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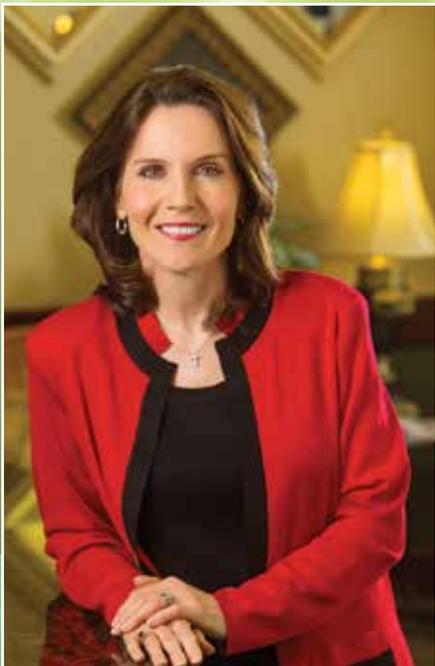
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ON THE COVER: Co-owner Todd Henderson, Executive Chef Matt Scofield, and General Manager Matt Meis will make sure your visit to Parkside Restaurant is a good one.

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This is the first of a monthly column highlighting some of the dogs and cats who have called the SPCA of Wake County home for far too long. Since the SPCA is a no-kill shelter, their adoptable pets stay with them as long as it takes them to find a home. This means that when the shelter is full, there's no available space for new pets. Some of these wonderful animals are older or have traits that require special attention or medications but want and need to be loved all the same. We hope you'll consider giving one of these (and the many other) long-timers a place to call home where they can feel safe and be cared for. Visit the SPCA of Wake County for more overlooked pets who could use a new family. You can also visit www.spcawake.org/longtimers or call 919.772.2326.



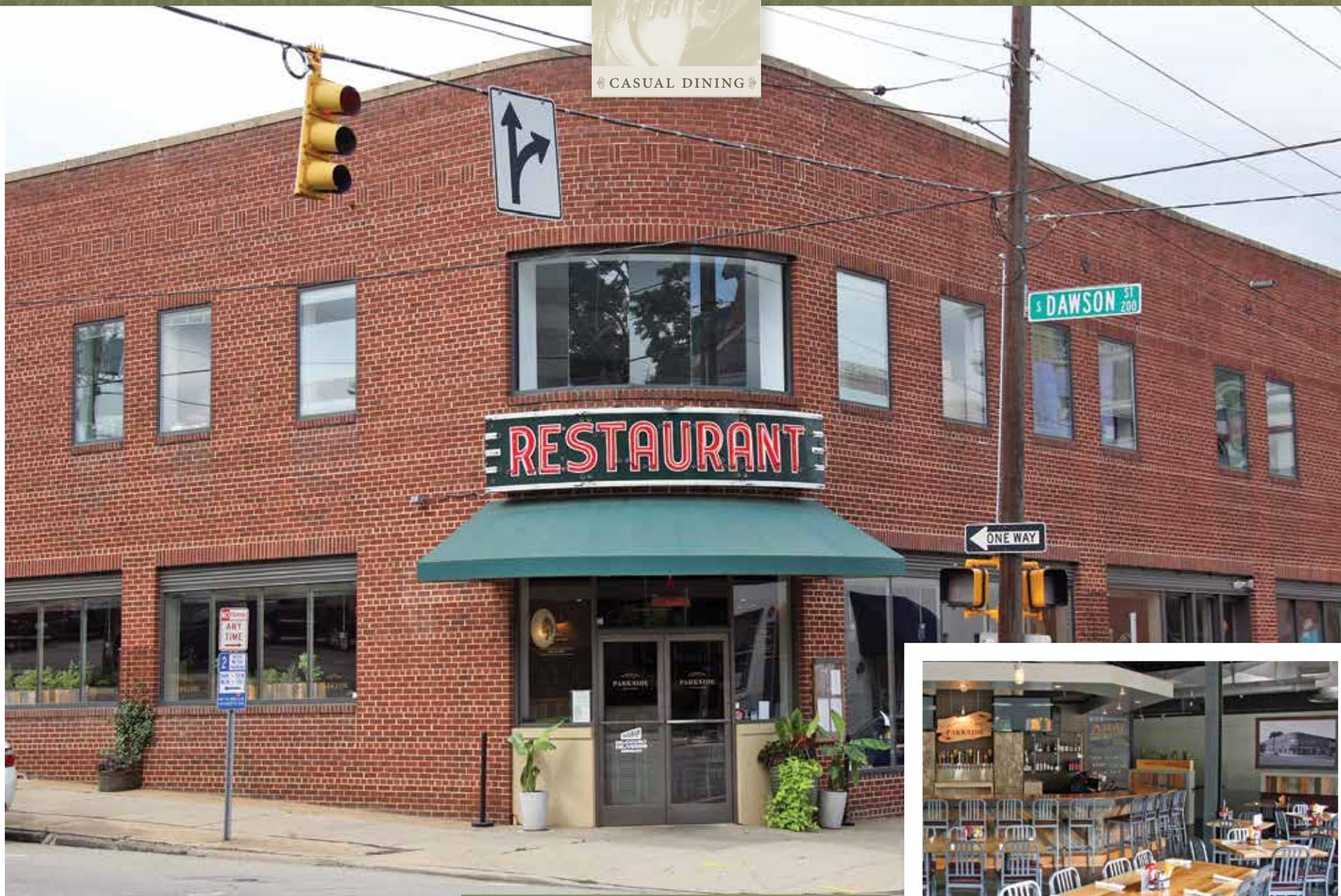
Bojangles is a two-year-old chocolate lab mix. More than anything else, he loves tennis balls. Walks are ok, but playing fetch in a fenced yard is his favorite way to pass the time and get some exercise. He would like to be the only pet in the home, just to be sure he gets all the tennis balls. Not to worry though, BoJangles knows to trade one tennis ball so he can chase a new one. He can even pick up two tennis balls at once, so you'll never know you're only playing with one dog! His foster mom says he is a dream in the house. He can be crated but doesn't need to be. Talk to an adoption counselor at 919-772-2326 if you're interested in meeting him.



Tommy If you're looking for an easy-going feline, Tommy is just the cat for you. He doesn't ask for much. Tommy was adopted as a kitten and lived in his home for almost

three and a half years. His adopter had to move across the country and couldn't take Tommy along, so Tommy is back to the SPCA. His family said he's good with men, women, kids, and other cats. They've never seen him around dogs. Tommy is on a diet to make sure he feels his best, so he's hoping his new family will help him play and exercise. Call 919-772-2326 or visit www.spcawake.org for more information on Tommy.

This space is donated to the SPCA of Wake County by Triangle Downtowner Magazine because we love our furry friends.



BY CHRISTY GRIFFITH • PHOTOS BY CRASH GREGG

Perhaps one of the most iconic sights in downtown Raleigh's Warehouse District is the neon RESTAURANT sign that sits above the doors at 301 West Martin Street. Todd Henderson and co-owner Todd Hamilton inherited the longest running neon restaurant sign in the state of North Carolina when he took over the space and opened Parkside, a name inspired by its proximity to Nash Square. The sign was originally made for Warren's in the 1940s and then adopted by the long-running, much-loved Joe's Place.

Parkside is a love letter to North Carolina. Henderson, a Raleigh native, has proudly furnished the entire restaurant with local reclaimed wood and handmade furniture created by Raleigh Reclaimed, bringing a sophisticated warmth to the space that was lacking in its previous incarnation as Brewmasters. Classy casual at its best.

Henderson is a sommelier, so expect to be impressed by the wine list. And the beer selection from by General Manager and cicerone Matt Meis is just as solid with loads of local craft options to choose from. There's a full bar, so stop by and enjoy the beautiful handcrafted bar top while you sip and snack.

The dining menu from executive chef Matt Scofield is eclectic and everyone should be able to



find something to suit their moods and tastes. The Fried Provolone Wheel (\$9) is encased in a perfectly crisp panko shell with no hints of sogginess even under bruschetta and a viscously good balsamic reduction. One of the most popular items on the small plates menu are the Bacon Wrapped Dates (\$9). The bacon is legit, thick and peppery, and the dates are stuffed with tangy goat cheese. Pair these with a glass of wine and pretend that you're not wearing yoga pants to dinner.

If I see nachos on a menu, nine times out of ten I'm ordering them. Nachos bring people together. You can't angry-eat nachos. Nachos transcend politics, race, and religion. You can't look neat or dainty eating nachos. You get to lick your fingers afterwards. Nachos are the best and if anyone says otherwise, they are a dirty, dirty liar. The Nachos (\$9) at Parkside come with (vegetarian) black-eyed peas, jalapeños, fire-roasted salsa, guacamole, and queso. For a \$4 upcharge, you can bulk it up with some protein, whether it be pulled pork, chicken, or vegan jackfruit BBQ.

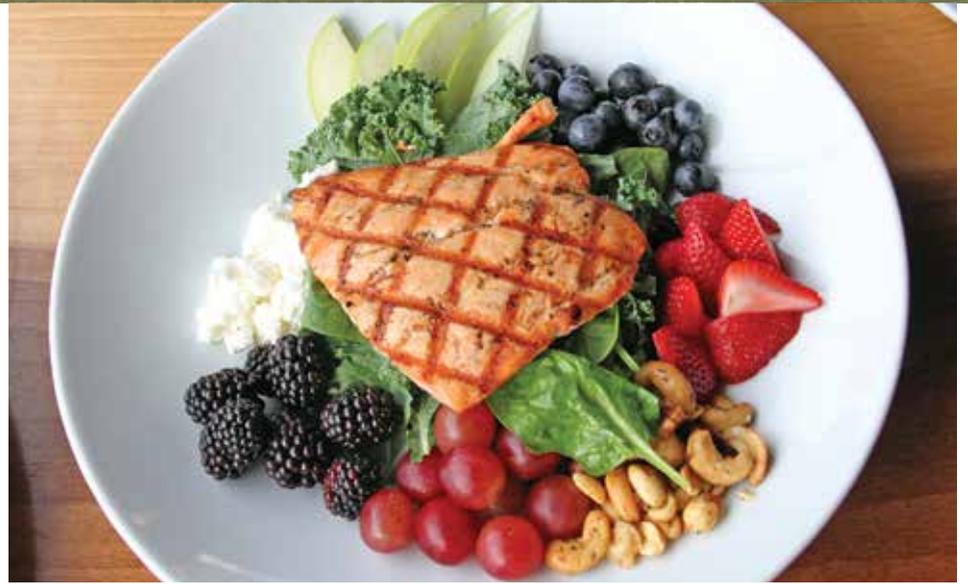
So what is jackfruit you might ask? I've seen the 60-second clips making the rounds on social media where you can turn this strange-looking fruit into a vegan pulled pork substitute. It seems to be pretty labor-intensive; enough so that I bet



A photo of Parkside's location when it was Warren's Restaurant in the 1940s.



If you're in the mood to eat with your hands, go for the Parkside Burger. It comes decked out in cheddar, avocado, lettuce, tomato, onion, and a very, very special bacon.



The Fruit Power Bowl with optional grilled salmon is the prettiest thing you will eat at Parkside.

a lazy vegan here or there might just throw in the towel and come back to our side. We were warned that the "BBQ" was a bit strange if you ate it by itself. This turned out to be 100% accurate. Somehow that funkiness disappears when you eat it with other food. And just like that, nachos again prove that they are better than all of us.

There are lots of interesting fresh salads and bowls on the menu, but we went with the Fruit Power Bowl (\$9.99) and added grilled salmon (\$5). This is the prettiest thing you will eat at Parkside. An artfully composed rainbow of a salad is just waiting for you to post its beautiful mug on Instagram with some kind of witty hashtag about how you are better than the rest of

us because you have this gorgeous bowl of baby spinach and kale covered with blueberries, apples, grapes, strawberries, spiced nuts, and goat cheese. Try it with the balsamic. Make everyone jealous. It looks healthy, it sounds healthy, but it tastes like maybe once in a while I won't order the nachos.

If you're in the mood to eat with your hands, I'd recommend skipping the salad unless you're trying *really* hard to make some kind of impression. Go straight for the burgers and sandwiches section of the menu and consider the Parkside Burger (\$12.49). It comes decked out in cheddar, avocado, lettuce, tomato, onion, and that very, very special bacon. It doesn't even need – dare

I say it? – mayonnaise. If you don't get this burger with some pink in the middle, well, there's good taste and then there's yours.

The Chicken & Waffle Sandwich (\$11.49) solves the age-old dilemma of how to gracefully eat chicken and waffles sans silverware. The rosemary-onion waffles are thick and pillowy, a nice foil to the fried chicken, baby greens, and harissa-spiced maple syrup. All sandwiches and burgers come with choice of a side, but good luck choosing because there are more options than there are ways I love to eat mayonnaise.

If I were to pick one section of the menu I'd hit hardest, it'd be the dinner plates. Sometimes I actually do >>>



Parkside's Bacon Wrapped Dates and the ManMason make a great pair.



The Fried Provolone Wheel is encased in a perfectly crisp panko shell with no hints of soginess even under bruschetta and a viscously good balsamic reduction.



The Nachos at Parkside come with black-eyed peas, jalapeños, fire-roasted salsa, guacamole, and queso. For a \$4 upcharge, you can bulk it up with some protein, whether it be pulled pork, chicken, or vegan jackfruit BBQ.

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The Parkside Meatloaf comes with three thick slices covered in an unctuous tomato gravy beautifully paired with some fresh haricot vert and a heaping pile of delicious red-skinned mashed potatoes.



Banana Pudding and Larry's Beans coffee are made for each other.

exactly what you'd expect. (Get this one with a beer or sweet tea. Coffee goes great too!) There are other equally delicious-sounding desserts to order but this girl wore lycra-less pants like an amateur, so we'll save those for our next trip. 🍷

want to eat a meat or three with a fork. That's an option! Put on your stretchy pants and go for it! Other options include Shrimp & Grits (\$16.99) and this version features a heavy dose of Mexican chorizo. The Eggplant Parmesan (\$14.99) is the crispiest fried eggplant I've ever had the pleasure of eating. It also comes with enough egg noodles to feed your neighbors, your neighbors' friends, and your neighbors' friends' cousins. My favorite dish of the night though was the Meatloaf (\$14.99). Three thick slices appeared in front of me covered in an unctuous tomato gravy that paired beautifully with some fresh haricot vert that were as unfussy as they were delicious. To mop up all the stuff going on on my plate was a heaping pile of the best red-skinned mashed potatoes I've ever had. I made enough faces over them that

Henderson knowingly uttered the word "butter." Butter, much like good beer, only improves most situations.

There are various daily specials, but on Mondays the Meatloaf plate sells for \$10. WIN! And there is parking in the evenings directly across the street. SCORE! And Henderson is raising money through Parkside for Make-A-Wish. WOA! There were a lot of statements in this paragraph that make you want to Bat dance with some ZAPS!, POWS!, and WHAMMMS!

If you saved room for dessert, which means you probably wore your stretchy pants, good on you. The Strawberry Cake (\$7) comes with fresh vanilla bean ice cream. (Get this one with a hot cup of Larry's Beans.) Henderson's favorite, and I tend to agree, is the Banana Pudding (\$6), a delicious yet ungussied-up offering of



Parkside Restaurant

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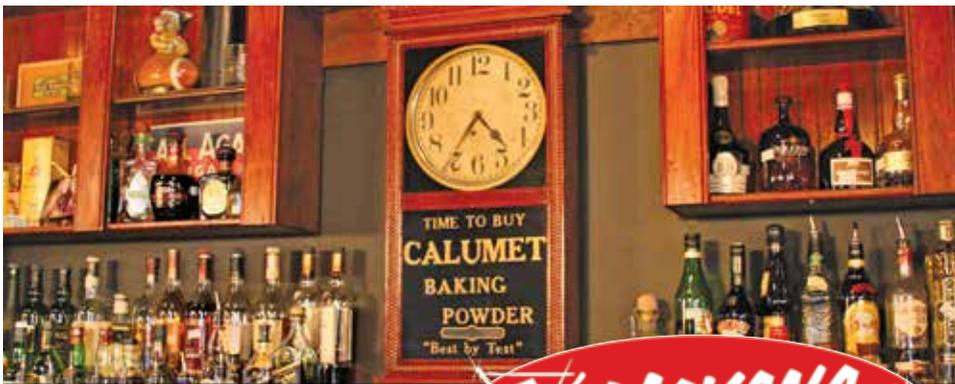
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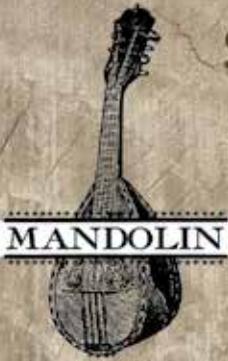
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From the Publisher



As some of you read in last month's issue, or may have seen online, after many years of considering it, I've decided to run for Raleigh City Council. I've always tried to utilize the *Downtowner* as a way to promote all the good things in and around our City and over the past 11 years as publisher, I've been fortunate enough to meet a widely diverse and incredible array of people: presidents, governors, mayors, business owners, unemployed and employed, mothers, fathers, children, and the homeless. I've always tried to treat each and every one of the people I've met with the same respect, attention, and interest, because although we are all not

the same, we are all equal. I also believe that everyone should be treated equally and with dignity, regardless of circumstances, background, or social class.

I've learned a lot from the people I've had the pleasure of meeting over the years and hearing about life experiences from many different perspectives was important to me. It has helped shape my outlook on life and how I view others as well as myself.

I've always listened and learned but was unable to do much to help, other than highlighting great charitable organizations in the *Downtowner*, volunteering, and serving on the boards for several local charities, including the Women's Center of Wake County for the past nine years. I could pass the information I learned on to government officials but was unable to act on it, truly champion a cause, or work to right an injustice or inequality. If I were to serve on City Council, I would be able to do so much more – from the inside – where laws are



Filing for the City Council race.

made, and where I will be able to reach more government officials who could help, whether at the city, county, or state level. And I'll still be able to utilize the *Downtowner* to reach more than

170,000 readers each month to inform and promote new ideas, programs, and initiatives.

I've already begun meeting with previous and current Raleigh and Wake County officials, as well as community leaders, church pastors, group presidents, business owners, and concerned citizens to hear their voices and their opinions about what is missing or needed. I want to hear residents' and business owners' issues and concerns, what they and their neighbors need from the city, their ideas to help people grow and better themselves, and to protect their businesses and their families.

Over the next three months, I will be meeting with as many people as possible and learning even more. And if elected, I plan on using that knowledge and doing something with it. I'm not running to become a politician. I'm running for City Council because I plan on becoming a true Civil Servant, which to me should be the most accurate description of those who serve on the council, and for that matter, a true description of what all political positions should be, especially at the city and county level. We have a duty to the people we

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represent to do all we can to truly be an advocate, a defender, and a champion; to serve with respect, honor, truth, humility, and hard work.

There are four other individuals running for Raleigh City Council, District C, and I encourage you to learn more about all of them before making your decision on a candidate to vote for. At the end of this article is a list of all those running in this district. Please visit their websites and read up on all of us and then make your own decision on who you would like to vote for. Your duty as a voter is to be as informed as possible, and choose who you believe will do the best job at representing the interests of all the people in your district, not just a small percentage. District C is the most wonderfully diverse and colorful of all the districts, which to me, makes it the most interesting and the most challenging. Luckily, I love a good challenge as much as I truly enjoy helping people. It's part of who I am and always will be.

It would be a sincere honor to serve the residents of District C for the next two years on City Council. Please visit my campaign website listed below to learn more about

me, my views and the issues I think are important to our district. Some of these include affordable housing, responsible growth, gentrification, parking, and local business. I will offer my experience, my dedication, and my work ethic as a civil servant of District C and will do my best to faithfully represent the interests of everyone in this district. I also hope you will consider lending your support to my campaign as we will need your help on this road to City Council.

At your service,

Crash

Crash S Gregg
 Publisher, Triangle Downtowner Magazine
 Candidate, Raleigh City Council

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Sweet Peas Urban Gardens

From Shipping Container to Table



Tami Purdue, founder and driving force behind Sweet Peas Urban Gardens

BY ANN LOKUTA • PHOTOS BY CRASH S. GREGG

There's a ranch style home surrounded by trees at 1931 New Bern Avenue, less than two miles east of downtown Raleigh. If you take the time to look closely, just to the side of the house, you'll spot a brightly painted old shipping container. Hidden inside are thousands of tiny herbs and vegetables, sprouting and growing steadily. I parked in the driveway, pulled up the hood of my jacket, and sprinted through the rain to the front door of Tami Purdue's house, otherwise known as Sweet Peas Urban Gardens.

I met Tami about six months ago when I moved to Raleigh. I had just spent the previous two weeks working on a farm in Maine through Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms, otherwise referred to as "WWOOF". Tami owns Sweet Peas; an urban farm known by many chefs in Raleigh as the local source of delectable microgreens that add the perfect finishing ingredient to their dishes. If you ask Tami, she'll let you know that this incredible flavor is undoubtedly a perk, but the wonder of microgreens is their wonderful density of nutrients. These baby veggies and herbs have been found to contain from four to 40 times the nutrition of the full-grown plants.

The repurposed shipping container on the side of the house is actually called a Cropbox. It's outfitted with a hydroponic growing system that allows for total control of the box's temperature, humidity, CO₂ levels, water quality, and airflow. This means Sweet Peas can grow year-round regardless of weather conditions and



An uninvited but welcomed guest at the Gardens

eliminates their need for any pesticides or fertilizers. The microgreen seeds are sprinkled on burlap sheets, stacked vertically on shelves, and provided the water they need to form the very first leaf structure of their lives, known as cotyledons. At this point, they're ready to be harvested and packaged solo or as a mix, like the Heart Healthy Zesty blend, which includes spicy radish and mustard microgreens.

This is just a snippet of the information Tami shared within a few minutes the very first time I met her. Since then, I've learned something new every time we've talked and always leave our interactions with a heightened level of inspiration. This is probably why WWOOFers have described her as a "great evangelist for microgreens" and a "beacon of light for others looking for adventure."

The next time I arrived, Tami answered the door and simultaneously gave me a big hug and offered coffee, which I always accept. I immediately walked into a buzz of conversation and action. There was a crew around the warmly lit kitchen table, which included Travis and Charles, who were in town from Brooklyn to learn about Tami's growing practices in order to replicate her method in New York (look out for Little Box Farms). Ellis, Sweet Peas' videographer, photographer, and website designer, was taking pointers from Travis on site design. Natasha and Spencer, farm co-managers, were discussing plans for the day's orders and harvest. I settled in at the table and smiled to myself as Tami set a large, steaming cup of coffee down in front of me.



Cropbox, the brightly painted shipping container that houses Sweet Peas Urban Gardens



Inside the shipping container, long shelves constantly host a wide variety of seeds which quickly grow into young sprouts.



A new crop of sprouts ready to be harvested.

There are a few facts about Tami you should know. She was an accountant in her life before Sweet Peas, but felt that something important was missing from her career. So she did something about it. A profound love and fascination for food led her to pursue various food endeavors on the side, until the realization hit that her microgreens home garden could be much more. She took a calculated and strategic leap away from the law practice she managed and dove head first into the Raleigh urban farm movement. She fortuitously connected with Julie Gauthier, a veterinarian and public health expert working with

the USDA at the time, who has been a wealth of knowledge and critical character in Sweet Peas' story.

Today, the Sweet Peas Urban Gardens family includes ten part time employees, rotating NCSU student volunteers, and usually a WWOOFer or two that live in the house. Tami makes it clear that these amazing people are whom she has to thank for Sweet Peas' growth. Jamie Eggleston, Sweet Peas' sales and delivery guru, is just one of the employees Tami gratefully raves about. She tells stories of the WWOOFers from Living Kitchen that helped foster a thriving collaboration with various downtown

restaurants and a WWOOFer from Canada who graciously developed an entire marketing plan for the farm.

The team over at 1931 New Bern Avenue is always busy. You'll find them at seven farmers' markets in the Triangle area and keep your eye out for a touch of microgreens on dishes at Raleigh restaurants including Death & Taxes, Brewery Bhavana, and Fiction Kitchen. They attend various vendor events throughout the year, host farm learning parties, and are in constant collaboration with other organizations in the city to further educate people on urban farming and local food. >>>



Sunflower seed sprouts

This doesn't even include the everyday tasks of tending to the farm! It's definitely not all sunshine and rainbows. Farming is a tough business and these folks are working extremely hard every day to keep Sweet Peas going as a successful and thriving production.

So, how can you support them? Spreading the word is step number one. Tell your friends, family, coworkers, and the person sitting next to you right now about the Sweet Peas story. If you like going out to eat, go to www.SweetPeasUrbanGardens.com for a list of the restaurants that use Tami's microgreens and give one of them a try. You can buy microgreens for use at home from any of the farmers' markets Sweet Peas attends,

including Holly Springs, Wake Forest, Quail Corners, and Rebus Saturday Market. You can also order them from The Produce Box or contact Tami to buy directly from the farm. If you have other ideas of how to get involved, give Sweet Peas a shout. Tami and her team tend to be a fan of thinking outside the (crop)box.

Learn more about Sweet Peas Urban Gardens at www.sweetpeasurbangardens.com.

Ann is a Registered Dietitian and freelance writer on a mission to make wellness an enjoyable and achievable part of life. Follow her on Instagram @wellthatsfunRD for realistic tips on living well and having fun.



How To Support Local Farmers

- 🌿 Shop at Farmers' Markets
- 🌿 Buy in to Community Supported Agriculture (co-ops)
- 🌿 Eat at restaurants that use local ingredients
- 🌿 Visit www.PeakFoodCo.com to find NC farms near you
- 🌿 Buy local produce from the grocery store
- 🌿 Visit www.woofusa.org to volunteer at NC farms
- 🌿 Contact farmers directly to learn more about what they do
- 🌿 Have conversations about local food with your friends

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From the Downtown Raleigh Alliance

To the Downtown Raleigh community and Triangle readers,

Thanks to the *Downtowner*, we have the opportunity to share this information that was sent to our members:

As we close out our 2016-2017 fiscal year, I want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude, reflect on significant milestones from the past year, and share some exciting planned initiatives.

Advocacy

- By serving on the downtown parking study team, we advocate for the interests of downtown businesses, visitors, and residents to improve downtown parking.
- With two representatives directly involved in the planning of Dix Park and a representative on the Moore Square renovation implementation team, we're actively involved in and excited about both parks, which will be important assets for downtown Raleigh.
- We recently assisted in providing an update of the city's bike plan and advocated for bike share, which will launch in the near future.
- The Wake Transit Plan, an initiative we strongly supported, passed public referendum last year and will bring mass transit and improved bus service to the entire county.

Retail

- Since late 2015, 11 stores received \$49,000 in retail up-fit grant awards provided by the DRA.
- 65 storefront businesses opened in downtown since the start of 2016.

Research and Analysis

- Our State of Downtown report features 70 pages of data on development and investment, sustainability, residential, retail, restaurants, arts, culture, connectivity and future planning; it was distributed at our annual State of Downtown event that over 600 people attended. The report is available for download here: http://godowntownraleigh.com/_files/sodlosres.pdf

Marketing & Events

- Over 115 earned media mentions in TV, print and online including spotlights on downtown economic development news and DRA events such as Downtown Raleigh Restaurant Week.
- The DRA hosted community events such as Raleigh Downtown Farmers Market, First Friday, Movie Series



and Downtown Raleigh Restaurant Week and partnered on events including Canstruction, World of Bluegrass, Artsposure, and First Night Raleigh.

Safety

- Downtown Raleigh's first Safety Summit, hosted by the DRA, brought together 30 downtown security firms in June 2017 with plans to meet monthly to discuss important safety topics.

Through services such as safety ambassadors, retail attraction, economic development, advocacy, marketing and analysis, we assist in creating a downtown that is safe, accessible, creative and vibrant. Thank you again for your support of the Downtown Raleigh Alliance and downtown Raleigh!

To learn more about the Downtown Raleigh Alliance or to become a member, please visit www.godowntown-raleigh.com.

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Around Town News in the Triangle

We love hearing about local growth and sharing it with our readers. Overhear juicy news about a new locally owned restaurant, bar, retail shop, or business opening in downtown Raleigh or across the Triangle? Send us your news@welovedowntown.com and clue us in. To say “Thanks Ya’ll,” we’ll pick a couple of random tipsters each month to win a free t-shirt.

The Around Town News is sponsored by our publisher Crash S. Gregg, who is also a commercial and residential real estate agent with Century 21. If you’re interested in finding commercial space for sale or lease in the downtown Raleigh/inside the beltline area, or buying/selling a home, please give him a call at 919.828.8888, and he’ll be glad to give you a hand.

We’re looking for writers who want to help us report on all the news, so drop us an email if you’re interested to writers@welovedowntown.com. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/triangledowntowner, Instagram at www.instagram.com/triangledowntowner or Twitter for updates on openings and closings in the area. We’ll be posting all these stories and more on our new, completely redesigned website, launching February 1st. Much thanks to some of our blogger friends for helping to spread the news on all the great new businesses, restaurants and bars in the area: Triangle Food Guy, Ashton Smith, and the wonderfully tongue-in-cheek WFIV.

To keep up with news between issues as well as lots of event and food photos, be sure to follow us on an or all of our social media pages. Facebook www.facebook.com/triangledowntowner • Instagram www.instagram.com/triangledowntowner • Twitter www.twitter.com/welovedowntown



MOFU Shoppe is now open! The owners began their career with a food truck, Dump Pho King Truck and were approached by the Food Network to compete in The Great Food Truck Race.

They went on to win and became the first and only all-female team to ever win a season. They put their \$50,000 winnings towards their restaurant in City Market. www.mofushoppe.com

made from shipping containers and modular greenhouse components with the entire structure used to grow food, and the first floor used for a retail market. Watch future issues of the Downtowner for an article on The Farmery. www.thefarmery.com



Check out the next **Ya’ll** at Dix Park free music event on August 22. Live music from Birds of Avalon, The Beast, The Debonzo Brothers, and Brook Hatala. Food trucks, draft beer, and more. Dog-friendly! www.yallatdixpark.com



Congrats to the **Cupcake Shoppe Bakery** on Glenwood Avenue on bringing tasty treats to the Triangle for ten years. Baking from scratch and using the freshest ingredients, they were the first cupcake shop to appear in Raleigh.

www.thecupcakeshopperaleigh.com



North Carolina’s first cocktail bitters company, **Crude Bitters**, has moved into its new location at 501 E Davie Street. Founded in 2012 by Craig Rude, the cocktail bitters and shrub syrup concentrates from Crude are hand-crafted by human hands, and are made with non-GMO alcohol, and with no glycerin, chemicals or dyes. Look for an article in an upcoming Downtowner on Crude Bitters. www.crudebitters.com

The Farmery has moved to its new location by Motorco. The Farmery is an urban farm and market



Oaks and Spokes is leading a community-funded Cycletrack, a temporary 6-month two-way protected bike lane that will run between Glenwood South to the Warehouse District. They’re partnering with The BikeRaleigh Program and the Pedestrian and Advisory Commission for the project, which is community funded.



Consider donating to help fiish this project on their website, <https://oaksandspokes.wildapricot.org/Projects>.

New greenway plans are underway connecting downtown at Peace Street to the Crabtree Creek Greenway along 2.6 miles of Capital Boulevard and Pigeon House Branch. The \$36.9 million, three-year **Capital Boulevard project** includes a new 14-acre park at Peace St. named Devereux Meadow Park that will also run next to Capital Blvd. View a Youtube video from the NCDOT on the the Capital Boulevard project here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cgvem5sxhM



Pho Vietnam has opened in the 2811 Building in Raleigh at the corner of Hillsborough Street and Dan Allen Drive. This is their second location with their first on Buck Jones Road. www.facebook.com/Pho-Vietnam-1648915392024893

Amber Cummings, a former designer with Feelgoodz as well as a textile designer, has started out on her own along with partner Ian Sheeley, a mechanical engineer, to found **Sedette Sandal Co.** Based in Raleigh, Sedette specializes in beech wood clogs, using woven textures instead of leather. www.sedettesandals.com



The Renaissance Hotel in North Hills announced the grand opening of **41Hundred**, the new restaurant concept inside the Renaissance Raleigh North Hills Hotel. 41Hundred will replace Flights, the previous hotel restaurant, but we’re glad to hear they’ll be keeping their talented executive chef, Dean Thompson, at the helm. Learn more at www.41hundredrestaurant.com.





What's Trending: Canned Wine

By LIZ OLIVIERI

Canned wines are a thing now, there's no getting around it. Whether it's because consumers are actively looking for sustainable packaging or they're just following the newest trend in the beverage world, cans fit the bill. Many different wines are being packaged into all kinds of environmentally-friendly packaging, and we've been big fans of boxed wine for a while now, but the newest enclosure is opening up a whole new can of worms – pun intended. Just like buying any other kind of wine, there are a couple of things to look for when purchasing a can to make sure you're getting the best possible juice, because there are a lot of not so good cans out there. Awesome thing is, we've done the research for you and have found a couple of delicious canned wines that we now stock at the shop, but here's some 'pro-tips' for your canned wine shopping.

First, look for a vintage. This couldn't be more important, especially with bulk packaging like boxes and cans. Unlike our food, there's no expiration date specifically written on the cans, so we have to do our own sleuthing. The easiest way to tell that your wine is fresh and up to date is to look at the vintage. The vintage tells you when the grapes were harvested, and it's also the only indication we have that you're getting the same wine from the same batch each time you open the can. Many cans out there don't have the vintage on the label, which means they're allowed to give you whatever juice they have left over, even if it means a collection of juice from the bottom of previous years' tanks. It's important for all wines, but especially with rosé. Rosé is meant to be enjoyed right away at its freshest point and there's no way to tell you're getting the most current wine if there's not a vintage on the can.

In the same vein, cans clearly aren't meant to be aged in your cellar, they're meant to be popped and consumed the moment

you purchase, so make sure it's something that is current and hasn't been lying around in a warehouse or in a storage closet for a while. The best way is to check out the producer, see which vintage is up to date, and search for that one at your local store. Anything before that current vintage may have been sitting for a while, and not doing any favors to the young juice inside.

The next thing to look for is that a real person makes it from a real place. Just like bottled wine, it's important to know where your wine is coming from and that it was made with care and an attention to detail. The same way we care about where our food comes from, or that we prefer craft microbrew to Miller Lite, knowing that your wine is made by hand from artisanal producers is just as significant. There's tons of wine out there that is pulled from ginormous farms by machines and is mass-produced with additives to mask bad grapes and terrible flavor, and the problem persists, especially with cans. Know where your wine comes from. It doesn't necessarily have to be the same juice that is going into a bottle, but know that it could be. The same standards that apply for buying a handcrafted, small production bottle of wine go even further when looking for cans.

Just like the early days of screw caps and boxes, alternative packaging for wine can get a bad rap. It's true, not all the best wine goes into these sorts of packages. However, as long as you're choosy and seek out small production, artisanal wines that hold the standards of value and balance, there are some great options out there. 🍷

Liz works at The Raleigh Wine Shop located at 126 Glenwood Avenue in downtown Raleigh. Email liz@theraleighwineshop.com to contact her.

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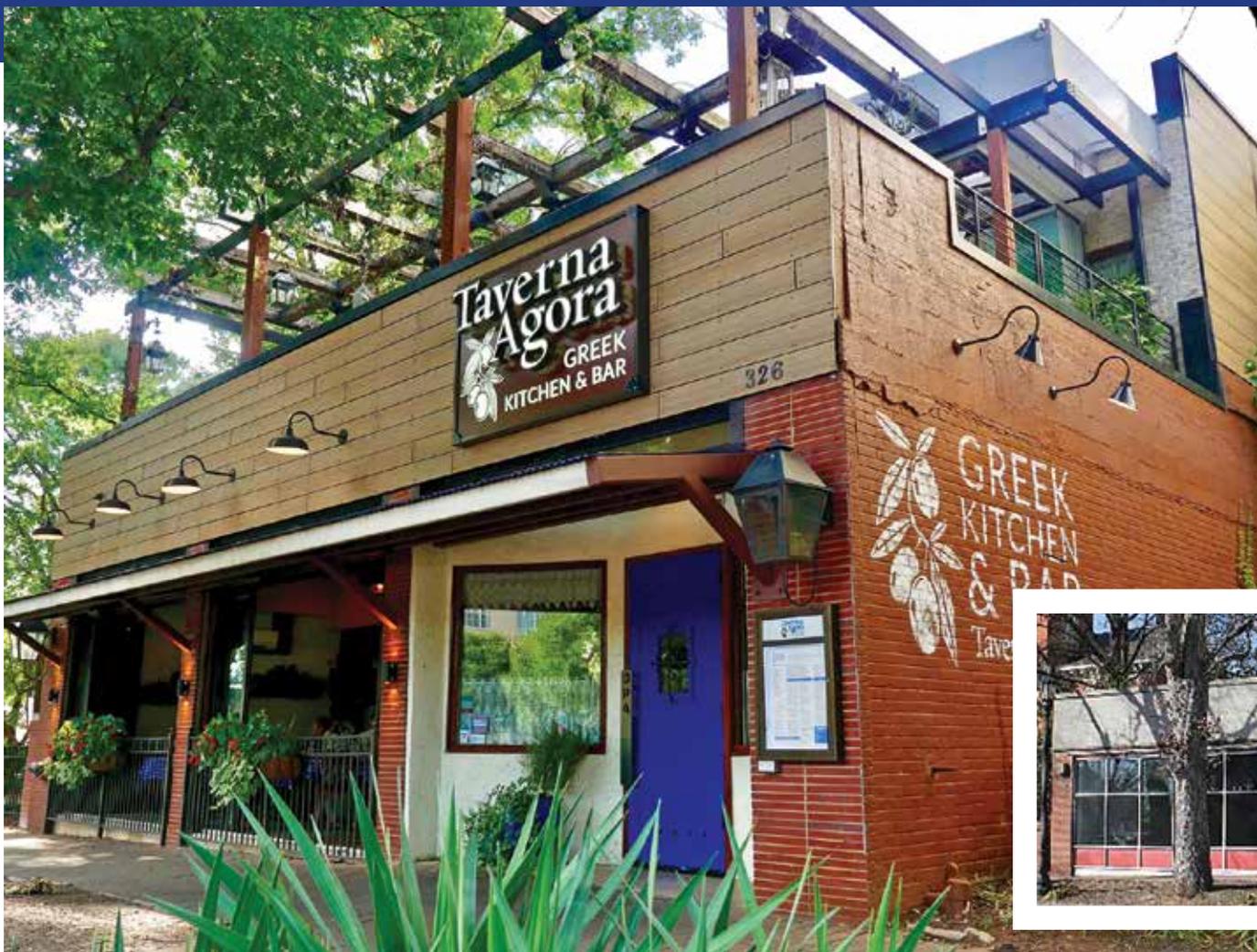
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Taverna before

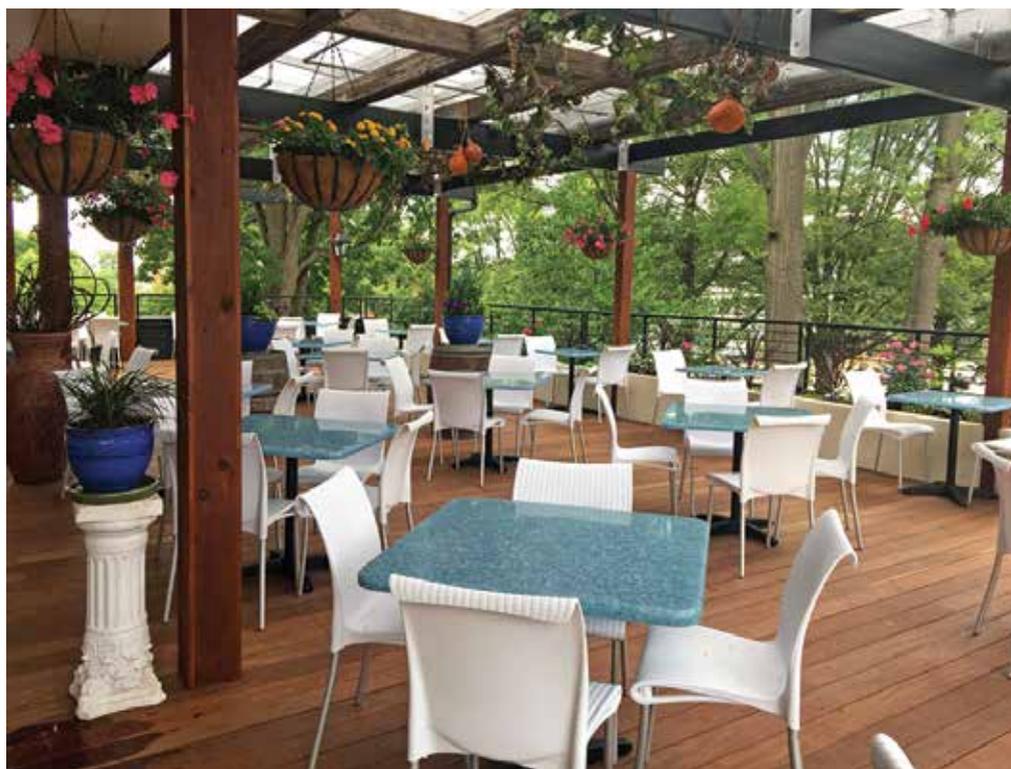
The Charm Is in The Details at Taverna Agora

BY DIANE MAKGILL

As last year's winner of the Raleigh Imprint Award, Taverna Agora came from humble beginnings. Once the home to the first IBM office, the building had sat empty for as long as I can remember. When LM Restaurants called me to help design the next iteration of Taverna Agora – relocating into downtown from Glenwood Avenue – I welcomed the challenge. We had worked on many restaurants together before, including the first Taverna, and I knew just what they would like. Cozy and charming, but with an updated twist. Hundreds of small details add up to an interesting dining experience. Even the bathrooms are adorable with farm sinks and fantastic wallpaper.

By design, guests can have very different dining experiences at Taverna. Downstairs the rooms are charming with wood details, Greek tile, gas lanterns, and old-fashioned checked tablecloths. My favorite decorations are the squirrel doorknockers on the sliding barn doors to the private room. The old Taverna pendant lights were clustered to give them an updated look. There is a large banquet for seating which allows groups to gather and it also saves space.

Relaxing on the front patio reminds me of dining al fresco in Europe. People strolling by on the brick sidewalk, a pretty wrought iron fence with flowers abundantly spilling out of their containers. The garden areas



The upstairs open air patio

at the Taverna Agora allow me to enjoy another passion of mine, landscape design.

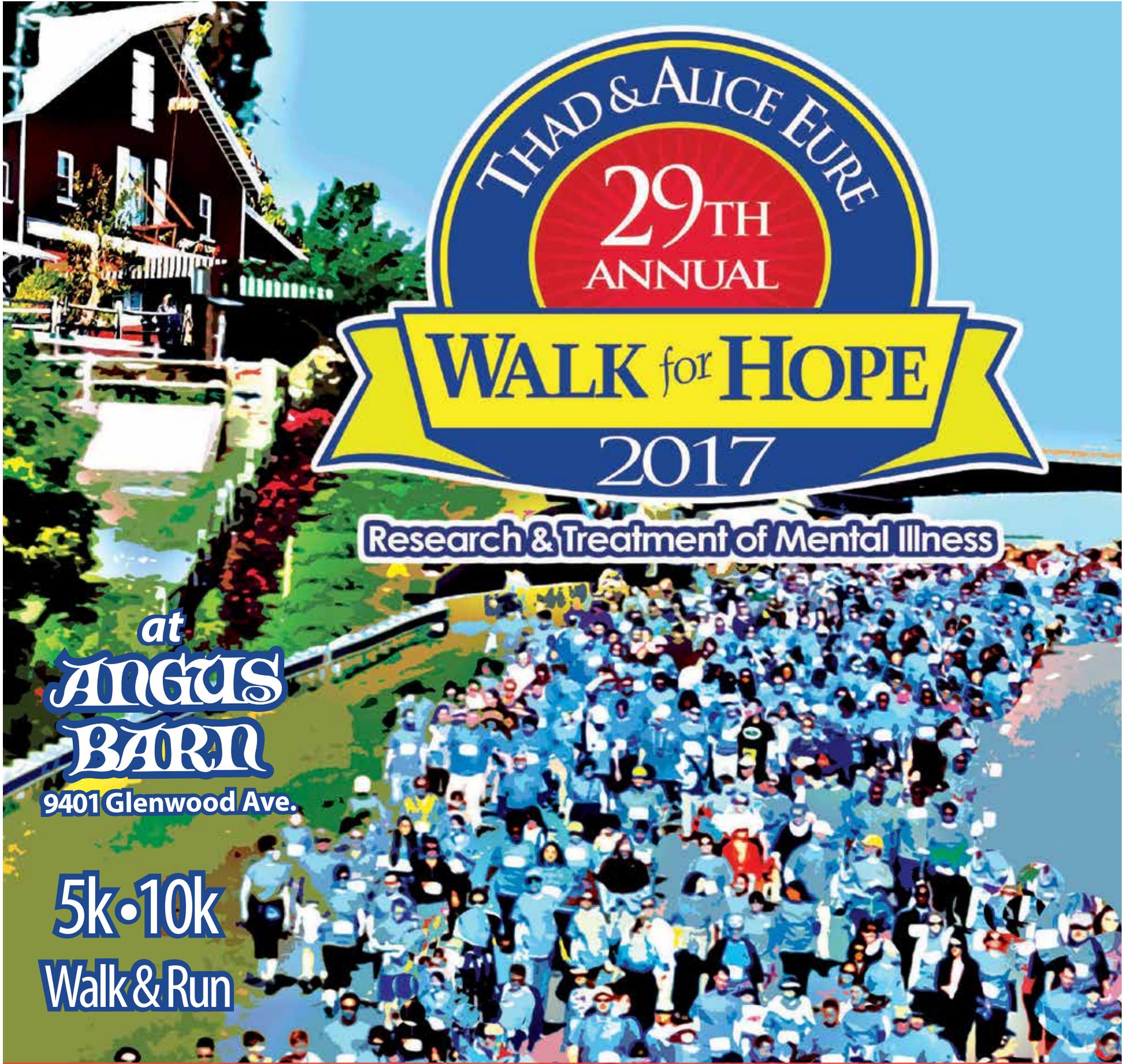
You can also dine on the open-air floor upstairs where you feel as though you are in a large tree fort with the large oaks out front. We chose blue tables and white chairs to reinforce the Greek theme. Thousands of twinkle lights, a garden full of flowers, herbs and vegetables and Greek music compliment the airy feeling. When I dine upstairs on the roof, I feel as though I'm on a mini

vacation. With icy cocktails served in copper mugs and delicious food, what more could I ask for? The staff lights the Saganaki appetizer on fire when served at your table and yells OPA! Did you know that OPA actually translates to oops or whoops, but in Greek culture, it's an emotional expression used frequently during weddings or celebrations, and sometimes accompanies purposeful (or unintentional) plate smashing. It's a fun expression you'll hear often at Taverna.

Tavern Agora was built entirely by North Carolinian artists and craftsman. The concrete bar tops, the blue wood doors, and the oversized OPA metal door handles were made here in town. The wood ceiling beams were salvaged from the pier from the Oceanic Restaurant. As a gift to the City of Wilmington, LM Restaurants rebuilt the pier after it was demolished by a hurricane, saving the old wood for future projects such as this one.

Dining local, yet Greek. Makes sense to me! See you on the rooftop. OPA! 🍷

Diane Makgill is the owner of 3D by D Design in Raleigh, which specializes in restaurant and home interior design. Visit 3DbyDdesigns.com to learn more about her services.



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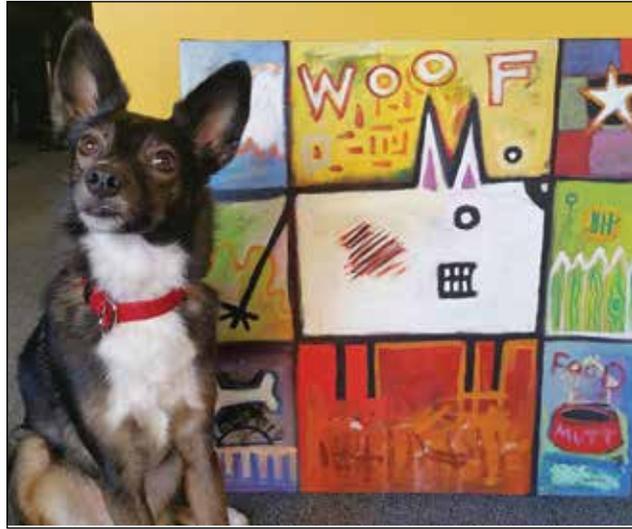


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If you're not a fan on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram...

...then these are just a few of the great photos you've been missing from our wonderful contributing photographers like Randy Bryant, Dave Gill, Flyboy Aerial, Robert Pettus, Mike McDonald, Thomas M. Way, and Crash S. Gregg. Find us on any or all our social media and join more than 87,000 followers and see just how cool the Triangle really is. Want to be a contributing photographer? Drop us a line and a link to a few of your photos to photos@welovedowntown.com.

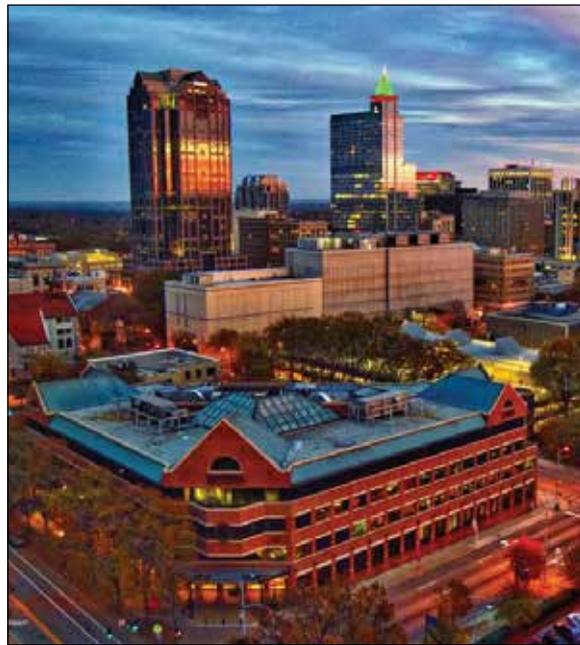


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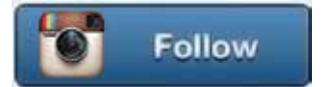
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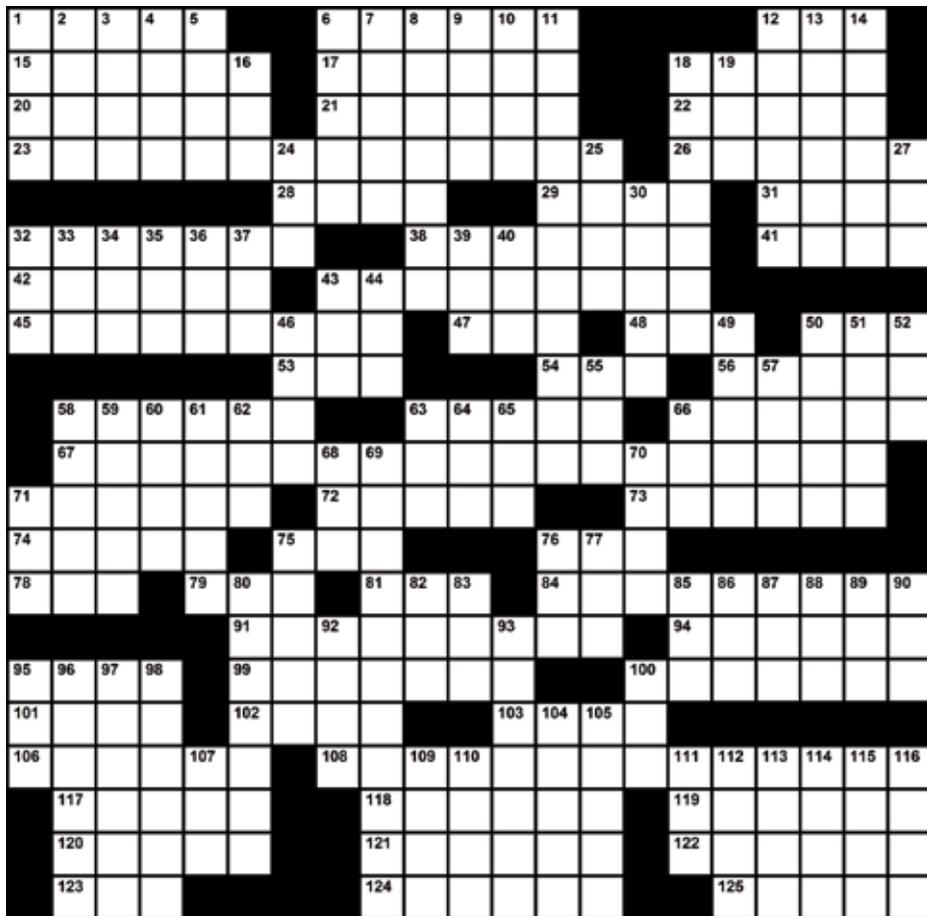


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Want to win a Downtowner T-shirt? Email us a photo of your completed puzzle to xword@welovedowntown.com. We'll pick a random winner each month. Need a hint? Visit our website for the answer key: www.welovedowntown.com. No cheating!



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"Political Starts"

ACROSS

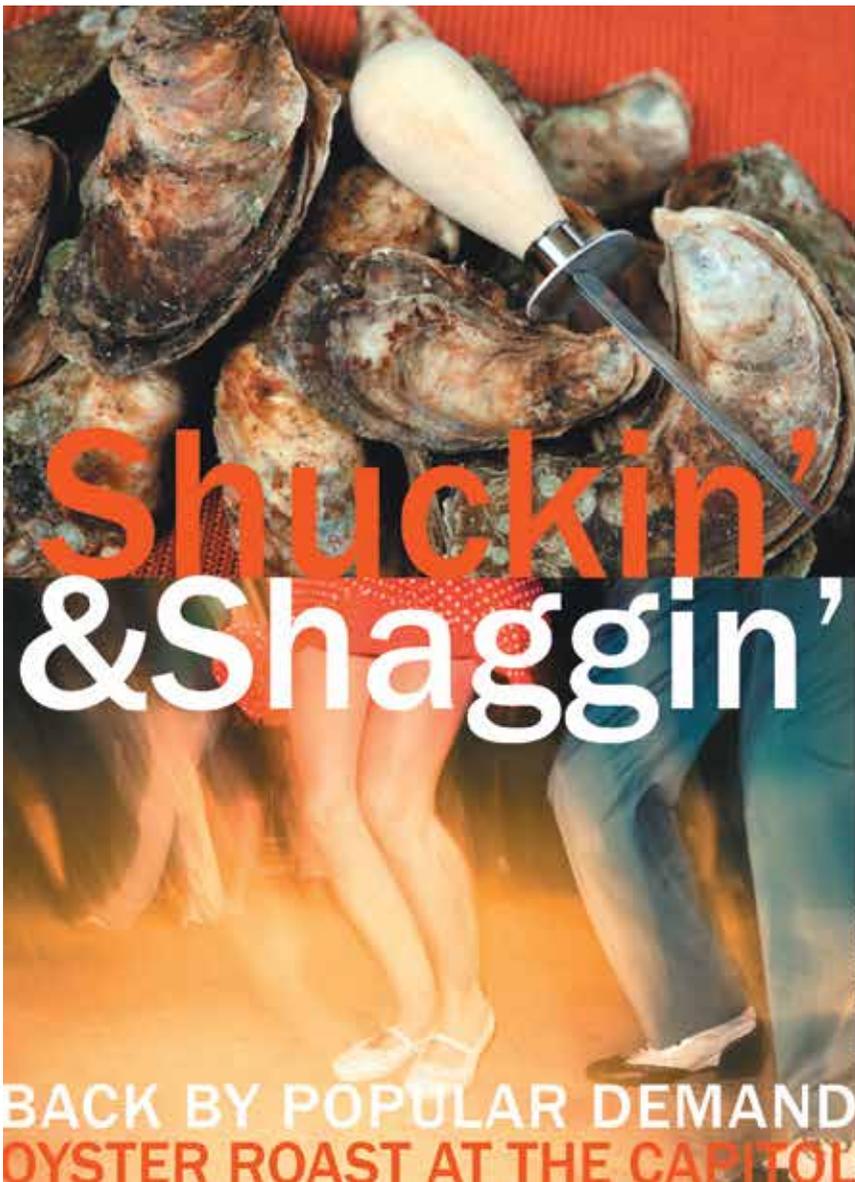
1. Scoped out
6. Obliquely
12. Party person and puzzle theme starter
15. Open
17. Hound, in the hunt
18. Stand
20. Closed book
21. In contrast to
22. "City Without Walls" poet
23. Protests
26. Short-tailed lemur
28. Assess
29. Patched
31. Birthright seller
32. Whiner
38. Short coats
41. Character
42. Light rowboat
43. Certain hospitals
45. Northern sky constellation
47. LaBrea goo
48. Big Apple inits.
50. It may be written "on" something
53. They're all the same
54. Prius's advantage
56. Record company
58. Chalcedony specimens
63. Deodars
66. In a shape that comes up to a point
67. Union conflicts
71. Christmas tree growing area
72. Cravings
73. "Rain Man" subject
74. Captain Nemo's creator

75. Peccadillo
76. Blackball
78. Billiard shooter?
79. Anna starters, in a celeb name
81. Canine command
84. Big Dipper's locale
91. Espresso serving
94. Dessert
95. Creamy salad
99. Wood tar derivative
100. Newborn outfit
101. Whittle
102. Singer, Ant
103. High point
106. Unpaid debt
108. How some countries are run
117. Dull and tasteless
118. Holiday roast
119. Composer, Jean Philippe _____
120. Etcher's medium
121. Skin problem
122. Fleet of warships
123. Barely get, with "out"
124. Aegean Sea island
125. Arcade coin

DOWN

1. Reminded
2. Diarist heroine
3. "___ fan" movie
4. Consequently
5. Angry outburst
6. Capital overlooking the Gulf of Guinea
7. Young hog
8. Light case
9. Italian province or its capital
10. Stepson of Claudius
11. Metamorphosed
12. Tremble
13. Very
14. Unskilled
16. Father figures
18. Deny
19. Bleed
24. Give it a shot
25. Mind reader
27. Supplicate
30. Strangle
32. Welsh valley
33. Fraternity letter
34. Passion
35. Good buddy
36. Sweep
37. Exiter's exclamation
39. Swallow
40. Homeric H
43. Scale note
44. Inquire
46. Type of CPU (abbr.)
49. Influence
50. Bassoon relatives
51. Belief in a supreme being
52. Days of yore, in days of yore
55. "___ Love You" (Beatles tune)
57. Opposed party
58. Goodbye, in Paris
59. Sort
60. Religious ending
61. "Baked" side dish, slangly
62. Victorian, e.g.
63. Trash bag accessory
64. "Maggie May" singer Stewart
65. Naval rank abbreviation
66. PC element
68. Folk rock's ___

- DiFranco
69. It measures the moisture in soil
70. Without (French)
71. Pipe
75. Pottery fragment
76. Greyhound transport
77. "Diamonds ___ Forever!" (Bond film)
80. What bouncers check
82. ___ a good plan!
83. Chinese ideal
85. Title for Khan
86. Can
87. Took a course?
88. Spout
89. Horse feed
90. Regret
92. Fermented beverage
93. Avoided responsibilities and work
95. Mani/pedi place
96. Feeding stage of insects
97. Fermented Middle East beverage
98. Tearjerker
100. Do-over
104. Thick liqueur
105. Pyramid builders
107. Tutor
109. Lots of
110. Very small pasta
111. Certain investment, for short
112. Golfer's transport
113. Fire power
114. Make public
115. Put on board
116. Chinese money



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