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the Shoals



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Time to eat
Shoals area places to dine

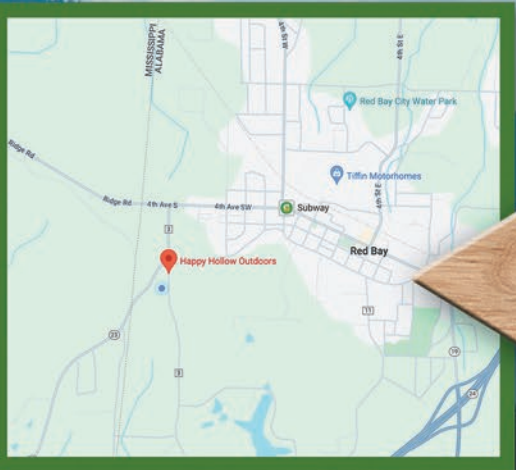
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while visiting the Shoals

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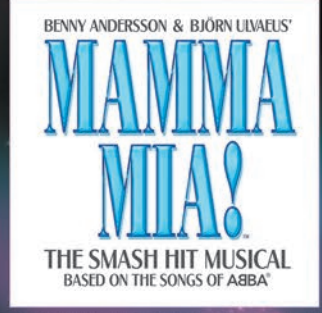
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Explore

the Shoals

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the Shoals

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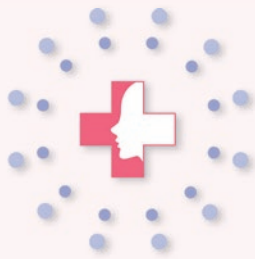
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Welcome to the Shoals!

Activities in and around the Shoals have been plentiful so far this year, and it looks like they will only get bigger and better with each passing month!

Inside this magazine, we'll give you a glimpse of the four cities which comprise the Shoals: Florence in Lauderdale County, Muscle Shoals, Sheffield and Tusculumbia in Colbert County.

Visit them all and the surrounding areas. Some have special celebrations you can't miss out on like the fireworks in Waterloo, Oktoberfest in St. Florian and Sledgefest in Leighton.

The area is also a perfect place to enjoy the outdoors, whether it be down by the river fishing or hiking the miles of trails throughout Colbert, Lauderdale and Franklin counties. The creeks and branches of the Tennessee River also lend themselves to great sailing, kayaking and canoeing.

The Shoals is also known for its music and the great musicians who have recorded right here. There are so many places and events to explore throughout the year to soak up and enjoy. Some of the events to enjoy, just to name a few, include the W.C. Handy Festival, the Belle Mont Celtic Festival and Sledgefest. Then there are plenty of places to visit to soak up the rich music history such as the Alabama Music Hall of Fame, FAME Studios and Muscle Shoals Sound Studio.

The Shoals has a rich history and its fair share of myths and legends. Long before the first track was recorded here, the American Indians fittingly nicknamed the Tennessee River the "Singing River." You'll also find that one of the most notorious criminals in our nation's history paid a visit to the Shoals.

Take your time to absorb all that the Shoals has to offer. You'll understand why countless visitors return because just being here gets better and better. We're confident you'll agree that the Shoals should be added to your travel plans every year.

ON THE COVER



Photograph by Dan Busey

Kevin McCarley rides along a trail east of the Cypress Creek Bridge on April 25, 2023. More bike trails are expected to be added at Wildwood Park after having been approved by the Florence City Council.

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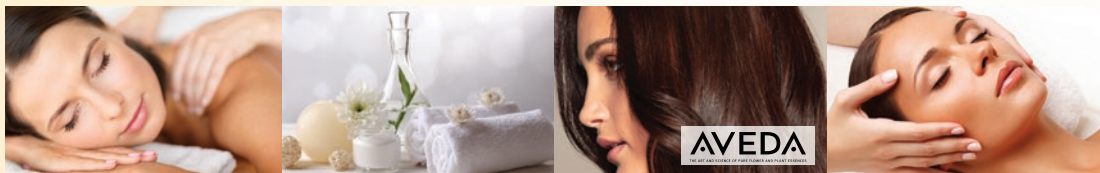
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— *the* Shoals —

distinguishing the four cities

Our name comes from the rocky shoal of the Tennessee River that flows east to west, making a northward turn to join the Ohio River at Paducah, Kentucky. The treacherous shoals are now under water, tamed finally by the Tennessee Valley Authority dams. Meanwhile, our distinct four cities were born.

Florence

Population: 41,690
Founded: 1818; incorporated, 1826

Florence, the county seat of Lauderdale County, was established on the northern banks of the Tennessee River in the years immediately after the Louisiana Purchase and the War of 1812.

The town's site was surveyed in 1818 by Ferdinand Sannoner for Cypress Land Company. Sannoner, who was a native of Italy, named the new town after his favorite city in his homeland.

Florence became a textiles town and was home to some of the earliest mills in the region.

Music is a key element of the city's heritage. W.C. Handy, the "Father of the Blues," and Sam Phillips, the "Father of Rock 'n' Roll," were born in Florence. The Muscle Shoals music industry got its start in Florence, as well. The University of North Alabama has its roots as the first state-chartered university in Alabama.

florenceal.org



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The SHOALS

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Muscle Shoals

Population: 17,019

Founded: 1923

Muscle Shoals was unincorporated farm land until the early 1920s when automotive tycoon Henry Ford visited the area and proclaimed his vision of turning the flat land into a metropolis. Ford offered to purchase Wilson Dam, but was turned down by the U.S. government. Instead, the government established the Tennessee Valley Authority. In 1923, the people living in unincorporated Muscle Shoals voted 361-6 for incorporation.

Disagreement continues about the origin of the name Muscle Shoals. Some claim the muscle portion of the name is a misspelled reference to mussels found in the Tennessee River, while others say it refers to the hard work and strength used to establish the area.

In the 1960s and 1970s Muscle Shoals became known as a hit maker in the music industry. Rick Hall and his FAME Recording Studios, and talented back-up musicians, The Swampers, put Muscle Shoals on the music map.

cityofmuscleshoals.com

Florence



Muscle Shoals



Sheffield



Tuscumbia





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Tuscumbia

Population: 9,113
Incorporated: 1820

The French settled the land in the 1700s, but the town was destroyed. The Chickasaw Nation moved in next, establishing a town near the spring. The first white family arrived about 1815.

The town, which is the county seat of Colbert County, was renamed in 1822 in honor of the Chickasaw chief who lived there.

Tuscumbia is best known as for Ivy Green, the birthplace of Helen Keller. It had the first railway west of the Alleghenies.

cityoftuscumbia.org

Sheffield

Population: 9,319
Founded: 1884

Gen. Andrew Jackson recommended that a town be established on the bluffs overlooking the Tennessee River after he and his troops camped in the area in 1817. The town was later laid out on that site and called York Bluff. The name was changed to Sheffield, after the city in England, which is on the River Sheaf.

Sheffield is the home of both locations of Muscle Shoals Sound Studios, where artists such as The Rolling Stones, Paul Simon, Boz Scaggs, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Willie Nelson, Rod Stewart and Bob Seger recorded albums in the 1960s and 1970s.

Sheffield is the home to Tuscumbia Landing, which was a debarkation point for Native Americans who were uprooted from their homes and forced to migrate west to reservations in Oklahoma under the Indian Removal Act of 1830 by President Andrew Jackson. In 2013, the city formed the Sheffield Port Authority at Tuscumbia Landing to work with groups that want to develop the site into an interpretive center.

sheffieldalabama.org



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Deibert Park in Florence.

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The Shoals has numerous parks, three of them on the Tennessee River, with a variety of amenities. Residents and visitors to the Shoals can find plenty of outdoor activities.

FLORENCE

Park information:
256-760-6416
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COX CREEK PARK

Where: corner of Alabama 17 (Chisholm Road) and Alabama 133 (Cox Creek Parkway); hours 8 a.m. to dark; free

Got your skateboard with you? This is the park for you. Florence Skate Park is located here featuring equipment manufactured by Spohn Ranch and made out of SkateLite Pro, a surface used by professionals and amateurs. The surface stays consistent in hot, cold, wet or dry weather, with frames of galvanized steel welded rather than bolted to prevent movement, and two banked wedges.

Don't forget wear your protective and safety gear.

Other park amenities include 12 lighted tennis courts, a billiard building, a playground, and horseshoe pits.

DEIBERT PARK

Where: Cox Creek Parkway and Darby Drive; hours: daylight; cost: free

This park offers tranquil nature walks along a 2.85 mile trail that winds through open areas, woods and around three ponds. A playground, picnic shelter and restrooms also are on site.

MCFARLAND PARK

Where: Alabama 20, west of O'Neal Bridge; hours: daylight; most services are free

This park gives you the best view and access to the Tennessee River and is a favorite among boaters, anglers, campers, joggers, bicyclists, disc golfers, bird watchers and other outdoor enthusiasts. There is a playground with picnic tables, and picnic tables dot the park with unobstructed views of the majestic river. A lighted walking trail and floating restaurant are irresistible draws, as are the swings and benches that overlook the river. Other amenities include boat ramps and slips, a baseball field, and camping area. The Florence-Lauderdale Visitors Center is located here.

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Walking Trail at TVA in Muscle Shoals.



Gattman Park in Muscle Shoals.

RIVER HERITAGE PARK

Where: 800 Cox Creek Parkway; 256-760-6416
 This park, located near the Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa, features a playground and large splash pad that's open May to September from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. A large pavilion offers a cool place to sit when it's not rented for special events. The park now includes a 1.2-mile path that winds its way from Riverfront Park to the Singing River Bridge. There are benches and overlooks to enjoy the views and a grass amphitheater which is capable of holding between 750 to 1,000 people for a concert.

WILDWOOD PARK

Where: Waterloo Road, west of Florence; hours: daylight; free
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MUSCLE SHOALS

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www.cityofmuscleshoals.com/Default.asp?ID=26&pg=Facilities

GATTMAN PARK

Where: 901 Gattman Park Drive; see website for hours

The park has two gymnasiums, one with an indoor walking track; pavilions (two large, one small), and numerous picnic tables. Also featured is a playground, outdoor walking track, and a splash pad that opens Memorial Day weekend.

SHEFFIELD

Park information:
 256-386-5616
www.sheffieldalabama.org/attractions

RIVERFRONT PARK

Where: 1416 Alabama Ave., Sheffield; Open daily 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Riverfront Park overlooks beautiful Pickwick Lake and features a boundless playground and splash pad for children. It is a lovely spot for fishing, picnics and has a walking trail with a stunning view of the water.

TUSCUMBIA

Park information:
 256-386-5655
www.facebook.com/Tuscumbia-Parks-Recreation-491863214257810/

SPRING PARK

Where: South of downtown; hours: varies; some costs for park attractions

Spring Park serves as a centerpiece for the town of Tuscumbia and dates back to the 1800s. It features a man-made stone waterfall, called Coldwater Falls. The park also features a mini-amusement park for children and a splash pad. The rides, including a

kid-sized roller coaster, a carousel and a train that takes passengers throughout the park, operate daily. More information, including operational dates, is available online at Tuscumbiarailway.com.

TVA

TVA ROCKPILE RECREATIONAL AREA

The TVA Rockpile Recreational Area is home to the “coolest” playground in America, according to Play Across America. The website and iPhone app named the TVA playground the coolest in America for the month of April in 2016. Play Across America is a crowd-sourced directory of playgrounds in the country. The Rockpile Playground was applauded for its river theme, taking its inspiration from the Tennessee River it is situated next to and Wilson Dam just a short walk away. Children can slide down blue slides that mimic water flowing



River Heritage Park in Florence.



Deibert Park in Florence.



Spring Park in Tusculumbia.



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Riverfront Park in Sheffield.

out of the Wilson Dam spillways; climb on a turtle and fish that pop out of the ground; climb and slide through a tree house; or swing on swings attached to poles fashioned to look like tree trunks. An interactive soundboard that plays animal sounds is popular with children. The board is decorated with animal tracks and pictures. The playground is just one attraction in the recreation area. There is a paved pedestrian path that follows the river to the rockpile waterfall for a closer view of Wilson Dam. The recreation area also has campsites, hiking trails and a boat launch. The 17 miles of paved and primitive hiking trails are Americans with Disabilities Act compliant.



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ATTRACTIONS



Tennessee Valley Museum of Art, Tuscumbia.

TENNESSEE VALLEY MUSEUM OF ART

This regional art center has a permanent exhibit of the Martin Petroglyph, a 3,000 pound boulder depicting human footprints and snakes, carved by the prehistoric people of northwest Alabama. Also among the museum's displays is the rare and historic Chickasaw beaded and embroidered bandolier strap that belonged to Chief George Colbert, for whom the county is named.

511 N. Water St., Tuscumbia • 256-383-0533 • www.tennesseevalleyarts.org
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Alabama Music Hall of Fame, Tuscumbia.

ALABAMA MUSIC HALL OF FAME

This is the place to learn the rich history, ever-changing present, and bright future of the Shoals music scene. The renowned achievements of music artists who live, have passed through and continue to record in the Shoals are found here. Exhibits include a 12-foot jukebox, a wax figure of Nat King Cole, recording equipment used in Sam Phillips’ Memphis Music Service, apparel and instruments from many artists.

617 U.S. 72 W., Tuscumbia • 256-381-4417 • Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday
Admission charged • alamhof.org



Belle Mont Mansion in Tuscumbia.

BELLE MONT MANSION

Belle Mont Mansion is one of Alabama’s best examples of the styles of the Jeffersonian-Palladian style architecture. The two-story structure was built in the early 1800s by Dr. Alexander Williams Mitchell, a native of Virginia, and one of the area’s largest slaveholders. The house was sold in 1833 to Isaac Winston, who was the uncle of Alabama first’s native born governor, John Anthony Winston. Winston was also the cousin of Patrick Henry and Dolly Madison. The structure was sold again in 1941 and donated to the Alabama Historical Commission.

1569 Cook Lane, Tuscumbia • 256-381-5052 • Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wed.-Sat.
Admission charged • ahc.alabama.gov/properties/bellemont/bellemont.aspx

TUSCUMBIA DEPOT AND ROUNDHOUSE

It's only fitting that since Tusculmbia was the site of the first railroad west of the Allegheny Mountains – built in the 1830s – it would have the area's premiere railway museum. The museum is in the former Tusculmbia Depot, which was built in 1888 and served as division headquarters for the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. The fully restored depot features rail and train memorabilia including a photo gallery. There is an interactive train simulator and telegraph demonstrations. Keeping with the historic architecture of the depot, a roundhouse was built in 2013.

204 W. Fifth St., Tusculmbia • 256-389-1357
tuscumbiarailway.com • Hours: call



Tusculmbia Depot and Roundhouse, Tusculmbia.



Edith Newman Culver Museum, Waterloo.

EDITH NEWMAN CULVER MUSEUM

The museum is nestled on a hillside overlooking downtown Waterloo and the path that thousands of Indians took during the 1800s removal as a part of the Trail of Tears. The two-story structure is the town's museum and features many military memorabilia, as well as Civil War relics and Native American artifacts. On the grounds is a barn housing a collection of horse-drawn carriages. The museum was the home of Joseph Marion Newman and his wife, Sarah. Newman, a Union soldier from Ohio, purchased the house in 1918 after opening a sawmill north of Waterloo.

501 Main St., Waterloo • 256-767-6081
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 Museum and
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W.C. Handy became famous in the music world for his compositions such as “Memphis Blues” and “St. Louis Blues” and as a band conductor and author. He is heralded as the “Father of the Blues.” But before his famous life, he was born in a small log cabin in Florence on Nov. 16, 1873. The museum in his honor houses a collection of memorabilia, including his famous trumpet and his personal piano, as well as personal papers and original sheet music.

620 W. College St., Florence • 256-275-3128
 Admission charged • wchandymuseum.org



W.C. Handy Birthplace, Museum and Library, Florence.



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KENNEDY-DOUGLASS CENTER for the Arts

Florence’s Center for the Arts includes the Kennedy-Douglass Center, Kennedy-Douglass Annex and Southall-Moore House. There is an arts gallery and museum that serves as an educational center and cultural hub for the area. The center has numerous exhibits throughout the year and rotating exhibits from artists of the Southeast. The three buildings are former homes, with the main center built in 1918 and named for the Rev. Hiram Kennedy Douglass who willed the house to the city in 1975 to be used for the arts. Charles Moore donated the historic Southall-Moore home to the city in 2006. It was built in 1894.

217 E. Tuscaloosa St., Florence • Hours: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday
 256-760-6379 • Admission: Free • florencealmuseums.com



Kennedy-Douglass Annex, Florence



Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts, Florence.



Southall-Moore House, Florence



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Ivy Green, Tuscumbia

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Children's Museum of the Shoals, Florence.

**CHILDREN'S
MUSEUM**
of the Shoals

The Children's Museum of the Shoals is the area's go-to place for child development and fun through educational games and activities. It features hands-on exhibits that encourage children to play while learning about the area's culture, history, and about the Tennessee River. Deibert Park, which is adjacent to the museum, hosts a nature walking trail and a playground.

2810 Darby Drive, Florence (Near the entrance to Deibert Park)
256-284-7107 • Admission charged • cmshoals.org

POPE'S TAVERN

Pope's Tavern Museum's façade harkens to the time in the 1800s when it was a stagecoach stop, tavern and inn. It is one of the oldest buildings in Florence and its location pinpoints the military road that once ran through the area, connecting Nashville to the Natchez Trace, and on to New Orleans. Andrew Jackson is said to have stayed at the tavern during his march to the Battle of New Orleans. The inn was a hospital for both the Confederate and Union during the Civil War before later becoming a private family home until the city bought it in 1965. It is housed with antiques and artifacts from the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as artifacts from the Civil War and local history.

203 Hermitage Drive, Florence • 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday
256-760-6439 • Admission charged



**FRANK
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Rosenbaum
House and
Museum

Frank Lloyd Wright is among the most prominent and revered American architects of the 20th century. He designed approximately 1,000 structures spanning a 70-year career. He preferred construction where buildings blended into the landscape rather than being obviously perched to rise independently off the ground on which it was constructed. His famous architectural designs include the Prairie, Concrete Block and Usonian, of which the Rosenbaum House in Florence is included. Horizontal lines connect the home with the land, as do its flat roofs with overhangs, natural materials like cypress, glass and brick, access to the outside from every room, and board and batten walls. The house has its original Wright-designed furniture.

601 Riverview Drive, Florence • 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday; 1-4 p.m. Sunday.
For large group tours, call 256-718-5050 • Admission charged • wrightinalabama.com



The Rosenbaum House, Florence.

Shoals Scholar Dollars

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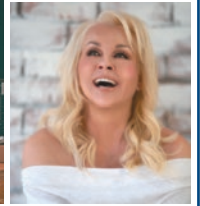


Student of the Year April

An awards ceremony recognizing students from all 17 high schools in Colbert and Lauderdale Counties. One student walks away being named Shoals Student of the Year.

Legends in Concert

Held throughout the year featuring iconic performances from legendary entertainers



Smoke on the Water Festival

April 27 • McFarland Park

The Smoke on the Water Festival is more than just a BBQ cook-off - it's an event for the entire family! Sanctioned by the Kansas City BBQ Society and the Alabama BBQ Association, this cook-off will determine the very best barbeque among entrants participating from throughout the Southeast.

Shoals Dragon Boat Festival

October 12, 2024 • McFarland Park

Once you hear about dragon boat racing and become involved in this world of sport, community and fun, there is no turning back. There is much more to it than a great day on the water. There are different and interesting ways to experience the sport for both team members and spectators. Whether you've never paddled in a festival, or you paddle regularly in a dragon boat, you feel connected to it. Now accepting team registrations and vendors for the event.



In 2011, the Shoals community, headed by the Florence and Greater Shoals Rotary Clubs, decided that education was the most important gift we could give our children. Because education is the underpinning for success in every endeavor, the community banded together to give every student in the Shoals the opportunity to continue education beyond high school.

For more information or tickets for any of these events check out www.shoalsscholardollars.com



Sponsored by



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www.shoalsscholardollars.com

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If you are visiting in the Shoals, stop by and visit us at a Rotary Meeting on Mondays at noon at the Marriott Conference Center for the Florence Rotary meeting and noon at Fizz at the Clarion Hotel in Sheffield for Greater Shoals Rotary.



**INDIAN
MOUND AND
MUSEUM**

The museum’s mission is to interpret the prehistoric culture of the Shoals area for education while preserving the Woodland period landscape of the site and fostering a community dialogue about environmental stewardship and Native American history, according to its mission statement. The 43-foot-high mound near the museum is one example of the work of early Native Americans who lived in Alabama before the Cherokee, Chickasaw and Creek nations inhabited the region. The mound is quadrilateral, with a summit that’s 145-by-94 feet. Early settlers found steps on the east side and there was evidence the mound was enclosed by a semi-circular earthen wall. Inside the museum are artifacts dating back to more than 10,000 years. Displays are arranged in chronological order from Paleo to Historic periods.

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Celebrate

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The Shoals is popular for its celebrations and festivals that are a continuous flow of entertainment from spring until winter. While some festivals have announced dates for this year's events, it's best to go to the website or Facebook page listed, or call the phone number provided with the information to double check that the event will still take place.

Arts Alive

Florence's Wilson Park plays hosts to a myriad of artists and craftsmen who flock to the downtown park to sell their arts and crafts and compete in the juried Arts Alive exhibit at the Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts.

Anything from paintings to sculptures to clothing and woodwork can be found at Arts Alive.

The 2024 festival was May 18-19. For details about the festival or exhibits, visit alabamaartsalive.com or call 256-760-6379.



W.C. Handy Music Festival

Every year, the Shoals honors W.C. Handy, who was born in Florence and built his legacy as "Father of the Blues." There will be some abbreviations to this year's 10-day event, scheduled for July 19-28. Visit wchandymusicfestival.com or call The Music Preservation Society Inc. at 256-766-7642.



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587313-1

Trail of Tears Commemorative Motorcycle Ride

Motorcyclists honor the Trail of Tears by riding from Chattanooga to Waterloo. The riders always ride on the third Saturday in September, this year Sept. 21.



FESTIVALS

Coon Dog Cemetery Labor Day Celebration

Not many places have a cemetery for coon dogs. Even fewer have a Labor Day celebration at a coon dog cemetery. But the annual Coondog Cemetery Labor Day Celebration has become one of the most popular, if quirky, events in the Shoals. Graves will be decorated and live music and barbecue will be available. The Coondog Cemetery is at 4945 Coondog Cemetery Road, off U.S. 72 and Alabama 247. For more details, visit coondogcemetery.com or call 256-383-0783.



Alabama Renaissance Faire

The Fountain on the Green, better known the rest of the year as Wilson Park in Florence, hosts nobility, knights and kings as the city of Florence celebrates the annual Renaissance Faire.

The 2024 faire is Oct. 26-27. For details about the fun and educational event, visit alrenfaire.org. The feast is usually set for the third Saturday in October. This year's Feast date is Oct 19.



FESTIVALS

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Shoals Spirit of Freedom Celebration

The popular Spirit of Freedom Celebration is July 4 this year at McFarland Park in Florence. The celebration will feature live music at the park along with plenty of family-friendly activities leading up to the fireworks show around 9 p.m. as long as the weather permits.



FESTIVALS

Helen Keller Festival

The life and accomplishments of one of the Shoals' most famous natives, Helen Keller, is celebrated each year with a summer festival. The weeklong festival takes place in Spring Park in Tuscumbia, not far from Keller's birthplace, Ivy Green. The festival includes live bands and music, a 5-mile and 23-mile family bike ride, a 5-mile and 1-mile fun run, a car and truck show, a golf tournament, arts and crafts, educational displays, and a parade and street party. Of course, no Keller festival is complete without a rendition of "The Miracle Worker," and the Helen Keller Art Show of Alabama. The 2024 festival is June 27-30. For details, visit helenkellerfestival.com or call 256-383-4066.





Franklin County Watermelon Festival in Russellville.



North Alabama State Fair in Muscle Shoals.



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Other Celebrations & Festivals

MONTHLY CELEBRATION

FIRST FRIDAYS

The First Fridays are held every month this year from May through December from 5-8 p.m. in downtown Florence. Sidewalks are lined with vendors, artists and musicians. Court Street is closed off and the area becomes filled with people who love strolling and shopping among the vendors and the downtown shops before or after having dinner in some of Florence's favorite restaurants.

YEARLY FESTIVALS

RECALL LAGRANGE

Civil War reenactments, exhibits and entertainment. May 4, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. LaGrange College Site, 1491 LaGrange College Road, Leighton. Call 256-702-6953

BELLE MONT CELTIC FESTIVAL

The annual Belle Mont Celtic Festival will be held May 10-11 at Belle Mont Mansion in Tuscumbia. The outdoor festival will feature world-class Celtic musicians staged on the sweeping lawn of the historic home. Stirring tunes featuring bagpipe, flute, and fiddle music will be showcased by some of the most popular Celtic bands in the U.S. Call 256-810-1683

NORTH ALABAMA AFRICAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Explores African art, fashions, culture, crafts, music and food; 2023 festival June 1-2 at the Willie Green Recreation Park, 609 S. East St., Tuscumbia. 256-383-0783

JUNIOR ARCHAEOLOGY DAY

Pope's Tavern Museum will host a free camp for students ages 9-18 from June 3 -7. The camp will be divided into two age groups. The groups and times of the camps are: Ages 9-12 from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m.; ages 13-18 from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. The camp will introduce students to the concepts of archaeology through hands-on investigation and research. Students will learn how to research, plan, excavate, and process artifacts at Pope's Tavern Museum. Applications for the camps are available at Pope's Tavern Museum, the Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts and online at www.florencealmuseums.com and then click on Pope's Tavern Museum.

MUSCLE SHOALS STREET RODS SHOW

June 1, Spring Park, Tuscumbia.
7 a.m. - 2 p.m.

SADDLE UP FOR ST. JUDE TRAIL RIDE

July 18-20, Gardiner Farm in Tuscumbia. Horseback trail riding, auctions, wagon rides, roping demonstrations, headliner concerts, and much more mark this two-day charitable event. This horse-related event benefits St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital and is the largest in the Southeast. Log onto www.saddleup4kids.org for more information.

WATERMELON FESTIVAL

It's not summer in the South without watermelon. The people of Russellville celebrate this Southern, summer fruit with music and more Aug. 16-17. Call 256-332-1760 for more details.

NORTH ALABAMA STATE FAIR

The state fair is an American tradition, and that's no different in the Shoals. Rides, booths, exhibits and entertainment about in the fairgrounds in Muscle Shoals Sept. 9-15. Visit northalabamastatefair.org for more information.

OKTOBERFEST

St. Florian's German heritage is celebrated in the fall as the downtown area is host to live music, arts and crafts, antique tractor shows and German food. Oktoberfest will be held Oct. 4-5. Visit townofstflorianal.com for more information.

IT'S A DICKENS CHRISTMAS Y'ALL

It is a holiday festival reminiscent of the classic "A Christmas Carol" complete with carriage rides, snow falling, music, arts and crafts and food vendors. This year's festival will be Dec. 7. Call Fiddledee D at 256-383-9797 for more information.



Dickens Christmas Y'all in Tuscumbia.

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Handy Festival in Colbert County

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for one and all

Alabama RENAISSANCE FAIRE

Story by Chelsea Retherford • Photography by Kevin Taylor

Organizers of the Alabama Renaissance Faire prefer to be called the “Roundtable” as opposed to planning group or committee, according to event founder Billy Warren.

That Roundtable is made up solely of volunteers, and the not-for-profit festival is run by volunteers.

“We like it that way,” Warren said.

Now in its 36th year, the Renaissance Faire has about 40 Roundtable members, including three who have been dedicated to planning the event almost since its inaugural year in 1987.

Lee Freeman and Darlene Freemon joined in 1989, and Freeman’s brother, William, came on

board a couple of years later.

Lee Freeman said he’s amazed at the continued success of the Faire.

“Billy found some literature 15 or 20 years ago that says volunteer festivals tend to go six years and then either fold up and pack it in, or they explode. Ours was textbook. By about our sixth or seventh year, we exploded,” he said.

Freeman said the festival has been consistent in drawing thousands of people each October to Wilson Park in downtown Florence.

“The last official count we got, and this has been like 15 years ago, was 30,000 people in that park

over the two days. You wouldn’t think the park could hold that many people,” he said.

Designated as the official Renaissance Faire for Alabama, the Florence festival has many ties to its sister city in Italy, according to Warren.

Ferdinand Sannoner, an Italian immigrant who was appointed in 1818 to survey the land that was to become Florence, Alabama, is said to have given the city its name after the capital from his homeland in Tuscany.

As Florence is situated on the Tennessee River, Florence, Italy, lies along the banks of the Arno River. And as the Italian Renaissance signifies a

restoration of the arts, literature, science and exploration, Warren said the Alabama Renaissance Faire was formed to promote all areas of curriculum in area school systems.

You don’t have to be an expert in Renaissance history to enjoy the faire, or even volunteer. Warren, Freemon and Freeman said the event is organized each year by a medley of dedicated members from all walks of life.

“We’ve had doctors, we’ve had ministers, we’ve had housewives, we’ve had college students. We have high school students, high school teachers. We’ve got blue collar workers from the plants,” Freeman said.

FESTIVALS



The Alabama Renaissance Faire invites attendants of all ages and interests. The family friendly event features Arthur's Field, an area filled with games and prizes for young children. It's a place to

learn medieval dancing, archery, crafting, and sword fighting. With unique food vendors, arts and crafts, demonstrations and medieval-themed festivities, the faire has something for everyone.



There are plenty of things to see and hear during the Renaissance Faire including music, ironwork and sword fights.

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Antique Tractor Show *and* Oktoberfest roll together

Story by Chelsea Retherford • Photography by Dan Busey



Jerry Newton and Malcolm Wilkes with their tractors at the St. Florian Park.

Malcolm Wilkes and Jerry Newton, longtime members of the Shoals Antique Engine & Tractor Club, said moving the annual Antique Tractor Show to coincide with St. Florian's Oktoberfest nearly 20 years ago has proven as beneficial for the club as it has been for the festival.

Wilkes said the first SAETC tractor show took place in McFarland in 1993, but with several regulations concerning the park lawn, the show was moved to Brooks High School the following year. While the

school proved a better fit with fewer restrictions and good parking space, he and Newton said St. Florian Park was an even better fit.

"When we had the show at the school, it wasn't growing," Newton said. "We moved out here, and it really took off. We've gained a lot of spectators."

He said the draw of the festival and its events helped increase visibility for the tractor show and its hosting club.

As St. Florian Town Clerk Lesia Albright points out, the relationship between

the festival and the tractor show is mutualistic.

"The first time we held Oktoberfest, it was just thrown together and we didn't know if it'd go over well or not," Albright said. "They take up the biggest space, but the Antique Engine & Tractor Show also draws the biggest crowds. Used to, they had to fight for their space, which we were limited until we got more work done out here. The last five or six years, we've made a lot of improvements, so it's better for everyone."

Albright said the SAETC has partnered with Oktoberfest since it's second or third event, and organizers are as grateful to the club as the club is thankful for the space.

"Last year, Mr. Wilkes was our Burgermeister. He got the honor; he was mayor for the day," Albright added. "That award honors someone who has been with us and has put in so many hours and worked so hard."

Wilkes said he was honored and surprised by the gesture.



In addition to the tractor show, Oktoberfest is host to an antique car and truck show at the St. Florian Senior Center.

"I didn't have a clue. They gave me shirt that had German on it, and I couldn't read a bit of it," he said with a laugh.

Wilkes showcases a few of his antique tractors at the festival each year, including his most prized piece of farm equipment, a 1948 Farmall tractor once owned by his father, Hubert Wilkes.

"I was born in '48," Wilkes said. "My Daddy bought that tractor new in 1948, so it's the same age as I am."

He said the tractor was put to use by his family for 27 years before his father's death in 1972. At that time, the tractor and his equipment were sold, but after tracking down the antique machinery, Malcolm Wilkes bought the tractor back in 2011.

Wilkes said his memories of growing up on a farm in the 1950s and '60s are what inspired him to join the Antique Tractor Club when it was formed in the early '90s.

"We raised cotton, vegetables, and we went to the Florence Curve Market twice a week and year-round. My Daddy, he never did have an education. He just farmed. I don't know, I still like it even now," Wilkes said. "I just gravitated toward these old tractors and stuff, because I was old, I guess."

Similarly, Newton said his farm raising piqued an interest in showing and tinkering on antique farm equipment.

While he and Wilkes both maintain and restore the pieces they collect, Newton

has also custom-built equipment for a Children's Pedal Tractor Pull the club hosts in conjunction with its Antique Tractor Show.

"I've been around tractor pulls ever since the '70s, and I know how they work," Newton said. "I built this sled; I copied it after a large sled. I went to some other pulls where the kids really weren't able to pull the sled. They just jerked it two or three times and whoever jerked the hardest, that's who won. I just felt like I could come up with something better."

Newton designed and

built a miniature tractor pulling sled inspired by metal drags used in the competitive motor sport for adults. He also built and modified the tiny metal "tractors" designed for children ages three to 12.

"At about 12 o'clock, it looks like a herd of cattle coming our way, because everybody is headed to the pedal tractor pull," Newton said with a laugh.

"We usually have 50 to 60 kids participate," Wilkes agreed. "It takes about an hour or hour-and-a-half to do it all. I mean, we're all give out when it's over with,

but it's a lot of fun."

The two club members said the community pitches in to make the event fun and competitive for participating children.

"Tax Mart in Florence pays for the first-, second- and third-place trophies, and TVA Community Credit Union pays for participant trophies for everyone who doesn't place. They get a small trophy. Bert Bretherick, Florence State Farm agent, helps with cash money prizes for the kids," said Newton.

He and Wilkes said they hope Oktoberfest and the Antique Engine and Tractor Show continue to draw interest for the club.

The two men said they continue to enjoy the festivities, which include an Antique Tractor Parade and tractor rides each year.

"I really enjoy it, and I love meeting new people," Wilkes said. "Especially the kids. We love interacting with them and teaching this farm stuff to the kids."



Jerry Newton and Malcolm Wilkes at the St. Florian Park.

Celebrating Leighton *and its* musical icons

Story by Chelsea Retherford • Photography by Dan Busey

As Leighton gears up for its third annual Sledgefest on June 7-9, honoring one of the town's most prominent citizens, event organizers and town leaders said the festival is as much about Leighton's heritage as it is about celebrating the legendary soul singer Percy Sledge.

For Debbie Bradford, a Muscle Shoals resident who

just can't get enough of her neighbors and the small town of Leighton, part of the charm is in the town's musical and educational roots.

"It's the heritage. You know, the schools and these town staples like the library," she said. "The people have fond memories here, and they have a way of making you feel welcome

and accepted. I feel accepted and appreciated here."

The 2024 Sledgefest will not only celebrate Sledge, but another Leighton icon. Jimmy Hughes day will be celebrated starting at 3 p.m. on Main Street on June 8.

The day prior, live music will kick off the celebration at 6 p.m. in Bliss Alley.

The celebration will

conclude on June 9 with live gospel music starting at 2 p.m. at the historic Leighton Training School.

Leighton Mayor Derick Silcox said he is excited to see the festival continue to grow, which aligns with the spirit of innovation felt all over Leighton this year as the town prepares for new beginnings while celebrating its rich history.

FESTIVALS



Debbie Bradford, president of the Friends of the Leighton Public Library, shows the mural to Jeremiah Burney in downtown Leighton.

Waterloo Fire Chief Ted Kavich said his department has hosted its annual Fourth of July fireworks show for at least 20 years, if not longer, thanks to an idea first presented by the late Neil Scott.

What began as a brief fireworks display for a local crowd of maybe 200 people has grown to a 45-minute show to crowds of thousands who come from all over the Shoals and surrounding areas, Kavich said.

“You just don’t realize how many come in, and it being July Fourth weekend, we have all these people who have summer homes here and people camping. Waterloo grows five times over the summer,” he said.

“We’ve been doing (the fireworks show) for 15, 20 years and enjoyed it, but it all started with Neil, and it’s grown ever since.”

Kavich has served as Waterloo Volunteer Fire Department’s chief for about 50 years. He had served as head football coach at Waterloo High School for much of his career.

He said he was first approached by former football player, Scott, sometime in the late ’90s or early 2000s after Scott had acquired Waterloo Market and Grille.

“He bought the store and called us and said, ‘Hey, I’ve got some fireworks!’ We literally shot them off the (Second Creek) Bridge for years,” Kavich said.

Sadly, Scott passed away in December 2015 at the age of 52.

“Neil died early from cancer, but we kept the tradition going,” Kavich said, adding that his former student and many of the firefighters who help organize the annual fireworks show all had a heart for their community.

“It started with Neil and a van full of fireworks. Over the years, the city chipped in money, the Farmers & Merchants Bank chips in, we kick in money, and the



A kayaker observes fireworks being launched by Waterloo Volunteer Fire Department for Fourth of July celebrations.

Waterloo fireworks light up Pickwick Lake

Story by Chelsea Retherford • Photography by Dan Busey

people make donations,” he said.

Kavich said the fireworks show isn’t a fundraiser; the department doesn’t host it for profit. Though, several of the fundraisers the department hosts throughout the year, like an annual Swamp John’s fish fry, help fund the Independence Day event.

“It’s just one of those

things we like doing for the community. This community supports us, and we support them,” he said. “It’s amazing that everyone pitches in. We’ll set up a truck with donations, but most of it is raised through the town, the bank and us. TNT Fireworks has kicked in a bunch too.”

The fire chief said he’s proud his department

can hold the event for his community. Since the department began hosting the spectacle, he said he’s noticed a decline in fireworks-related incidents around the Fourth of July each year.

“We haven’t seen any real accidents from fireworks down here since we started. Of course, we pass it along to the folks: ‘If you’re going to shoot fireworks, make sure there is adult supervision all the time,’” he said. “Children shooting them off can easily get burned, and that’s the least of it. Fireworks can explode, hit them in the eye. There can be a lot of damage. People need to be real careful.”

This year, he said the town has \$4,500 worth of fireworks ready for the big show.

Volunteer firefighters will fire from behind the ballfields near the town’s community center. Kavich said the area will be blocked off for spectators’ safety, but visitors and locals can watch from Hart’s RV Park, the Trail of Tears field and other public areas around the community center, or Second Creek Campground. Boaters and kayakers will also have a unique view from the lake or the river around Second Creek Bridge.

Kavich said vendors will set up before the show. As in past years, he said the fireworks will take place after a performance of the “National Anthem” around 9 p.m. or at sunset.

“The event has really grown, and the guys in the department really look forward to it,” Kavich said. “What we’ve been blessed with, we’ve turned around and passed back out. We’ve been fortunate in that way.”



Students are lead in traditional dance Friday during school day of the Oka Kapassa Return to Coldwater festival at Spring Park.

OKA KAPASSA:

Return to Coldwater Festival

attracts thousands of students on Education Day

Story by Bernie Delinski
Photography by Dan Busey

Colbert Heights Elementary School fourth graders Ruger White and Titus Coleman were among a large group of students in early September 2023 watching Lyndon Alec perform a jaw-droppingly impressive hoop dance.

“It was amazing,” White said afterward. “I’m baffled.”

“I rate it 10 out of 10,” Coleman added.

That was part of the Oka Kapassa: Return to Coldwater Festival at Spring Park. Friday’s event is set aside for students, but the next day’s events are open to the public.

It is free, and features authentic cultural demonstrations of music, dance, and arts, including basketry, pottery, jewelry and other crafts by Native American tribal members in full regalia. The festival

also has concessions and Native American foods and crafts vendors.

Alec’s dance, performed to the beat of a large drum and chanting provided by some of his fellow Native Americans, was an up-tempo demonstration that included him making symbols such as birds and the planet out of the hoops.

“I actually didn’t even know it was possible,”

White said.

In another area of the park, a group of Colbert Heights fifth graders tried their hand at ax throwing, under careful supervision of a professional who gave them pointers and made sure others stayed clear of the tossing area.

Afterward, Abigail Kling said she was nervous at first but it was fun.

“I wish I could do it again,” Kling said. “I need

to practice.”

Her classmate, Killian O’Flannery, said he enjoyed the new experience.

“I never felt an ax in my hand,” O’Flannery said. “It was actually pretty easy but when it started I thought I’d hit the back of my head.”

The festival has a deep meaning, celebrating a homecoming for Southeastern Tribal Nations to commemorate the kindness once shown to their ancestors.

As the Southeastern tribes of the 1830s prepared for forced removal, known as the Trail of Tears, some of those tribes were shown compassion by Tuscumbia residents who brought food, clothing, firewood, blankets and other goods to the people for their treacherous journeys west, festival chairman Terry McGee said.

“When we decided to



have a festival in this area we wanted it to be as authentic as possible,” McGee said. “It’s a wonderful festival and seems to be growing each year.”

Storyteller Amu Bluemel said she likes informing children that a lot of things in their lives carry a Native American heritage.

“I tell them you speak native languages all the time,” Bluemel said, pointing to Tuscumbia’s name, which derived from Chief Tuscumbia, among examples.

She said the children always seem to enjoy and appreciate her stories.

“This is one of my favorite places to be,” Bluemel said. “All the kids are always so kind and sweet and interested. I tell a lot of interactive stories.”



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City Hall

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The River Heritage Trail entices citizens and visitors to discover the beauty of our river and city.

Future plans for a new City Hall are underway. This update will provide additional parking, as well.

LODGING



The Shoals area offers visitors different places to stay, including a luxury four-star Marriott.

More than 1,200 rooms are available in Lauderdale and Colbert counties, according to tourism officials.



Photos by Merrito.

LODGING

Lodging facilities in Colbert and Lauderdale include:

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101 U.S. 72 Killen, 256-757-2169;
americasbestvalueinn.com

BAYMONT INN SUITES

115 Ana Drive, Florence; 256-764-5326;
wyndhamhotels.com/baymont/florence-alabama/
baymont-inn-florence-muscle-shoals/overview

BEST WESTERN PLUS

1934 Ala. Hwy 20, Tuscumbia, 256-386-9889

BUDGET INN

1238 Florence Blvd., Florence, 256-764-7621;
budgetinnflorence.com

CLARION INN

4900 Hatch Blvd., Sheffield, 256-381-4710;
choicehotels.com

COLDWATER INN

712 U.S. 72, Tuscumbia, 256-383-6844;
coldwaterinn.com

COMFORT INN & SUITES

5101 U.S. 43 S., Tuscumbia, 256-248-0850

COMFORT SUITES

140 Matthew Paul Court, Florence, 256-246-2300;
choicehotels.com

DAYS INN

2701 Woodward Ave., Muscle Shoals, 256-383-3400;
wyndhamhotels.com/days-inn

ECONOMY INN

15936 U.S. 72, Rogersville; 256-247-5416

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gunrunnerhotel.com

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hamptoninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels/Alabama/
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2281 Florence Blvd., Florence, 256-764-8888;
hamptoninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels/Alabama/
Hampton-inn-florence-midtown

HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS

101 Etta Gray St., Florence; 256-246-2200; ihg.com/
holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/Florence/shefl/
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JOE WHEELER STATE PARK

4401 McLean Drive, Rogersville; 256-247-5461;
alapark.com/joe-wheeler-state-park

KEY WEST INN

1800 U.S. 72 E., Tuscumbia, 256-383-0700;
staykeywesthotels.com/Tuscumbia-alabama-hotel

FLORENCE INN & SUITES

1915 Florence Blvd., Florence, 256-766-2620

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256-246-3600;
marriott.com/hotels/travel/mslmc-marriott-shoals-hotel-and-spa

MICROTEL INN

1852 U.S. 72 E., Tuscumbia, 256-248-0055;
wyndhamhotels.com/microtel

QUALITY INN

150 Etta Gray Drive, Florence, 256-740-0444;
choicehotels.com/alabama/florence/quality-inn-hotels/al175

RED ROOF INN

2807 Woodward Ave., Muscle Shoals, 256-381-0236

RESIDENCE INN MARRIOTT

1000 Sweetwater Ave., Florence, 256-764-9966;
marriott.com/hotels/travel/mslri-residence-inn-florence

STRICKLIN HOTEL

317 North Court Street, Florence, 256-248-9982;
www.thestracklin.com

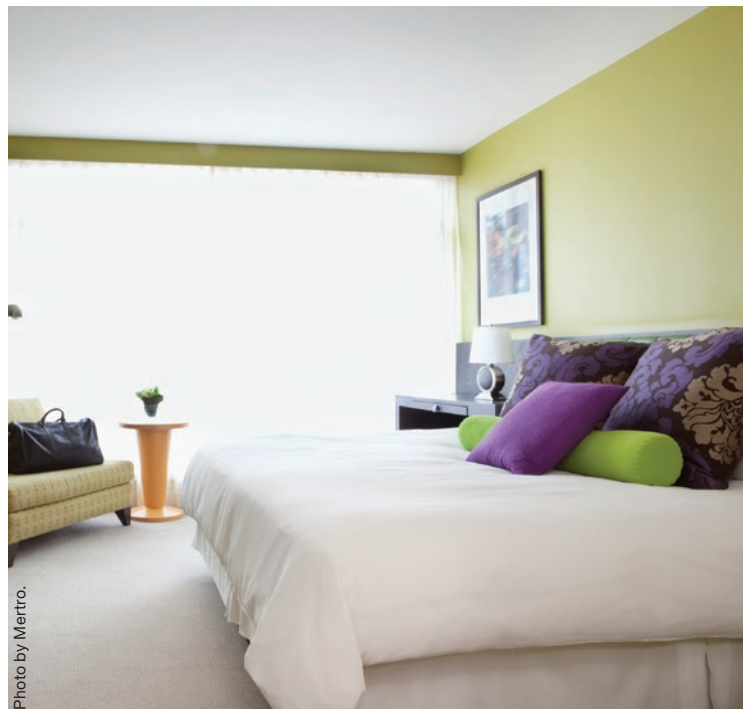


Photo by Meitro.

Marriott

SHOALS HOTEL & SPA

More than 1,200 rooms are available in Lauderdale and Colbert counties, including the four-star Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa, which consistently rates highest among Marriott guest amenities and service. Fine dining is offered high atop Renaissance Tower at the 360 Grille, a revolving restaurant. Casual dining and great, live music is offered at Swampers Bar and Grille. There's also an indoor and outdoor pool.



LODGING



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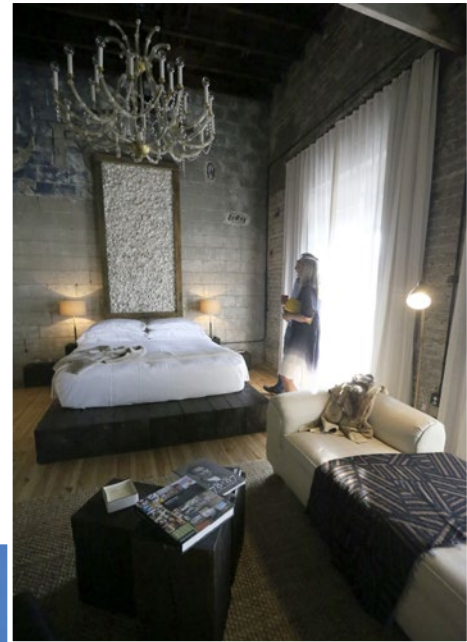
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The GunRunner is more than a boutique hotel, it's an experience, with 10 suites, seven with private balconies, specially designed to celebrate local music, fashion and art icons, and honor the area's history. One suite is decorated by renowned fashion designer Billy Reid, another is themed around the legendary Muscle Shoals Sound Studios. Brick walls and exposed ceiling beams give the commons area an industrial chic vibe, and a former freight elevator has been converted into a stunning bar. Suites may be reserved separately, or choose to have the "run of the house," which includes private access to all 10 suites and the common area.



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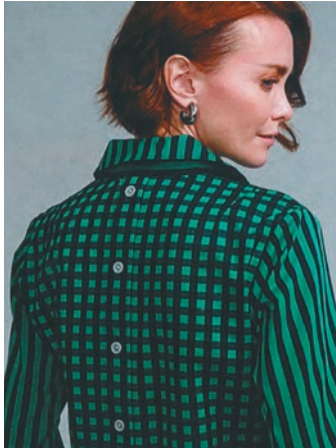
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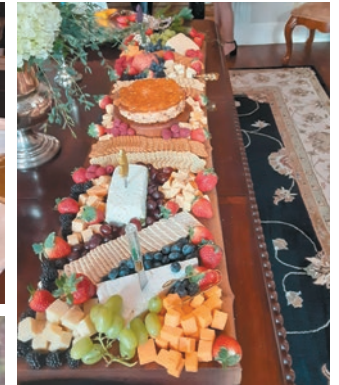
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AIR SUPPLY

"Even the Nights Are Better"

ALABAMA

"Once Upon a Lifetime"

ALABAMA

"Old Flame"

ARETHA FRANKLIN

"Chain of Fools," "I Never Loved a Man (the Way I Love You)," "Respect"

ART GARFUNKEL

"Watermark"

ARTHUR ALEXANDER

"You'd Better Move On"

ARTHUR CONLEY

"Sweet Soul Music"

BACKSTREET BOYS

"Never Gone," "No One Else Comes Close"

THE BAND PERRY

"Don't Let Me be Lonely"

BILLY RAY CYRUS

"Achy Breaky Heart"

BLAKE SHELTON

"Sure Be Cool If You Did"

BLOODSTONE

"Do You Wanna Do a Thing"

BOB SEGER

"Against the Wind," "Night Moves," "Rock 'n' Roll Never Forgets," "Old Time Rock and Roll"

BOBBY WOMACK

"Harry Hippie," "Lookin' For Love"

CARRIE UNDERWOOD"Before He Cheats"
"Blown Away"**CLARENCE CARTER**

"Patches," "Slip Away"

CLARENCE CARTER

"Too Weak to Fight"

CRAIG MORGAN

"That's What I Love About Sunday"

DARRYL WORLEY"Awful, Beautiful Live"
"I Miss My Friend"

Sledge



SONGS Recorded *in the Shoals*



Here is a partial list of hit songs that were either recorded at studios in the Muscle Shoals area, written by Shoals songwriters or recorded with studio musicians from the Shoals:

DELBERT MCCLINTON

"Givin' It Up For Your Love"

THE DELLS

"Give Your Baby a Standing Ovation"

DONNY OSMOND

"Go Away Little Girl," "Sweet and Innocent" "Hey Girl"

DR. HOOK

"Sexy Eyes," "Sharing the Night Together," "When You're In Love with a Beautiful Woman"

EARL THOMAS CONLEY

"Holding Her and Loving You"

FLORIDA-GEORGIA LINE"Round Here"
"Get Your Shine On"**GEORGE JONES AND TAMMY WYNETTE**

"We're Gonna Hold On"

GLENN FREY"Smuggler's Blues"
"Sexy Girl"

Franklin

**HEARTLAND**

"I Loved Her First"

HOLLIS DIXON & THE KEYNOTES

"Paper Boy"

JAMES & BOBBY PURIFY

"I'm Your Puppet"

JIMMY BUFFETT

"Bama Breeze"

JIMMY HUGHES

"Steal Away"

JOE TEX

"Hold What You Got"

JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY

"I Swear"

JOHNNY TAYLOR

"I Believe in You (You Believe in Me)"

KENNY CHESNEY

"Ain't Back Yet"

KENNY CHESNEY & TIM MCGRAW

"Feel Like a Rock Star"



LEANN RIMES
"Commitment"

LENNY LEBLANC AND PETE CARR
"Falling"

LONESTAR
"I'm Already There"

LUKE BRYAN
"Drunk on You"

LUTHER INGRAM
"If Loving You is Wrong (I Don't Want to Be Right)"

MAC DAVIS
"Baby Don't Get Hooked on Me," "Stop and Smell the Roses"



MARY MACGREGOR
"Torn Between Two Lovers"

MILLIE JACKSON
"Feelin' Bitchy," "Get It Outcha System"

MINDY MCREADY
"Guys Do it (All the Time)"

OAK RIDGE BOYS
"Bobbie Sue," "I Guess it Never Hurts to Hurt Sometime," "American Made"

THE OSMONDS
"One Bad Apple," "Sweet & Innocent"

PAM TILLIS
"Deep Down"

PAUL SIMON
"Loves Me Like a Rock," "Still Crazy After All These Years," "Kodachrome"

PERCY SLEDGE
"When a Man Loves a Woman"

R.B. GREAVES
"Take a Letter Maria"

REBA MCENTIRE
"The Fear of Being Alone"

ROD STEWART
"Tonight's the Night"

THE ROLLING STONES
"Wild Horses," "You Gotta Move," "Brown Sugar"

RUSHLOW
"I Can't Be Your Friend"

SAILCAT
"Motorcycle Mama"
Sanford & Townsend
"Smoke from a Distant Fire"

SAWYER BROWN
"Treat Her Right," "This Time," "Thank God For You"

SHENANDOAH
"I Got You," "Rock My Baby," "Ghost in This House"

SONS OF THE DESERT
"Whatever Comes First"

STAPLE SINGERS
"Come Go With Me," "I'll Take You There," "Respect Yourself"

TEMPTATIONS
"A Song for You," "House Party"

T.G. SHEPPARD
"Strong Heart," "One For the Money"

THELMA HOUSTON
"Any Way You Like It"

TIM MCGRAW
"Some Things Never Change"
"One of Those Nights"

TRAVIS TRITT
"Modern Day Bonnie and Clyde"

TYLER FALL
"Redneck Crazy"

WAYLON JENNINGS
"We Had it All"

WILLIE NELSON
"Bloody Mary Morning"

WILSON PICKETT
"Don't Knock My Love," "Land of 1,000 Dances," "Mustang Sally"



FAMOUS Shoals Faces

Shoals boasts many well-known celebrities.

From Grammy-award winning musicians, songwriters and producers to world-known fashion designers to sports figures to history changers and politicians, many influential personalities past and present have ties to the Shoals area and can be seen from time to time in the area.

GARY BAKER

The local singer, songwriter and producer won a Grammy in 1994 for co-writing the No. 1 crossover hit, "I Swear" and in 2001 co-wrote Lonestar's No. 1 country hit, "I'm Already There" and Alabama's No. 1 country hit, "Once Upon a Lifetime." Baker also has worked with stars Reba McEntire, LeAnn Rimes, Mac Davis, Marie Osmond, Nick Lachey, Jessica Simpsons, the Backstreet Boys and 98 Degrees. His Florence recording studio, Noiseblock, has a partnership with the University of North Alabama to teach students recording arts.



Stewart Cink

NATALIE CHANIN

The Florence native is a renowned fashion designer whose line of clothing, Alabama Chanin, is highlighted by uniqueness and hand-sewn detail.

Chanin's clothing line continues to have a focus on the environment. Many of her projects come from recycled T-shirts.

She returned to Florence to work in the fine hand-stitching that's a signature of her clothing line. Her clothing sells to high-end stores such as Barney's in New York. Her clothing has also been featured in various national and international fashion magazines.

Chanin also created The School of Making, which provides inspirational workshops and experiences.

STEWART CINK

A veteran among the professional golf ranks, Cink has eight Professional Golf Association Tour wins, including the 2009 British Open.

The Bradshaw High School graduate and Florence native turned professional in 1995 after graduating from Georgia Tech University. He joined the PGA Tour in 1997 and collected more than \$43 million in earnings during his career. He also has been a part of four Presidents Cup, five Ryder Cup and two World Cup teams.

Jason Isbell



JASON ISBELL

The Greenhill native has six Grammy Awards to his credit, including the latest one in 2024. Isbell and his band The 400 Unit took home two Grammys in 2024 when their album "Weathervanes" won for Best Americana Album, and a track from the album, "Cast Iron Skillet," won for Best American Roots Song.

Isbell and The 400 Unit's first Grammy win came in 2016 when they received the award for Best Americana Album for "Something More Than Free," and the Best

American Roots Song for the track “24 Frames.”

Two years later, Isbell and the band won the Best Americana Album for “The Nashville Sound” and Best American Roots Song for “If We Were Vampires.”

A former member of the Drive-By Truckers, Isbell’s star began to rise after the release of “Southeastern” in 2014, the same year he won three awards from the Americana Music Association.

In 2023, HBO debuted “Running With Our Eyes Closed,” a documentary that follows the making of Jason Isbell’s 2020 album “Reunions.”

RICK HALL (1932-2018)

Hall was the founder of FAME Recording Studios and the acknowledged “Father of Muscle Shoals Music.”

He was featured in the 2013 documentary “Muscle Shoals,” which was the same year he received the Grammy Trustees Awards by the Recording Academy, which recognized his success in the music

business.

Beginning in 1961, Hall produced and/or engineered some of the most memorable songs of the second half of the 20th Century, including Wilson Pickett’s “Mustang Sally,” Clarence Carter’s “Patches,” Etta James’ “Tell Mama” and Aretha



Franklin’s “I Never Loved a Man (the Way I Love You).”

In the 1970s, he moved into pop and country, and scored hits with the Osmonds, Mac Davis, Bobbie Gentry, Shenandoah and others. Kent Records of England issued a four-disc boxed set of Hall’s 1960s and 1970s FAME recordings in 2011. Hall’s autobiography, “The Man From Muscle Shoals: My Journey From Shame to Fame,” was released in 2015.

FAME remains an active studio today as his son Rodney Hall carries on the tradition.

W.C. HANDY (1873-1958)

William Christopher Handy was born in a log cabin in west Florence in 1873 and is the namesake for “The W.C. Handy Music Festival,” which is the Shoals’ largest annual event, which runs for some 10 days starting in late July.

The man who became known as the “Father of the Blues” left the area at a young age and went on to compose the “St. Louis Blues” and other jazz songs such as “Beale

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Street Blues” and “Memphis Blues.” Handy’s talents and efforts helped create and popularize the blues.

HELEN KELLER (1880-1968)

Most likely the most famous resident of the Shoals, Keller was known as “The First Lady of Courage.” Keller, who was born and raised in Tuscumbia, became blind and deaf at a young age from an illness that many believed to have been scarlet fever. In 1887, her family hired Anne Sullivan to teach Keller. The association with Sullivan changed Keller from a wild and unruly child. She went on to accomplish many things, graduating from Radcliffe College and becoming famous worldwide. People around the world visit her birthplace, Ivy Green in Tuscumbia. Tuscumbia’s annual Helen Keller Festival is held in late June to coincide with her June 27 birthday.

HOWELL HEFLIN (1921-2005)

The Tucumbian who died in 2005 served as an Alabama U.S. senator from 1979 to 1997. He was a member of the Judiciary Committee and was heavily involved in hearings on nominees to the U.S. Supreme Court, including the highly publicized Clarence Thomas hearings. Heflin also served as chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court and wrote a judicial article that modernized Alabama’s courts. Known as “the judge,” he was a popular senator who won three elections with wide margins of victory and was a Democrat with a reputation of bipartisanship. Heflin was a 1st lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II and was awarded the Silver Star and two Purple Hearts.

GEORGE LINDSEY (1928-2012)

Lindsey, who will always be best known for his role as Goober on “The Andy Griffith Show,” was a former quarterback for the football team at Florence State



George Lindsey



Teachers College, which today is the University of North Alabama. The annual George Lindsey/UNA Film Festival is named in his honor at UNA, where he established the George Lindsey Academic Scholarships.

MAC MCANALLY

The Red Bay native and Sheffield resident has been recognized as the Country Music Association’s Musician of the Year 10 times. McAnally has recorded 15 albums and was a member of Jimmy Buffett’s touring Coral Reefer Band, producing several of Buffett’s albums, including the No. 1 “License to Chill,” and has written numerous songs for Buffett. Many singers have recorded McAnally’s songs, including Alabama, which took his “Old Flame” to No. 1 in 1981.

MITCH MCCONNELL

A native of Sheffield, McConnell moved to Kentucky and is the longest-serving Senate party leader in American history, having served a total of nine stints either as Senate



majority and minority leader since 2006. TIME Magazine has named him one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World three times. He is married to Elaine I. Chao, who has served as secretary of labor and secretary of transportation.

OZZIE NEWSOME

The Leighton native gained the nickname “The Wizard of Oz” for his ability to make circus catches. Upon retiring from playing the game, Newsome became a wizard in the front office.

A Leighton native, he played for Colbert County High School, the University of Alabama and the Cleveland Browns. The tight end ultimately was inducted into the National Football League Hall of Fame.

Newsome later became general manager of the Baltimore Ravens, making him the first African-American to become an NFL general manager.

SAM PHILLIPS (1923-2003)

Credited with discovering Elvis Presley, Phillips will forever be known as the “Father of Rock ‘n’ Roll.” The Florence native is the founder of Sun Records in Memphis. In 1953, Phillips discovered Presley, and also is credited with launching the careers of Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, B.B. King, Carl Perkins

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and Roy Orbison.

The Sam Phillips Music Celebration is held annually in the Shoals to honor Phillips and his legacy. In 2017, CMT created a series titled “Sun Records.” The two-year series was based on Phillips and the stories of the studio.

QUEEN

The grandmother of “Roots” author Alex Haley lived and worked for several years on the Forks of Cypress Plantation, which was owned by the Jackson family, just north of Florence. She was the illegitimate and unacknowledged daughter of James Jackson III and his slave, Easter.

Queen was highlighted in the 1993 CBS movie, “Alex Haley’s Queen,” which starred Halle Berry as Queen. Haley began writing the book about his grandmother but died before it was finished. The book was completed by David Stevens, a friend of Haley’s.



Billy Reid

BILLY REID

An internationally recognized fashion designer known to give classic American designs subtle modern twists with nods to Southern gentility, Reid owns and operates his headquarters and design studio on Court Street in downtown Florence.

The Florence location is among 12 stores, including ones in New York, Chicago, New Orleans, Dallas and Nashville. He has partnerships with upscale retailers, including Bergdorf Goodman and Bloomingdale’s.

After living in New York, Reid, a native of Amite, Louisiana, whose wife, Jeanne, is from Florence, moved to north Alabama in 2002. He opened his flagship shop and studio, Pickett Place, before moving into the Court Street location in 2009.

DRED SCOTT (C.1799-1858)

The man whose name is synonymous with the earliest civil rights battles lived in Florence as a slave in 1820



Dred Scott

with Peter Blow and worked in a hotel that Blow owned. Scott lived in Florence until 1830 when he and Blow moved to St. Louis. In 1846, Scott sued for his freedom, claiming he should be free since he had lived on free soil. The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled against him in 1857. Historians say the Dred Scott case widened the gap between the North and the South and brought the nation closer to the Civil War.

PERCY SLEDGE (1940-2015)

The Leighton native became known worldwide in 1966 when the song, "When a Man Loves a Woman," was released and moved up the music charts to No. 1. It was No. 53 in the list of Rolling Stone magazine's 500 greatest songs of all time. Sledge recorded other songs such as "Warm and Tender Love," "It Tears Me Up" and "Take Time to Know Her." He is recognized as one of the artists who helped make Muscle Shoals music world famous.

T.S. STRIBLING (1881-1965)

The Pulitzer Prize-winning graduate of Florence Normal School, which now is the University of North Alabama, wrote 16 novels, but is best known for a trilogy of books set in and around Florence. The second novel in that trilogy, "The Store," won the 1933 Pulitzer for fiction.

THE MUSCLE SHOALS RHYTHM SECTION

The group, made up of Barry

Beckett, Roger Hawkins, David Hood and Jimmy Johnson, was a house band, working backup for music artists coming through the Shoals in the 1960s and 1970s, the heyday of the Muscle Shoals Music Scene.

The group was featured in the 2013 documentary "Muscle Shoals" about FAME Studios and Muscle Shoals Sound Studio.

The group has appeared on classic recordings by top-named artists. They began their career at Rick Hall's FAME Studios, appearing with Wilson Pickett, Aretha Franklin, Clarence Carter, Arthur Conley and Etta James.

In 1969, with the support of Atlantic Records and producer Jerry Wexler, they opened Muscle Shoals Recording Studios at 3614 Jackson Highway in Sheffield.

There, the group worked with R.B. Greaves, The Rolling Stones, Paul Simon, Bob Seger, The Staple Singers, Willie Nelson, Leon Russell, Rod Stewart and Lynyrd Skynyrd, among a list of others.

It was Lynyrd Skynyrd's adoration



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of them that moved the band to include a nod to the Swampers in their hit, "Sweet Home, Alabama." David Hood remains the last living member of the group. Barry Beckett died in 2009, Jimmy Johnson in 2019 and Roger Hawkins in 2021.

FRED THOMPSON (1942–2015)

An actor and former U.S. Senator who once ran for president, Thompson was born in then Colbert County Hospital (now Helen Keller Hospital) in Sheffield. He lived a short time with his family on Colbert Heights Mountain before moving to Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, where he was raised. He attended the University of North Alabama before transferring to Memphis State.

Thompson was a U.S. senator representing Tennessee from 1994–2002 and ran unsuccessfully as a Republican presidential candidate in 2008.

An attorney by profession, he served on the minority council of the Senate Watergate Committee. He became an actor and appeared

in numerous movies and television series, maybe best known as Arthur Branch, the district attorney in NBC's "Law and Order."

ED YEILDING

The time was 68 minutes, 17 seconds. The day was March 6, 1990. That is when the Florence native and resident flew an SR-71 "Blackbird" jet coast to coast, setting a record that remains intact today. The average speed during that trip was 2,189.94 mph. Lt. Col. Yeilding shattered the old coast-to-coast record of 3 hours, 38 minutes, set 27 years earlier.

BILL YOAST (1924-2019)

Yoast grew up in Florence, attended Coffee High School and loved the game of football. He eventually got into high school coaching and gained national fame in 1971. That was the year integration combined two schools in Virginia, where Yoast was coaching. Yoast found himself going from head coach at Alexandria High School to assistant at the new T.C. Williams

High School.

Yoast, who is white, bonded with black head coach Herman Boone, and that friendship and working relationship led the team to the state championship. The season and the team, along with Yoast and Boone, inspired the 2000 hit movie, "Remember the Titans."

JOHN PAUL WHITE

The Florence resident was formerly part of The Civil Wars, teaming with Joy Williams, of Nashville. The duo won Grammy awards in consecutive years. The songwriting and singing partners made numerous television appearances, released the best-selling "Barton Hollow" album and had surprise concert appearances with Taylor Swift, one of their most ardent fans.

White continues to write music and some of his songs were used in the ABC television show, "Nashville."

Today, he is a partner in the Florence-based Single Lock Records and continues writing and touring.

Ed Yeilding



John Paul White



DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS

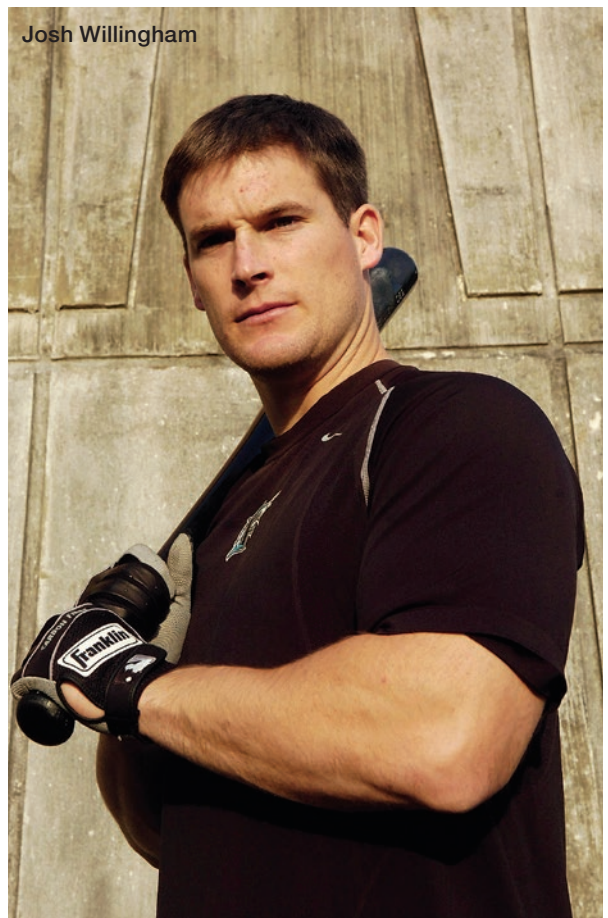
Florence native Patterson Hood and Tusculumbia native Mike Cooley have been performing together for decades, but The Drive-By Truckers is where they made their mark. The band, which today also includes Jay Gonzalez, Matt Patton and Brad Morgan, has had well-known previous members including Spooner Oldham and Jason Isbell. The Drive-By Truckers have become a Southern rock institution and are back together and embarking on a 2024 tour.

THE SECRET SISTERS

The Greenhill sisters Laura Rogers and Lydia Slagle have become well-known and respected, were nominated for Grammys in 2021 for Best American Roots Song for “Cabin,” and Best Folk Album their album, “Saturn Return.”

JOSH WILLINGHAM

Willingham enjoyed a long Major League Baseball career from 2004-2014 that saw him collect nearly 1,000 hits, including 195 home runs. Primarily an outfielder, he played for the Marlins, Nationals, A’s, Twins and Royals. In 2012, he hit 35 homers and 110 runs batted in with the Twins, earning an American League Silver Slugger Award in the outfield. While at UNA from 1998-2000 he tied or broke 14 school records. Today, the former Mars Hill High School and University of North Alabama standout is better known around his old high school as Coach Willingham, ever since taking over the baseball program in 2021.



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Myths & Legends

DETROIT, ALABAMA STYLE

Could you imagine this place as the automobile hub of the world?

Well, in 1921, Henry Ford and Thomas Edison came to the Shoals with a vision of making the area a huge metropolis. Ford said it would become the “Detroit of the South.”

He wanted to build a factory that would employ as many as 1 million workers. Ford envisioned a city 75 miles long.

He offered to buy Wilson Dam, but that was turned down by Congress, which later formed the Tennessee Valley Authority to

develop the dam and the TVA river system.

At the time, residents were disappointed the Detroit vision didn't work out, but most say today they are thankful the Shoals was able to maintain its small-town traits.

There still is a hint of Ford's visions, however. Many of Muscle Shoals' main streets are named after major Detroit streets.

SPOOKINESS

If you like to get spooked, you're at the right place. The Shoals is full

of ghost stories to make your spine tingle.

One popular tale is about Mrs. Winston, who was killed in a tornado at her home, which today is a historic building on Deshler High School's campus in Tuscumbia.

Mrs. Winston's ghost has been known to peer out the window at passersbys, and it's a tradition to leave her an invitation at the house if you are going to have an event there, lest she haunt the gathering.

Another ghost story is of a child who was killed after being bitten by a rabid dog.



Henry Ford and Thomas Edison stand on the platform of a train leaving the East Florence train station Dec. 23, 1921. Photo by G.W. Landrum. Courtesy of Jerry Landrum Collection.



Judith Winston, who died in the Winston Home after an 1874 tornado.

For a few years the home was the location of an off-campus bookstore across from the university until it moved toward the intersection of Pine Street and Wood Avenue.

Many students, employees and owners tell of sightings of the girl's ghost, which sometimes asks, "Have you seen my dog?"

In fact, there are so many

stories that historic ghost tours are available in downtown Florence and Tuscumbia in October.

THE SINGING RIVER

If you like music, you've come to the right place. The Shoals has a long history of musical influence, with countless Billboard Top 40 hits recorded in the area throughout the years.

Perhaps a story passed down through the centuries by American Indians who settled in the area foreshadowed that success.

American Indians gave the portion of the Tennessee River that runs through here the nickname "Singing River."

The story goes that the name was created because the shoals in the river were so abundant that a hard breeze would produce a noise as it traveled over them. The noise sounded musical.

It is said that the river continued to "sing" after American Indians fell victim to forced federal government relocations in the 1800s. The singing river was beckoning them back home.



Photo taken on March 8, 1934, by W.N. Manning for the Historical American Buildings Survey, of the Winston home in Tuscumbia. (Photo from HABS)



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The Legislature was so moved by the tale that it named the newest bridge across the Shoals the “Singing River Bridge.”

MUSSEL/MUSCLE SHOALS

There remains disagreement about the origin of the name Muscle Shoals, one of the “Quad Cities” in the area.

Some say it’s another spelling for the river’s mussels, which is why the city should have been spelled “Mussel Shoals.”

Others claim it honors those whose labor helped build the area through their hard work and muscle, hence “Muscle Shoals.”

Either way, the official name remains Muscle Shoals.

LEGENDARY ROBBER

One of the most infamous criminals in our nation’s history once came calling to the Shoals.

Jesse James and his gang hit the area on March 11, 1881 and made off with \$5,200 in federal paychecks.



Jesse and Frank James and company robbed a Muscle Shoals Canal paymaster of the checks shortly after the paymaster had gone into Florence for the money. The robbery, near Killen in Lauderdale County, involved three men on horseback who confronted the paymaster and took the federal money.

HAIL TO THE VISITORS

No fewer than six U.S. presidents have visited the Shoals. William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Jimmy Carter visited during their presidential terms.

Rutherford Hayes was here as a Civil War Union officer and Andrew Jackson encamped here during the War of 1812.

SWAMP THINGS

One of rock ‘n’ roll’s best-known anthems, “Sweet Home, Alabama,” not only pays homage to the state, but to a group of talented musicians from the Shoals.

When Lynyrd Skynyrd sings the line, “Now Muscle Shoals has got the Swampers,” in the song, the band is speaking of the musicians who helped record hit after hit in the 1970s, including some for Skynyrd.

Those recordings helped members of Skynyrd and the Swampers form tight bonds.

 A professional headshot of Victoria Davis, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a black top, with her arms crossed.

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“Mountain” Tom Clark had committed about every heinous crime imaginable in the area during those days. The story goes that he finally was captured and scheduled to be hanged, but that wasn’t good enough for local residents, who lynched him and buried him under what became Tennessee Street.

They chose that spot for a purpose: it was and continues to be one of the most-traveled roads in the area, thus making Clark’s well-known boast — “No one will ever run over Mountain Tom Clark” — wrong.

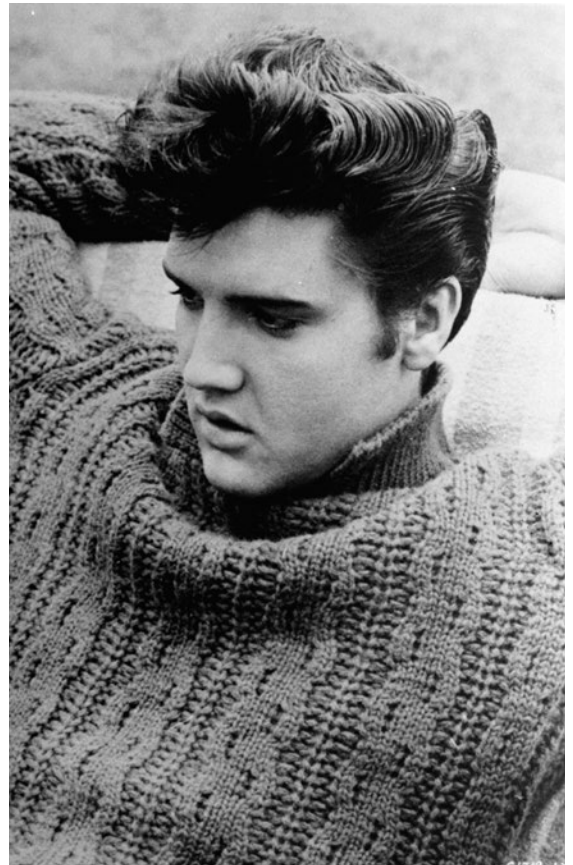
A historic market at the Florence City Cemetery at that stretch of road describes the incident.

LONG LIVE THE KING

There were plenty of Elvis sightings in Sheffield, even before the singer became a national icon. Elvis Presley was a regular at Sheffield Community Center, where he honed his skills.

The center had a reputation at the time as an important spot to reach in order to achieve stardom. Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash and Carl Perkins are others who played at the center, which today has been remodeled into Park Place retirement center on North Montgomery Avenue.

It also was common to see Elvis spend leisure time in town, with the old Woody-Mac Drive-In among the spots where he would pull in his pink Cadillac.



This 1958 photo provided by RCA Victor shows Elvis Presley.



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CAMPGROUNDS

The Shoals offers plenty of sites for primitive and RV camping, many of which are along the beautiful Tennessee River.



BRUSH CREEK PARK

Lauderdale 14, near Waterloo
Brush Creek Park in Lauderdale County now has 12 new camping sites for recreational vehicles, an additional picnic pavilion, an additional bathhouse, and restroom facilities. All of the facilities will be handicapped-accessible. There also are boat ramps at the campground that provide easy access to the water for campers and fishing enthusiasts. Open from April through late October. Thirty-day maximum stay. 256-760-5878 or 256-760-5750

COLBERT ALLOYS PARK AND CAMPGROUND

180 Alloys Park Lane, Muscle Shoals
Located on Wilson Lake, has RV, tent and primitive camping; electricity; water; sewage and dump station; bathhouse; and boat ramp. The park is open year round. 256-577-9619

COLBERT ROSE TRAIL

9395 Riverton Rose Trail, Cherokee
Located on Pickwick Lake, the grounds include tent and primitive camping, electricity, water, dump station, piers, pavilion, bathrooms, showers and seasonal boat ramps. Open all year. 256-360-2764

HERITAGE ACRES RV PARK

1770 Neil Morris Road, off U.S. 72, Tuscumbia
The park offers RV campsites with full hookups, coin laundry, bath house, free cable television, free WiFi. Daily, weekly and monthly rates are available, and big rigs and pets are welcome. 256-383-7368; heritageacresrvpark.com.

HIDDEN CREEK CAMPGROUND

1552 Woodmont Drive, Tuscumbia
Located 2 miles from downtown Tuscumbia, it has back-in and pull-thru sites with full hookups available. There is a laundry room with five washers and dryers along with a men's and women's bathhouse with five showers each. The lodge is also available to rent for functions like birthday parties, reunions, etc. 256-320-5097; hiddencreekcamping.com

TUSCUMBIA RV PARK

18260 U.S. 72, Tuscumbia
A park with 24 RV spots located about 7 miles west of Tuscumbia. Full hookups with electricity, water, sewage, WiFi, free laundry and shower building. The park is open year round. 256-383-2363 or 800-930-7275, or TuscumbiaRvPark.com.



Photo by Merrito.

WILSON DAM ROCK PILE CAMPGROUND

663 Rock Pile Road, Muscle Shoals
 A self-service campground opens mid-March through mid-November with 23 campsites. Rest rooms with heated showers and flush toilets, picnic tables and grills, boat ramps above and below the dam, lake and river fishing, hiking trail (10 miles), walking trail, nature area, wildlife viewing area, bird watching and bicycling. 800-882-5263; tva.gov/river/recreation/camping.htm#wilson.

MCFARLAND PARK

Alabama 20, Florence
 The park has 60 campsites open year round with electrical and water connections. It also has rest rooms, bathhouse and laundry facilities. The park is conducive to tent camping. 256-740-8817.

JOE WHEELER STATE PARK

Rogersville
 This state park offers resort facilities with a lodge, cabins, restaurant, fishing, golf, swimming, tennis, convention and banquet facilities and boat slips and marina. The upgraded campsites offer all amenities and primitive sites as well. 256-247-1184; joewheeler.park@dcnr.alabama.gov.

WHEELER RESERVATION CAMPGROUND

Alabama 101, east end of Wheeler Dam
 Campground has 30 camping sites open from mid-March through late October. With water and electrical connections, the park has a free dumping station, bathhouse and a fishing pier for campers. Camping fee charged. First-come, first-serve basis with a maximum 30-day stay. No reservations. 256-760-5878 or 256-760-5750.



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Recreational camping at McFarland Park.



Wheeler Campground near Wheeler Dam.

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The best 18 holes in the Shoals



Story by Gregg Dewalt

Photos by Matt McKean and Patrick Hood

One of Robert Trent Jones Sr.'s integral golf design philosophies was that it should be hard to make a par and easier to make a bogey on any given hole.

That design influence can be found on three of Alabama's best golf courses located in the Shoals — Turtle Point Yacht and Country Club, and the self-named Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail's the Shoals Fighting Joe and Schoolmaster layouts.

Turtle Point, annually ranked among the top five courses in the state, was designed by Jones. Fighting Joe and Schoolmaster were the brainchild of Jones' protégé Roger Rulewich, who did the majority of the architecturally acclaimed Trail designs.

Why is that little bit of history important? Because those three courses contain the bulk of what a panel of local experts consider the best 18 holes in the Shoals.

But Jones' philosophy, while perhaps forged from his mentors, isn't the gospel of golf architecture. Every great designer has their own ideas for architecture. So do most players.

So, what makes a great golf hole? Jeff Neuman, editor of *Met Golfer* magazine, offered insight in an email response.

“A great golf hole should be a challenge to the mind and body, and a delight to the senses. It should have a strategic element, offer more than one way to play it, and fit pleasingly in the landscape. Some would say it should look as though it was discovered rather than built; for others, it’s like the joke about honesty and sincerity being the key to success in Hollywood (‘As long as you can fake that, you’ve got it made’) — artfully manufactured surroundings can serve just as well.”

Many of the great holes are what Donald Ross called half-par holes: potentially driveable par-4s, reachable par-



Robert Trent Jones at the Shoals has stunning views of the Tennessee River.

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5s, long fours where the prudent play might be to lay up on the second shot. Holes that force decisions plant the seeds of doubt in a golfer's mind, and those seeds often sprout at the top of the backswing.

For Tom Doak, "The best holes tend to be the ones that play into the most interesting greens." Whether through size, tilt, contour, or surrounding hazards, they offer challenges that affect the golfer all the way back to the tee. He once told an associate, "If (you) made the green look as different as possible from opposite sides of the fairway, that would be a great start to an interesting hole."

University of North Alabama golf coaches Cullen Carstens and Neil Self, UNA senior golfer Jackson Wedgeworth, Blackberry Trail's Jason Vaughn, Cypress Lakes' Scott Arndt and Les Holcombe, formerly of Turtle Point, compiled a list of their favorite local holes from seven courses based on aesthetics, shot value and playability. Panelists were asked to consider each of the holes from the middle tees to reflect where the majority of the general public plays from, although back tees were considered in some instances. The

preliminary list featured 48 holes.

From there, the list was pared down to reflect which holes received the most votes. Par-3s were heavily favored among the panelists, with seven among the top vote-getters. However, to more closely reflect a traditional 18-hole, par-72 course, the list was separated into par-3s, par-4s and par-5s, and from there the top holes were selected to form the Shoals Dream 18.

The front nine plays to 3,630 yards from the middle tees and features water on five holes.

Dream 18: The Back Nine

After traversing a difficult outward nine holes of the Shoals' Dream 18, the back nine features spectacular views with fun holes and a sprinkling of danger at every turn.

The yardage on the back nine softens considerably once you get past the front's daunting 3,600-plus yards. The Dream 18's back nine plays to a modest 3,159 yards from the middle tees with multiple chances for birdies. Dial in your iron play and get your putter working, and a sub-par score is easily attainable.

Make a few errors or get distracted by the scenery and a good round can quickly go south.

The back nine starts with a par-3 — No. 18 on Fighting Joe at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail the Shoals. Scott Arndt, the former director of golf at the RTJ facility who now manages Cypress Lakes, calls it the best finishing hole on the trail.

Players need to show off their ability to shape shots with their driver, needing a draw on one hole and a high fade on the next. The back nine also features a pair of risk-reward par-5s, a long, difficult par-3 and a smattering of fun short par-4s.

It ends with another spectacular view of Wilson Lake and a devilish short iron into the 18th green at Turtle Point.

**Turtle Point, No. 13, Par 4
336/359 yards**

Neil Self says: I've seen good players hit irons off the tee but I'll always use a driver. If the greens are firm, it's one of the trickiest little wedge shots around. Hit the fairway and a solid little nipper you'll have a good look at birdie.

Anything less and you probably won't keep it on the green.

Former TimesDaily sports editor Gregg Dewalt, avid golfer, says: This is just a tremendous short par-4 with multiple options from tee to green. You can bomb a driver as close to the green as possible or hit something less and leave a longer, yet more-full shot into a shallow green that is hard to hold. On paper, it looks like a birdie hole. In reality, it's a tough second shot to a green that is tough to hold and par is an acceptable score.

**Schoolmaster, No. 16, Par 3
146/157 yards**

Neil Self says: Beautifully carved out little par 3. Interesting green in both shape and severity. Triangle green makes for good variation.

Gregg Dewalt says: This is a hole that really fits a person's eye. Every time I play this hole with friends, I feel as if I could see a hole-in-one because you have a short iron in your hands. That only adds to the thrill factor.



Robert Trent Jones at the Shoals has a beautiful clubhouse overlooking the Tennessee River.

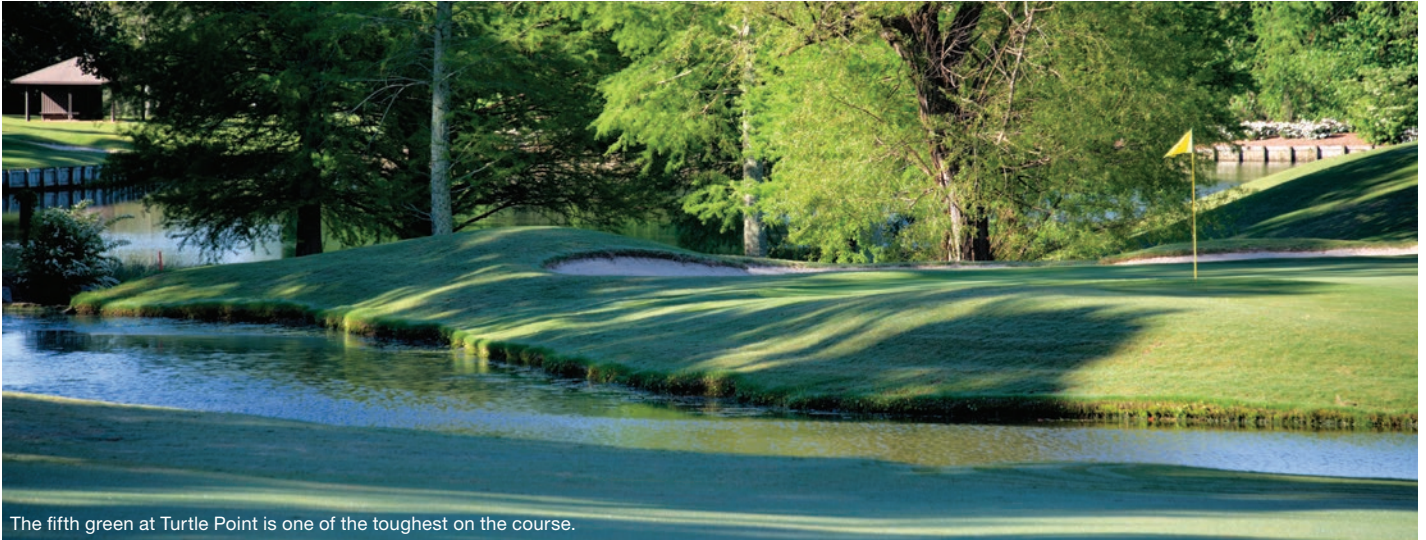
**Turtle Point, No. 5, Par 5
493/566 yards**

Cullen Carstens says: If you enjoy working the ball from left to right, this hole is for you. From the white tees, players can either hit a 220-240 shot straight away, or hit more and try to maneuver a cut around the trees guarding the

corner. After the tee shots, the rest of the hole plays downhill with a pond guarding the front of the green. For the big hitters, a well-placed drive will leave you just a little too far to reach the green, but close enough to convince you to try it. Another hole where you have to think your way

through every shot, the downhill elevation must be factored in on the layup shot, making sure you don't run through into the water. Approach shots to the green are usually from 80-120 yards, so make sure to leave yourself a number you are comfortable with. The green has a crown

in the middle which will run putts towards both the front and back edges of the green. Such a great hole, I've seen just as many birdies as I have double-bogeyes. Three good shots will earn you a par (or better), so if you can, take 5 and be thankful.



The fifth green at Turtle Point is one of the toughest on the course.

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The 10th hole at Turtle Point stretches to 219 yards and has four bunkers protecting the green.



The 18th green at the clubhouse at Cypress Lakes Golf Course in Muscle Shoals.

**Fighting Joe, No. 5, Par 3
175/193 yards**

Gregg Dewalt says: One of the few holes on Fighting Joe with significant elevation change, this is another one of the great par-3s in the area. Water can come into play on both sides of the green and also behind it, and bunkers protect the front. Because the tee shot is downhill, you get to track it all the way, wondering as the ball flies toward the green if you pulled the correct club. When the ball lands safely, you can let out a sigh of relief.

**Blackberry Trail, No. 14, Par 4
303/336 yards**

Gregg Dewalt says: This is a neat little hole that mostly requires a lay-up to 100 yards. The green is divided into two sections by a ridge and is one of the most perplexing on the course. Even though a short-iron approach should leave a player stalking a birdie, the slightest miss-hit can result in the ball resting in a watery grave and putting double bogey in play.

**Schoolmaster, No. 2, Par 3
178/196 yards**

Gregg Dewalt says: another really fine par-3 that you face early in the round on Schoolmaster. This deep green can play as much as three more clubs depending on the wind and the hole location. Water guards the front and right side of the green with bunkers on the left. It's another one of those holes where you'll take par and move on.

**Cypress Lakes, No. 17, Par 3
184/224 yards**

Jackson Wedgeworth says: A 230-yard carry over water to a protected green can be scary late

in a round. This hole requires a great shot and some luck to hit the green. Many balls find the water all around this green. Keeping the ball dry on this hole is a great success.

**Turtle Point, No. 10, Par 3
188/219 yards**

Les Holcombe says: No. 10 is a great par-3 because of the shape of the green and the placement of the four bunkers, and it is 219 yards from on the back tee. It can take three different clubs depending on the hole location. And the back left bunker or over the green must be avoided.

**Blackberry Trail, No. 8, Par 5
493/526 yards**

Gregg Dewalt says: The perfect ending to an emergency nine — the classic risk-reward par-5. A good drive leaves a decision — try to carve a 3-wood or hybrid into a narrow opening for an eagle opportunity or lay up and go for birdie with a wedge or sand wedge. There is no bailout area if you go for it — a pull ends up in a penalty area and a fade ends up in a pond guarding the front and right side of the green. There's always a little indecision in the second shot if you go for the green in two because the pond extends slightly in front of the green.





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The fifth hole on the Fighting Joe is well-guarded by water and bunkers.



The eighth hole at Blackberry Trail is a good risk-reward par-5.

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Photo by Meritro.

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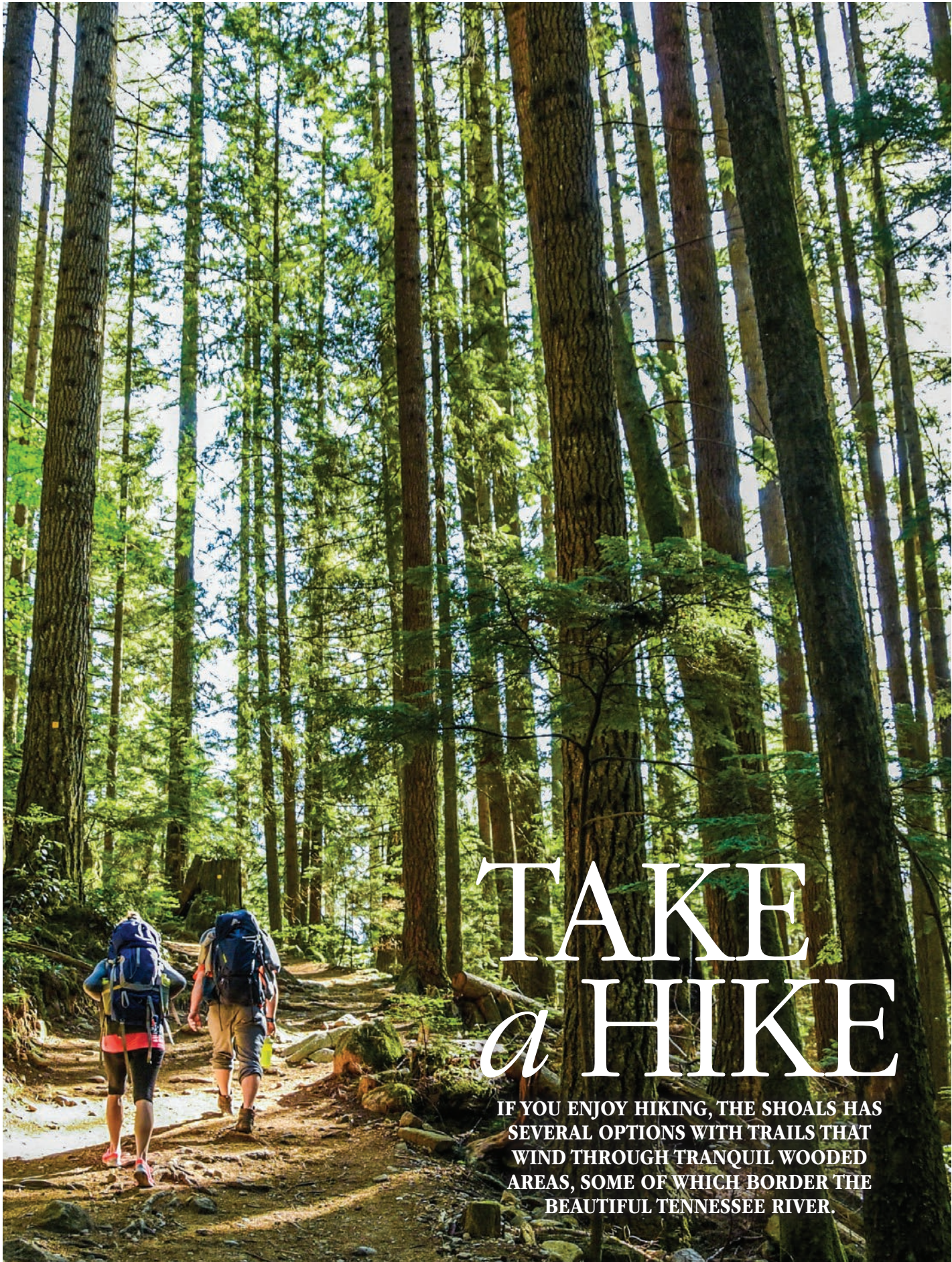
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IF YOU ENJOY HIKING, THE SHOALS HAS SEVERAL OPTIONS WITH TRAILS THAT WIND THROUGH TRANQUIL WOODED AREAS, SOME OF WHICH BORDER THE BEAUTIFUL TENNESSEE RIVER.

Photo by Merrto.

SHOAL CREEK NATURE PRESERVE

This picturesque place is a popular destination for those who enjoy a walk in the woods, horseback riding, bicycling and bird watching. The state-owned, 298-acre nature area features 4.5 miles of trails that provide views of cascading streams, wildflowers, wildlife and Shoal Creek. The preserve features varying habitats including fallow fields, mature upland hardwood stands and scenic creek bottoms. It also offers opportunities for fishing, canoeing, picnicking, photography and nature study. Motorized vehicles are only allowed in designated parking areas and access roads. An additional 2 miles of trails at the nature area are available for horseback riding and bicycling. The preserve is about 7 miles north of Florence and 2.5 miles north of St. Florian on Lauderdale 61. Access is available via a gravel road off Lauderdale 61.

ROCK SPRING NATURE TRAIL

Located west of Florence, this scenic trail is a part of the Natchez Trace Parkway. Visitors have an opportunity to see beaver and other wildlife. During the fall, numerous hummingbirds can be seen along the trail, feeding on the jewelweed that grows around Colbert Creek. A small natural spring bubbles from the rocks near a deep pool where fish dart about. After completing the 20-minute walk around the loop trail, you might be tempted to take off your shoes and dangle

your feet in the cool water. Vegetation and trees change as you move along the trail, past the stream, and on to a field and a rocky hillside. Steppingstones that provide access across Colbert Creek limit the opportunities for handicapped access to the trail.

KEY CAVE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Key Cave National Wildlife Refuge is located southwest of Florence and features more than 2.5 miles of gravel trails that provide opportunities for watching birds and other wildlife. Many of the birds seen there are grassland species that are not commonly found in north Alabama. The 1,060-acre refuge is on Lauderdale 204. Take Alabama 20 to Lauderdale 2 in Florence. Travel 5 miles west and turn south on Lauderdale 223 for 1.5 miles. Then turn west on 204 for 1/4 mile.

BANKHEAD NATIONAL FOREST

In addition to nature preserves, parks and other outdoor venues in the Shoals, Bankhead National Forest, in Lawrence, Winston and Franklin counties, has numerous trails ranging from narrow paths through wilderness to a multi-use trail where horses and all-terrain cycles can be ridden. The forest is a popular destination for campers, hikers, wildlife watchers, horse-back riders, canoeists and kayakers. Alabama 33 south of Moulton and Alabama 195 south of Haleyville provide access to the forest. 205-489-5111.



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Wildwood Park walking trails in Florence



Key Cave Wildlife Refuge.



Cane Creek Nature Preserve.



Rock Spring, a Natchez Trace Parkway nature area.

ALABAMA FOREVER WILD SHOAL CREEK PRESERVE, ST. FLORIAN

This beautiful part of Lauderdale County is perfect for beginning hikers, where scenic creek bottoms and vast woodlands comprise the well-marked trails. Wooden bridges decorate the 2.4-mile Jones Branch Loop and 1.8-mile Lawson Branch Loop, making them easy to cross and providing a rustic atmosphere. A cave in the area is a great place for spelunking. From Florence Boulevard, turn left onto Lauderdale 30, take first right onto Lauderdale 47, take second left onto Lauderdale 61, go about 2 miles and entrance road will be on the right.

WILDWOOD PARK, FLORENCE

Located a short distance from historic downtown Florence and the University of North Alabama, Wildwood Park offers trails ranging from beginner to advanced. The park is also ideal for mountain biking and jogging. The park has a picnic area. Going south on Pine Street, turn left onto Lion Drive, then turn left onto Circular Road. Continue onto Waterloo Road, turn left after about a half-mile, and the park will be on the left.



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Boating Laws

If you were born after April 28, 1954, Alabama law requires you to obtain a boaters license. The Florence Flotilla of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary offers several classes each year to help boaters prepare for the boaters license exam.

Children younger than 12 are prohibited from operating boats and personal watercraft in Alabama. Youths 12 and 13 can obtain an Alabama boater safety certificate, which allows them to operate a boat while being supervised onboard by a person 21 years or older who

has a valid Alabama boat operators license.

Alabama law requires a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device be on board boats for the operators and all passengers.

Children younger than 8 are required to wear a life jacket at all times except when riding inside an enclosed cabin. All boat operators and passengers are required

to wear a life jacket while within 800 feet of the downstream side of a hydroelectric dam or navigation lock.

Personal watercraft operators and passengers, and anyone towed on skies, tubes, and wake or knee boards must wear a life jacket.

State law also requires vessels more than 16 feet long be

equipped with a flotation device that can be thrown, if needed.

The Alabama Marine Police recommends all boat operators and passengers wear a life jacket at all times.

The local Coast Guard Auxiliary flotilla offers vessel safety inspections at area boat ramps during the spring and summer to help boaters make sure they have all required safety equipment onboard. For more details, call 256-757-4622.



Photo by Merrito.

GLAMPING

under the stars

Story by Chelsea Retherford • Photography by Dan Busey



Owner Stacy Rollins sits for a portrait with her dog Mini-me at the Wish Upon A Star Vacation Properties.

Eight years ago, Stacy Rollins said she didn't even own a car. Now the owner of tiny homes and glamping resort just outside of Rogersville, Rollins said she's taken charge of her life and hopes to inspire others who set debilitating limitations for themselves.

Tucked away on the beautiful bluffs of Blue Water Creek in Elgin, Rollins lives nearby and reflects each night on where she's been and where she hopes to be.

Her story is a harrowing tale that involves kidnapping, domestic violence and other abuse, but rather than focusing on the dark things she's lived through, beginning with her childhood in foster care, Rollins prefers to gaze upon her silver lining.

She admits it wasn't an easy go, but with lots of hard work, a powerful sense of self preservation, and above all, her faith, Rollins said she truly believes in happy endings.

At Wish Upon a Star Vacation Rentals, Rollins, her team and her guests are encouraged to take the name quite literally.

"I tell everybody who stays, 'The first star you see, make a wish!' Because dreams really do come true," she said. "At one time, I couldn't see how I was ever going to have something like this. I thought it was just something I was fantasizing about, but it's happening. It's here, and I am very, very grateful."

At one of Rollins' lowest points, she said she experienced a "spiritual

awakening."

She'd raised her four children in church, and she had faith in Christ, but this time, she felt she was being led to something and knew it was time to focus on her understanding and put that faith into motion.

"I had a lot of limitations I put on my own shoulders," she said. "I was always told, 'You can't do this,' or 'You're not that.' That added to all those limitations I set for myself," she said. "By the grace of God, this is where I am now ... I don't play games at all, but like chess, life is a game. You know, what is my next move going to be? I am the gatekeeper of my life. What am I going to allow in? What am I going to project out?"

Rollins went to school to become a life coach, and she

said she opened up to yoga and meditation. Eventually, she started a residential cleaning service, Legacy, and began employing women who had experienced their own struggles and were trying to get back on their feet.

"The girls love it. They would come into work at 6 in the morning, and we would have devotional," Rollins said. "We were there to support each other, help one another and pray together. We would have breakfast, and they would go to work."

Rollins kept the business for about seven years until the pandemic hit.

"I had 17 employees and 250 clients every two weeks, but when COVID happened, it wiped it all away," she said. "I was freshly divorced,

and I'm just sitting here in my house wondering what I'm going to do. I'm a people person. I like people, and I like being very busy."

Not knowing how long health and stay-in-place orders were going to last, she began dreaming of building and creating something new.

"I love tiny houses," she said. "I always said I wanted to build a tiny house community, and I know a little about decorating. I know about running a business."

She said it also felt like fate led her to the forested paradise that would become her tiny homes resort.

"This land wasn't even for sale. I found it intuitively,"

she said, adding that the property owner wasn't yet open to selling the entire space apart from a small lot that would become Rollins' home, which she eventually named The Scorpio after her astrological sign.

"He said, 'No, I'm not selling it,' but he would keep meeting me up here and we would take walks up to the bank," Rollins said.

After the two spotted a pair of bald eagles flying over the bluffs one day, she said they took it as a sign. Rollins bought the property, got to work clearing vegetation, leveling ground for the foundation, and a year later was running a glamping resort with two luxury bell tents, two cabins

and a glamping dome.

By January 2023, she had all five structures listed on Air BnB, and through her own website, rents them individually or altogether for large parties, events and families.

"I do promote it as a couple's retreat or for adult getaways, but I have had kids stay, and it's quite O.K.," Rollins added. "Most people who have booked have gotten a babysitter and stayed the weekend as a little getaway. For date night, this is a great place."

Rollins hopes to host yoga retreats, family reunions, ladies' retreats, birthday parties, and even weddings on her property.

Rollins said filling the

space with friends and families is her vision. Even for Shoals residents, she said the little slice of paradise is like vacationing right in your own back yard, but local guests still enjoy a relaxing get-away.

"I wanted to create a space for families to escape the hustle and bustle, where they can laugh, cook out and roast s'mores," she said. "You hear the birds, see the stars, and there is a little creek that runs through the property."

Each of her rentals are named after constellations in the cosmos, keeping with the "Wish Upon a Star" theme, except for the glamping dome, which is named The Phoenix, as



One of the tent rentals at the Wish Upon A Star Vacation Properties.

symbol of rebirth.

Rollins said she chose the mythical bird because in Greek and Egyptian mythology, the phoenix is known for “rising out of the ashes.”

The Phoenix dome and a two-story cabin called Gemini feature kitchenettes, private bathrooms and spacious living and sleeping space, but all five of the rentals feature their own unique indoor and outdoor amenities.

With waterfront views, fire pits and picnicking areas, high-speed Wi-Fi, heating and cooling options, and other basic and luxury offerings, Rollins said guests at Wish Upon a Star can immerse themselves in nature for brief or extended stay without compromising comfort and relaxation.

Now that the property is up and running, and with the cooler camping season ramping up in the fall, Rollins said she’s also gotten Legacy back off the ground.



The patio to the Gemini rental at the Wish Upon A Star Vacation Properties.

The business complements her new venture, as her employees are available to clean each of her rental properties in between stays.

Standing in the shade and admiring the beautiful fruits of her labors, Rollins is in awe of how far she’s come.

“I didn’t know I had all this in me,” she said, adding that she hopes others who feel down on their luck can take inspiration from her journey.

She also stresses that the

fairytale ending does not come without perseverance, effort and some sacrifice. Rollins said she invested physically, mentally and financially in herself to get to the space she is in now.

“It helps when you have support,” she said. “My parents are a part of my life now. I have relationships with my dad and my stepmom, but I did all of this by myself because I wanted to. I wanted to see what I was capable of.”

Though she experienced more than her share of blood, sweat, and tears, Rollins said she urges other women and men struggling to push forward and believe that better things are possible.

“When you’re in the middle of doing it, you can’t always see (the bigger picture). You have to put those things into practice,” she said. “You know, we all go through hard times. I teach my employees and anyone I can about gratitude and how to create the reality you would like for yourself. You must concentrate on what you want and claim them with excitement. The more you say it, the more you believe it, the more you can do.”

Visit wishuponastargetaway.com or Wish Upon a Star on Facebook and Instagram for more information; contact wishuponastarprop@gmail.com or call 256-275-0526.



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10 MUST-SEE SITES

while visiting *the Shoals*

Let's say you only have a couple of days to visit the Shoals and you need some recommendations as to what sites to visit.

Here are our recommendations:

The Rosenbaum House, W.C. Handy home, Pope's Tavern, FAME recording studio, Muscle Shoals Sound Studios Museum, Ivy Green, Wilson Dam, Coon Dog Cemetery, Spring Park and the Railroad Depot Museum in Tuscumbia.



The Rosenbaum House

601 Riverview Drive, Florence

This is the opportunity to experience the work of Frank Lloyd Wright from inside the walls of one of the homes he designed. The 1,540-square-foot home is the only Wright-designed building in Alabama. It was created in a Usonian style that incorporates organic simplicity by bringing in the outdoors.



W.C. Handy Birthplace, Museum & Library

620 W. College St., Florence

The small log cabin where W.C. Handy, known as “Father of the Blues,” was born is part of an attraction that includes a museum and library containing books on Handy and his music, as well as black history and culture. Handy was born in the cabin Nov. 16, 1873, and died in New York in 1958.



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Pope's Tavern

203 Hermitage Drive, Florence

This building's history is intriguing, being a one-time stagecoach stop that later became a hospital for Union and Confederate troops at different times during the Civil War. Andrew Jackson is said to have stopped here on his march to the Battle of New Orleans. Today, artifacts from the 18th and 19th century are displayed in the home.



FAME Recording Studios

603 E. Avalon Ave., Muscle Shoals

This is a chance to visit the place where artists such as Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, Etta James, Otis Redding, the Osmonds, Jerry Reed, Alabama and Mac Davis have recorded. All totaled, FAME has been involved in recording or publishing records that have sold over 350 million copies since opening its doors in Florence in 1959 and later moving across the river to Muscle Shoals.



Muscle Shoals Sound Studios Museum

3614 Jackson Highway, Sheffield

This is where The Swampers moved to when they left FAME Recording Studios in 1969. The original studio closed in 1978, but in 1999, it was purchased and brought back to life. Artists who recorded here included Cher, Rod Stewart, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Wilson Pickett, Bob Seger, and the Rolling Stones.



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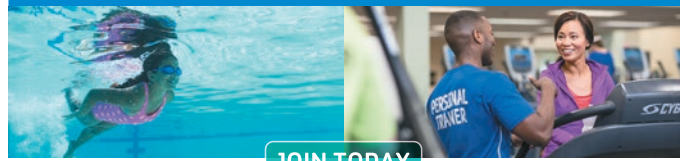
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Wilson Dam

Wilson Dam Road

The mammoth dam that once was a power supply center for munitions plants in World War I today is a major power source for the Tennessee Valley Authority. It was completed in the early 1920s and considered an engineering marvel for its time.



PLACES TO SEE

Ivy Green

*300 N. Commons St. W,
Tuscumbia*

The birthplace of Helen Keller also is the location where she famously learned sign language as a child when her teacher Anne Sullivan repeatedly spelled out “water” in Helen’s hand. The pump where Sullivan drew the water is part of the sprawling indoor and outdoor attraction.



Coon Dog Cemetery

Coondog Cemetery Road,
Cherokee

In 1937, Key Underwood honored his beloved hunting dog, Troop, by establishing the cemetery as his burial site. Today, it remains a unique attraction, where coon-dog owners continue the tradition of burying their pets there, beneath markers that range from small stones to large monuments.



8

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Tuscumbia Railway Depot Museum

204 W. Fifth St., Tuscumbia

This train depot was opened in 1888 and today has been renovated to precise specifications to make certain it retains its original look. It includes memorabilia inside the depot and train cars, a roundhouse and operating turntable on the grounds.

PLACES TO SEE



9



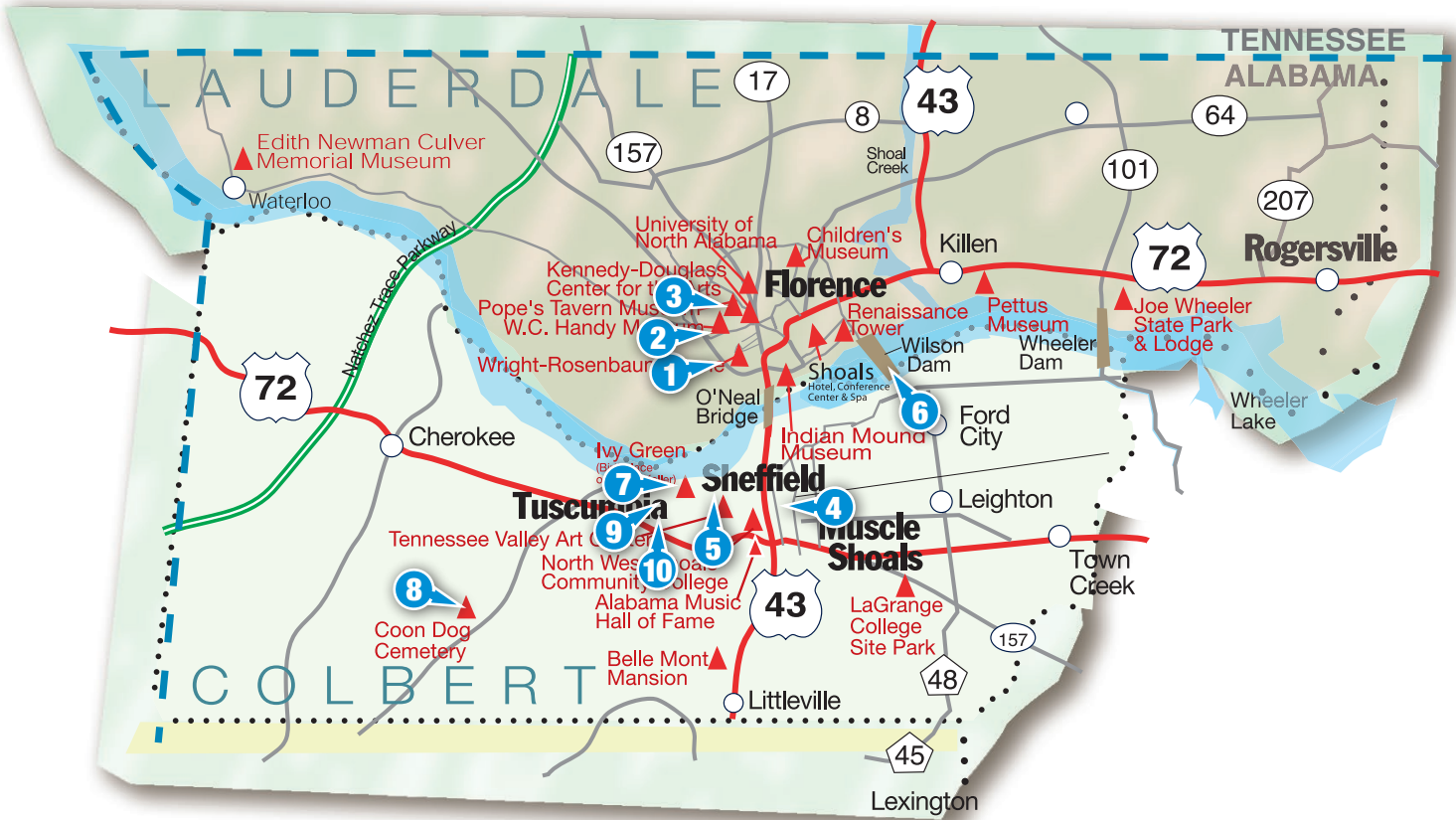
Spring Park

Off Main Street, Tuscumbia

The park, which draws its name from a large spring, features a small roller coaster, carousel, and train that travels throughout the park and waterfall leading into the spring. It also features a two-story open air shelter, several single-story pavilions with lights and power outlets, public restrooms and open spaces.



10



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Photo by Meritro.

U.S. Space and Rocket Center, Huntsville

Here's your opportunity to learn about the U.S. space program with space travel simulators and hands-on exhibits at the Space and Rocket Center. The center is recognized as one of the most comprehensive U.S. space museums in the world. Visitors can learn about north Alabama's role in putting man on the moon, the space race, the Apollo missions, the Space Shuttle program as well as the International Space Center. The facility is just off Interstate 565 at One Tranquility Base, Huntsville. 1-800-637-7223; rocketcenter.com.



Natchez Trace Parkway

Nature is always on display with a visit to the Natchez Trace Parkway. Driving the parkway is a way to enjoy the beautiful colors of autumn, and the spring offers a peek at the first colors of a new year. The Trace connects Nashville with Natchez, Mississippi and attracts more visitors each year than any U.S. National Park except the Statue of Liberty. Access to the Natchez Trace is on Alabama 20, northwest of Florence, and on U.S. 72, near Cherokee, in Colbert County.



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Dismals Canyon

The Dismals Canyon is a privately owned 85-acre natural conservatory that was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1975 by the National Natural Landmarks Program. Its natural formations awe visitors and the secluded trails and woodlands feature a variety of vegetation and rock formations. Features also include a hiking trail, waterfalls, cabins, campsites and a country store. And if you visit during Alabama's sweltering summers, you'll immediately notice the cooling drop in temperature. Open weekends. 205-993-4559; dismalscanyon.com



Pond Spring Home of Gen. Joe Wheeler

The home of Gen. Joe Wheeler, a former Confederate officer and longtime U.S. congressman, is a good day trip. The Wheeler home features many items of the family's clothing and furniture. Besides the home, other buildings on the site include original slave cabins, an old ice house, log barn and other plantation outbuildings. 256-637-8513; facebook.com/GeneralJoeWheelerHome



Cook Museum of Natural Science is 'just down the road' from the Shoals

The 62,000-square-foot museum at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Lee Street in downtown Decatur features exhibit galleries, a retail store, a restaurant and event space.

It is one of the winners of the USA Today 2020 10 Best Readers' Choice Travel Award contest for Best New Museum. Cook Museum finished second out of 20 nominees across the United States and Canada.

The museum features at least 60,000 bees, a multitude of bugs and more than 260 other animals. It has seven aquatic tanks, including a 15,000-gallon saltwater tank.

256.351.4505; cookmuseum.org



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594075-1



I'll Take You There
by Scott Campbell - 2023

Welcome to the Florence-Lauderdale Visitor Center.

We appreciate the time you are taking today to enjoy the history of our area portrayed through the mural in front of you.

Internationally renowned muralist, Scott Campbell, has created this masterpiece, which beautifully captures the spirit of The Shoals area. From our decorated music history to the mighty Singing River, Campbell has illustrated iconic landmarks that have played a pivotal role in our north Alabama culture.

We invite you to listen to all three audio segments to hear the historic narrative behind the mural.

By using your phone's camera, scan the QR code on this plaque to access the audio segments, or visit us at TheShoalsAL.com and type 'The Shoals Mural at McFarland Park' in the search bar.

Enjoy your journey through The Shoals!

@VisitTheShoalsAL

Scan me

Visitor Center at McFarland Park

The Florence-Lauderdale Tourism office is complemented by the Shoals music-themed mural that graces the east wall of the building in McFarland Park in Florence. The mural was painted by renowned graphic artist Scott Campbell. Three audio segments, which were produced by Big River Broadcasting and voiced by Jerry Phillips and Halley Phillips and Rodney Hall, can be heard by using your smart phone to scan the QR codes on a plaque on the east lawn near the mural.



Time to Eat



The Shoals has plenty of variety when it comes to the dining experience. Following is just a sample of local restaurants that offer great menus.

FAMILY

BIG BAD BREAKFAST

315 N. Court St., Florence; 256-415-8545; bigbadbreakfast.com/locations/florence-alabama 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. seven day a week

The aprons were designed by renowned fashion icon Alabama Chanin, the sounds of Shoals-related music mingle with conversation and the tink of cutlery against plate, and there are so many breakfast combinations on the menu, you'll just camp out there – if they'd allow you. But if breakfast past 9 a.m. is not your thing, there are salads, sandwiches and wraps, too. Ingredients are locally sourced whenever possible and the chef overseeing Florence's newest eatery is passionate about laying a great table.

BOX CAR CAFÉ

220 N. Nashville Ave., Sheffield; 256-381-7437 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday

Good variety on its breakfast menu. A recent sample of lunch, which is served beginning at 10 a.m., was meatloaf, salmon, grilled porkchop, chicken and dumplings, vegetables, salad and bread. Desserts served, too.

CAFÉ 222

256-284-7392 222 North Court Street Florence, AL 35630 Mon-Fri 10am-2pm

Offering cafeteria style entrees and sides, as well as freshly prepared packaged salads and sandwiches. Specialty desserts, including fresh baked croissants, cakes, cupcakes, and cookies.

CHAMPY'S FAMOUS FRIED CHICKEN

120 2nd St, Muscle Shoals; 256-389-9985 Everyday 10:30am-10pm,

CHICKEN SALAD CHICK

chickensaladchick.com/florence 256-257-0042 363 Cox Creek Parkway Florence, AL 35630 Mon-Sat 10am-8pm Drive-Thru Available

CLAUNCH CAFÉ

400 S. Main St., Tuscumbia; 256-386-0222;

11 a.m.-2 p.m. Sun-Thur. Claunch Café specializes in down home Southern cooking. Diners can sit inside the glassed in porch and look out at the beauty of Spring Park. In the summer months, the glass is removed and only the screens remain. The chicken salad plate is a must-try – it's Claunch's signature dish.

COLDWATER CAFÉ

3810 Hatch Blvd., Sheffield; 256-381-9633 10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Mon - Fri

ESTHER'S EATERY

www.estherseatory.com 256-349-5231 1416 Huntsville Road Florence, AL 35630 Mon-Fri 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sat 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Signature Bowls, Create Your Own, Baked Goods & More! Just opened in June 2020!

GARDEN GATE

701 Avalon Ave. Muscle Shoals; 256-383-6905; Mon-Fri, 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Garden Gate serves home cooking in generous helpings that include fare like fried chicken, beef tips and rice, slow cooked pork roast, chicken and dumplings and home-style veggies like grandma used to cook: turnip greens, potatoes and gravy, green beans, corn, fried okra, purple hull peas or white beans.

HOMESIDE RESTAURANT CLOVERDALE RD.

3922 Cloverdale Rd, Florence; 256-768-1138;

Mon-Fri 7 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sat & Sun 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

Homeside Restaurant serves country cooking just like your grandmother used to make. The service is down home. They know you by name and treat you like family.

The restaurant has rotating meat specials Monday through Thursday and then offers all you can eat fish on Friday. In addition to the specialty meats, it serves various vegetables from cabbage to black eyed peas and green beans to broccoli & rice casserole. If a meat and vegetable option is not what you're hungry for, it also offers breakfast all day, seafood, burgers, fresh made salads and steaks along with a wide variety of desserts.

HOMESIDE RESTAURANT HUNTSVILLE RD.

4220 Huntsville Rd, Florence; 256-367-4953;

Mon-Sun 7 a.m.-2 p.m.

Homeside Restaurant serves country cooking just like your grandmother used to make. Bring the kids & stay awhile. The atmosphere is welcoming and kid friendly. There is a party room available for reservations.

The restaurant has rotating meat specials Monday through Thursday and then offers all you can eat fish on Friday. In addition to the specialty meats, it serves various vegetables from fried okra to slaw and baked beans to macaroni & cheese. If a meat and vegetable option is not what you're hungry for, it also offers breakfast all day, burgers and fresh made salads.

MOMMA JEAN'S RESTAURANT FLORENCE

3609 Cloverdale Rd, Florence; 256-766-6222;

Mon-Fri 10:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Sun 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Mama Jean's is located in the Petersville community. It serves Southern-style food six days a week. It offers Southern meats on various days like boneless fried chicken, meatloaf, chicken livers and fried pork chops with gravy. It offers several vegetables and breads as well as a wide variety of desserts.

MOMMA JEAN'S RESTAURANT TUSCUMBIA

2325 Highway 20, Tuscumbia; 256-381-7001;

Mon 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Tues-Fri 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Sun 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Momma Jeans is family owned and operated. Three sisters started the Bread Basket in Cherokee in 1983, so there's a lot of good ole country cooking under Momma's belt. It serves Southern-style food six days a week. It offers Southern meats on various days like pork roast, country fried steak, meatloaf and fried chicken livers. It offers several vegetables and breads as well as a wide variety of desserts.

ODETTE

120 N. Court Street, Florence; 256-349-5219; odettealabama.com

Tues-Thurs 5 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Fri 5 p.m.-11 p.m.; Sat 11 a.m.-3 p.m. for brunch; 5 p.m.-11 p.m. for dinner.

Odette bills itself as serving "elevated American fare with Southern and international influences." Menu items feature locally- and sustainable-sourced ingredients. The atmosphere is contemporary and relaxed. It's a local favorite

RATTLESNAKE SALOON

1292 Mount Mills Road, Tuscumbia; 256-370-7220; Reservations must be booked before 4:45 p.m. by calling 256-370-7218; rattlesnakesaloon.net

11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday through Saturday (Feb.-Nov.); 11 .m. to 3 p.m., Sunday (April-Sept.)

You've got to see this restaurant. There's a reason it bills itself as "the watering hole under the rock." This is a very popular restaurant. See the website for reservation rules.

RAY'S AT THE BANK

1411 Huntsville Road, Florence; 256-275-7716

Wed & Thurs 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and 5 p.m.-9 p.m.; Fri & Sat 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and 5 p.m.-10 p.m.

Good regional fare in this new restaurant in east Florence. The building has been renovated to expose brick walls that adds warmth and charm to the dining experience, which features sandwiches (smoked gouda pimiento cheese sounds good), slow smokes pork brisket, ribs and chicken, and soups and salads.



Champy's Famous Fried Chicken

SOUTHERN FARM TABLE

4160 County Road 200,
Florence 256-577-7009
Fri. & Sat. 3:30pm-8pm;
Sunday 11am-2pm

STANFIELD'S RIVER BOTTOM GRILLE

Florence Harbor; 256-768-1721; riverbottomgrille.com
Tues-Thurs 11 a.m.-9 p.m. and
Fri-Sat 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
It's the only floating restaurant in the Shoals. The view of Florence Harbor surrounds you in this casual dining spot. When the weather permits, take a table on the deck and drink in the ambiance of the Tennessee River lifestyle. The menu is long and varied. The Stanfield's Steamer Bucket of seafood is a favorite.

STEW SHACK

4728 Hwy 207, Anderson, 256-247-7988
Tue.-Sun. 10:30am-9pm

SUPERHERO CHEF'S

256-320-7349
104 S Main Street
Tuscumbia, Alabama 35674
www.superherochefs.com
Tue-Sat 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Sun 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

Superhero Chefs is the brain child of celebrity chef Darnell Ferguson. Serving urban eclectic american dishes with a twist. From our amazing Sub-Zero blueberry pancakes with lemon-marscapone cheese to our 1-inch thick handcrafted burgers, you are sure to find something to love at Superhero Chefs!

SWEET BASIL CAFÉ

1627 Darby Drive, Florence;
256-764-5991; Facebook
9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon-Fri, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sat

Choose from an assortment of sandwiches or opt for the lunch plate special. Or order a "super foods salad" featuring kale, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and chicory, carrots, dried cranberries and all kinds of yummy ingredients with a hone-lime dressing. The eatery is also a market, so take advantage of its leisurely atmosphere and browse.

SWAMPERS BAR AND GRILL

1 Hightower Place, inside the
Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa;
256-246-3600;
Mon-Thur 6:30 a.m.-11 p.m.;
Fri 6:30 a.m.-12 a.m.; Sat 7 a.m.-12 a.m.; Sun 7 a.m.-11 p.m.

This Florence eatery features casual dining in an elegant setting with a comfortable lounge and outdoor patio for diners to enjoy. Swampers serves breakfast, lunch and dinner featuring classic American fare. The interior honors Alabama's rich cultural heritage.

BAR and GRILL

ON THE ROCKS

110 N. Court St., Florence; 256-760-2212; florenceontherocks.com
4 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Full menu for lunch and dinner includes pub-like menu items like hot wings, nachos, burgers and sandwiches, grilled mahi mahi, and steak. It is a favorite spot for live music and for dining and late socializing in the heart of historic downtown Florence.

FLOBAMA

311 N. Court St., Florence;
256-764-2225;
11 a.m. to 2 a.m. Tuesday
through Saturday

Another of downtown Florence's dining and late socializing venues, FloBama's menu features hickory smoked beef and pork as well as chicken, salads, wraps. There's Tuesday karaoke, open mic, and live music.

MUGSHOTS GRILL AND BAR

321 N. Court St., Florence; 256-415-8335
mugshotsgrillandbar.com
11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sundays through
Thursdays; 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Fridays and Saturdays

Located in the heart of downtown Florence, this restaurant will offer dine-in/

out, take-out, curbside, pickup, catering, and delivery services. The menu consists of appetizers, burgers, sandwiches, pasta and more.

SAM'S SPORTS GRILL

www.samssportsgrill.com
256-349-2300
339 Seville St, Florence, AL
Sun-Thur 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Fri &
Sat 11 a.m.-11 p.m.

We took the philosophy "if we are going to do it, let's do it right". We apply this philosophy to all areas of the restaurant including food, service and sports. We know we are only as good as your last visit, that's why our whole team is committed to your complete satisfaction and if we fall short please bring it to our attention. food, service and sports. Our hard work has paid off as we have been voted 'best sports grill' for 14 years by the readers of the Nashville Scene Magazine.

THE BOILER ROOM

313 N. Court St., Florence; 256-693-0074; Mon-Thur 5 p.m.-10 p.m. Fri & Sat 5 p.m.-12 a.m.

This a place for people to come and be themselves with a collection of games as well as food & beverages to enjoy. Explore an evening filled with bowling, live music, shuffleboard, darts, skeeball, foosball and made-from-scratch dining.

VOODOO WING COMPANY

310 Cypress Mill Rd, Florence;
256-275-3710
Woodwingco.com
10:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Mondays
through Thursdays; 10:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays

Pick how many traditional or boneless wings you want, select your flavor and/or temperature and your favorite dipping sauce. You can also order a side or two. If you still have room there are a few desserts to choose from.

WILDWOOD TAVERN

108 E. Mobile St., Florence; 256-349-2139;
Mon-Sat 11 a.m.-2 a.m. and
Sunday Noon until 2 a.m.

Wildwood Tavern is an eclectic pub in downtown Florence. It serves all-natural beef hot dogs, locally sourced bratwurst, unique sandwiches, flatbread pizzas, seasonal microbrews and craft cocktails all paired with a hand selected jukebox, shuffleboard table, outdoor patio, good conversation and smiling faces. It offers a quick and affordable lunch. Happy Hour is from 3 p.m. until 7p.m. every day and features \$1 off select drinks and food.

FINE DINING/ STEAKS/ SEAFOOD

360 GRILLE

10 Hightower Place, Florence;
256-246-3600;

Mon-Sat 11 a.m.-10 p.m.;
reservations are required

The 360 Grille, located atop the Renaissance Tower at the 4-star Marriott Shoals Hotel and Spa, offers spectacular views of the Tennessee Valley and hails as Alabama's only revolving restaurant.

The menu features regional American cuisine with a commitment to locally grown produce, sustainable farming practices and seasonality. A five course chef's tasting offers innovative takes on some classics, while the a la carte menu presents refined renditions of Southern favorites.

GEORGE'S STEAK PIT

1206 Jackson Hwy., Sheffield;
256-381-1531; georgessteakpit.com

Tue-Thur 4:30 p.m.-9 p.m.
Fri & Sat 4:30 p.m.-10 p.m.
(reservations are recommended)

Known throughout the Shoals, this establishment remains an area classic. Diners enjoy a selection of fine wines to complement their meal of choice. Menu appetizers include Oysters Rockefeller, Fried Calamari and the Greek Tray. Steaks are cooked over a wood-fire grill.

JACK'S PLACE

118 W. Mobile St.,
Florence; 256-349-5429;
jacksplacebistro.com

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday;
11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5-9 p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to
2 p.m. and 5-10 p.m. Friday
and Saturday; 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Sunday

You've seen Chef Jack White's work. The actor turned food stylist has worked in more than 100 movies and TV shows including "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo," "Saving Grace," and "The Hunger Games" series. For brunch or lunch, you'll find mouth-watering selections that include Eggs Benedict three ways, frittata or quiche of the day, Belgian waffles and French toast, or maybe you would prefer a spinach salad or tarragon chicken salad. "Sandwiches and such" include Panini, wraps, a meatball hoagie or burgers, with the "such" including brisket, panko encrusted pork tenderloin, pasta and flatbreads. The dinner menu includes main courses of hand-cut ribeye and braised pork shank among many dishes that will please all appetites.



RED CLAY TABLE

307 N. Montgomery Ave,
Sheffield, 256-320-5500
Mon-Wed 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Thur
11 a.m.-8 p.m. Fri 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Sat 5 p.m.-9 p.m.

STANFIELD'S

4838 Hatch Blvd, Sheffield;
256-446-5588;
Tue-Thur 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Fri
& Sat 10:30 a.m.-10 p.m.
Stanfield's specializes in
homemade foods and impeccable
baked goods to meet everyone's
taste bud needs.

FISH

CURTIS'

8050 Hwy 43, Florence, 256-
757-9066
Tue.-Sun. 10am-9pm

FISH CREEL

7810 Hwy 207, Anderson, 256-
247-0969
Sun.-Thur. 10:30am-8pm
Fri. and Sat. 10:30am-9pm

NEWBURN'S

3406 Florence Blvd., Florence;
256-766-6866
Wed-Sat 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Known for the best catfish in
North Alabama.

WALTON'S RESTAURANT

1205 Hwy 101, Rogersville,
256-247-0696
Tue.-Sat. 10am-9pm

BARBEQUE

BIG MAN'S BARBECUE

1510 N. Pine St., Florence; 938-
368-2502
10:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Wednesdays
through Saturdays
This barbecue house offers
a variety of meats from pulled
pork to brisket. You can have it
on a plate, a sandwich or just
by itself. It also offers plenty of
sides, salads, loaded potatoes and
nachos. The restaurant has also
been known to come up with
some specialty sandwiches, so be
on the lookout by checking out
what's new on its Facebook page.

BUNYAN'S BARBECUE

901 W. College St., Florence;
256-766-3522; bunyansbarbecue.
com
This is a favorite among
locals for pulled barbecue pork
sandwiches and hotdogs with
Bunyan's famous slaw, hot or
mild. Chicken is also on the
menu. Order ahead and pack a
picnic lunch. Eat in or take out.

DICK HOWELL'S BBQ

1350 N. Pine St. Florence; 256-
767-5830;
10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday
through Saturday;
In addition to a smoked
barbecue sandwich, try the rib
plate, smoke turkey sandwich or
stuffed baked potato with meat.
The mouthwatering menu has
something for every taste.

306 BBQ

322 N. Court St., Florence; 256-
766-5665; 306bbq.com/Florence
11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday
through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11
p.m. Friday and Saturday
Hickory wood smoked barbecue

featuring pork, ribs, chicken, turkey,
ham, and plates with a choice of
sides. There are salad, potatoes and
wings, too.

RICK'S BBQ

www.ricksbbq.com
Alabama Locations
Muscle Shoals-2405 Woodward
Ave, Muscle Shoals, AL 35661
Florence-212 Cox Creek Pkwy,
Florence, AL 35630
Sky Park-4260 Florence Blvd,
Florence, AL 35634
Madison-7929 Hwy 72 W
Madison, AL 35758
Wilson Dam-2408 S. Wilson
Damn Rd, Muscle Shoals, AL
35661



Bunyan's Bar-B-Q

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Commissary-2366 Hwy 43 S. Leoma, TN 38469
Fayetteville-1419 Huntsville Hwy, Fayetteville, TN 37334
We won't go as far as saying that blood, sweat, and tears make us who we are — but a lot of time, hard work, and pure dedication goes into our process and we're beyond proud of the food we serve.

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ICE CREAM / SANDWICHES

SOUL WINGERY & RECORDS

1055 Poplar St., Florence; 256-275-7434

Tues & Wed 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Thurs-Sat 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

Love wings? Soul, as it's fondly referred to, is tucked in on a side street and has limited space, but you won't mind at all once you taste their wings. There are 10 flavors on the menu — you'll want to work your way through them all and start over again.

TROWBRIDGE'S

316 N. Court St., Florence; 256-764-1503

Mon-Sat 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

In the heart of historic downtown Florence, this shop features handmade shakes, sundaes, and sandwiches.

MEXICAN

CASA MEXICANA

11000 Jackson Hwy., Sheffield; 256-381-5397; 550 Brighton Ave., Muscle Shoals, 256-383-4434; 2801 Mall Drive, Florence; 256-767-2750

Traditional Mexican food with starters of chips and salsa are served upon being seated. There is a wide variety of delicious Mexican fare. Popular dishes include taco salads and fajitas.

EL POLLITO LOCO-THE CRAZY LITTLE CHICKEN

www.thecrazylittlechicken.com

256-275-3851

1403 Chisholm Road
Florence, AL 35630
Mon-Sat 11am-10pm
Sunday 11am-4pm

LA HACIENDA MEXICAN RESTAURANT

153 Cox Creek Parkway, Florence; 256-764-3532

Munch on chips and salsa as you choose a meal from the extensive list of offerings or order a drink from the full bar.

FIESTA MEXICANA

(SEVERAL LOCATIONS)

1550 Florence Blvd., 256-766-0100; 3364 Cloverdale Road, Florence, 256-178-6843; 3721 Florence Blvd., 256-272-8444; 41 Market Square, Rogersville, 256-247-6180; 517 Avalon Ave. E., Muscle Shoals; 256-389-8282; 4001 N.

Jackson Hwy, Sheffield; 256-248-4279

ROSIE'S MEXICAN CANTINA

302 N. Court St., downtown Florence; 256-767-5599; rosiesmexicancantina.com

Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The go-to for Mexican food and a fun atmosphere in historic downtown Florence. Create your own custom combo platter or order from the long and varied menu of traditional fare, or soup, salads and appetizers.



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TACO MAMA

Tacomamaonline.com
256-712-4434
121 Cherry Street, Florence, AL
Mon-Sat 11am-9pm; Sun 11am-8pm

At Taco Mama, we believe that our guests eat with all of their senses which is why we hand-pick the music you hear in the restaurant. So, it always made sense that Taco Mama would find a home in The Shoals. Whether it's the special sound of Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals, or W.C Handy's genre-defining blues, or Jason Isbell and The 400 Unit's brand of Americana-Southern Rock-Alt Country – Florence and The Shoals area has always kept the rhythm of its Southern Soul.



ASIAN

ICHIBAN

1207 Jackson Hwy., Sheffield;
256-389-9888; iloveichiban.com
Mon-Thur 11 a.m.-3 p.m. for lunch and 4:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. for dinner; Fri & Sat 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sun 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m.

Japanese dishes featuring Sushi, a variety of rolls, soups, salads and appetizers.

UMI JAPANESE STEAK HOUSE

201 N. Cox Creek Pkwy.,
Florence; 256-718-6868;

umijapanesesteakhouse.com
11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., then 4:30-10 p.m. Monday through Friday; 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Saturday; 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Sunday

Traditional and exotic Japanese cuisine including sushi, sashimi, teriyaki, tempura and hibachi food.

RICE BOX

1529 N. Wood Ave., Florence;
256-767-6752

11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Asian cuisine in a casual setting, specializing in Chinese and Japanese food, the menu items reflect the tastes and traditions of both countries.

YUMM

117 N. Court St.,
Florence; 256-349-2074;
yumthaisushiandbeyond.com

11 a.m. to 2 p.m., then 5-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., then 5-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday

Sushi and Thai cuisine and everything beyond – mild or spicy and artistically prepared. Eat indoors or alfresco in historic downtown Florence.

CAJUN and CREOLE

CAJUNS

4301 Jackson Hwy., Sheffield;
256-381-1573

Wed & Thur 3 p.m.-10 p.m. Fri & Sat 3 p.m.-11 p.m.

Cajun-flavored food in a relaxed environment, with delicacies such as fried oysters and shrimp, red beans and rice, frog legs, corn and potatoes. Menu also offers regular fare.

ITALIAN PIZZA SPECIALTY

HOMETOWN PIZZA

104 W 6th St, Tuscumbia; 256-978-5507

Mon-Sat 10am-9pm, Sun 11am-8pm.

LIL CAPONE'S ITALIAN BAR & GRILL

256-275-7603
www.lilcapones.com
3370 Cloverdale Road,

Florence, AL
125 Cox Creek Pkwy South,
Florence, AL



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LOST PIZZA CO.

201 N. Seminary St., Florence; 256-415-8693;

Every day 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Lost Pizza Co. is a funky, laid-back joint with good music, great food made from scratch and some of the coldest beverages in town. You can sit inside or enjoy the fresh air out on the covered patio.

RICATON'S ITALIAN GRILL

107 N. Court Street, Florence; 256-718-1002

11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Fri and Sat

The historic building has exposed brick walls and diners love the fresh bread and saucer of herbs and oil as a starter. Traditional Italian fare with handmade pizzas baked in a wood fire oven.

THE PIE FACTORY

106 N. Court St., Florence; 256-275-3248; and 3312 Woodward Ave., Muscle Shoals; 256-314-2622; pizzapiefactory.com

11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fri and Sat

They make their own dough in house and you can choose from a variety of savory sauces, cheeses and toppings or choose one of their specialty pizzas and a craft beer brewed in Alabama.

THE CHICAGO CAFÉ

106 E. Mobile St., Florence; 256-710-3607;

Mon-Thur and Sunday 11 a.m. – 2 a.m. and Fri and Sat 11 a.m.-3 a.m.

11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fri and Sat

The Chicago Cafe is located in downtown Florence. Its menu features all-natural black angus beef hot dogs, locally sourced organic bratwursts, flatbread pizza that is made fresh to order, and sandwiches that are toasted to perfection. The café will have a hot dog of the month like the "Big McDog" or the

Currywurst Dog. It also serves up a special dog on certain holidays like the Bangers & Mash Dog on St. Patrick's Day. You can dine in or take out dinners. It says it's the best late-night food in town until 3 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

COFFEE HOUSE / BISTRO

ALABAMA BLISS AND BISTRO

2108 S. Wilson Dam Rd., Muscle Shoals, 256-248-4530; 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Friday

How about a picnic lunch while you're here? Try the grilled triple cheese pimento cheese and bacon, or the roasted chicken salad, or one of salads with a cup of soup or slice of homemade quiche. You can enjoy a Bliss meal there or take it with you knowing it has been prepared fresh onsite. Staying with family or friends and want to contribute to the home meal? Bliss offers a variety of take-home dishes ready to just pop in the oven.

RIVERTOWN COFFEE COMPANY

117 N. Seminary St., Florence 765-7128; rivertowncoffee.co

7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday

Muffin or breakfast wrap with a cup of Mule Town Coffee shipped in weekly from Columbia Tennessee are favorites. Also serves lunch that includes their famous Panini and soup of the day.

TURBO COFFEE

310 E. Tennessee St., Florence; 256-483-1501; Facebook page

Hours: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday

Coffee shop that also serves food and smoothies.



The Pie Factory



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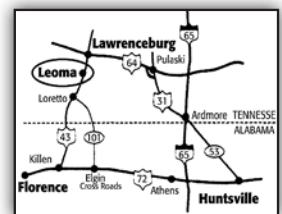


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