

connect

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TRADITION TRANSFORMED

It's no secret that **Charleston, South Carolina**, values its history. But as you'll discover on page 55, the city is also a place where new ideas find a warm welcome.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER FRANK EDWARDS

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From left: Restaurateur Duolan Li, urban designer Jacob Lindsey, and folk artist P-Nut Johnson gather in Hampton Park.



THE SOUL OF CHARLESTON

New creative energy is humming through the historic streets of South Carolina's largest city.

by M. K. Quinlan

ONCE A SLEEPY SOUTHERN TOWN, Charleston has a thriving, multicultural downtown. The 3.5-mile-long peninsula containing 12 small, eclectic neighborhoods has become a beacon for creative professionals from New York and other major U.S. cities looking for more laid-back lives. Thanks to the influx, Charleston is rife with entrepreneurial energy: Over the past five years, new restaurants, shops, and boutique hotels have opened at a rapid pace. Charleston's biggest challenge? Making room for the changes while still protecting the city's unique history and architecture. Three locals share their takes on the Holy City.

Jacob Lindsey

Urban Designer

When it comes to architecture, the city is known for its multicolor Charleston single houses—long, narrow homes, many with white-pillared porches on each level. And Jacob Lindsey is charged with preserving them. As the director of planning, preservation, and sustainability for the city, he oversees Charleston's strict Board of Architectural Review (BAR), which dictates every design detail down to the color of a building's mortar and the finish of its bricks.

"Charleston has a legacy of architecture and design that goes back to the beginning of the modern city," Lindsey says.

In recent years, his office has reviewed

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new developments on Charleston's Upper Peninsula, a former industrial area now alive with restaurants and multiuse developments. But Lindsey and his wife, who have a young daughter, have chosen to stay in the city's historic downtown. "Living downtown allows us to walk to everything we need," he says. "That's a rare lifestyle these days."

Joseph "P-Nut" Johnson

Artist

If anyone can attest to Charleston's dramatic changes over the years, it's folk artist P-Nut Johnson. Born in 1955, he started as a poet, scribbling rhymes on napkins at local clubs in the '70s and '80s and selling them for \$5 apiece.

A few years ago, P-Nut switched from poetry to painting. "My fans got me into art," he says. "They wanted me to put my poems on canvas. All of my paintings tell a story." Many portray street scenes from old Charleston: neighbors saying hello across the fence, a fisherman catching his dinner. Some works verge on the irreverent (hangovers are a favorite motif), and some depict subjects that live only in his memories. "There used to be a bar called the Piccadilly Club, and another one called Three Nags, where everyone would hang out," he says. "Jimi Hendrix played a little tune with the boys there in the late '60s." These days, if he's not showing prospective buyers work at his home uptown, chances are you'll find him at the city's tried-and-true locales.

Duolan Li

Restaurateur

Duolan Li and her husband, Joshua Walker, moved from Brooklyn in 2009. Though the city's food scene was growing, there was a lack of diversity. "We missed some of the flavors we enjoyed in New York and on our travels," says Li, who was born in China and grew up eating home-cooked Chinese food. "At one point we said, 'Why don't we do it ourselves?'"

The restaurant they launched, Xiao Bao Biscuit, is now one of the most popular in town, serving Asian soul food (such as *okonomiyaki*, or cabbage pancakes, topped with candied pork) in a renovated gas station. The couple's latest collaboration, Tu, serves Indian food in the Eastside neighborhood.

Li and Walker, along with their infant daughter, live in the residential Wagener Terrace. On nights when she's not on baby duty, you can catch Li moonlighting as Auntie Ayi, spinning house, electro, and techno tunes at small clubs uptown. ☺

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER FRANK EDWARDS



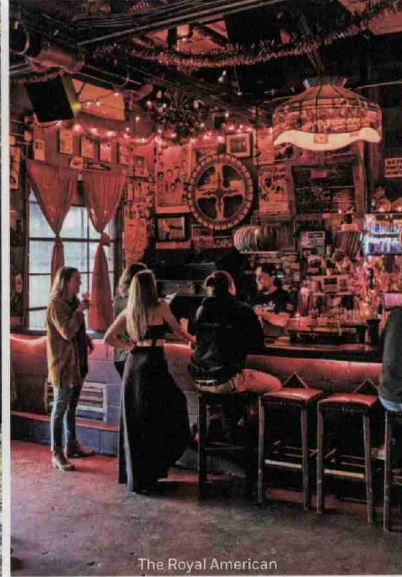
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Hampton Park



The Royal American

Renzo

"They have a special happy hour menu with Detroit-style pizza—and I can bring the baby. After 5 p.m., my go-tos are the Caesar salad and the Big Rob pizza, which has broccoli rabe and, if you want, salumi. I always try to get a banquet seat by the window." —DUOLAN LI

Hampton Park

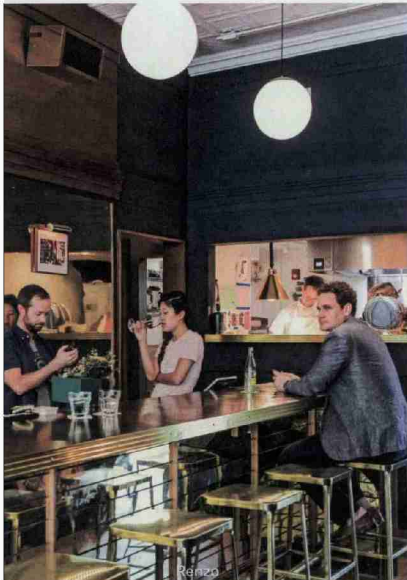
"The park reflects Charleston's history. One of my favorite areas has a statue of Denmark Vesey, a free black Methodist leader and antislavery activist. Hampton Park, ironically, is named after General Wade Hampton III, one of the largest slaveholders in the South." —D.L.

The George Gallery

"Anne Siegfried, the owner, primarily represents abstract and non-objective creators like South Carolina artist Tom Stanley, but the work she shows is totally accessible. The gallery is a wonderful place to see what's relevant and new in Charleston's art scene." —JACOB LINDSEY

The Royal American

"A restaurant and music venue, the Royal American is an awesome place to catch independent bands. They support local hip-hop by hosting events like the Art Binge Festival. There's a lot going on with the decor—it's like visiting your punk-rock grandma's saloon!" —D.L.



Renzo



Renzo



The George Gallery



Artist and Craftsman

"I started going to this [art shop] when I started painting. It's convenient for brushes and paint, and it's in a 100-year-old brick church building a few blocks away from my house. The people are nice, and the prices are right." —P-NUT JOHNSON

Cone 10 Studios

"I took pottery classes here, and you can purchase pottery made by local ceramicists in the gallery space. Cone 10 is next door to Martha Lou's Kitchen, famous for its fried chicken, so it's a great place to kill two birds with one stone." —D.L.

Seafood Alley

"Normally I catch my own crabs. But if I do order them, Seafood Alley is the last seafood market left downtown. The prices are good, and the ones they sell in winter are from the deep sea, which means they're fatter, with more meat." —P.J.

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**167 Raw**

"We love this little sardine-can-size oyster bar. It's got a cool, maritime feel inside. But you have to time it right. We try to show up by 3:30 in the afternoon to avoid the lines. Our standard order is a dozen oysters and the fish tacos. You can't go wrong." —J.L.

**Billy Reid**

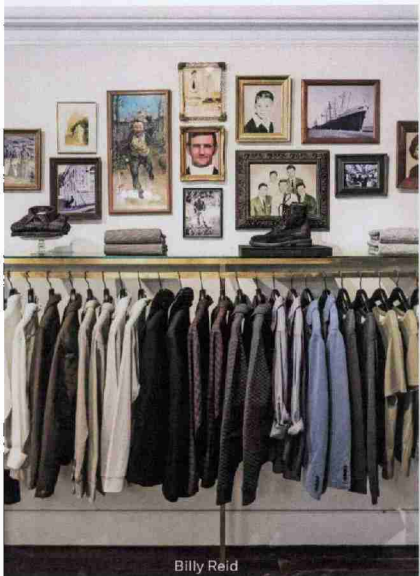
"If we want to spend a little money, we stroll over to Billy Reid. It's one of the few places where you can find fashion that has authentic roots in the South. The clothing is designed in Florence, Alabama. The men's suits are the best things in the whole store." —J.L.

The Fireproof Building

"Built in 1827 as the country's first fireproof document archive, the building recently reopened as the home of the South Carolina Historical Society, which has a really cool collection of maps, manuscripts, and old photographs that tell the story of our state." —J.L.

Hannibal's Kitchen

"I go to Hannibal's on the Eastside if I want good soul food at a good price. I like the flounder, lightly fried, with red rice. The restaurant was called Martha's when I was a kid, and we used to jump the fence and eat there because we didn't want to eat the food at school!" —P.J.



Billy Reid



The Fireproof Building



Hannibal's Kitchen