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Artist Fletcher
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LOCAL TAKES

CHARLESTON

FIVE NOTABLE LOCALS SHOW US HOW
TO DO *THEIR TOWN, THEIR WAY*

With a rare mix of historic beauty, culinary culture, sea and sunshine, Charleston is known for its unique Southern charm—and yet the city is now redefining it. Today, the quaint cobblestone streets of the downtown peninsula feature stately Georgian and Victorian homes and world-class cuisine. But the Holy City's past is not as pretty as the architecture it left behind, and a dialogue with history is both necessary and ongoing. Meanwhile, a slew of forward-looking entrepreneurs and creatives are changing the dining landscape, pushing artistic boundaries and building community—invigorating this Lowcountry city with new energy. Here, we dive into all the splendor, complexity and flavor that is Charleston by following five locals as they show us what they love most about their hometown.

Words **STINSON CARTER**
Photography **PETER FRANK EDWARDS**

Style and Substance on Upper King Street

RACHEL GORDON
GIFT AND JEWELRY
DESIGNER

I JOIN RACHEL GORDON AT A mirrored alcove table at **Malagón**, the tiny *tapería* a half-block off Charleston's restaurant and nightlife corridor of **Upper King Street**, which has, in the past decade, evolved from a relative hinterland into the heart of the city's hippest retail and nightlife scenes. She orders for both of us: seafood rice stew, serrano ham, salt-cod salad and a glass of effervescent Avino. Fine by me.

Gordon's confidence in her taste fuels both her career, designing for her nearby accessories boutique, **Grit & Grace**, and her affection for certain local businesses. **Malagón**, one of her favorite go-to spots, is a darling of locals and known for its cozy European atmosphere and impeccable food. "I love the paella and their *cor-tado*," she says of **Malagón**. "Life is too short for bad coffee."



"I used to come up here to a fabric store called Read Brothers," Gordon says, gazing at the neighborhood. "It never changed; they sold the same fabric for a hundred years." But Charleston changed around it; the fabric and furniture stores are gone, with new restaurants, hotels and condos springing up here like mushrooms after rain. "It's only going to keep moving north," says Gordon.

Originally from Sharptown, Maryland, population 650, Gordon helped take care of her mother, who was ill at the time, after high school, but eventually graduated from the College of Charleston, paying the bills by bartending. The money was good, but she needed a creative outlet, which she found remaking heirloom wedding gowns into new creations. She began crafting oyster shell ring dishes and >

Above: Rachel Gordon at Rainbow Row
Below: Candlefish boutique

TOP: HAIR BY RITA AT BERENICES SALON. HAT BY CAROLINA MILLER COMPANY.
DRESS BY SPELL. JEWELRY BY GRIT & GRACE STUDIO. BOOTS BY FRYE



Charleston

giving them to wedding clients. “Suddenly all these brides are knocking down my door for ring dishes,” she says. Thus Grit & Grace was born.

The small-town cooperation of Charleston is actually integral to her company. “I knew when I started that I would need a lot of oystershells, and within a week I had agreements with local restaurants.” She learned on the job that there is a shortage of oystershells in the area marshes, so for every shell she sells, she donates 10 to be recycled to help create new oyster reefs.

After *cortado* and flan, we head a few blocks south on King Street to one of her favorite shops, **Ro Sham Beaux**, a lighting store known for beaded chandeliers, designed and made in Charleston. The staff greet Gordon like a dear friend—one of their signature Malibu chandeliers hangs in Gordon’s shop across the street, and she often enlists the staff as hand models for her product shots. She has a special affinity for places like this—not just locally owned, but selling products that are locally made. Another of her favorites is **Candlefish**, which pours all its candles on King Street. She laments the fact that rising rents can be the mortal enemy of the

Right: Gordon’s nightingale appliqué oyster dish at Grit & Grace. Below: Fideo noodles with squid in squid ink from Malagón



ANN MARSHALL
COFOUNDER,
HIGH WIRE
DISTILLING

Rent a powerboat and see the city from the water! Areas like Shem Creek, Morris Island and the Intracoastal Waterway let you explore the salty side of the Holy City. You’ll need snacks, too, so I suggest bringing local brews from Edmund’s Oast Brewing Co. and fried chicken from the local grocery store.



cool owner-proprietor businesses that make the city special. “These are places I really believe in and I want them to succeed.”

We cross King Street to her second-floor boutique in an 1800s Charleston-style house. It sits above **Callie’s Hot Little Biscuit**, a carbohydrate altar with a permanent line out the door. Like the culture of Charleston itself, her design cues are coastal, colonial and West African. There’s a black-and-white photograph of her mother, who passed away in 2013, on a fireplace mantel overlooking her showroom—a young woman who strikingly resembles her daughter, and who inspired the name of the business. “She didn’t know how long she had, so she wrote me letters that I could always keep,” says Gordon. No matter what trial her daughter was facing at the time, her mother’s words of reassurance were always the same: “You can do it; you’ve got grit and grace.” >

**“I LOVE THE
PAELLA
AND THEIR
CORTADO.
LIFE IS TOO
SHORT FOR
BAD COFFEE.”**



Charleston

Tasting the Past and Future of Charleston's Seafood

MIKE LATA
CHEF, RESTAURATEUR

IN 1998, A 25-YEAR-OLD CHEF, freshly recruited from Atlanta to Charleston, headed out to a seafood shack called **Bowens Island Restaurant**—a marshfront institution south of the city that has been in business since 1946. He watched a man shovel oysters into a pot over a wood fire, then pour the steamed clusters onto a table to be pried open and savored. It was his first South Carolina oyster roast—his first taste of the warm trapped brine, the slightly undercooked oyster. “It was the single best seafood experience I’d had in my life,” says chef Mike Lata, as we gaze upon Bowens today. “My aha moment.”

In the 22 years since, Lata has arguably become the most significant chef-restaurateur in Charleston, opening the lauded ingredient-driven restaurant **FIG** in 2003, winning the 2009 James Beard Award for Best Chef: Southeast, and launching the sophisticated seafood hall **The Ordinary** in 2012.

It’s fitting that he’s taken me to the marsh to show me where his love affair with Lowcountry seafood began, but also fitting that we’re headed to downtown, where he has a Godfather-like presence around younger chefs and self-requesting foodies. From the **James Island** wetlands, we drive toward Charleston in his silver Ford pickup. Once over the bridge in downtown, our first stop is the **Delaney Oyster House** on **Calhoun Street**, where we sit on a



Clockwise from above: Mike Lata at his restaurant **The Ordinary**; **Bowens Island Restaurant**; the goods at **Delaney Oyster House**

candlelit side porch. I let Lata do the ordering: a half-dozen **Divine Pine** oysters from North Carolina, blue crab claws, crab rice and grilled shrimp with a sherry and garlic broth. It’s all delicious. “A very current perspective on modern seafood,” says Lata, and with a distinctive angle: **Delaney’s** chef, **Shamil Velazquez** (a James Beard Best Chef: Southeast semifinalist this year), is from Puerto Rico and brings Latin and Caribbean flavors to the Lowcountry’s bounty.

Our next stop is **Chubby Fish**, a nautical corner restaurant where chef **James London** offers a bold take on local seafood. London

greet Lata and rattles off his menu favorites. Dishes arrive: grilled oysters, lamb ribs, grouper cheeks with rice and dashi, and a breathtaking Buffalo-fried triggerfish head. “Buffalo-fried triggerfish head? It’s a benchmark for creativity. It pushes boundaries,” raves Lata. “The city wasn’t ready for this eight or nine years ago, but look how busy it is on a Wednesday night. I’m impressed.”

Chubby Fish, like Lata’s restaurants, gets much of its product from local captain Mark Marhefka of Abundant Seafood in **Shem Creek**, just across the harbor. Marhefka has played a central role in shifting to more sustainable seafood by using alternate and non-imported species such as sheepshead and triggerfish. Lata, who helped lead the sustainable charge in Charleston, says working with a broad range of sometimes unusual seafood is challenging and takes time to master. “With pig or chicken, you can crack that code,” he says, “but with seafood you need a PhD.” On our way out, foodie fans spot Lata and request selfies. He politely obliges. “Believe it or not, I’m a lot more anonymous downtown now than I used to be,” he says, on the stroll back to his truck. “And I like anonymity.”



DR. ELIJAH HEYWARD III
COO,
INTERNATIONAL
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
MUSEUM

One of my favorite places in Charleston is Sullivan’s Island, where I spend time at a “Bench by the Road,” installed by The Toni Morrison Society. These benches represent the locations where African captives were kept in quarantine before being sold into slavery. It’s a place for me to reflect, just as The Toni Morrison Society intended.

Our final stop is a nightcap at Lata’s own seafood restaurant, The Ordinary. It’s a palatial space that even on a Wednesday has an energy that makes you feel you’re where you need to be. We sit at the marble-topped rum bar for an aged rum daiquiri—a drink so popular that they took it off the cocktail menu because it goes without saying. We share snapper crudo, steak tartare and smoked oysters. With the first bite, I’m reminded of why I’m interviewing Lata, tasting the two decades of refinement between his aha moment at Bowens Island and the dishes in front of us now.

This evening, Lata has told me about rising rents that make it tough for young chefs to get in the game, and that the city’s building boom has put stress on the very wetlands that provide the aquatic bounty. I ask him how the future looks for Charleston seafood. “If we can retain our fishing fleets, it can get even better,” he says. “The seafood coming into Shem Creek and Cherry Point, those are the things that make our culinary scene unique.” >

“IT WAS THE SINGLE BEST SEAFOOD EXPERIENCE I’D HAD IN MY LIFE. MY AHA MOMENT.”



Charleston

An Artist Confronting the Past

FLETCHER WILLIAMS III
ARTIST, SCULPTOR

FLETCHER WILLIAMS III, A Cooper Union-trained artist and Charleston native, has earned a reputation in the city somewhere between prodigal son and enfant terrible: a valuable asset to a community that he can't help but subvert. Over the past year, Williams had a residency at Charleston's renowned **Gibbes Museum of Art**, created set elements for *Moonlight* director Barry Jenkins' new series, *The Underground Railroad*, and launched a large solo exhibition of illustrations and sculptures in one of downtown Charleston's antebellum mansions.

We've dodged crowds with a late lunch at famed **Rodney Scott's Whole Hog BBQ**, a temple of barbecue in the fast-changing **North Central** neighborhood on the downtown peninsula. Chef Scott was featured in the new Netflix series *Chef's Table: BBQ*, which has made the ever-popular spot even more crowded. Williams orders his usual: a pound of ribs, collards and mac 'n' cheese. The James Beard Award-winning owner joins us at our table. It's been almost four years since Scott left his rural upstate hometown of Hemingway, South Carolina, and opened this Charleston location, and he's well aware that he is part of a wave of change in the neighborhood: "I want everyone to feel like they have a place at the table," he says.

Williams recalls mornings as a kid when his dad would bring



Above: Fletcher Williams III at the Aiken-Rhett House
Right: Williams' Homestead, 2018

him to a barber shop just up the street. "My father was a City of Charleston police officer, and they'd open up the shop for us at 7 a.m.—we'd be the first ones in there," says Williams. Against an onslaught of hip coffee, wine and garden shops, his boyhood barber shop, **Fresh Cuts Barber Shop No. 2**, is still within sight of our table. Besides ribs, Williams comes to the area to pick up supplies at **Artist & Craftsmen Supply**, a beloved professional art store inside a labyrinthine three-story den of creativity run by fellow



ONE DAY, TWO WAYS

Designer Paula Rallis and model Venita Aspen show us their favorite way to spend a day in Charleston

Check out the full itinerary at americanway.com/features/charleston

artists. Together with nearby contemporary art gallery and studio space **Redux**, where Williams recently exhibited work from his *Picket Fence* series, North Central has the ingredients for an arts corridor.

We hop in the car and drive south into the historic heart of Charleston to the **Aiken-Rhett House**, a circa-1820 mansion once owned by former South Carolina Governor William Aiken, Jr., and now operated by the Historic Charleston Foundation as a museum. The building is no varnished version of the antebellum South, but a solemn place of asterisked beauty that looks as if a well-heeled family walked out with most of their furniture a century ago. Two-hundred-year-old heart-pine floors groan, French wallpaper flakes from the dusty plaster walls, marble fireplaces sulk in silence.

This summer, the museum showcased Williams' exhibition "Promiseland," in which he positioned his pieces tellingly throughout the site, interacting with it. "It happened during one of the biggest moments of social unrest for my generation," he says. "It engaged people itching for some way to be a part of the conversation." The artwork itself embraced a central theme. "The primary symbol was the picket fence—borders, access, >



BOTTOM: COURTESY OF FLETCHER WILLIAMS III

PAULA RALLIS

@PAULARALLIS



Babas on Cannon café is the first stop of the day. I always get their chai latte, and they cast some kind of sea-salt spell on their avocado toast

Stroll around the Cistern Yard at the College of Charleston to hang out and people-watch

Enjoy the best lobster rolls the South has to offer at 167 Raw

Charter a private boat around Charleston Harbor to see history from a different perspective

Grab a Southern dinner with Italian influences at The Obstinate Daughter, and gelato at Beardcat's Sweet Shop—they have flavors like red velvet cake and olive oil and sea salt

VENITA ASPEN

@VENITAASPEN



Walk the Arthur Ravenel, Jr., Bridge—this is a great way for newcomers to see beautiful views of the city

Try some Southern cooking at Fields Deli and Bakery. They'll make you feel right at home. The okra soup and fried fish are my personal favorites!

Pick up a new page-turner from Turning Page Bookshop. It's a little bit of a drive, but well worth a visit

Indulge in some sweets at Swank Desserts. They change up their daily offerings to keep you on your toes

Take a walk down South of Broad or on Meeting Street's beautiful cobblestoned paths and end the day with a picnic at The Battery

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Charleston



subjugation of another group of people is packed into that.” He surveys the grand double parlor we’re standing in. “I had no agenda but to activate this space, because the moment someone feels attacked is the moment they resist.”

We stroll out to the quarters behind the mansion, where more than 20 enslaved people once lived. During his exhibition, he installed a series of freestanding white fence pickets in the space to represent the former inhabitants. “Everybody interpreted them as human figures,” says Williams. “They reinforced the heat and confines of that space, and set a tone.

“Whether you go inside or stay outside, there’s a presence here, this place is alive,” he continues. “What does Charleston mean to you? Projects like this can pose that question.”

As the sun dips, we drive north to **Elliotborough Mini Bar**, a tucked-away wine, craft beer and small plates boîte in a quiet area of downtown, where the husband and wife owners greet us warmly. This is one of his favorite local spots. “It’s off the beaten path, and I like staying on the perimeter,” he says, “somewhere I can still feel like a local.”

From left:
Gibbes Museum
of Art; Rodney
Scott slathering his
famous pork at his
namesake restaurant



**KARALEE
NIELSEN FALERT**
RESTAURATEUR,
COFOUNDER,
GREEN HEART
PROJECT

When I cross the bridge to Folly Beach, 20 minutes outside town, I feel “island time” take over. Start at Jack of Cups with a local brew, then head nearby to Taco Boy for street corn and a house-infused pineapple margarita. Post-dinner, you can find live music and a tiny dance floor at Surf Bar.



We order two glasses of red and dig into cheese and charcuterie. Williams riffs on Charleston’s relative affordability compared to New York and the local community that supports him. “I’m pleased and shocked that I’m able to have relationships with large institutions while living in a small city,” he says, referencing major entities he has connected with through his Charleston work, such as Studio Museum in Harlem. I ask him about what’s next, and he admits to being wary of becoming pigeonholed by addressing Charleston and its racial history via downtown shows. He’s careful to avoid what he calls “the commodification of trauma.” “The only way for me to evolve is to remove myself from that context—maybe a studio in a different part of the city, accessible to different people. North Charleston is divorced enough,” he says, and takes a sip. “That could be a total reinvention.” >

“IT’S OFF THE BEATEN PATH, AND I LIKE STAYING ON THE PERIMETER, SOMEWHERE I CAN STILL FEEL LIKE A LOCAL.”

The Benefits of Slowing Down in Downtown

MOLLY FIENNING
ENTREPRENEUR

THE MORNING SUN GLEAMS ON Charleston Harbor as I climb the front steps of Molly Fienning’s waterfront house on **The Battery**, the local term for the southern tip of the Charleston peninsula. Her modern-vernacular home, designed to evoke the colonial architecture around it, abuts a waterfront promenade that offers views of fishing boats, marshes and historic Fort Sumter in the distance. Despite her hectic schedule—she’s the CEO of Red Clay Hot Sauce, cofounder of children’s sunglasses line Babiators, and mother of five- and nine-year-old boys—she makes time every day for a walk alone along the harbor. “It’s grounding,” she says, “the only alone time I get all day.”

The Manhattan native, who’s lived in Charleston for the past



seven years, is part of a wave of local female entrepreneurs, some of whom we’ll be visiting today. Our first stop as we drive north on the peninsula is accessory boutique **Candy Shop Vintage**. Owner Deirdre Zahl, a stylish New York expat wearing earrings of her own design, is setting up a display of ’70s-inspired zodiac necklaces while Fienning and I peruse Zahl’s jewelry line made with rice-like beads, inspired by the state’s heirloom crop (rice). “I started making these when I realized there weren’t many great souvenirs to buy in Charleston,” says Zahl.

We next head across town to **The Cigar Factory**, a 19th-century >

Above: Molly Fienning on her front porch
Left: Candy Shop Vintage boutique

Charleston

brick behemoth built for cotton manufacturing, and later housing cigar production. It's now an upscale retail complex, and home to **The Water Room**, a nail spa owned by Fienning's friend Jessica Morse, with a focus on nontoxic and organic products. Inside it looks like a Scandinavian café, all light wood and white walls, and smells suitably organic, with none of the typical fumes. Fienning cruises the shelves and spots what she's after, a few bottles of Nue Co. calming fragrance. "I keep it in my desk drawer for workday breaks," she says, and gives me a spritz—woody, spicy, with a bit of smoke and cilantro.

Upstairs, in a shared artist space, we stroll past the handcrafted fine jewelry of Jane Pope, who made the baroque pearl pendant Fienning is wearing, and the abstract works of Raven Roxanne, with whom Fienning launched a children's book-publishing house called Lil Bit Lit. "We may live in a good-ol'-boy state, but Charleston is run by enterprising women," says Fienning with a grin. She attributes her closeness with other female entrepreneurs to Charleston's laid-back pace, which allows time for relationships to blossom. "Charleston harkens back to a more European lifestyle," she says.

For lunch, we head to **Little Jack's Tavern**, a cozy vintage clubhouse with padded booths, green gingham tablecloths and walls dotted with black and white vintage photos of Sinatra, prizefighters and other nostalgic semaphore. "I love that this place is Southern meets old-school Rat Pack," she says. Fienning, who helped launch Red Clay five years ago and stepped in as CEO in 2018, tells me that Little Jack's owner, Brooks Reitz, was the first Charleston restaurateur to put Red Clay Hot Sauce on its tables. It's been a quick rise: The hot sauce is available nationally at The Fresh Market, Whole Foods and, starting in January, Publix.



“WE MAY LIVE IN A GOOD-OL’-BOY STATE, BUT CHARLESTON IS RUN BY ENTERPRISING WOMEN.”

We order *crudité* and Tavern Burgers with garlic herb fries. "A cheeseburger is one of my last-meal foods," says Fienning between bites, "along with a dirty martini." I can vouch that this is no ordinary cheeseburger: It's a slider-sized delicacy with American cheese and sunchoke relish on a doughnut-soft bun, named one of the country's top three burgers by *Bon Appétit* in 2017.

Before long, the interview's focus falls prey to the burger, the booth and the indulgence of a lingering lunch on a pretty day in Charleston. I'm reminded of something Fienning said earlier that sums up not just the connection between her and the entrepreneurs and artists she's introduced me to today, but also our few hours together: "You build friendships faster here, because this city lets you have the time to build them." >

Above: Historic houses on the southern tip of Charleston. Below: Tavern Burger at Little Jack's Tavern



TOP: ALAMY

Gullah Flavor South of Town

BJ DENNIS
CHEF, GULLAH
AMBASSADOR

AS I DRIVE SOUTH OUT OF Charleston on Highway 17, housing developments give way to tidal marshes and I start seeing roadside stands selling shrimp and boiled peanuts. I'm here along the rural coast to meet up with BJ Dennis, a Charleston-born private chef who has become the de facto culinary ambassador of Gullah culture. Gullah, or Gullah Geechee, is an African-American subculture unique to the coastal Southeast, where barrier islands both isolated Dennis' enslaved ancestors and acted as time capsules for their West African traditions, giving rise to a distinct language, cuisine and culture.

"This, for me, is the Lowcountry," Dennis says as we rendezvous in the small town of **Ravenel** and head into what seems like a normal gas station. Inside **Fuel Zone** there's a full-on mini cafeteria. "This is classic," Dennis says, eyeing the goods. "They have one of the best shrimp and grits around." We step up to a glass case and he recommends the fried chicken, stewed cabbage and red rice, a quintessential Gullah dish made with smoked sausage and tomatoes. The chicken is lightly battered, just the way Dennis likes it, the cabbage infused with the flavor of the pork it was stewed in, the red rice smoky and hearty. A massive serving is \$7.

We sit in a booth and talk about the passion for Gullah culture that defines Dennis' professional career. "There would be no Charleston



BJ Dennis among oyster shells along a tidal creek near his home

without Gullah culture. I want to teach people the story behind the food, the Gullah influence," he says. This influence ranges from fingerprints on the bricks of Charleston's antebellum mansions to intonations in the Charleston accent to the strong West African components (myriad stews and rices) that distinguish Gullah cuisine from typical Southern fare.

"I want our culture to learn to re-love ourselves," he says. It's a personal sentiment for him. He didn't fully appreciate his own heritage until he moved to St. Thomas to cook in his 20s. The islanders knew more about the Gullah of South Carolina than most Americans did. Now he uses events such as restaurant takeovers in downtown Charleston to serve heritage dishes like seafood okra soup and coconut peanut-butter cream greens. It's his way to tell the Gullah story to others. >

Charleston

Our next stop is **Ravenel Seafood**, a roadside seafood house covered with murals of local fishing scenes. “There are no seafood houses in Charleston anymore,” Dennis laments. Here you can find anything from conch stew to shark steaks, but people come from far and wide for their garlic blue crab. Enough shrimp and crab to feed a family will run you less than \$20—a far cry from downtown. We order garlic rock crab and a half-pound of steamed shrimp and forgo the profoundly tempting fried Oreos. The crab is so good that I save the leftover garlic sauce to pour over the shrimp, which aren’t just “steamed” but also served in a bag so full of seasoned melted butter that we’re left scrambling for crusty bread.

On the drive back to Charleston, Dennis doesn’t want to leave out any highlights, and points to **Dodge’s**, another gas station-restaurant punching above its weight with double-battered fried chicken. We also peek into **Fishnet**, a seafood house that sells breaded whole blue crab—you get to eat the crispiness off your fingers as you crack the shells. He also raves about **Buckshot’s**, his favorite Gullah

Deep-fried breaded whole crab from Fishnet Seafood



WINSLOW HASTIE
PRESIDENT & CEO, HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION

I draw inspiration from the foundation’s Nathaniel Russell House. When you think about the trials of everyday life in 19th-century America, it’s amazing that such magnificent architecture was possible, and it showcases the incredible skills and craftsmanship of the enslaved people who constructed these grand residences.

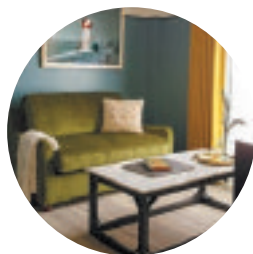
restaurant these days, an hour north in the tiny marsh-side town of McClellanville.

We make one last stop at **Capt. Don’s Seafood**, near Dennis’ childhood home in the Charleston suburb of **West Ashley**, so he can pick up dinner. Inside, we find a couple dozen species of fresh fish on ice. Dennis explains that most high-end restaurant fish are deep-sea fish, and not common on Lowcountry dinner tables. “I didn’t grow up with friends who had deep-sea fishing boats—we ate creek fish, like this sheepshead.” He picks up the buck-toothed fish, examining its gills for freshness. “It’s probably my favorite fish,” he says, and sends it back for cleaning. “I grew up eating this way. We were poor, but by today’s standards we were eating delicacies.” **AW**

ENOUGH SHRIMP AND CRAB TO FEED A FAMILY WILL RUN YOU LESS THAN \$20—A FAR CRY FROM DOWNTOWN.

For more on Charleston, see our City Guide at americanway.com/charleston

WHERE TO STAY



Approachable Luxury Emeline

This exquisitely designed downtown newcomer greets you like an old friend, with warm staff, wood paneling and soft leather banquettes.

Restaurant Frannie & the Fox is a mid-mod refuge of wood-fired Italian goodness, with a cozy bar and lush patio.

hotelemeline.com



Historic Boutique Zero George Street

A collection of colonial homes converted into 16 modern guest rooms in the historic Ansonborough neighborhood, Zero George Street exudes authentic appeal. The chef’s tasting menu, curated by Vinson Petrillo, is worth the splurge.

zerogeorge.com



New Opulence Hotel Bennett

A grand hotel in the middle of things, the Bennett opened last year with 179 rooms filled with colonial affluence. Over-the-top decor includes an oval champagne barroom with a dramatic crystal chandelier and unabashedly pink furniture.

hotelbennett.com