

JANUARY 2009

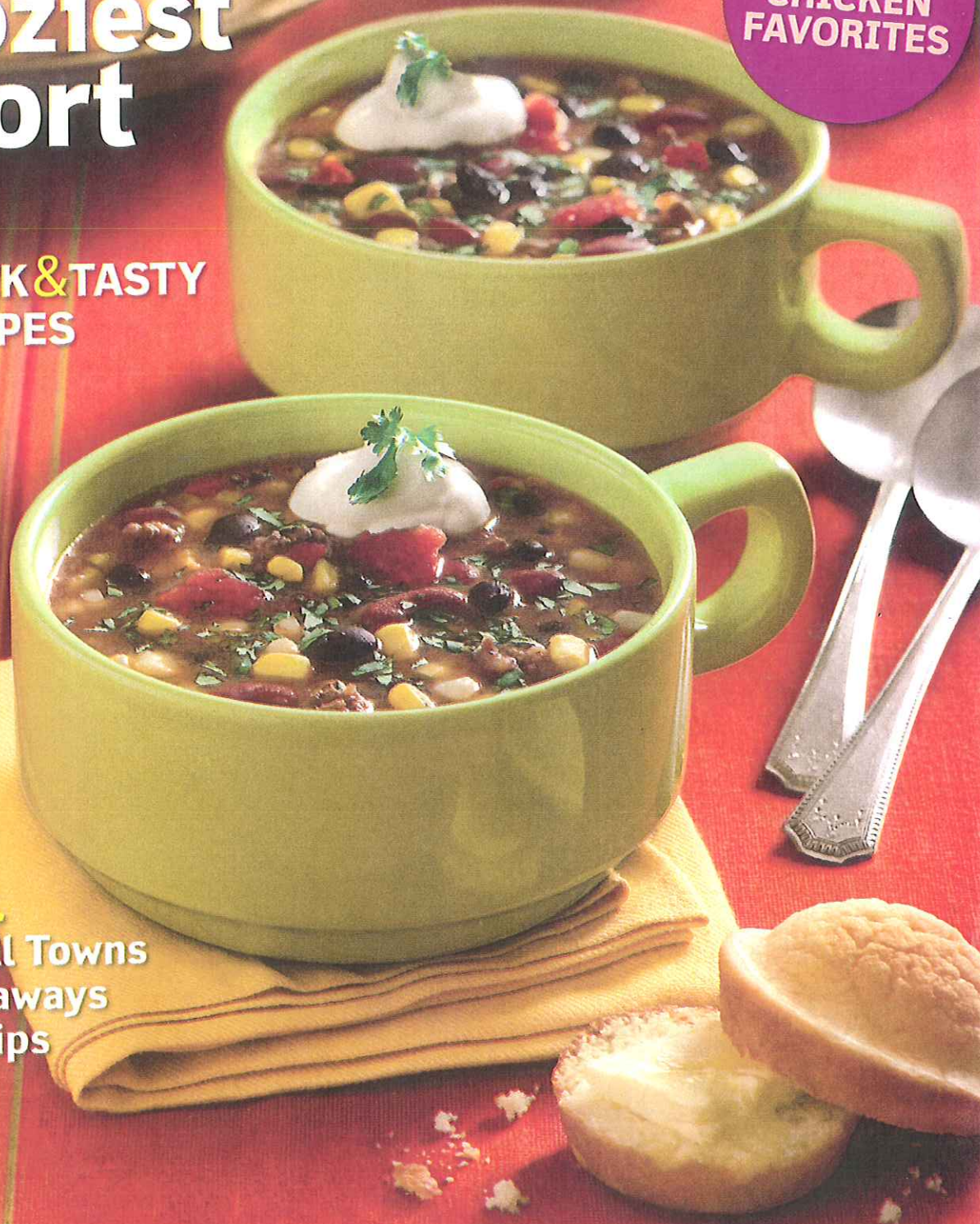
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- *Hotels & Small Towns
- *Weekend Getaways
- *Fun Family Trips

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Destinations

Whether it's an extended vacation, a long weekend, or just a day-trip up the road, you've told us your favorite places to get away. From historic cities and tony hotels to small towns dripping with charm, we salute the exploration of *your* South.

NO. 3: ATLANTA
Centennial Olympic Park, built for the 1996 Olympic Games, helped infuse new energy into downtown Atlanta and continues to be a great gathering spot.

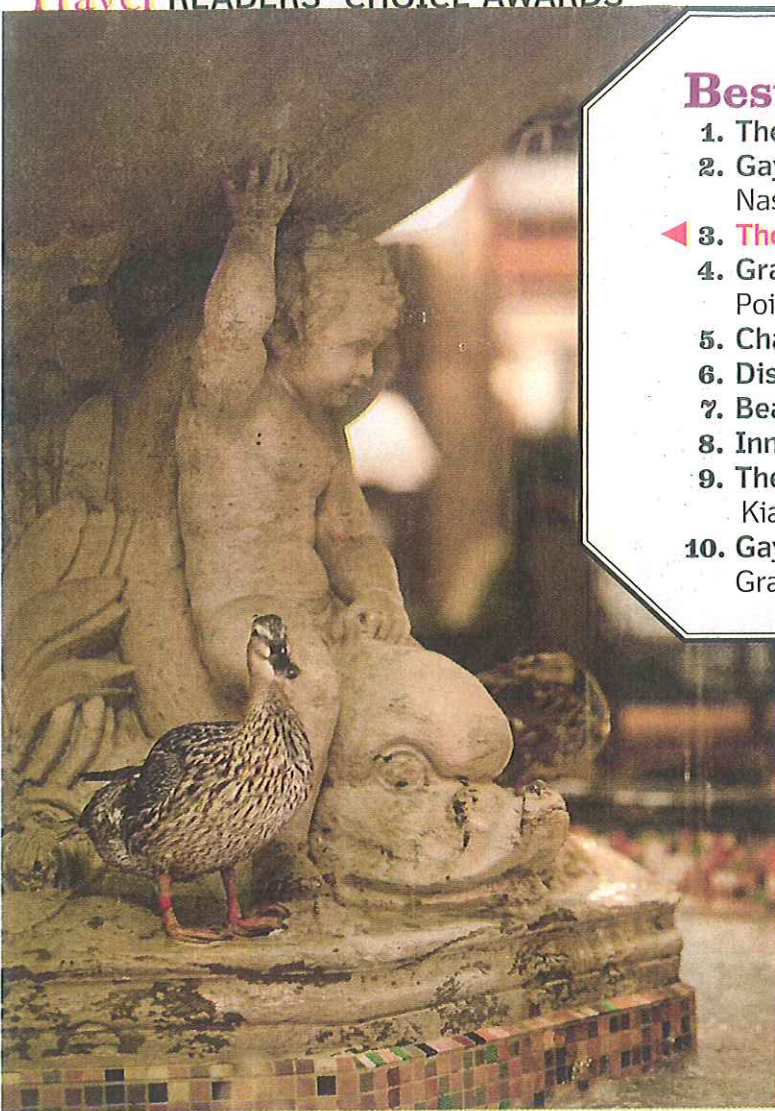


Best City

1. Charleston, South Carolina
2. Savannah, Georgia
- ◀ 3. **Atlanta, Georgia**
4. New Orleans, Louisiana
5. Nashville, Tennessee
6. Orlando, Florida
7. San Antonio, Texas
8. Asheville, North Carolina
9. Destin, Florida
10. Austin, Texas

Best Hotel

1. The Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa, Asheville, North Carolina
2. Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, Nashville, Tennessee
- ◀ 3. **The Peabody Memphis, Tennessee**
4. Grand Hotel Marriott Resort, Golf Club, & Spa, Point Clear, Alabama
5. Charleston Place, Charleston, South Carolina
6. Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, Orlando, Florida
7. Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, Biloxi, Mississippi
8. Inn on Biltmore Estate, Asheville, North Carolina
9. The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Kiawah Island, South Carolina
10. Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center, Grapevine, Texas



Generations of visitors watch The Peabody's resident ducks take their daily swim in the lobby fountain.



Southern Classics

Southern hotels, with their legendary hospitality, know a thing or two about getting people to return time and again. This year's Readers' Choice winner for Best Hotel, The Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa, is practically a Southern institution. But just what takes a regular hotel and elevates it to a "classic"?

If you ask a group of people why the South resonates with visitors, you'll get at least one, "everyone is so friendly." Truthfully, all luxury hotels strive to welcome guests—memorable service can make a good hotel great. But hotels in the South seem to have a leg up. At Blackberry Farm in Walland, Tennessee, the personal

attention starts long before guests arrive on property. From the moment they make a reservation, guests are in touch with a personal concierge who assists in planning activities, finding out the details of personal preferences (hip-hop or classical music in the car on the way to dinner?), and generally putting themselves at the guests' disposal for that perfect stay.

A tie to the past never hurts. The Peabody Memphis (No. 3 Hotel) is ripe with nostalgia and historical significance. Elvis's tailor, Bernard Lansky, continues to maintain a shop within the hotel. And generations of visitors have watched The Peabody's resident Mallard ducks waddle

from the elevator to the fountain in the Grand Lobby.

Great food can help seal the deal. Chef Bob Waggoner dishes up Lowcountry masterpieces nightly at the Charleston Grill inside the Charleston Place hotel (No. 5). And The Inn at Little Washington, with its farm-to-table approach and renowned wine collection, is a foodie's dream.

But really, you have to feel at home and wake up refreshed. Whether it's the subdued elegance of The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort (No. 9) or the ultra-comfy bed at The Farrington House Country Inn just outside Chapel Hill, North Carolina, a classic hotel puts you at peace.

Hooray for Dollywood

You'd be hard-pressed to find a more recognized Southern icon than Dolly Parton. She's crooned and flirted her way into the collective Southern heart since she first appeared at the Grand Ole Opry at the age of 13. And *Southern Living* readers flock to Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge (No. 1 Weekend Getaway) year after year to get a little taste of Dolly at her namesake amusement park, Dollywood. The East Tennessee native "Backwoods Barbie" has long been smitten with the Smoky Mountains, and this year, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Dollywood will launch "Adventure Mountain," a 2-acre collection of family-friendly mountaineering and ropes courses. ●



Best Weekend Getaway

- ▲ 1. Gatlinburg/Pigeon Forge, Tennessee
- 2. Asheville, North Carolina
- 3. Charleston, South Carolina
- 4. Savannah, Georgia
- 5. New Orleans, Louisiana
- 6. Nashville, Tennessee
- 7. Atlanta, Georgia
- 8. San Antonio, Texas
- 9. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
- 10. Destin, Florida

Dollywood's Splash Country Water Adventure Park is located in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, your No. 1 pick for a weekend getaway.