24c.co

Celebrating 20 years of building better brands, 24 Communications assists clients with brand identity, strategic marketing and advertising, website design and public relations. This is their fourth year in a row to win this Best of Bama Award.

Architect

Nequette Architecture & Design
Birmingham
nequette.com

For 25 years, Nequette has been creating thriving mixed-use town centers that capture the character of yesterday, while anticipating the financial and environmental challenges of tomorrow. With projects nationwide, their goal is to solve problems, create a sense of place and bring people together.



Bank

Bank Independent
Northeast Alabama
bibank.com

With this third win for Best of Bama, this hometown community bank has received numerous accolades locally and nationwide. Today, Bank Independent employs more than 650 local team members who are deeply involved in the areas served by the bank.

Charity Event

Mutt Strut
Birmingham
handinpaw.org

Hundreds of humans and hounds gather annually to celebrate Hand in Paw's Animal-Assisted Therapy across Central Alabama. With a different theme each year, from the starting line to the after party, the dog-friendly 5K and Fun Run is full of connection, community and plenty of tail-wagging fun.

Hospital

Mitchell Cancer Institute
Mobile, Fairhope
usahealthsystem.com

The mission at Mitchell Cancer Institute is to discover, develop and deliver innovative solutions to improve cancer outcomes. Every breakthrough is built on an advancement of knowledge through science. They also have a podcast that is a platform for knowledge, stories, coping advice, life tips, inspiration, humor, jokes and even smiles.

Plastic Surgeon / Medical Spa

Rouso Adams Facial Plastic Surgery
Birmingham
drrouso.com

Practicing in a fully-accredited, state-of-the-art facility, this team has performed more than 100,000 facial procedures with a commitment to natural looking results.

Real Estate Agency

Engel & Völkers
Huntsville
evrealestate.com

Delivering concierge real estate care to discerning clients with residential, commercial and development services. The Huntsville branch is independently and locally owned and operated.

School / University

University of Montevallo
Montevallo
montevallo.edu

This is Alabama's only public liberal arts university and it continues to ascend the ranks of *U.S. News & World Report's* list of America's Best Colleges when it comes to overall education and lack of student loan debt.



Amphitheater

The Orion Huntsville

theorionhuntsville.com

Since opening in the spring of 2022, The Orion has received widespread accolades as it was featured on Billboard's global Top Music Venues 2024 list among many other large awards. This 8,000 capacity facility has won the Best of Bama for four years in a row. From artist dressing rooms to center stage, the Orion has settings of every size to fit any event needs.

Art Festival

Kentuck Festival of the Arts Northport

kentuck.org

This annual event celebrates creativity, culture and community in the Tuscaloosa region. Held at Snow Hinton Park, this nationally recognized festival attracts over 15,000 visitors from across the country for a weekend filled with inspiring art, live entertainment and hands-on experiences. This year's festival will be held October 17-18.

Art Gallery

Carnegie Visual Arts Center Decatur

carnegiearts.org

Passionately promoting art for all, education is a priority through hands-on creative opportunities such as Camp Carnegie, lunch and learns, field trips and more. The center features exhibitions and promotes creativity, family-fun and downtown revitalization.

Art Museum

Mobile Museum of Art Mobile

mobilemuseumofart.com

Mobile Museum of Art includes a permanent collection of more than 6,400 works of fine and decorative arts from America, Asia and Europe. This collection spans periods from classical antiquity to the present day and is displayed throughout the impressive 95,000 square-foot facility.

Bed and Breakfast

The Fairhope Inn Fairhope

thefairhopeinn.com

The Fairhope Inn offers a getaway in the heart of a town dubbed one of the most desirable in the South. The freshly renovated rooms and private carriage house are well-appointed, warm and elegant. Featuring only the finest ingredients on the dinner, lunch and brunch menus.

Family Recreation

Magnolia Branch Wildlife Reserve Atmore

magnoliabranch.com

This is the perfect place to connect with nature and get away from the hustle and bustle of busy life. Nature lovers enjoy exploring the hiking trails with some of the best bird-watching in the state. Relish in the beautiful campsites or take a relaxing float down Big Escambia Creek.

Garden

Huntsville Botanical Garden Huntsville

hsvbg.org

Offering an escape into the enchanting world of nature, the gardens are open year-round creating a variety of experiences across all seasons. Whether you are seeking a serene stroll, an educational adventure or a special event, the Garden has something for everyone.

Golf Course

Kiva Dunes Gulf Shores

kivadunes.com

This gorgeous track winds through a secluded piece of land, presenting incredible shotmaking opportunities in an unforgettable setting. The links-style course was ranked the number one public golf course in Alabama by *Golf Advisor* in 2017 and has received many awards from *Golf Digest*, *Golf Week* and *Links Magazine*. The resort has twice been voted Best Vacation Destination by the readers of *Alabama Magazine*.



HUNTSVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN

Heritage Tour

Wilcox Historical Tour of Homes Wilcox County

wilcoxhistoricalsociety.org

Welcoming more than 1,000 visitors annually from across the country and beyond, this spring event draws people to experience the history, beauty and hospitality that makes Wilcox county so special. Featuring homes, churches and more, the tour showcases the charm and heritage of Alabama's Black Belt.

Historic Landmark

Vulcan Park & Museum Homewood

visitvulcan.com

What kind of city builds a huge statue of a burly, bearded, bare-bottomed man to tower over its entire population? One that never forgets its roots. Vulcan, the Roman god of fire and forge, watches over all of Birmingham as a symbol of the city's iron origins. Vulcan is the world's largest cast iron statue made of 100,000 pounds of iron and is 56 feet tall.

Hotel / Resort

Perdido Beach Resort Orange Beach

perdidobeachresort.com

With five dining options and three onsite bars this has been a Gulf Coast paradise since 1987. The award-winning beach front resort is the perfect escape for vacations, weddings, corporate events and more.

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Arts &
entertainment



THE ORION

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VULCAN PARK & MUSEUM



Music Festival

Alabama Strawberry Festival Cullman

alabamastrawberryfest.com

Along with all things “strawberry,” this annual festival features two days of concerts, more than 90 craft and food vendors, carnival rides, contests and a Miss Alabama Strawberry Festival Pageant. The next event will be held at Depot Park in April of 2027.

Performing Arts

Gogue Performing Arts Center Auburn

goguecenter.auburn.edu

The Jay and Susie Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University engages audiences across the university, the state of Alabama and beyond with curated arts experiences that inspire, enlighten and unite. The 2026–27 season features 36 total performances spanning the worlds of chamber arts, dance, opera, rock, pop, country, improv comedy and Broadway musicals.

Salon / Spa

The Corner Soak & Spa Cullman

thecornersoakandspa.com

Offering a wide array of facials, massages, mineral bath soaks and body scrubs as well as hair removal, injections and advanced treatments. Cottage and couple’s packages are available as well as a la carte services.



Vacation Destination

Lake Guntersville Guntersville

lakeguntersville.org

Alabama’s largest lake and a fisherman’s paradise, there’s so much more to do from year-round festivals and activities to unique shopping, dining experiences. Enjoy a vibrant arts community and lodge in a comfy hotel room, an intimate cabin, a roomy condo or a fun campsite along the water.

Wedding Venue

Battle House Renaissance Hotel and Spa Mobile

marriott.com

A luxury hotel with spa, rooftop pool, upscale rooms and suites, the Certified Wedding Planners are trained to coordinate weddings of all types, including ethnic and military weddings. From setting an event budget, planning event menus and table settings to finding florists, photographers and entertainment, they can do it all.

Zoo

Tigers For Tomorrow Attalla

tigersfortomorrow.org

A wild animal preserve and community environmental education center; their mission is to uphold the highest standards of care and respect for native and exotic animals in need of secure permanent homes.



Bakery

Edgar’s Bakery & Cafe Statewide

edgarsbakery.com

Starting with a single location in Birmingham in 1998, this ten-time Best of Bama winner now has 11 locations throughout Alabama. The bakery specializes in ultra-beautiful cakes and pastries while the cafe serves gourmet breakfast and lunch menu items. They also ship nationwide through Gold Belly.

Bar

Rattlesnake Saloon Tuscumbia

rattlesnakesaloon.net

Since its opening in 2009 this saloon-style watering hole tucked under a rock ledge has been featured in magazines, music videos and TV shows and has become a top Alabama attraction. Guestbooks show visitors from all 50 states and more than 30 countries.

Barbeque Joint

Lawler’s North Alabama

lawlersbarbecue.com

With more than 4,600 five-star reviews, Lawlers is a four time Best of Bama winner. With 14 locations throughout North Alabama and offering nationwide shipping through Goldbelly, it’s not hard to get your hands on the authentic Alabama smoked brisket, pulled pork, ribs and sauces.

Brewery

Back Forty Beer Company Gadsden, Birmingham, Huntsville

backfortybeer.com

One of Alabama’s first craft breweries, in 2009 Back Forty released its first offering—Naked Pig Pale Ale. The beer was only available in the North-Central Alabama home market and today it has three locations and is sold in four states.

Brunch

Odette Florence

odettealabama.com

Sourcing ingredients from local farmers, the Saturday brunch features elevated dishes such as an Asparagus Grilled Cheese, a Spinach and Goat Cheese Omlet and a Meyer Lemon Tiramisu. Craft brunch cocktails are also offered. Open Tuesday through Saturday.

Burger

Chez Fon Fon Birmingham

fonfonbham.com

Chez Fonfon is a casual, bustling French bistro in the heart of Five Points South transporting you to Paris, Lyon or Nice. Hamburger Fonfon features comté, grilled red onion and pickles served with pommes frites.



Butcher Shop

Perdido River Meats
Atmore
perdidorivermeats.com

Perdido River Meats is an award-winning cattle operation that provides local beef raised on Perdido River Farms and processed right here in Atmore. The 23,000 square-foot processing facility includes a retail storefront and serves wholesale customers as well. Purchase grass-fed and grain-finished beef, from soup bones to filet mignon.

Café

Chez Lulu
Mountain Brook
chezlulu.us

A funky and eclectic little French café located in the heart of Mountain Brook's English Village with indoor and outdoor seating. Established in 1995, the menu at this bistro and pizzeria is inspired by cuisines of the French Riviera.

Caterer

Capers in the Kitchen
Daphne
capersinthekitchen.com

Catering everything from Low-Country Boils to Mardi Gras Balls, chefs Pam Hunter and Kris Conlon have been serving the Gulf Coast in a number of culinary capacities over the years. They offer interactive dinner parties, corporate events, home-cooked meals, cooking demo parties and more.

Chef

Kelsey Barnard Clark
Dothan
chefkbc.com

A born and raised Gulf Southerner from Dothan, Chef KBC has developed an impressive resume as the fifth woman and first southerner to win the title of Bravo's *Top Chef*, the sole fan favorite following her season 16 win and a 2024 James Beard Award nominee for *Best Chef: South*. She frequently appears on hit Food Network shows including *Tournament of Champions*, *Chopped*, *Bobby's Triple Threat*, *Guy's Grocery Games* and more. Today, she runs her catering company and restaurant, KBC, while also teaching virtual classes and taking her chef talents on the road.

Coffee House

Church Street Coffee & Books
Mountain Brook
churchstreetshop.com

Serving coffee and books to the Birmingham community since 2011, the team of baristas and bakers serve up muffins, pastries and gluten-free treats alongside their famous Breakup Cookie which they have become known for as well as their variety of hot and iced coffees.

Fine Dining

1856
Auburn
auburn1856.com

The world's finest teaching restaurant – a truly unique and elevated experience where education meets experiential dining. The Culinary Residence was recognized in The MICHELIN Guide 2025. This remarkable achievement marks the first restaurant in Auburn to receive this distinction and the first teaching restaurant in the United States to ever be recognized in The MICHELIN Guide. Located inside The Laurel Hotel and Spa which is Alabama's first and only AAA Five Diamond Hotel.



CHUCK'S FISH

Pizza

Pizzeria GM
Homewood
pizzeriagm.com

This is not an average pizza place. While pepperoni and mozzarella can be found on the menu, there's far more beyond the ordinary. Think fig and prosciutto or slow roasted marinated beef with oaxac cheese and avacado cream or onions with brussels sprouts, gorgonzola, pecorino and rosemary honey. Prepare to be wowed.

Seafood

Chuck's Fish
Birmingham, Madison, Mobile,
Montgomery, Tuscaloosa
chucksfish.com

There's no substitute for fresh seafood and the Chuck's Fish team prides themselves on sourcing their seafood directly from their own wholesale market, Harbor Docks in Destin, Florida. This is the eleventh Best of Bama win for their seafood and their sushi.

Specialty Grocery Boutique

Mark's Mart
Northport, Selma, Vestavia
chickenswirl.com

Serving central Alabama and the surrounding areas since 1978, Mark's Mart is home to the Chicken Swirl which is an individually wrapped delicacy made of high-quality, boneless chicken breast, beef, bacon and a special seasoning. They also specialize in high-quality cut-to-order meats, fine wines and local specialty items.

Steak

Corks and Cattle
Enterprise
corksandcattle.com

This six-time Best of Bama Award winner's has the finest selection of CAB steaks. They carry 100% beef locally-sourced from Southern Cattle in Marianna as well as bison from Green Acres in Slocomb.

Sushi

Jinsei
Homewood
jinseisushi.com

This award-winning sushi restaurant features more than 20 specialty rolls, 16 classic rolls and a lengthy Nigiri/Sashimi menu. For the meat lovers out there, be sure to try the River Rock Beef where you personally sear your own over a lava-hot rock and baste with a Japanese BBQ sauce.



MARK'S MART

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drink

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BRITTANY HOUSE



Antiques

The Brittany House Oak Hill

thebrittanyhouseantiquesatoakhill.com

Located in Alabama's smallest incorporated town and the only antiques dealer within a 60 mile radius, this store is full of timeless, well cared for period pieces from the 19th century. Many of the antiques at The Brittany House have their original brasses, fabrics and other embellishments.

Bridal Boutique

Bliss Bridal Fairhope

beablissbride.com

Offering a full-service boutique experience with a showroom of designer gowns under \$4,000, this is an elegant Southern bridal boutique that hosts multiple events annually. Other locations include Hattiesburg, MS and New Orleans.

Children's Clothing

Dear Emmaline Vestavia Hills

shopdearemmaline.com

Offering a wide range of clothing for boys, girls, babies and tweens, this boutique carries more than 80 name brands. A custom Dear Emmaline collection of clothing is also offered as well as toys, gifts, books and swimwear.



Florist

Jubilee Flowers Fairhope

jubileeflowersfairhope.com

Bringing style, elegance and personality to every celebration, Jubilee Flowers specializes in everything from soft romantic palettes to bold contemporary designs. Their portfolio showcases their versatility and passion for exceeding client expectations.

Furniture & Interiors

Atchison Home Fairhope, Mobile

atchisonhome.com

With a newly renovated Mobile showroom and a new Atchison Home boutique in Fairhope, experience the curated collection of antiques, furniture, rugs and accessories.

Gift Shop

Table Matters Mountain Brook

table-matters.com

Named a "Top 100 Wedding Registry Retailer in America," this luxury gift boutique carries the top name brands in china, crystal, linens, decor and more. Gift registries are available both in store and online with shipping services available.



Jeweler

Wallace-Burke Homewood

wallaceburke.com

Birmingham's premier jeweler for custom jewelry designs, jewelry repair, custom furniture repair, diamonds and precious stones, shop and relax in leather chairs with a favorite libation and catch up on the latest ball game on the showroom's 50-foot flat screen television.

Mall

Shops of Grand River Leeds

shopsograndriver.com

Featuring more than 70 brands and outlets, shop big discounts on name brands such as Kate Spade, Brooks Brothers, Michael Kors, Coach and more.



Men's Boutique

Bernard's Store For Men Jasper

bernardsstoreformen.com

Featuring clothes, gifts and accessories to outfit any man for the lake, beach, mountains, work, class, church or business meeting. This is Bernard's fourth Best of Bama win..

Specialty Boutique

Fixtures & Finishes Birmingham

fixturesandfinishes.com

With a two-story showroom, Fixtures & Finishes represents an exclusive collection of well edited plumbing, tile, lighting and decorative products for the kitchen and bath. It is the state's only dealer for many exclusive plumbing and tile brands..

Women's Boutique

Carriage House Decatur

shopcarriagehouse.com

Where modern design plays side-by-side with classic style. Owners Nicole Shelton and Kate Cole are knowledgeable and passionate about women's clothing. Shop curated collections of unparalleled design either online or in-store.

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Shopping

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