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ON THE COVER: We love our 2019 Best of Downtowner Awards cover design and have local artist and musician George Hage to thank for the awesome job. In case you missed his Artist Profile in last month's issue, be sure to give it a read on our website: <http://bit.ly/TDM-143>. You can also check out George's music and artwork at www.george-hage.com.

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The 2019 Best of Downtowner Award Winners!

It's that time of year again when we present the winners of our **9th Annual Best of Downtowner Awards!** Over 10,000 of our readers took the time to cast a vote for their favorite restaurant, brewery, cocktail purveyor, sports team, live music venue, and many more. It only took us a few weeks to tally all the votes and while some winners were easy to spot early on, some picked up a Best of Downtowner Award within the last 100 votes. We've included a few extra Reader Favorites again this year when the tally was within 25 votes between finalists. It never hurts to have a few extra recommendations to check out when you're out and about in the Triangle.

It's great to see that our readers have some of the most wonderfully diverse, eclectic, and discerning preferences of any magazine readers in the Triangle. As always, the Food & Drink and Restaurants & Bars categories garnered the most votes. In general, the foodie scene across the entire Triangle is pretty amazing and we're lucky to have so many great options to choose from to enjoy a great meal.

We're proud to continue featuring only locally owned businesses in the Best of Downtowner Awards, and equally proud that some of the other area magazines are doing the same. Hopefully, they'll all make the switch eventually to promote buying local as it ensures more of our spending dollars stay here in our local economy. This helps to create more local jobs, fuel growth, and develop self-sufficiency for region. Please always try to shop local first!

We hope this list provides you with plenty of new restaurants to choose from, businesses to visit, and interesting things to do and see. Watch for "Best of Downtowner Awards" stickers on business doors and windows and you'll know there's something good waiting for you inside. A huge *Thank You* to all who voted this year and helped to make the Best of Downtowner Awards a great way to support and promote the Triangle. If someone steals your copy and you need to check out the list again, you can always find it (and previous issues) online at www.triangledowntowner.com. Congrats again to all the winners this year!

FOOD & DRINK

Appetizers Parkside

Reader Favorites
Brewery Bhavana
NOFO @ the Pig
Scratch Kitchen

Sandwiches Side Street Cafe

Reader Favorites
NOFO @ the Pig
The Pharmacy Cafe
La Farm Bakery
Sunflower's Cafe

Steaks Sullivan's Steakhouse

Reader Favorites
Angus Barn
Oak Steakhouse
Rey's Restaurant
The Peddler

Sushi Waraji Japanese Restaurant

Reader Favorites
M Sushi
O-Ku Sushi
Sono Sushi
Mura



Parkside's Bacon Wrapped Dates, one of their many great appetizers

Seafood 42nd Street Oyster Bar

Reader Favorites
Saint James Seafood
St. Roch Fine Oysters + Bar
Cortez Seafood + Cocktail

Pizza Trophy Brewing

Reader Favorites
Lilly's Pizza
Frank's Pizza
DeMo's Pizza & Deli
Mellow Mushroom
Pizza La Stella

Tacos Centro

Reader Favorites
Gonza Tacos y Tequila
Gringo A Go Go
La Santa

Ribs Angus Barn

Reader Favorites
The Pit Authentic Barbecue
Clyde Cooper's Barbecue
Big Al's BBQ

BBQ The Pit Authentic Barbecue



Dumplings are just one of the delicious dishes from Chef David Mao at David's Dumpling

Reader Favorites
Clyde Cooper's Barbecue
Backyard BBQ Pit
Tobacco Road Sports Café

Burgers The Players' Retreat

Reader Favorites
Bad Daddy's Burger Bar
Cowbar
Chuck's Burgers
Parkside Restaurant

Biscuits Rise Biscuits and Donuts

Reader Favorites
Lula's
Big Ed's
State Farmers Market Restaurant
Flying Biscuit
Tupelo Honey

Mac & Cheese Poole's Diner

Reader Favorites
My Way Tavern

Capital Club 16
Tobacco Road Sports Café
Oak City Meatball
Relish

Fried Chicken State Farmers Market Restaurant

Reader Favorites
Lula's
Clyde Cooper's Barbecue
The Pit Authentic Barbecue
Beasley's Chicken + Honey

Hot Dogs The Cardinal Bar

Reader Favorites
The Roast Grill
Snoopy's Hot Dogs

Chicken Wings My Way Tavern

Reader Favorites
Carolina Ale House
Soo Cafe
Woody's City Market
Parkside Restaurant

Oysters 42nd Street Oyster Bar

Reader Favorites
Saint James Restaurant
St. Roch Fine Oysters + Bar

Royale
Cortez Seafood + Bar
French Fries
Carolina Ale House
Reader Favorites
NOFO @ the Pig
Char Grill
Chuck's Burgers

Dumplings
David's Dumplings & Noodle Bar
Reader Favorites
Brewery Bhavana
MOFU Shoppe
Five Star

Desserts
Hayes Barton Cafe & Dessertery
Reader Favorites
lucettegrace
Bittersweet
Guglhupf Bakery

Vegetarian/Vegan Dishes
Fiction Kitchen
Reader Favorites
Irregardless Café & Catering
Remedy Diner
Neomonde Mediterranean

Ice Cream
Howling Cow (NCSU)
Reader Favorites
Two Roosters
Treat

Bloody Marys
Mason Jar Tavern
Reader Favorites
NOFO @ the Pig



Just a few of the Neomonde family and staff.



Scott and team from Crawford & Son

The Raleigh Times
Hummingbird

Margaritas
Centro
Reader Favorites
Jose & Sons
Gringo A Go Go
La Santa

RESTAURANTS & BARS

New Restaurant That Opened in 2018 (Wake County)
O-Ku Sushi
Reader Favorites
Postmaster
Bodega Tapas

New Restaurant That Opened in 2018 (Other Counties)
Saint James
Reader Favorites
M Tempura

COPA
Lula's
All-Around Favorite Restaurant (Wake County)
Crawford & Son
Reader Favorites
Brewery Bhavana
Stanbury
Bida Manda
MOFU Shoppe

All-Around Favorite Restaurant (Other Counties)
M Sushi
Reader Favorites
Vin Rouge
Saint James Seafood

Family-Friendly Restaurant
Gonza Tacos y Tequila
Reader Favorites
Ruckus Pizza
The Cowfish
Bad Daddy's Burger Bar
Neomonde Mediterranean

Coquette
Rue Cler
Indian
Garland
Reader Favorites
Azitra Authentic Indian Fare
Viceroy
Vimala's Curryblossom Café

Thai
Sawasdee Thai
Reader Favorites
Lemongrass
Sushi Thai

Coffee Shop
Sola Coffee Cafe
Reader Favorites
A Place at the Table
Morning Times
42 & Lawrence
Third Place

Bakery
Boulted Bread
Reader Favorites
Yellow Dog Bread Company
La Farm Bakery
Stick Boy Bread Co.

Doughnuts
Rise Biscuits and Donuts
Reader Favorites
Duck Donuts
Baker's Dozen Donuts
Monuts Donuts

Breakfast
Brigs Restaurant
Reader Favorites
Flying Biscuit Cafe
Big Ed's
State Farmers Market Restaurant

>>>

After work drinks? Romantic dinner? Business lunch?
Cheering your team? Kid's birthday party? Connecting with friends?



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Brunch
Coquette Brasserie

Reader Favorites
Brigs Restaurant
Taverna Agora
Irregardless Cafe

Coffee Roaster
Larry's Coffee

Reader Favorites
Counter Culture
Joe Van Gogh Coffee

Healthy Food
Raleigh Raw

Reader Favorites
Happy + Hale
Living Kitchen
Remedy Diner

Value for the Money
Mitch's Tavern

Reader Favorites
Caffé Luna
Guasaca
Mami Nora's Rotisserie Chicken

Southern Comfort Food
The Pit Authentic Barbecue

Reader Favorites
Mandolin
Poole's Diner
Clyde Cooper's Barbeque
State Farmers Market Restaurant
Parkside Restaurant

Restaurant for a Business Meeting
Hérons at The Umstead

Reader Favorites
Winston's Grille
Vivace
18 Seaboard

Dive Bar
Ruby Deluxe

Reader Favorites
Slim's Downtown
The Goat
Bison Bar
Berkeley Cafe

Bar Food
My Way Tavern

Reader Favorites
Carolina Ale House
Raleigh Times Bar
Whiskey Kitchen
Woody's at City Market

Wine Menu
Second Empire

Reader Favorites
Vin Rouge
Hérons at Umstead
Angus Barn
Vidrio

Craft Cocktails
Foundation

Reader Favorites
C Grace
Bar Virgile
Watts & Ward
Alley Twenty-Six

Bourbon/Whiskey Selection
Whiskey Kitchen

Reader Favorites
The Oak
The Players' Retreat
Foundation
Circa 1888

Distillery
Durham Distillery

Reader Favorites
Bedlam Vodka
Social House Vodka
TOPO Distillery

Brewery
Trophy Brewing



Car troubles? Stop in to see the gang at Benchmark Autoworks.

Reader Favorites

Lynwood Brewing Concern
Bond Brothers Beer Company
Fullsteam Brewery
Big Boss Brewing

Bar Inside a Brewery
Brewery Bhavana

Reader Favorites
Lynwood Brewing Concern
Trophy Brewing
Crank Arm Brewing

Outside Patio

Whiskey Kitchen
Reader Favorites
Taverna Agora
Raleigh Beer Garden
Humble Pie

Sports Bar

Tobacco Road Sports Café
Reader Favorites
Carolina Ale House
The Players' Retreat
Krafty's Burgers and Brews

Friendliest Restaurant Staff
Big Ed's

Reader Favorites
NOFO @ the Pig
Brigs
MOFU

Place to Go Dancing
Legends Nightclub

Reader Favorites
Ruby Deluxe
Pinhook
Coglin's

Restaurant for a Romantic Date
Mulino Italian Kitchen & Bar

Reader Favorites
Vivace
Second Empire
Cafe Tiramisu

Irish/English Pub

Bull McCabe's Irish Pub
Reader Favorites
London Bridge Pub
James Joyce Irish Pub

Late Night Food
The Raleigh Times Bar

Reader Favorites
Whiskey Kitchen
Cardinal Bar
Woody's City Market

Rooftop Bar/Restaurant
10th & Terrace

Reader Favorites
Taverna Agora
Durham Hotel
Raleigh Beer Garden
Level 7

Local Neighborhood Bar
Person Street Bar

Reader Favorites
Havana Deluxe
Sharky's Place
My Way Tavern

Place to Hear Jazz/Blues
C Grace

Reader Favorites
Irregardless Cafe & Catering
Watts & Ward
Blue Note Grill

Juices/Smoothies
Raleigh Raw

Reader Favorites
Juicekeys
Happy + Hale

Food Truck

Cousins Maine Lobster
Reader Favorites
Chirba Chirba
American Meltdown
Gonza Tacos y Tequila

RETAIL & SERVICES

Customer Service
Bailey's Jewelers

Reader Favorites
Bida Manda
NOFO @ the Pig
Quail Ridge Books

Hair Salon for Women
Mark Christopher Salon

Reader Favorites
Alter Ego
Salon Blu
The Junction



Get your workout on HEAT Fitness.

Hair Salon/Barbershop for Men
Tesoro Hair Designs

Reader Favorites
Arrow
Alter Ego
Man-Mur

Nail Salon
Polished Nail Bar

Reader Favorites
Paintbase
High Park Nail Spa
Seaboard Nails
Nail Yeah

Local Pharmacy
Hayes Barton Pharmacy

Reader Favorites
Person Street Pharmacy



Best haircut around with Maurizio at Tesoro Hair Designs.

Glenwood Pharmacy + Market
Ashworth Drugs

Tailor/Alterations
Lee's Tailor Shop

Reader Favorites
Glenwood South Tailors
North Hills Tailor

Coollest T-shirts
House of Swank

Reader Favorites
Green Monkey
Deco Raleigh
NOFO @ the Pig

Gym or Place to Work Out
Heat Fitness

Reader Favorites
O2 Fitness
YMCA

Med Spa/Day Spa
Skin Raleigh at Davis & Pyle Plastic Surgery

Reader Favorites
Cynthia Gregg, MD Face & Body
Synergy Face & Body
Umstead Hotel & Spa

Dry Cleaner
Brothers Cleaners

Reader Favorites
Capstone Cleaners
Medlin-Davis Cleaners

Law Firm

Hatch Little & Bunn
Reader Favorites
Parker Poe
Smith Anderson

CPA/Accounting Firm
H. Lee Miller, CPA

Reader Favorites
Tyndall Stroud
Keasler CPA

PR/Marketing/Ad Agency
French | West | Vaughan

Reader Favorites
S&A Cherokee
G&S Communications
Clairmont Communications

Plastic Surgery Practice
Davis & Pyle Plastic Surgery

Reader Favorites
Cynthia Gregg, MD Face & Body
Specialists
Synergy Spa & Aesthetics

Dental Practice
Ashley Lloyd, DDS

Reader Favorites
Renaissance Dental Center
Russo Dentistry
Downtown Dental

Orthodontic Office
Zaytoun Orthodontics

Reader Favorites
Gladwell Orthodontics
Wells Orthodontics

Roofing Company
Baker Roofing

Reader Favorites
Roofwerks
Olde Raleigh Roofing

Mortgage Broker
Southern Trust Mortgage

Reader Favorites
Raleigh Mortgage Group
Advantage Lending

Real Estate Agency
The Jim Allen Group

Reader Favorites
DeRonja Real Estate
The Glenwood Agency

Gymnastics/Dance Studio
NC Dance Institute

Reader Favorites
Tutu School
Carolina Dance Center

Veterinary Office/Animal Hospital
Care First Animal Hospital

Reader Favorites
Quail Corners Animal Hospital
Rocky Top Catering

Yoga/Pilates/Barre
110 Yoga

Reader Favorites
Blue Lotus
barre3
Barre-Up

Tattoo Parlor
Blue Flame Tattoo

Reader Favorites
Mad Ethel's Tattoo
Raleigh Tattoo Company

Pet Adoption
Saving Grace NC

Reader Favorites
SPCA of Wake County
Cause for Paws

New Furniture
Green Front Interiors

Reader Favorites
Furnish
Cooper Furniture
Nadeau

Home Accessories
Form & Function

Reader Favorites
Market Imports
Union Camp

Vintage Furniture
Revival Antiques & Accessories

Reader Favorites
Father & Son Antiques
Hunt & Gather

Antiques
Hunt & Gather

Reader Favorites
Antiques Emporium
Raleigh Flea Market
Revival Antiques & Accessories

Florist
Fallon's Flowers

Reader Favorites
Kelly Odom Flowers
The English Garden
The Flower Cupboard

Flooring Store
Eatman's Carpets & Interiors

Reader Favorites
David Stallings Hardwood Floors
Bell's Carpets & Floors

Clothing Consignment Shop
Adore

Reader Favorites
dress.
Revolver Consignment
Fifi's of Cameron Village

Wine Shop
The Wine Feed

Reader Favorites
Raleigh Wine Shop
Short Walk Wines
Seaboard Wine Shop

Bottle Shop
Tasty Beverage Company

Reader Favorites
Crafty Beer, Wine and Spirits
Hoppy Endings

Gift Shop
NOFO @ the Pig

Reader Favorites
Deco Raleigh
Edge of Urge
Stuf N Such

Women's Fashions
Uniquities

Reader Favorites
Art of Style
Galatea
Fab'rik
Scout & Molly's

Men's Fashions
Art of Style

Reader Favorites
Liles Clothing Store
Nowell's Clothiers
Kannon's Clothing

Fine or Custom Jewelry
Bailey's Fine Jewelry

Reader Favorites
Booth Custom Jewelers
Diamonds Direct
Jewelsmith

Place to Buy Diamonds
Reliable Jewelry

Reader Favorites
Diamonds Direct
Bailey's Fine Jewelry

Hardware Store

Burke Brothers Hardware
Reader Favorites
Town & Country Hardware
Briggs Hardware & General Store

Car Wash/Mobile Detailer
Spiffy On-Demand Car Care

Reader Favorites
Men At Work Car Care Center
Etalia Car Wash

Independent Bookstore
Quail Ridge Books

Reader Favorites
Reader's Corner
Letters Bookstore
Nice Price Books & Records

Garden Center/Nursery
Logan's One Stop Garden Shop

Reader Favorites
Atlantic Gardening Company
Homewood Nursery & Garden Center

Dog-Friendly Restaurant
Whiskey Kitchen

Reader Favorites
The Station

Plates Kitchen
Sola Coffee Cafe

Art Gallery
Artspace

Reader Favorites
Gallery C
Adam Cave Fine Art

Coworking Space
Loading Dock

Reader Favorites
HQ Raleigh
American Underground

Local Charity
Healing Transitions

Reader Favorites
Women's Center of Wake County
Urban Ministries of Wake County

PEOPLE

Local Chef
Ashley Christensen

Reader Favorites
Scott Crawford
Matt Kelly
Mike Lee

Interior Designer
Diane Makgill

Reader Favorites
Camara Jackson
Tula Summerfield
Lisa Stewart

DJ/Event Emcee/Auctioneer
Benjamin Farrell

Reader Favorites
Joe Bunn
Ryan Pflumm



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Local Band or Singer
Side Car Social Club

Reader Favorites
Stone Age Romeos
Bull City Syndicate

Podcast/Podcaster
NC F&B

Reader Favorites
919 Beer
ArtCurious

Elected Official/Government Employee

Sig Hutchinson
Reader Favorites
Nancy McFarlane
Steve Schewel
Jay Chaudhuri

OUT & ABOUT

Place to Hear Live Music - Larger Venue
Red Hat Amphitheater

Reader Favorites
Lincoln Theatre
NC Museum of Art

Place to Hear Live Music - Smaller Venue
The Pour House Music Hall

Reader Favorites
Slim's Downtown
C Grace

Special Event/Wedding Space Venue

The Stockroom at 230
Reader Favorites
Fairview
Whitaker & Atlantic

Place for a Girl's Night Out
Hummingbird

Reader Favorites
Vita Vitae
Watts & Ward
Brewery Bhavana

Place for a Guy's Night
Boxcar

Reader Favorites
Raleigh Times Bar
Sullivan's Steakhouse

Hang Out for People Over 30
Capital Grill

Reader Favorites
Sullivan's Steakhouse
Vivace
Circa 1888

Movie Theater
Rialto Theatre

Reader Favorites
Alamo Drafthouse
Cinébristro
Marbles IMAX

Boutique Hotel
The Umstead Hotel and Spa

Reader Favorites
The StateView Hotel
21c Museum Hotel Durham
Washington Duke Inn

Best Designed New Building
One Glenwood

Reader Favorites
The Dillon
Union Station

Sports Team
Carolina Hurricanes

Reader Favorites
NC State Wolfpack
Durham Bulls

Sports Mascot
Stormy

Reader Favorites
Wool E Bull
Mr. & Ms. Wuf

Golf Course

Lonnie Poole Golf Course
Reader Favorites
Northridge Country Club
Raleigh Country Club

Outdoor Event
Artsposure

Reader Favorites
Hopscotch
Shakori Hills Festival
Centerfest

Place to Take Out-of-Town Tourists

NC Museum of Natural Sciences
Reader Favorites
NC Museum of Art
American Tobacco Campus
Dix Park

Favorite Place to Pick Up the Downtowner
Fayetteville Street

Reader Favorites
Whole Foods
Downtown condos/apartments

Wish List Feature, Amenity, Attraction

Amusement park near downtown
Reader Favorites
Sports arena near downtown
Rail (or special bus service) between Raleigh and Durham downtowns
Skating rink in downtown
More driving lanes on I-40

Join us for the Dereck Whittenburg Foundation

Fifth Annual Reception & Fundraiser + 2019 Golf Invitational!

Please join us for the **Fifth Annual Dereck Whittenburg Foundation Reception & Fundraiser** presented by BDO, LLP on Sunday, June 23 at MacGregor Downs Country Club from 3pm to 6pm. This amazing event will include celebrity guests, entertainment, great food, spirits, live and silent auctions full of exceptional items, and much more! Join our guests again the following day at MacGregor for the **2019 Golf Invitational!** Proceeds from both events will benefit the Dereck Whittenburg Foundation Scholarship Fund, which has awarded more than \$293,000 in need-based academic scholarships since 2015. Sponsorships still available! www.thedwfoundation.org



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Owners Mike Ruiz and Darren Bridger



TRIANGLE DINING

Enjoy dining or a game of cornhole on the huge outside patio at the Pub



The London Bridge Pub

BY CHRISTY GRIFFITH • PHOTOS BY CRASH S. GREGG

Just five years ago, BuzzFeed named The London Bridge Pub the best bar to watch the World Cup in all of North Carolina. Five years later, it's still alive and well with local soccer fans flocking in with flags and accompanying accents from around the world. Located on Hargett Street in downtown Raleigh, the only thing that has really changed is the long-awaited addition of a kitchen from which to sling good eats.



The talented Chef Lauren Smaxwell

Owners Michael Ruiz and Darren Bridger brought on Chef Lauren Smaxwell (previously of Oro, The Mint, and The Pit) to design and execute their new English-themed menu. Lunch and dinner are served daily, along with weekend breakfasts for Premier League games (you can find the schedule regularly updated on both their website calendar and Facebook page). While this isn't an area of downtown that you see a lot of dedicated parking lots for local businesses, you can take advantage of a great number of city decks just a short walk away. It's always a good idea to get a few steps in and then lie to yourself by saying you've just burned enough calories to deserve that extra side of fries.

The Wings (\$8) at London Bridge may just be my new favorite. They are so crispy – fabulously flabless! – and flavored so beautifully that I didn't even need the ranch that came with them. (Pro-tip: save the dressing for the sliced cucumber and BAM!, miniature crudité

platter.) Among the dry-rubbed options, go for the Lemon-Pepper (tastes like summer picnics!) or the Buffalo (my favorite). The wet-sauce wings we sampled were the Buffalo (a very comfortable heat level) and the Peri-Peri (a slightly spicier African sauce with Thai chilies). You could easily polish off a plate by yourself, but if you're a drumette fan and are looking for someone to help you with those flats, gimme a call. Please.

If you're looking for the same number of calories as a regular-sized meal, but without the hassle of deciding on a protein and vegetable, look no further than the Chippy Plate (\$5). In England, French fries are chips and potato chips are crisps. This is a basket of fries, which we can all agree no matter what you call them, will rarely let us down. French fries are there for you when you've had a bad day, when you've had a good day, and when you haven't decided what kind of day you're going to have. All the days are better when French fries are involved. These fried potatoes look like steak fries from above but pick one up and they are about a quarter of the thickness. So, diet fries, maybe? Nice and crispy and perfect for dipping. And London Bridge Pub has tons of great sauces you can try for your dipping pleasure; don't miss out on the curry ketchup, red hot aioli, and curry mustard. Fries go good with beer. Any kind of beer. Fries don't judge.

If you want something green in your life because Michelle Obama has guilted you into thinking that one cannot survive on fried potatoes alone, the Rocket Salad (\$9) is an easy choice. English people call arugula *rocket*, which is another thing I'd wager we could all agree on



Don't miss out on trying the awesomely crispy Chicken Wings.



Can't go wrong with a plate of these tasty Chips and delicious dipping sauces.

– rocket is a positively badass name for lettuce. Those peppery badasses are tossed in a black currant vinaigrette and studded with thinly sliced red onion, shaved



Groups of soccer-loving fans like these folks from Peru turn out in droves to watch soccer matches at London Bridge.

parmesan, and currants (a very, very British dried fruit, not unlike a raisin). I made sure to eat the whole thing because I pretty much ate the whole Chippy Plate and Michelle got me all like, MAKE BETTER CHOICES, CHRISTY.

But I rarely go out to eat to make good decisions (duh, I can eat lettuce and broth at home). I make the

kind of decisions that leave me stuffed and satisfied. The kind of decisions where you're unbuttoning your pants just to drive home, back to that lettuce and broth.

One of my tasty decisions today was the Shepherd's Pie (\$12). Lamb and beef are stewed until meltingly tender with carrots, onions, celery, and peas. (It's pretty much a salad, no?) It's topped with a super-buttery

mashed potato crust that gets golden brown under the broiler. It's the kind of dish that looks and tastes like WINTER IS COMING! Speaking of Game of Thrones, I'm in need of a new HBO Go password if anyone can hook me up.

Have you ever celebrated too hard when Manchester United scores? I sure haven't, but I've celebrated a few Fridays too hard. We all know it's basically a scientific fact that a giant breakfast is a cure-all for whatever celebrations come back to haunt you. Just a picture of the Full English Breakfast (\$16) would give vegans night terrors. Also known by some as All-Day Breakfast (in that it keeps you full all day), this plate includes two fried eggs, bangers (thick English sausages with a satisfying snap), rashers (English bacon = deliciously hammy), black pudding (a blood sausage), baked beans, roasted tomatoes and mushrooms, bubble & squeak (here, a mixture of mashed potatoes, cabbage, carrots, and peas formed into a thick patty), and buttered toast to sop up any remaining juices. How much remains may be determined by just how much you celebrated. Alternatively, if you eat the Full English *before* you celebrate, you'll hardly have any room in your stomach to celebrate too hard. It's on the regular menu, so by all means, be a rebel and eat this for lunch. You'll win lunch for that day and you can stand with Jon Snow to defend the Wall against the White Walkers! And seriously, I need a password. >>>



Hidden under the golden brown mashed potato crust of the Shepherd's Pie, you'll find deliciously stewed lamb and beef, carrots, onions, celery, and peas.



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You won't find overbattered cod in these Fish & Chips!

I was wowed by the Fish & Chips (\$13). Too many times you get more batter than actual fish – and while I love fried things, I'm not big on fish-flavored funnel cakes – but in this case, there is just enough beer batter to hold the flaky, tender cod together. You get a tangy tartar sauce for dipping, a generous amount of fries, and a side of slaw. The coleslaw is definitely not traditional, but we are in a pub in North Carolina after all.

Can I just give a shout out to Mushy Peas (\$3)? I've never had them before so I can't speak to authenticity (again, we're in Raleigh, NC, so stop taking yourself so seriously), but the peas here are not only mushy but sinfully buttery, creamy, and minty. You should order a side of these to use as a dip for your fries – you won't be disappointed! If you *are* disappointed then that just means



The Curry Chicken Salad Sandwich is a must-try.

you have terrible taste and I don't need to ever know you unless you want to give me all your flats and your HBO password, in which case I will make exceptions.

There's a Double Burger (\$9) with two thin patties held together by American cheese (the Colonial irony!) with lettuce, tomato, and pickles. The Bread Shop in Pittsboro bakes the brioche bun and *that alone* is worth ordering the burger. It comes impaled with a steak knife as if you would want to share it. Maybe it's for defending Winterfell!

One of the things I appreciate about the London Bridge Pub menu is the nod to the Indian and Middle Eastern influences that proliferate British take-aways. The Curry Chicken Salad Sandwich (\$7) is a perfect lunchtime option. Chunks of chicken breast are tossed in a mild curry mayonnaise along with crunchy celery

and carrots and sweet pops of currants. Add some lettuce, tomato, and toasted sourdough and you've got yourself a beautifully complex sandwich that is impossible to make a Game of Thrones reference about.

The shaved spit-roasted lamb on the Doner Kebab (\$7) has lovely crunchy edges and is served under a dollop of some extra-refreshing tzatziki.

It comes snug in a pillowy fresh pita with shredded lettuce, tomato, and red onion. It's probably what a Dothraki warrior would eat before he does the bidding of Daenerys Stormborn of the House Targaryen, First of Her Name, the Unburnt, Queen of Meereen, Queen of the Andals and the First Men, Khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea, Breaker of Chains, and Mother of Dragons. Or what I would eat if I were just going to put something good in my face with no plans of attack or any exercise, really, following eating said-pita. I'd probably add a side of Potato Crisps (\$3) because they are delicious and I deserve them. I'm basically Daenerys Targaryen but Queen of Chicken Wing Flats and Unburnt Potatoes.

In the middle of the menu, you'll see British Butty featured: "A sandwich made with buttered bread and

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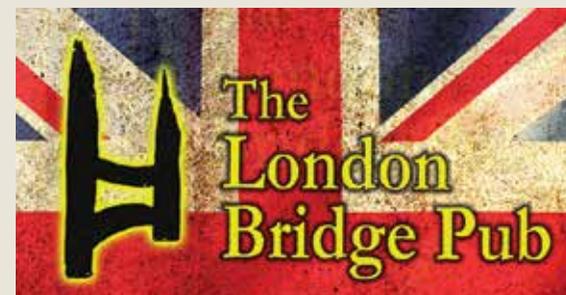
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The Doner Kabob with shaved spit-roasted lamb, tzatziki sauce, lettuce, tomato, and red onion, served on warm pita bread.

British Butty with bacon and roasted tomatoes and a side of Crisps

The London Bridge Pub
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Raleigh, NC 27601
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www.thelondonbridgepub.com

Pub Hours*
Mon-Fri 11:30am-2am
Sat 11:30am-2am
Sun 11:30am-2am

Kitchen Hours*
Sun-Thur 11:30am-midnight
Fri & Sat 11:30am-2am

*The Pub and Kitchen open as early as 8am on weekends with soccer matches. Check their Facebook page for updated days and times.

your choice of filling.” Before I ordered one, I was sure that this was regular lunch fare. “No,” said Mike. Then it arrived. I bit into it. And I got it. This is the English equivalent of your late-night Glenwood hotdog. It’s simple and satisfying and completes the night. It consists of toasted bread (regular or brioche), butter, and whatever filling(s) you choose. If you look up humble in the dictionary, you’ll see a picture of this sandwich, right after my headshot, of course. Mine had bacon and roasted tomato (\$7), but yours can have chicken tenders. Rashers. Bangers. Egg & cheese. Whatever fuels you through the night to defend the realm on your watch. A perfect ending to a great night at the Pub.

P.S. Please send password.

Stop by for a visit at London Bridge Pub, enjoy tasty British fare, watch some futbol, play some cornhole on

their huge back patio, and make some new friends. You can even bring your laptop during the day, have a great lunch inside or at one of their outside picnic tables, and get some work done, too. Maybe. Or just pretend you’re working and re-watch that Game of Thrones episode to figure out if Jon was really yelling at his dragon or at Arya. 🐉

Christy is a self-diagnosed foodie and loves tacos most of all. She has an incredible foodagraphic memory and can remember everything she eats and all the ingredients for our restaurant profiles as well as everything she’s eaten, EVER. Christy and her husband Matt are in the process of opening a Southern-inspired tea room in Holly Springs called Pimiento Tea Room. You can follow their progress at facebook.com/PimientoTeaRoom.

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From the Publisher

In this issue, you'll find all the winners of the 2019 Best of Downtowner Awards, voted on by you, our amazing readers. Lots of familiar names in this year's list with a few new ones scattered throughout. Check out some of your favorite categories, save the list for later, share it with friends, and discover new places to dine, listen to live music, go dancing, bike and run, or just hang out to people-watch. In my opinion, our Downtowner readers are the best of any magazine in the Triangle: unpretentious yet discerning, open to trying something new but still love their favorites, and diverse in their choices and selections; the perfect readers for choosing who ends up in the most comprehensive "Best of" list in the Triangle. I couldn't be happier with the demographics of our 145,000 monthly readers and after 13 inspiring years, we have you to thank for our success and the distinct honor of showcasing how great the place we choose to live, work, and play.

Our artist for the cover of this year's Best of Downtowner Awards is the talented local artist and musician George Hage. George has been a friend for over a decade

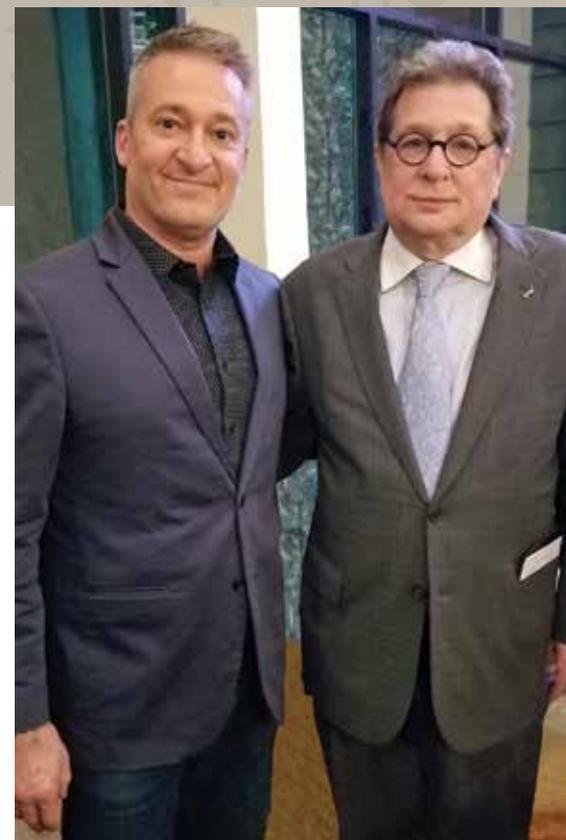
and is one of the creative folks who help make the Triangle such a cool place to be. Check out our article on George in our last issue (www.bit.ly/TDM-143) to learn more about his artwork and music.

For behind-scenes photos of George working on the cover and to keep up with other great things going on around the Triangle, give us a follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/triangledowntowner and on Instagram, www.instagram.com/triangledowntowner. Feel free to join me personally on Instagram for non-Downtowner posts, www.instagram.com/crashgregg.

Cheers,

Crash

Crash S. Gregg
 Publisher, Triangle Downtowner Magazine
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Here with Robert "Ricky" Weiss, Founding Artistic Director/CEO of Carolina Ballet since 1997, at a private celebratory performance at Fletcher Auditorium to honor his 21 years with the ballet. Ricky has moved from day-to-day business operations and is spending more time working on creative endeavors in the studio. Beginning in 2014, ex-ballet dancer Zalman "Zali" Raffael has taken on the responsibility of Co-Artistic Director with Ricky and continues to create and choreograph new ballets with the company. Watch for an interview and article on Zali in an upcoming issue.

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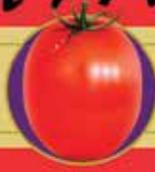
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Vic's Linguini alla Pescatora is an abbondanza of seafood loaded with mussels, clams, calamari, and shrimp.



Vic's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria

Old World Italian Cuisine

BY BRIAN ADORNETTO, FOOD EDITOR • PHOTOS BY CRASH S. GREGG

In 1993, Vic's Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria opened in Raleigh's City Market. Although the location has been a restaurant since 1985, the business didn't take off until current owner Mario Longo, Sr. purchased it in 1998 and began cooking his family recipes. Mario Sr. immigrated to the United States in 1963 from Calabria, Italy and moved to Cary in 1979, when he opened a pizzeria in Cary Village Mall, now known as Cary Towne Center. In 2016, Mario Sr. opened a second Vic's at The Marketplace on Raleigh's Lake Boone Trail.

Both Vic's locations are family-owned and operated. Mario Sr.'s wife Lucia makes all the cakes for both restaurants, son Mario Jr. (a former professional soccer player) manages Vic's on Lake Boone Trail, and son Michael and daughter Mia help run Vic's in City Market.

Walking down Blake Street, it's hard to miss Vic's bustling 40-seat covered patio. The lively outdoor scene spills

inside where large storefront windows provide abundant natural light as well as an opportunity to people-watch. On the right and left are hand-painted, wall-to-wall murals depicting famous Italian panoramas. Tucked in the left-hand corner of the restaurant is Mario Sr.'s regular table/makeshift office. Adorned with a cup of espresso, an orange or two, and piles of paperwork, this is where the patriarch keeps a watchful eye on the kitchen and dining room while occasionally sneaking a glance at the soccer game on the flat-screen television over the door.

In Vic's kitchens, Chefs Giovanni (Lake Boone Trail) and Antonio (City Market) are both natives of Naples, Italy, which makes sense given that the menus lean heavily on the Southern Italian recipes Mario Sr. grew up eating. Appetizers, which Vic's calls antipasto, include Fried Calamari (\$9.95), Antipasto Italiano (\$9.95 for one, \$15.95 for two), and Portobello alla Baggio (\$9.95).

Thick-cut calamari is lightly battered, fried crisp, and served with homemade tomato sauce. The abundant antipasto consists of mortadella, Genoa salami, prosciutto, provolone, homemade mozzarella, kalamata olives, and roasted peppers. For the Portobello alla Baggio, a large grilled portobello is set on baby greens, flanked on each side by a stack of marinated and grilled eggplant, homemade mozzarella, and roasted peppers, and topped with homemade pesto, balsamic reduction, and toasted pignoli. It's delicious.

The Zuppa & Insalata (soup and salad) section offers a lighter start with dishes such as Pasta e Fagioli (\$5.95) and the Contadina salad (\$5.50). Vic's vegetarian Pasta e Fagioli has plenty of broth, cannellini beans, ditalini pasta, and vegetables, while the Contadina—mixed greens, tomatoes, onions, kalamata olives, and homemade balsamic vinaigrette—is analogous to a house salad.



Vic's is well-known for their pizzas, which are crisp, chewy, and loaded with toppings.

Vic's is well known for its pizza and calzones. The pizza has a good sauce-to-crust ratio and is crisp, chewy, and loaded with toppings. The sauceless White Pie (\$16.25 small/\$18.95 large) is drizzled with olive oil, sprinkled with garlic, topped with tomatoes, onions, mozzarella, and parmesan, and baked until golden brown. For something more traditional, sausage, mushrooms, onions, and fresh tomatoes top the red-sauced Chicagoan Pie (\$15.75 small/\$18.95 large). In addition to a list of specialty pizzas, a wide variety of toppings are available for you to create your own.

The pasta section combines numerous standards including Manicotti (\$11.95) and Linguini alla Pescatora (\$20.95) to name a few, as well as special creations such as the Gnocchi alla Benigini (\$17.50), Penne alla Vecchia Roma (\$15.50), and Penne ai Funghi con Pollo (\$15.50). Vic's traditional baked manicotti is every bit as gooey and cheesy as you'd expect. Sweet, briny, and tomatoey, the linguini is an abbondanza of seafood

loaded with mussels, clams, calamari, and shrimp. The gnocchi, bathed in a pesto cream sauce with sautéed zucchini, yellow squash, and shrimp, is excellent. Sausage and broccoli are sautéed with garlic, tossed with penne, and topped with a spoonful of marinara for the wonderful Vecchia Roma. The funghi con pollo features sautéed mushrooms, chunks of chicken, and penne tossed with a pink cream sauce.

Entrees include Eggplant, Chicken, and Veal Parmigiana (\$13.95, \$15.95, and \$17.95, respectively) and Saltimbocca alla Romana (\$17.95). To create Vic's eggplant parm, unpeeled hand-breaded eggplant is layered with marinara and Parmigiano Reggiano, topped with homemade mozzarella, baked until golden brown, and served with a side of spaghetti. For the saltimbocca, thin, tender veal cutlets are seasoned with fresh sage, topped with prosciutto, and served in a white wine sauce with roasted potatoes and zucchini. The whole dish is then showered with a balsamic glaze.

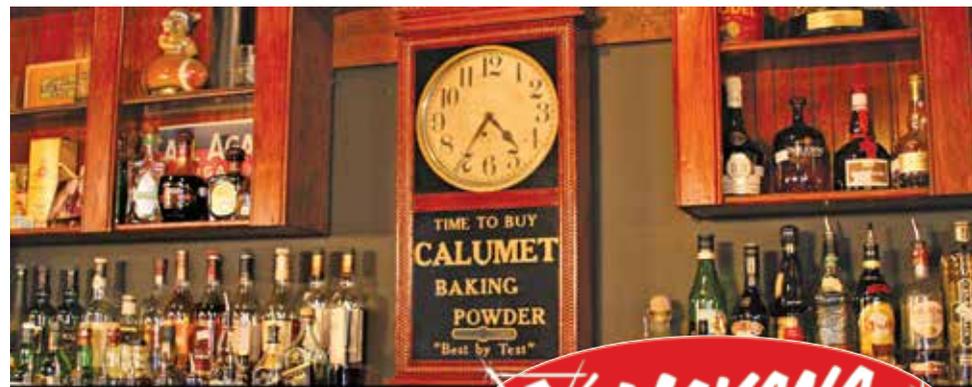


Mario Sr. and son Michael in front of one of their wall-to-wall hand-painted Italian panoramic murals.



The Antipasto Italiano consists of mortadella, Genoa salami, prosciutto, provolone, homemade mozzarella, kalamata olives, and roasted peppers.

Make sure to save room for dessert because Lucia's homemade cakes are fantastic. The restaurant's most popular is the Tiramisu (\$5.95), with classic flavors that are light and well balanced. For citrus fans, the outstanding Limoncello Cake (\$5.95) is a must. The moist cake and creamy filling have just the right amount of tartness, booze, and sweetness. It's the perfect end to an Italian feast. >>>



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Sausage and broccoli are sautéed with garlic, tossed with penne, and topped with a spoonful of marinara for the wonderful Vecchia Roma.



The Gnocchi alla Benigini comes with sautéed zucchini, yellow squash, and shrimp bathed in a pesto cream sauce.

Vic's provides Italian standards and a taste of old school Raleigh at affordable prices—all in a warm, welcoming environment where you don't just feel at home, you're made to feel like you're part of the family.

Downtowner Tips: Great lunch prices; Good for groups and kids; Patio is dog-friendly (there's even a pet store right next door); On the first Wednesday of every month, Vic's hosts a special wine dinner featuring five courses each paired with a different wine, reservations required;

Vic's calzones are ginormous and can easily feed two for dinner; Vic's second location is at The Marketplace: 4035 Lake Boone Trail #109, Raleigh, 984.200.9292.

Brian Adornetto is a food writer, culinary instructor, and chef. His business, Love at First Bite, specializes in private cooking classes and intimate dinners. For more information, please visit www.loveatfirstbite.net. Contact Brian at brian@welovedowntown.com.

Vic's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria

Downtown City Market
331 Blake St., Raleigh
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www.vicsitalianrestaurant.com

Hours of Operation

Monday - Thursday: 11am - 10pm
Friday & Saturday: 11am - 11pm
Closed on Sunday

Cuisine: Italian-American
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Service: Friendly

Dress: Casual

Noise Level: Moderate to loud

Reservations: Accepted

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Wine List: Mostly Italian and very affordable

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IMURJ

CREATE * PERFORM * ENGAGE

A Creative Community in Downtown Raleigh

BY DUSTIN HUBEL



The colorful entrance to Imurj projects a bit of foreshadowing to the diverse and eclectic offerings that lie within.

Just below Whisky Kitchen lies a unique business that's difficult to categorize. Equal parts bar, café, venue, and artist co-op, Imurj breaks all the molds. Their stage is host to 100+ artists and musicians each week as they perform everything from indie rock to Shakespeare. Walking into Imurj is reminiscent of co-operative art venues in far-flung cities like Portland, Brooklyn, and San Francisco.

As you descend the steps toward the entrance, guests are greeted with colorful murals before even opening the door. Inside there is a selection of local crafts and goods, as well as a community table featuring flyers, newsletters, and local magazines.

The concrete floors and unfinished ceiling balance perfectly with the tidy retail displays and colorful art adorning the walls. A creative mashup of grit and wonder, Imurj emits a harmonic frequency all its own.

The invisible hands guiding Imurj are managing partners Karl Thor and Heather Burns. Karl himself is a unique mix of infectious qualities: positivity, idealism, and ambition. Just as multifaceted as his business, Karl is an internationally renowned neuropharmacologist who has released music under the pseudonym Eye d'Neau.

While Karl is working on his day job in pharmaceuticals, Heather takes care of business as the even-keeled pragmatic operations manager. Her history as an entrepreneur started with a blog about baby clothes



Heather Burns



Karl Thor

before graduating to online sales, and finally a brick and mortar store. A quick chat with Heather reveals her good nature and positive attitude. With her background and temperament, Heather is exactly who you'd want as an operations manager. Sadly, Heather felt her work helping to launch and grow Imurj had come to fruition and she recently announced she will be leaving for another position this summer.

The story of Imurj started in 2015 when Karl came to Heather with an idea while she was in the process of shutting down her retail store. He told her about an idea for building a website that would serve as a resource to help local musicians turn their music into careers. At that same time, Karl's son, Michael, and his business

partner Jeff Mickle were opening a restaurant called Whisky Kitchen in an amazing downtown Raleigh space. In addition to the ground floor restaurant, the building also had a 6,000 square foot unfinished basement. Without hesitation, Karl told Heather, "Let's take this space!", and Imurj was born. When I asked Karl if he'd ever done anything like this before he said, "No, but it's a great experiment. I'm a scientist so I've always enjoyed experimenting."

While Imurj's café hosts a small kitchen as well as a bar area for a quick lunch or an evening drink, the primary pull is most certainly the eclectic list of events guests can enjoy every day of the week. Guests can

have a laugh at the Monday Comedy Night, witness an improvisational experiment as musicians are placed on stage with strangers during the Tuesday Open Jam, and stop in on Wednesdays to appreciate the unusually high caliber music Open Mic. The weekend is often host to ticketed events, and peppered throughout the month are meetups and workshops for creatives and groups of all types.

Still standing by their core mission of helping artists, Heather and Karl have turned Imurj into a powerful vehicle to assist with creative career development.

For visual artists, they offer a Galley Extension Program where businesses pay a subscription fee that gives them access to a rotating selection of art that's hung >>>



Artists compete in a First Friday Art Battle.



The stage at Imurj has seen everything from rap to Shakespeare to stand-up comedy.



Imurj boasts a professional recording studio inside.



Nick Hagelin performing at Imurj.

on the walls throughout Imurj. The business gains access to a selection of art without having to purchase multiple canvases, and the artists gain exposure to businesses and collectors who otherwise wouldn't have the chance to find their work. When a sale is made, the artist earns a paycheck.

For musicians, Imurj invites standout artists from their open mic nights to perform in the Artist Spotlight events. Anyone can get on stage and share a song on open nights then the spotlight event gives musicians the opportunity to play a longer set and gain valuable stage

time. The next step for musicians is playing a ticketed weekend show where they play full sets for fans to enjoy. This roadmap has proven tremendously successful for the development of musicians that have started their careers at Imurj.

Other projects in the works include an internet radio station featuring North Carolina musicians and partnerships with other venues across the state to make it easier for artists to pick up more performances. In addition to open mic nights, bands can also book their own shows at Imurj and the entire venue can be rented for

special events. While it's hard to predict the outcome of this experiment, Imurj will certainly remain a unique presence in downtown Raleigh as it continues to grow within the community it calls home.

So, what are you waiting for? Head on over to imurj.com and check out their website and ever-evolving calendar. Stop in for a coffee and a wrap, pick up some local crafts, attend a workshop, listen to a wide variety of live music, or enjoy an evening visit to discover some of Raleigh's most promising creatives sharing their talents. No matter your interests, you'll surely find something that suits you at Imurj. 🍷

Imurj is located at 300 South McDowell Street in downtown Raleigh. Their typical hours are Sunday & Monday 11am-11pm, Tuesday - Friday 11am-1am, and Saturday 11am-2am. www.imurj.com



DOWNTOWNER MAGAZINE CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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1. Liquorish flavor
5. Deserving attention
11. For the full band, on a score
16. Small eating instrument, abbr.
19. Fountain beverage
20. Schwarzenegger's "Total ____"
21. Father of well-known twins
22. Lady
23. Local business group
26. The Giants' Manning
27. Joyful exclamation
28. Rocky peaks
29. "____ the Land of the Free, and the Home of the Brave"
30. Strives
31. "Tea for ____"
32. Road show grp.
33. Attempt
36. A saying, witty and concise
39. Completed
40. Fleece
41. Not poke into others' affairs
51. Comment around a birthday cake
52. URL ending
53. ____ out a living
55. In the midst
56. Portable music device
58. Soap opera's slot
61. Gradually decline
62. A.B.A. member, abbr.
64. Identical in all directions
66. 1983 Eddie Murphy movie
70. Mournful
74. Minnesota clinic
75. Garnet and ruby

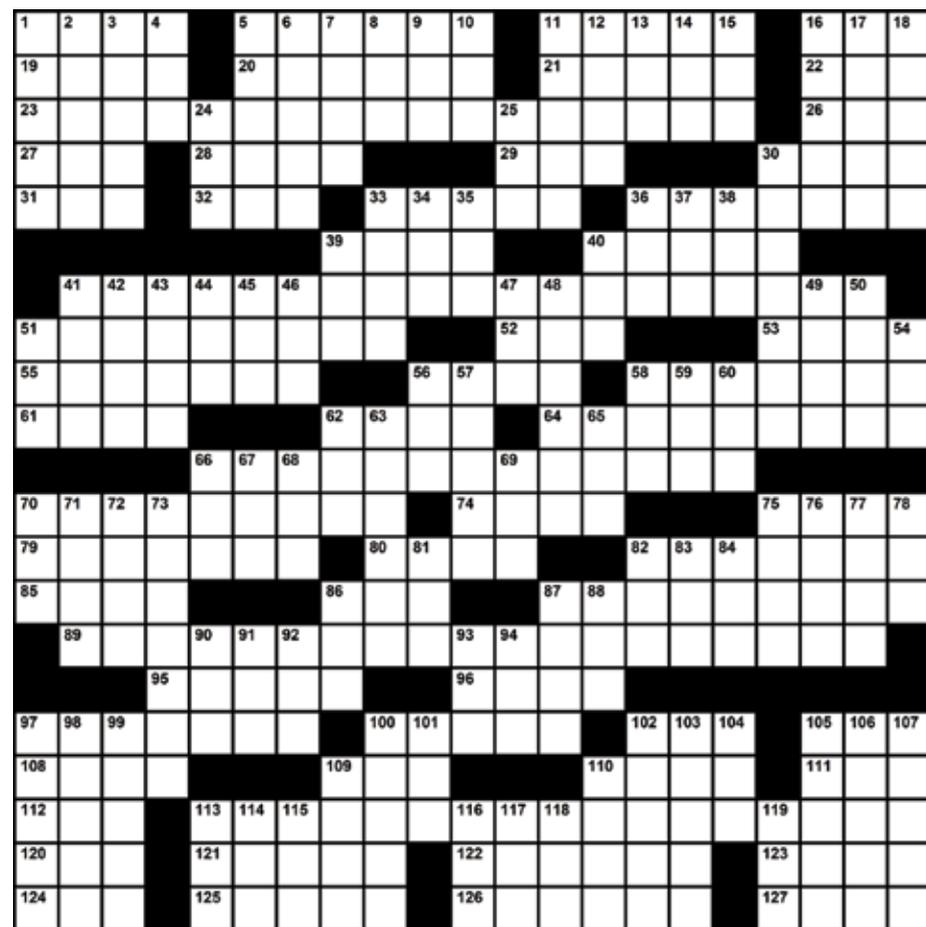
79. Moved like Le Bron
80. Many Christmas presents
82. Written communications
85. Washer cycle
86. "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine" science officer
87. Most indifferent
89. It's not traded on the NYSE
95. Greet and seat
96. Acme
97. Responded to
100. Dweeb
102. Army rank, for short
105. Firms
108. "Do ____ others as..."
109. 5th century Chinese dynasty
110. Mani-____ (salon job)
111. Gibbon, for one
112. Encountered
113. One who gives you tips
120. Longtime record label
121. Hoops
122. Free from anxiety
123. Djokovic, e.g.
124. TriBeCa is part of it
125. Means of business expansion, abbr.
126. Hot water fountain
127. Nabokov heroine and others

DOWN

1. Broad scarf
2. Never in any way
3. A rocky mountain state
4. Favorite uncle?
5. Dunkable snacks
6. Prefix with magnetic
7. Sgts., e.g.
8. Churlish sort
9. That special touch, briefly

10. 70s rock group, abbr.
11. Stopwatch
12. Exploitative type
13. Hot roofing material
14. Center X or O
15. Clinch
16. Those people's
17. 1965 march site
18. Cut-glass work of art
24. A.C. stat
25. Dairy farm sound
30. O.K.
33. Golly gee!
34. Lennon's Yoko
35. Elite group
36. Codgers' replies
37. Canadian province with red sand, for short
38. Swimming gold medalist Thorpe
39. ____ Plaines
40. "The ____ of all fears"
41. Miss Cass
42. Disney was one
43. Aloha State bird
44. First name among U.N. leaders
45. Cries of pain
46. Something to pick
47. Barracks V.I.P.
48. Relating to the physical frame
49. Ditch school for the day
50. Tractor trailer
51. Stomach
54. End of the year month, for short
56. BBC rival
57. African tribesman
58. A dwarf
59. Wore away
60. Soph. and jr.
62. Dictionary abbr.
63. Haberdashery item
65. ____ Paulo
66. Building demolition material
67. Road with a no.
68. Helping hand
69. Swan Lake steps
70. Letter abbr.
71. Prefix with suction
72. Tel ____
73. "The Bald Soprano" playwright
75. Modify
76. Big cheese
77. Work furniture
78. Mach 1 breaker
81. Losing tic-tac-toe line, perhaps
82. Craggy peak
83. Overhead railways
84. English class, for short
86. Simba's home
87. Measure
88. Cowboy's moniker
90. ____ Admiral
91. Golfers starting point
92. Secreted
93. Emirates, for short
94. "Weekend Edition" ailer
97. First stomach
98. Hostile force
99. Cobwebby area
100. Genius physicist and inventor
101. Jocularly
102. Call it a day
103. Stranger
104. Roman 54
105. Scoped out
106. "Carmen" or "Tosca"
107. Belgrade residents
109. Fuse
110. Grade-school orgs.
113. Technology giant
114. Basketball org.
115. It provides a moving experience
116. Vibe or Cosmo
117. Berlioz's "Les nuits d'____"
118. Napoleonic marshal
119. Patience-virtue link

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