

The Best

OF SAVANNAH ★ 2011

No one knows Savannah like the readers of *Savannah* magazine.

That's why, for the past 11 years, we've relied on our following of invested Savannahians to recommend the very best in dining, night-life, personalities, shops and services. Your city magazine asked and you responded — in greater numbers than ever before!

And the 2011 Best of Savannah awards go to...

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THE BEST POLL: HOW IT WORKS

★★★★★

★ Thank you for participating in our 11th Annual Best of Savannah readers' poll! How are we different from other local competitions? Here's what you need to know.

★ Votes and votes alone determine a Best of Savannah winner. We only accept one ballot per person.

★ Duplicate or photocopied ballots and those without a verifiable name and address are automatically disqualified.

★ As part of the area's foremost news organization, we strictly limit our role to tallying and reporting reader votes.

★ Anyone can be written into a Best of Savannah category, ensuring equality of opportunity. We do not make suggestions.

★ We can't control how individuals campaign for Best of Savannah, we can only control how accurately the votes are counted.

★ *Savannah* magazine's readers — connoisseurs, professionals and household decision-makers — know the best when they see it. Your votes reflect your opinions about what is truly the best in each category — rewarding good business practices and calling attention to exemplary members of our community.

Best ★ Dining

ASIAN

Ele Fine Fusion

This Whitmarsh Island favorite and two-time Best of Savannah winner earns raves for its fresh Asian cuisine and tropical-inspired drink menu. Owner Ele Tran emphasizes style and substance at this fusion-style eatery.
Runner-up: Saigon

BBQ

Wiley's Championship BBQ

Try one juicy bite of the barbecue pork platter or the beef brisket and you'll understand why repeat Best of Savannah winners Janet and Wiley McCrary have won acclaim on the competitive barbecue circuit for their hot-off-the-grill entrees, sultry sides and tastebud-tingling sauces.
Runner-up: Blowin' Smoke

BREAKFAST & BRUNCH

J. Christopher's

Savannah magazine readers love to rise and shine at this four-time Best of Savannah

winner, where breakfast items — from chocolate chip pancakes to gourmet omelets — are served with a smile. Sidewalk seating earns extra props.

Runner-up, Breakfast: Breakfast Club
Runner-up, Brunch: B. Matthew's

BUSINESS LUNCH

Soho South Café

Talk business surrounded by original art work at Soho South Café, a Liberty Street haven and three-time winner offering gourmet lunches topped off with old-fashioned Southern desserts such as pecan pie and banana pudding.
Runner-up: Toucan Café

DESSERTS

Lulu's Chocolate Bar

Everything tastes better with chocolate, right? Try a chocolate mousse tower, cappuccino brownie or caramel martini for a taste of heaven at Lulu's Chocolate Bar, a reader fave since

2008.

Runner-up: Back in the Day Bakery

FINE DINING

The Olde Pink House

Located in a stylish 19th century mansion overlooking Reynolds Square, the Olde Pink House specializes in New Southern cuisine and delights locals and visitors alike.
Runner-up: Elizabeth on 37th

FRIED CHICKEN

Mrs. Wilkes' Dining Room

In her day, Mrs. Sema Wilkes could have taught the Colonel a thing or two about fried chicken. A Best of Savannah winner since 2008, this family-style culinary landmark attracted President Obama when he visited Savannah in March of 2010 — and, yes, he loved the fried chicken.
Runner-up: Lady & Sons

HAMBURGER

Five Guys Burgers & Fries

You want fries with that? *Savannah* magazine readers recommend this beloved Bay Street burger joint, operated by Chris Smith, which stands apart as a three-time Best Hamburger winner. A second location opened on U.S. Highway 80 on Whitmarsh Island in June. Opening soon in Twelve Oaks.
Runner-up: Green Truck Pub

ICE CREAM/ YOGURT

Leopold's Ice Cream

Decked out with cinematic nostalgia, Leopold's is a true Savannah tradition. This family-friendly ice cream parlor, operated lovingly by Stratton and Mary Leopold, specializes in old-fashioned

ice cream sodas, milkshakes and homemade ice cream flavors. No wonder Leopold's has been a winner in this category since 2006.
Runner-up: Lovin' Spoons

INDEPENDENT COFFEE SHOP

(Tie)

Gallery Espresso

This three-time winner offers steaming hot espresso and cappuccino as well as outstanding art exhibits, attracting a devoted, eclectic following to its convenient Bull Street location.

&

Sentient Bean

One of the best fair-trade coffee houses in the Southeast, Sentient Bean is a true community destination for caffeine junkies, music lovers, poetry aficionados and film buffs, with special events taking place throughout the year at this Park Avenue anchor.
Runner-up: Cutter's Point

ITALIAN

Bella's Italian Café

Lasagna lovers and pasta-philes know that this Habersham Village culinary destination, a winner in this category since 2007, offers a delicious taste of Italy with a southern Italian twist.
Runner-up: Leoci's

KID-FRIENDLY DINING

Basil's Pizza & Deli

This Wilmington Island restaurant and two-time winner delights parents with delicious Italian and Greek food as well as TV monitors that allow them to watch their children playing in the kids' room.
Runner-up: Jalapeno's



BEST KID-FRIENDLY DINING ★ BASIL'S PIZZA & DELI



BEST NEW RESTAURANT ★ GREEN TRUCK PUB

MEXICAN

Jalapeno's Mexican Restaurant

Owner Arnold Castellanos offers tasty Mexican cuisine and knockout margaritas at seven locations throughout the greater Savannah area, earning our readers' acclaim for Best Mexican Restaurant for four consecutive years.

Runner-up: Cancun

NEW RESTAURANT

Green Truck Pub

Organic ingredients in burgers, salads and sandwiches? Check. Lively selection of artisan beer and wine? Check. Homemade ketchup? Check. No wonder this Habersham Street restaurant and pub attracts crowds for lunch and dinner.

Runner-up: Brasserie 529

OUTDOOR/ON-THE-WATER DINING

Bonna Bella Yacht Club

Savannah magazine readers love to throw on a pair of flip-flops, sip a cold beverage and sample fresh seafood and steaks while overlooking the water at this three-time winner, which has also been featured on The Food Network.

Runner-up: Crab Shack

PIZZA

Vinnie Van GoGo's

Owner Paul Miller has earned top raves from our readers in this category since 2002. This City Market pizzeria delights diners with oversized New York City-style slices, abundant toppings and laid-back Savannah style.

Runner-up: Mellow Mushroom

SEAFOOD

The Crab Shack

The Crab Shack, a five-time winner, specializes in fresh local seafood, from shrimp to oysters. Jack and Belinda Flanigan attract visitors from around the world with their emphasis on casual waterfront dining and their display of live alligators.

Runner-up: Love's Seafood

STEAK

Ruth's Chris Steak House

When it comes to tender filet mignon or USDA Prime New York strip, this threepeat winner simply can't be beat. Ruth's Chris serves up signature steaks, much to the delight of carnivores across the Coastal Empire.

Runner-up: Outback Steakhouse

SUSHI

Sushi Zen

Sushi master Kazumi Yoshimoto, a.k.a. Chef Yoshi, is the culinary genius behind this repeat winner, dominating this category since 2003.

Runner-up: Ta Ca

TAKE-OUT

Zunzi's

Owners Gabriella and Johnny DeBeer offer quick, tasty and inexpensive meals with a South African flair. From a tiny York Street location, friendly staffers serve up fresh sandwiches, salads and entrees at this favorite restaurant, a winner in this category since 2006.

Runner-up: Hirano's

Best ★ *Nightlife*

APPETIZERS/BAR FOOD

Bar Food

Bar Food owners John H. Baker III and Paula Letcher converted a nondescript Habersham Village storefront into a happening nightspot, serving up tasty fusion-inspired cuisine and earning a nod in this category for two years in a row. *Runner-up: Jazz'd Tapas Bar*

BEER SELECTION

The Distillery

With 20-plus craft beers on tap nightly and hundreds of bottles to choose from, this three-time winner appeals to brew aficionados, who appreciate the vast selection and delectable pub food masterminded by owners Michael and Lori Volen. *Runner-up: Moon River Brewing Company*

COCKTAILS

Rocks on the Roof

The Kessler Collection's mixologists pour a wide range of signature cocktails,

including the Georgia Peach Martini and the Aquarium Showcase, which is garnished with a glow stick. *Runner-up: Jazz'd Tapas Bar*

PLACE TO GO DANCING & LATE NIGHT SPOT

Saya Lounge

Savannah magazine readers love to dance the night away amid the subterranean splendor and chic décor of Saya Lounge, a favorite Broughton Street destination. *Runner-up, Place to Go Dancing: Club One*
Runners-up, Late Night Spot: (Tie) Sweet Melissa's; McDonough's

PLACE FOR GIRLS NIGHT OUT

Jazz'd Tapas Bar

With an eclectic tapas menu, inventive cocktails and live entertainment, Jazz'd has been a favorite GNO destination for our female readers since 2008. *Runner-up: Rocks on the Roof*

HAPPY HOUR & PLACE FOR MEETING SINGLES

Rocks on the Roof

Nestled atop the Bohemian Hotel, this sexy rooftop lounge features spectacular river views and a lively happy hour. Best of all, this urban oasis serves as a great place to meet professional local bachelors and bachelorettes. *Runner-up, Best Happy Hour: Jalapeno's*
Runner-up, Best Place for Meeting Singles: (Tie) Jazz'd Tapas Bar; Saya Lounge

LIVE MUSIC/ ENTERTAINMENT

Live Wire

Jam bands, blues legends, jazz trios and Southern rockers all turn up the volume at Live Wire, a favorite River Street hot spot for live music and three-time Best of Savannah winner. *Runner-up: Wild Wings*

PUB

Six Pence Pub

Enjoy a taste of England in the heart of Savannah's National Historic Landmark District at Six Pence Pub, a three-time Best of Savannah fave. *Runner-up: Molly MacPherson's*

SPORTS BAR

Coach's Corner

Looking for the perfect place to watch the latest game? Sports fans know that Coach's Corner on Victory Drive, a four-time winner in this category, offers the ideal combination of large-screen televisions plus cheering fans, delicious food and plenty of beer on tap. *Runner-up: Wild Wings*



BEST APPETIZERS/BAR FOOD ★ BAR FOOD

Best ★ Community

CHARITY EVENT

Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure

Winning this category for the second year in a row, the annual Komen event seeks to inform people about and fight breast cancer by bringing together some 5,000 walkers and runners each spring. *Runner-up: American Diabetes Association's Kiss a Pig*

COMPANY TO WORK FOR

Gulfstream Aerospace

Responsible for designing and manufacturing large-cabin corporate jets, Gulfstream has been chosen as the best company to work for for the fourth year in a row. *Runner-up: Savannah College of Art and Design*

DAY TRIP & MOST FUN PLACE TO TAKE THE KIDS

Tybee Island

Whether you spend the day surfing the waves, playing in the sand or enjoying the

unique dining and shopping, Tybee Island is the place to be. And that is why it has been the No. 1 choice in both of these categories since 2009. *Runner-up, Day Trip: Charleston, S.C. Runner-up, Fun Place to Take the Kids: Oatland Island Wildlife Center of Savannah*

GOLF COURSE

The Club at Savannah Harbor

Escape the busy streets of downtown Savannah — but still get the breathtaking view — for a relaxing round of golf at The Club at Savannah Harbor. *Runners-up: (Tie) The Landings; Savannah Golf Club*

GROUP TO VOLUNTEER FOR

Humane Society for Greater Savannah

(In keeping with Best of Savannah tradition, the winner of this category receives a portion of ticket sales from the Best of Savannah party to be held Sept. 15.)

For four consecutive years, the Humane Society has won this category ... who can resist the cuddly kittens and adorable puppies? *Runner-up: Hospice Savannah*

MUSEUM/HOUSE MUSEUM

Telfair Academy/Jepson Center for the Arts

A vast spectrum of art — from 18th century to contemporary — is housed in these neighboring museums on Telfair Square. Collectively, these two museums and the runner-up comprise the Telfair Museums. *Runner-up: Owens-Thomas House Museum*

PRIVATE SCHOOL

Savannah Country Day School

Preparing students for the academic and life challenges of college, SCDS is a leader in shaping the lives of Savannah's next generation. *Runner-up: Savannah Christian Preparatory School*

PUBLIC SCHOOL

Savannah Arts Academy

Each year, the freshman class grows larger as more Savannahians realize the opportunities awaiting students at SAA. Alongside regular high school courses, students major in the various arts, such as instrumental or vocal music, visual arts, communications, dance and theater. *Runner-up: Hesse Elementary School*

RADIO STATION

WRHQ 105.3

Winning the category since 2001, this radio station is clearly a Savannah favorite. Station owner Jerry Rogers says: "Thanks for sticking with the local station for all these years." *Runner-up: 97.3 Kiss FM*

SPECIAL EVENT FACILITY

Charles H. Morris Center

Only open since 2007, this accommodating and resourceful venue has soared into popularity, winning the category since 2009. This year's Best of Savannah party will be held here on Sept. 15. *Runner-up: Savannah Station*

TV STATION

WTOC-TV

For more than 50 years, the "News Leader" has provided Savannah with news and local programming. This fact has not gone unnoticed by our readers, who have voted it No. 1 since 2009 when we added this category. *Runner-up: WSAV-TV*



BEST DAY TRIP/PLACE TO TAKE THE KIDS ★ TYBEE ISLAND



Best ★ Shopping

ART GALLERY

Chroma Art Gallery

Color serves as a dominant force at this vibrant downtown art gallery, which is an eight-time winner in this category. Owners Lori Keith Robinson and Jan Clayton Pagratis are both artists, so they infuse the gallery with a vibrant creativity.

Runner-up: Jepson Center for the Arts/Telfair Museums

BABY GEAR/ CLOTHING

Punch & Judy

A Best of Savannah fave since 2008, Punch & Judy is the perfect place to find great baby gear, precious toddler attire, high-quality cribs, distinctive baby shower gifts and much more.

Runner-up: Just for Baby

BAKERY

Back in the Day Bakery

From fresh-baked baguettes to sinfully decadent desserts, Back in the Day does

everything from scratch and with an urban-infused style, earning *Savannah* magazine's reader approval for five consecutive years.

Runner-up: Baker's Pride

BIKE SHOP

Bicycle Link

Stocking everything from Trek children's bikes to competition-quality triathlon bicycles, this two-time Best of Savannah winner located on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard offers an exceptional selection, plus rentals and repair.

Runner-up: Quality Bike Shop

BRIDAL

BleuBelle Bridal

Savvy brides know that this four-time Best of Savannah champ offers an exceptional selection of designer wedding dresses and chic bridal accessories, plus outstanding customer service.

CANDY SHOP

River Street Sweets

Indulge your sweet tooth at this award-winning Southern confectionary, which offers melt-in-your-mouth pralines as well as a host of freshly made chocolate delights.

Runner-up: Savannah Sweets

CAR DEALERSHIP

Critz

This family-owned business is devoted to making buying a new or used car an enjoyable experience, whether you're in the market for a Mercedes-Benz or a Buick. Continuing the family tradition, Dale Critz Jr. proudly stands behind every vehicle at this three-time Best of Savannah winner.

Runner-up: Grainger Honda

FASHION VALUE

Red Clover

Looking for the newest looks at affordable prices? Red Clover has earned smart shopper approval for three

consecutive years for its fashion flair and excellent value.

Runner-up: Fab'rik

FLORIST

John Davis Florist

This two-time winner knows flowers make any occasion more memorable. Owner John Davis brings an expert eye and an artist's touch to every floral arrangement.

Runner-up: Kiwi Fleur

FRESH PRODUCE

Fresh Market

Fresh Market features a wide range of conventional and organic produce to delight the most discriminating shoppers.

Runner-up: Polk's

JEWELRY

Levy Jewelers

Savannah's headquarters for fine jewelry, this family-owned institution has offered high-quality diamonds, world-class watches and

ERIN ADAMS



BEST CANDY SHOP ★ RIVER STREET SWEETS

Best ★ Services

AUDIO/VIDEO/ LIGHTING PRODUCTION COMPANY

Stage Front

Providing customers with all their audio, video and lighting needs, this company wins this category's debut.

BANK

Wells Fargo

Catering to commercial and small-business clients as well as individuals, this financial institution is a reader favorite. *Runner-up: Savannah Bank*

DAY SPA & MASSAGE

Savannah Day Spa

Savannah Day Spa can best be described as a "downtown oasis" with a myriad of services designed to de-stress your day. *Runner-up, Day Spa & Massage: Glow MedSpa*

MEDICAL SPA

Glow MedSpa

Presenting customers with

cutting-edge treatments and the finest in skin care, Courtney Buntin Victor and her father, Dr. Jules Victor, are here to pamper you. *Runner-up: New Youth Medical Spa*

FACIALS

(Tie)

Glow MedSpa

& Savannah Day Spa

Runner-up: SpaBleu

MANICURES/ PEDICURES

Golden Nails

You'll have the best hands and feet in town after a visit to Golden Nails.

Runner-up: Savannah Day Spa

DRY CLEANER

Curry Dry Cleaners

In business since 1944, and a long-time favorite of the locals, Curry Dry Cleaners will be around for generations to come.

Runner-up: David's Dry Cleaners

EXERCISE FACILITY/ GYM

YMCA

Affordable and family-friendly, the YMCA is a great place for the whole family to stay healthy while enjoying the many amenities of the Y's various locations.

Runner-up: The Landings

HAIR SALON

Towne

Specializing in today's latest haircuts and the most innovative hair-coloring techniques, Towne Salon strives to meet all your hairstyling needs.

Runner-up: Color Boxx Hair Salon

HOTEL

Avia Savannah

Strategically located in the heart of historic downtown overlooking Ellis Square, Avia is the place to stay for an unforgettable visit to Savannah.

Runner-up: Bohemian Hotel

INN/ BED & BREAKFAST

Presidents' Quarters

Modern amenities blend with historic charm and old-fashioned Southern hospitality at this blissful respite in the heart of downtown. The beautiful courtyard is the perfect setting for an intimate wedding.

Runner-up: The Gastonian

RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

The Marshes of Skidaway Island

Located on 58 acres on Skidaway Island, The Marshes offers a one-of-a-kind continuing care community.

Runner-up: Savannah Square

TOUR COMPANY

Old Savannah Tours

Guiding you through all the best that Savannah has to offer, Old Savannah Tours is sure to make your Savannah experience a memorable one.

Runner-up: Old Town Trolley

TRAVEL AGENCY

Four Seasons

If you've seen everything there is to see in Savannah, why not explore someplace new? Four Seasons Travel has everything you need to plan your adventure.

Runner-up: AAA



BEST AUDIO/VIDEO/
LIGHTING PRODUCTION
COMPANY ★ STAGE FRONT



Best ★ People

BAND

Liquid Ginger

Rocking the faces off of Savannahians since 2000, Liquid Ginger has been a reader favorite for the past six years.

Runner-up: The Trainwrecks

BARTENDER

Katie Olson

Katie Olson receives rave reviews from her loyal customers at the Hyatt Regency Savannah.

Runner-up: Patrick Huffstetler at Rail Pub

CATERER

Susan Mason

Winning this category since 2007, Susan Mason's exquisite Southern style is sure to add the perfect touch to your special event. Who can resist the tomato sandwiches?

Runner-up: Nick Mueller

CHEF

Nick Mueller

Making every dish from scratch, Nick Mueller is sure

to awaken your taste buds with his tasty creations.

Runner-up: Paula Deen

COLUMNIST

Bill Dawers

A well-known columnist for the *Savannah Morning News*, Bill Dawers writes about Savannah in his weekly columns, "Man About Town" and "City Talk."

Runner-up: Tom Barton, editorial page editor of the Savannah Morning News

PARTY/EVENT PLANNER

Sebrell Smith Designer Events

Bringing more than 15 years of experience and Southern hospitality to the table, Sebrell Smith adds special touches to small or large events.

Runner-up: Tricia Huddas

PET SITTER/ GROOMER

Catnip 'n' Biscuits/At Home Pet Sitters

While you're away — on

vacation or at work — these friendly folks will provide your best friends with socialization and love until you return.

Runner-up: Carol's Pampered Pets

PHOTOGRAPHER

Christine Hall

Specializing in wedding and portrait photography, Christine Hall captures life's special moments with her outstanding talent and artistic eye.

Runner-up: Donna Von Bruening

TELEVISION PERSONALITY

Sonny Dixon

Winning each year since 2002, Sonny Dixon is clearly a local favorite. Look for his smile on the airways at WTOG and at various events in the community.

Runner-up: Jesse Blanco, WJCL/WTGS

VETERINARIAN

Case Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Jerry Case and Dr. Carla Case McCorvey carry on the family business begun 102 years ago by Carla's great-grandfather.

Runner-up: Islands Veterinary Clinic ■

CONGRATULATIONS!

★★★★★

Anne Marie Gladden was the lucky winner of a grand prize package that includes Sunday Jazz Brunch for two at Aqua Star, a massage or facial at Heavenly Spa and a foursome of golf at the Club at Savannah Harbor. Her ballot was drawn from among the record number of verifiable ballots submitted for this year's Best of Savannah reader poll. Thank you to the Westin Savannah Harbor for its generous donation!

★★★★★



BEST PET SITTER/GROOMER
★ **CATNIP 'N' BISCUITS/AT HOME PET SITTERS**