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## Nashville's got it going on

'Southern Living' readers agree . . .

By *Natalia Mielczarek*  
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Of all the places to go and things to do in the South, *Southern Living* readers think Nashville and its offerings are some of the best below the Mason-Dixon line.

In the magazine's annual readers poll, the city of Nashville and its landmarks — four of them in West Davidson County — were named in seven categories. The Music City's tally rivaled those of such Southern hubs such as Charleston and Asheville.

"The word is out about Nashville. People pay attention to this kind of recognition, especially coming from an esteemed publication like *Southern Living*," said Ralph Schulz, president and CEO of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. "The city's creative, entrepreneurial spirit attracts people and businesses alike. That is what sets us apart."

Loveless Café operations manager Jesse Goldstein said it was rewarding for the restaurant to be ranked fifth-best restaurant for breakfast and to claim fifth place in Southern favorites.

"There's an amount of authenticity that people really appreciate with a place like the Loveless," Goldstein said. "They know that when they walk in, they're having a recipe that's been made the same way for over 50 years. Without a doubt, we owe a very big thank-you to the staff."

Jack Becker, Cheekwood Botanical Gardens' president and CEO, said being named the South's 10th-best public garden certifies it as a destination that's among the best.

"It brings regional and national stature to what everyone in Nashville already knows as a true treasure," Becker said. "It reaffirms the uniqueness of Cheekwood and its remarkable landscape."

Aside from recognition, the acknowledgement also serves as a strong marketing push. Given the state of the economy, the free publicity couldn't come at a better time.

"It continues to remind people of the great shopping available in Green Hills, which in turn supports the area retailers," said Hank Woerner, general manager of the Mall at Green Hills, addressing Green Hills' No. 7 ranking among top neighborhoods for shopping.

"It definitely helps to be recognized by such a well-known lifestyle publication. We hope that people beyond the Nashville area will visit and discover what makes Green Hills such a special shopping area."

Jimmy Granbery of H.G. Hill Realty Co. said such recognition helps to not only attract shoppers to the company's newest development, the Hill Center, but also to draw new businesses, because they can use the entire area as an incentive.

"We're able to say to prospective tenants that we have national chains like Whole Foods and West Elm, and that does bring instant credibility," Granbery said. "But we're also able to say 200 yards away, there's a Tiffany and a Nordstrom coming and a Brooks Brothers. It's an overall district that's more than just our project."

For the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, receiving second place for best hotel gets a potentially difficult year off to a good start.

"That prestigious title, coming from more than 40,000 *Southern Living* readers polled, might encourage people in this region who will be looking for an exciting vacation that is closer to home or even in their own backyard to come see what we have happening," said Peter Weien, Gaylord Opryland's president and general manager, in an e-mail. "Gaylord Opryland is an icon that some people in Tennessee and the surrounding states are used to seeing, so they forget to consider that one of the greatest places to vacation in the nation is right up the road."

## Additional Facts

*SOUTHERN LIVING'S* NASHVILLE SHOUT-OUTS

Here's how the Nashville area fared in the magazine's collection of top 10 lists:

**Best city:** Nashville ranked fifth.

**Best restaurant for breakfast:** Loveless Café ranked fifth; Pancake Pantry ranked sixth.

**Southern favorites:** Loveless Café ranked fifth.

**Best weekend getaway:** Nashville ranked sixth.

**Best neighborhood for shopping:** Green Hills ranked seventh.

**Best small town:** Franklin ranked fifth.

**Best public gardens:** Cheekwood Botanical Garden ranked 10th.

**Best hotel:** Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center ranked second.

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