

# BEST OF 2015

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**AFTER TREKKING ACROSS THE NATURAL STATE WHILE RESEARCHING THIS YEAR'S BEST OF, WE WERE STRUCK BUT JUST HOW DARN DIVERSE THIS GREAT STATE IS. IT IS A STATE OF CONTRASTS, AFTER ALL. SO WHETHER IT'S A GARAGE GALLERY OR A WORLD-CLASS MUSEUM YOU'RE AFTER, WHETHER YOU'VE GOT A HANKERING FOR A HOT DOG OR THE HAUTE-EST OF CUISINES, WE'RE CERTAIN YOU'LL DISCOVER SOMETHING SUPERLATIVE WITHIN THESE PAGES**

BY BONNIE BAUMAN, KATIE BRIDGES, JORDAN P. HICKEY, NICHOLAS HUNT & EMILY VAN ZANDT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARSHIA KHAN



# FOOD

BEST FOOD & DRINK OF 2015

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## FRANKENDESSERT

LE POPS AND LOST FORTY BREWING'S POPSICLE COLLAB

We're not about to cop to the existence of what might be a staff-compiled Google doc of fantasy local-food mashups—but if such a list did exist, odds are good these beer popsicles from Lost Forty and Le Pops would totally be on there. Lemon and grapefruit mixed with a simple syrup made from the brewery's hop pellets? White hops and locally grown blueberries? Milk chocolate and Love Honey Bock? *Swoon.* Although these frozen lovelies have mostly been limited to events and promotions (all the more reason to keep your eyes peeled on Le Pops and Lost Forty's social media accounts), we can guarantee they'll continue to be in one place: our dreams. And, hopefully, our bellies. ([facebook.com/lost40beer](https://facebook.com/lost40beer); [facebook.com/LePopsIceLollies](https://facebook.com/LePopsIceLollies))

## SET OF WHEELS

KENT WALKER ARTISAN CHEESE

The new hotness in foodie tours? Cheese caves. You can only get that at one place in Little Rock, and that's on Cross Street at Kent Walker Artisan Cheese. Tours, which walk you through each step of the process and finish with a 2-ounce cheese plate, are offered every Saturday and Sunday for \$7. Stick around after the tour (or skip it altogether) for a round of local brews paired with house-made cheeses and live music on the patio. (323 S. Cross St., Little Rock; [kentwalkercheese.com](http://kentwalkercheese.com))

## BEST AMERICAN-STYLE PIZZA IN A SEA OF NEAPOLITAN PIES

DAMGOODE PIES

Given the choice between pizza and no pizza, we'll choose pizza every time. And while we rejoice that Arkansas has more wood-oven-fired, Neapolitan-style pizzas than ever, we have to admit—sometimes we just need a good ol' American pie. And at Damgoode Pies in Little Rock, Fayetteville and Rogers, the slices come with a hearty, malty crust piled high with toppings and extra cheese. Just like our delivery favorites, but oh-so-much better. (*Multiple locations; [damgoodepies.com](http://damgoodepies.com)*)

## BEST LOUISIANA TAG TEAM

THE FADED ROSE AND MADDIE'S PLACE

Arkansas sees no shortage of Cajun influence in its dining scene, and in Little Rock, two of the finest spots for soaking up the flavor are right next to each other. Both restaurants offer their own specialties—Faded Rose is known more for its po'boys and steaks, Maddie's for its shrimp and grits with andouille-sausage reduction. And while both have slightly cramped dining rooms, their proximity to each other means if one spot is feeling crowded, you can make your way along the sidewalk and see how the wait's looking next door. Best part? You can't go wrong either way. (*Faded Rose: 1619 Rebsamen Park Road, Little Rock; [thefadedrose.com](http://thefadedrose.com). Maddie's Place: 1615 Rebsamen Park Road, Little Rock; [maddiesplacelr.com](http://maddiesplacelr.com)*)

## BEST BLOODY-AMAZING BRUNCH BEVERAGE

TUSK & TROTTER'S HOUSE-INFUSED BLOODY MARYS

With brunch dishes like lemon soufflé pancakes, carrot-cake waffles and a duck pastrami Benedict,



Bentonville’s Tusk & Trotter American Brasserie isn’t the kind of place for a simple mimosa. Here, even the brunch cocktails are over the top, crafted using house-infused spirits for extra flavor. Bloody marys come in flavors such as pickle, bacon, pizza, ghost chile, chipotle, pastrami bourbon and tequila lime. And you thought your pickled okra garnish was something special. (110 SE A St., Bentonville; [tuskandtrotter.com](http://tuskandtrotter.com))

## BEST REASON TO PROVE ANDY SAMBERG WRONG

### ROBERT’S PORT AT COWIE WINE CELLARS

Fox’s *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* may have painted a less-than-flattering portrait of Arkansas wine when star Andy Samberg mentioned that he’d bought the “eight dollar-ist” bottle of vino from “the finest vineyard in Arkansas.” But maybe they should think again. Cowie Wine Cellars in Paris has garnered multiple national awards for its sweet red Robert’s Port, which pairs perfectly with a few chunks of dark chocolate. But unlike Samberg’s unnamed bottle, it’ll run you around \$19 if you can track it down. (101 N. Carbon City Road, Paris; [cowiewinecellars.com](http://cowiewinecellars.com))

## BEST SUGAR-FUELED ROAD TRIP

### LAMBRECHT GOURMET / SILLY CHILI / JUANITA’S

It’s pretty well an unalienable truth that Arkansans don’t mind hoofing it a little for a good meal. (Mostly because, *um*, have you had Jones Bar-B-Q in Marianna?) But of course, as any haver of sweet tooths will likely attest, that goes doubly for our state’s locally made sugar spun confections. Because, *um*, have you had the fleur de sel toffee from Heber Springs’ Lambrecht Gourmet? Or the candied jalapenos from Silly Chili in Eureka Springs? Or the peanut brittle from Juanita’s in Arkadelphia? Because sometimes that stuff just tastes better at the source. And is totally worth the cavities. (Lambrecht Gourment; [lambrechtgourmet.com](http://lambrechtgourmet.com)) (Silly Chili; (479) 253-0088) (Juanita’s Candy Kitchen; [juanitascandykitchen.com](http://juanitascandykitchen.com))

## BEST USE OF PINEAPPLE

### ARKANSAS PINEAPPLE WHIP

When you scarf down one of these things, you’re tasting fate. You’re tasting something that began six years ago, when the now-proprietor of Arkansas Pineapple Whip, Robert Clark, got what he calls a “botched snow cone” from a parking-lot vendor in Springfield, Missouri, and decided to try the soft-serve pineapple dessert place next door. And you’re tasting the fruit it bore here in central Arkansas—namely, that of the deliciously creamy, pineapple variety. And if you don’t believe in love at first bite, then you’ve never experienced this stuff on a hot summer night. (Locations in Conway and Sherwood; [facebook.com/ArkansasPineappleWhip](https://facebook.com/ArkansasPineappleWhip))

# YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL:



# FANCY-PANTS RIBS VS. “BARBECUE HEAVEN”

### DRESSED UP ◀

Cut into single-bone pieces and stacked on a chic white plate, the ribs at Little Rock’s **Kemuri**—a fresh Asian-fusion eatery in Hillcrest—look damn near classy. The ponzu barbecue sauce adds a subtle citrus tang that blends well with the smokiness imparted by the indoor robata grill. Just don’t wipe your fingers on the tablecloth. (2601 Kavanaugh Blvd., Little Rock; [kemurirestaurant.com](http://kemurirestaurant.com))

### DRESSED DOWN ▼

When you put ribs in your restaurant’s name, you better do them right. Luckily, the team behind **The Rib Cage** in Hot Springs—a red trailer with a permanent address—seems to know exactly what they’re doing. Dive into the six-bone Big Red plate for a heaping helping of fall-off-the-bone meat slathered in the spot’s “Sweet Heat BBQ Sauce.” Just be sure to get to this paper-napkin spot early. When they’re out, they’re out. (5429 Central Ave., Hot Springs; [ribcagehs.com](http://ribcagehs.com))





# "I'VE-GOT-BRATS-YOU'VE-GOT-BUNS" COLLAB

ARKANSAS FRESH BAKERY AND BUTCHER & PUBLIC

The Saline County sandwich game was kicked up a notch this spring when Travis McConnell of Butcher & Public announced a new partnership with Ashton Woodward's Arkansas Fresh Bakery, provider of breads to many of Little Rock's hippest restaurants. McConnell, an artisan butcher and Capital Bar & Grill alumnus, took the reins at the bakery's Bryant cafe in March, combining his hearty meats with the bakery's famously fluffy breads and buns. Stay tuned: McConnell plans to expand Butcher & Public to a wholesale facility in Bryant later this year. (304 N. Reynolds Road, Bryant; arkansasfresh.com)

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## BEST MORNING PICK-ME-UP

"I love Capitol Bistro. It's in our building below the KARK studio, and it's the perfect spot to drop in and get coffee and breakfast. My pick? Mocha Joe with an extra espresso shot. The morning-show schedule requires a 2:30 a.m. alarm clock and plenty of caffeine!"

—Mallory Hardin Brooks, morning and noon news anchor at KARK-TV, Channel 4 in Little Rock



LOCAL PICK



## BEST 'MEAL' IN ARKANSAS

Our ideal Arkansas dinner? You'll need a time machine—or at least a plane—to indulge in these five courses across the state. But heck, there's no reason we can't dream.

### DRINK: SOUTHERN COMFORTABLE

Capital Bar & Grill, Little Rock

We'd start our meal in true Southern style: with a cocktail. Bellied up to the bar at Capital Bar & Grill, we'd order a round of Southern Comfortables, made with spiced pear vodka, yellow chartreuse, lemon juice and house-made pecan soda, to whet our appetites. (111 W. Markham St.; capitalbarandgrill.com)

### APPETIZER: BACON-WRAPPED DATES

The Pantry Crest, Little Rock

Across town at The Pantry Crest, we'd pull up a chair for an order or two of bacon-wrapped dates. Just like your grandma used to make in the '60s—when all the best appetizers came bacon-wrapped and served on toothpicks—these bite-sized snacks are sweet and savory and warm from the oven, oh my. (722 N. Palm St.; littlerockpantry.com)

### SALAD: MASSAGED KALE SALAD

Heirloom, Rogers

Because we can bend the rules of time and space for our dream Arkansas dinner, we'd make it to Rogers in time to see chef Jason Paul Roth at Heirloom before he closes up shop. His salads are works of art, and we'll have our fingers crossed that his massaged kale salad with harissa-cashew dressing and shaved radishes is on his rotating menu. (113 S. Second St.; heirloomfoodandwine.com)

### MAIN COURSE: BERKSHIRE PORK CHOP

The Hive, Bentonville

The Hive in Bentonville focuses on what chef Matthew McClure has dubbed "High South cuisine." With that in mind, we can always bet on a juicy, thick-cut pork chop to be available during dinner hours. Lately, the chop's been served with creamed corn, shell beans and that most favorite of Southern condiment: chowchow. (200 NE A St.; thehivebentonville.com)

### DESSERT: COCONUT PIE

Charlotte's Eats & Sweets, Keo

We fully believe in the existence of a second dessert stomach, so we won't worry about dragging our already-full bellies all the way to Lonoke County for a slice of the famed coconut pie at Charlotte's Eats & Sweets. Tender crust and fluffy filling abound at this tiny restaurant wedged right by Keo's city hall. (290 Main St.; (501) 842-2123)





# SEE

BEST ACTIVITIES OF 2015

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## BIKE RIDE FOR GASTRONOMES

### GRAN FONDO

The Big Dam Bridge 100 may get all the glory, but Little Rock's Gran Fondo is the best bike ride in town. Not a race, this 70-miler is all about living the high life on two wheels. Feel free to leave those chalky energy bars behind as you wind your way through central Arkansas' main drags and back roads—the full-service rest stops and post-ride party (complete with concierge bike check-in and swag bag, of course) feature food prepared by some of the region's best chefs. ([littlerockgranfondo.com](http://littlerockgranfondo.com))

## BEST FOR GETTING VERTICAL

### HORSESHOE CANYON RANCH

In addition to the typical “dude ranch” activities—horseback tours and wagon rides, pond fishing and skeet shooting—this Ozark mountain hideaway between Jasper and Ponca near the Buffalo National River happens to be one of the premier climbing destinations east of the Rockies, thanks to the more than 300 sport-climbing routes for all skill levels ringing its namesake sandstone cliff. New to the sport? The ranch's climbing guides can give you the lay of the land. ([gohcr.com](http://gohcr.com))

## BEST PLACE TO LOOK FLY

### GASTON'S WHITE RIVER RESORT'S FLY-FISHING SCHOOL

Who could blame you for wanting to take up fly-fishing? First off, it's gorgeous. The grace of a fly line arcing across a sun-dappled mountain stream? Come. On. Plus, our fair state abounds in fly-fishing opportunities, and the northern reaches of the White River—home to Gaston's White River Resort's fly-fishing school—could very well be considered the epicenter. From April through November, longtime fishing guide Frank Saksa offers two-day courses on the sport, instructing newbies on everything from how to select the perfect fly to the specific techniques needed to snag a brown on the White. Classes are held eight weekends a year; the next session is Aug. 10-11. (1777 River Road, Lakeview; [gastons.com](http://gastons.com))



## WAY TO SET YOUR INNER ARTIST FREE

### CLASSES AT THE ARKANSAS ARTS CENTER

If scanning the pages and pages—and pages—of classes outlined in the Museum School's course catalog (painting, photography, carpentry, silversmithing, etc., etc.) makes one thing clear, it's this: You really don't have much of an excuse for resisting the creative itch. For those overwhelmed by the sheer number of creative endeavors, Director of Education Programs Lou Palermo recommends a foray into drawing, saying that “it teaches you how to see; it teaches you how to look.” Or, if nothing else, mark the Museum School sale on your calendar (Nov. 13 and 14), when both students and teachers will exhibit (and sell!) everything from mosaics to wooden pens. ([arkarts.com/art-classes](http://arkarts.com/art-classes))

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## LOCAL PICK

### BEST MUSIC VENUE

“My favorite venue would have to be the legendary White Water Tavern, where the



music always comes first and an electric spirit vibrates off the walls.” —*Bonnie Montgomery, Arkansas-bred musician extraordinaire*



# BEST RETRO BEER JOURNEY

## HOGSHEAD TOURS

A classic 1970 VW van named Vanny? Check. Behind-the-scenes brewery access? Check. Cooler to keep your, *um*, liquid memorabilia cold from stop to stop to stop? Check. Obviously, Fayetteville’s Hogshead Tours has everything you need to explore Northwest Arkansas’ booming craft-beer scene, but with an expanding range of tour options—including wineries, local organic farms and music venues—you don’t have to be a hophead to climb aboard. ([hogsheadtours.com](http://hogsheadtours.com))

# BEST REASON FOR A ROUND

## STONE’S THROW BREWING

Those who enjoy testing their brain’s capacity for random knowledge over a pint are familiar with the typical trivia format: a few pop culture questions, a few facts from the day’s news, and you’re done. Not so at Little Rock’s Stone’s Throw Brewing. The small brewery’s Thursday-night Arkie Pub Trivia features a decidedly local bent, with questions on Arkansas-centric topics of all kinds. Do yourself a favor and recruit a history buff, stat. ([402 E. Ninth St., Little Rock; stonesthrowbeer.com](http://402E.NinthSt.,LittleRock;stonesthrowbeer.com))

# BEST PLACE TO SHOOT THE RAPIDS

## SILOAM SPRINGS KAYAK PARK

With some 600 feet of man-made rapids, eddies and pools, what once was a sleepy section of the Illinois River just outside Siloam Springs has become a hot spot for whitewater kayakers from around the region. Not a kayaker? Not to worry—tubes work just as well for getting in on the action. But with no lifeguard on duty, life

jackets are an absolute must for participants of all skill levels. ([Fisher Ford Road, Siloam Springs; siloamspringskayakpark.com](http://FisherFordRoad,SiloamSprings;siloamspringskayakpark.com))

# BEST PLACE TO BREAK A (FISHING) RECORD

## BEAVER LAKE

Want one heckuva fish story? Best head north to Beaver Lake, where the state’s newest fishing record was set early last March. At 105 pounds, the paddlefish landed by Springdale native Jessie Wilkes provided a rod-bending, back-breaking fight not often found in freshwater. But lest you think it was a one-off occurrence, the state’s previous record paddlefish, a 102-pound behemoth, was pulled out of the lake in 2007. ([swl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Lakes/beaverlake](http://swl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Lakes/beaverlake))

# BEST COMEDIC LEGACY

## RED OCTOPUS

Red Octopus has seen some stuff, man. In the 24 years since the storied troupe first took the stage, hundreds of cast members have come and gone. But so, too, has plenty stayed the same. For 20 years, they’ve sung the same song (“Pagans on Bobsleds”) at Christmas. For 10, they’ve featured the same lewd-talking, scarf-layering “old lady,” wheeled onstage to admonish the crowd with her clanky, bejeweled fingers. And as they prepare for this coming show in mid-August (one of the five they’ll put on this year), writing for two weeks, rehearsing for another two and a half before performing—sure, it’ll be a new show. But the spirit will be the same. ([616 Center St., Little Rock; redoctopus theater.com](http://616CenterSt.,LittleRock;redoctopus theater.com))

# YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL:

# MEGA MUSEUM VS. UNDERGROUND GALLERY

## MUSEUM MASTERPIECE

With its extraordinary permanent collection, Moshe Safdie-designed buildings and idyllic location—not to mention its current exhibitions, displaying the likes of Andy Warhol and Jamie Wyeth—we can’t praise **Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art** enough. ([600 Museum Way, Bentonville; crystalbridges.org](http://600MuseumWay,Bentonville;crystalbridges.org))

## COVERT CONTEMPORARY

What this North Little Rock garage gallery lacks in pedigree, it makes up with sheer youthful audacity. But don’t expect some slapdash operation at **Goodweather Gallery**. Its crisp white walls and rotating contemporary art exhibitions belie its humble locale. ([4400 Edgemere St., North Little Rock; goodweathergallery.com](http://4400EdgemereSt.,NorthLittleRock;goodweathergallery.com))



# BEST DATE SPOTS

No matter who your crush is or what they’re into, these five amorous outings should solve that whole “what should we do tonight” thing:

## BEST NERD DATE: SCIENCE AFTER DARK AT THE MUSEUM OF DISCOVERY

Smart is sexy and nerds are cool at these monthly, adults-only events where you and your date can peruse special interactive installations (past themes include space, tornadoes and the science behind superheroes) over craft beer and cocktails. ([500 President Clinton Ave., Little Rock; museumofdiscovery.org](http://500PresidentClintonAve.,LittleRock;museumofdiscovery.org))



## BEST HOW-TO DATE: TABLE FOR TWO AT THE WINTHROP ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE

Snap out of your date-night rut with these couples-specific, mountaintop cooking classes featuring a candlelit DIY entree, lodging for the night and a continental breakfast to see you off. ([1 Rockefeller Drive, Morrilton; rockefellerinstitute.org](http://1RockefellerDrive,Morrilton;rockefellerinstitute.org))



## BEST ARTSY DATE: THEA FOUNDATION’S THE ART DEPARTMENT

With great local art, live music, heavy hors d’œuvres and an open bar—all for only \$10—these quarterly exhibitions might just be the best deal in town, especially when you consider that the proceeds help fund the arts-based nonprofit. ([400 Main St., North Little Rock; theafoundation.org](http://400MainSt.,NorthLittleRock;theafoundation.org))



## BEST FOODIE DATE: TABLE 28

If you’re feeling a bit guilty about the price of pulling up a chair at Table 28’s table 28—the \$200-per-person price tag includes six wine-paired courses exclusively prepared by chef Scott Rains—just know that 50 percent of the proceeds go to support Arkansas Children’s Hospital. ([1501 Merrill Drive, Little Rock; table28lr.com](http://1501MerrillDrive,LittleRock;table28lr.com))



## BEST GREAT-OUTDOORS DATE: GUIDED SUNSET- AND STARLIGHT-KAYAKING TOURS

Few things can stir the heart like watching the sun set and the stars shine from the water. And thanks to guided sunset-, starlight- and full-moon-kayak tours offered by state parks such as Lake Ouachita, De Gray Lake, Village Creek and more, it’s never been easier. ([arkansasstateparks.com](http://arkansasstateparks.com))



# DES IGN

BEST DESIGN & STYLE OF 2015

## YOUTUBE-FAMOUS MAKEUP GURU

ARDEN ROSE, AKA "AROSE186"

Have some time to kill at the office? Type "Arden Rose, YouTube" into your browser and then prepare to lose yourself for an hour or three in Rose's cheeky makeup tutorials. The doe-eyed 19-year-old Arkansan, who recently hit 1 million subscribers on her YouTube channel, started vlogging about all things beauty when she was a 14-year-old high school freshman, never dreaming that it might one day turn into a full-fledged career that would land her in Los Angeles. (It did, last year, at the ripe old age of 18.) But whether set in Little Rock or La La Land, Rose's offbeat humor ("Thanks, Internet, for my daily picture of Ronald Reagan wearing sweatpants") and true-blue beauty advice (turns out Stila's Stay All Day waterproof liquid eyeliner is the key to nailing the cat-eye) are Internet gold. ([youtube.com/user/arose186](http://youtube.com/user/arose186))

## BEST LOCALLY MADE PRODUCTS FOR ORGANIC-MINDED BEAUTIES

CREEKBABY

Most cosmetic companies print a laundry list of ingredients on the back of the bottle. But not CreekBaby. Launched this past fall by native Arkansan (and former Elizabeth Arden exec) Misty Duffy, the all-natural skin-care products are packaged in containers that list their ingredients smack-dab on the front. Sea salt. Fresh Ozark spring water. Organic, fair-trade sugar. Olive oil. That is to say, none of those unpronounceable things that might have scared away a mother-to-be worried about toxins (as was the case with Duffy), and all of the things that are good and pure. And we have to admit—our skin has never been happier. Like, ever. (Visit [creekbaby.com](http://creekbaby.com) for a list of local stockists.)

## BEST SPOT FOR STYLISH SPECS

MERTINS EYE & OPTICAL

Let's say you don't need glasses. And let's say you start scrolling through the gorgeous "lookbooks" on Mertins Eye & Optical's equally gorgeous website. Here's what *might* happen: You *might* get serious glasses envy and consider making an appointment and, you know, fudging a couple of lines on the vision chart during the exam. Until you realize that Mertins also sells seriously chic sunnies—and that they are, in fact, the only stockist in Arkansas to carry the likes of luxury lines Mykita, Moscot, Thierry Lasry and Garrett Leight California Optical. And then you *might* do your happy dance. (640 N. Garland Ave., Fayetteville; [mertinsye.com](http://mertinsye.com))

## BEST ONE-STOP SHOP FOR KIDDO COUTURE

"I always find the most unique items for my baby boys at Bella Jack's in Fayetteville—I can count on there being something new every time I go in. Paige Thompson, the owner, is always so sweet and helps me find the cutest pieces for my little guys." —Lauren Wilkins Stokes, founder and CEO of women's clothing brand Lauren James Co.



## PLACE TO PROCURE TRENDY HOUSE PLANTS THAT ARE—BONUS!—NEXT-TO-IMPOSSIBLE TO KILL

THE PLANT OUTLET

*Euphorbia tirucalli*. *Kalanchoe luciae*. *Crassulaceae echeveria*. Sure, they may sound complicated, but succulents—those water-storing, desert-dwelling plants that in recent years have become practically ubiquitous in the designosphere—are oh-so easy to keep alive. Good thing, then, that The Plant Outlet in Conway keeps a superlative stock of 'em in its greenhouse. Owner Brett Battle is happy to give tips on incorporating the low-maintenance plants into everything from tabletop containers to xeriscape beds. Here's a pro tip: Try filling the Outlet's pretty moss pots with a mix of sedums and jades for a stylish centerpiece. (827 Hogan Lane, Conway; [arkansasplantoutlet.com](http://arkansasplantoutlet.com))



## PLACE TO OUTFIT YOUR STATIONERY WARDROBE

SHINDIG PAPERIE

We Southerners understand the importance of a handwritten note. And if said handwritten note happens to be scrawled on a rounded-corner, double-thick card embossed with a custom-designed monogram, all the better. Shindig Paperie's owner, Trisha Logan, knows this all too well, which is why she's ready and willing to help you dream up a stationery suite of calling cards, note cards and the requisite envelopes (lined, of course!) that will set your Emily Post-worshipping heart aflutter. And while you're in Logan's shop, be sure to browse through all of the other paper lovelies stocked therein (we've recently spied some pretty marbled-paper notebooks and laugh-out-loud-funny greeting cards from Ladyfingers Letterpress). (Locations in Bentonville and Fayetteville; [shindigpaperie.com](http://shindigpaperie.com))

## BEST ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ALL THINGS GENTLEMANLY

BARAKAT BESPOKE

Some guys hate to shop. Those guys clearly have not yet been to Barakat Bespoke. Mostly because scouting for a new suit or a sleek pair of boots in the River Market District's suave storefront comes with a side of Scotch. And custom tailoring. And the opportunity to get a beard trim by the folks behind Bryant's The Art of Men's Cuts. And a shoeshine. Not in Little Rock? The shop also offers a monthly subscription service called The Bespoke Box, which features a curated roundup of dapper accessories and grooming products—think Happy Socks, Stolen Riches pocket squares and neon laces—delivered directly to your front door. (417 President Clinton Ave., Little Rock; [barakatbespoke.com](http://barakatbespoke.com))



### BEST FOR HIGH-END HEELS

Sky-high Jimmy Choos, sophisticated Tory Burch slides, Rag and Bone ankle boots—the gang's all very much here at Little Rock style institution **Barbara/Jean Ltd.** (7811 Cantrell Road, Suite 1, Little Rock; [barbarajeans.com](http://barbarajeans.com))

### BEST FOR BUDGET-SAVVY BABES

Head to either **Steamroller Blues**' flagship location in Jonesboro or its shop in Little Rock's Heights neighborhood for funky footwear that won't break the bank. (5915 Kavanaugh Blvd., Little Rock; [steamrollerblues.com](http://steamrollerblues.com))



YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL:  
SPLURGE VS. SAVE





## BEST SHOPPING DISTRICT FOR DESIGNOPHILES

Just moved? Got an empty room (or four) to fill on the quick? It's a good thing Little Rock's Riverdale has become a one-stop design district. Here are a few places to hit for home goods—just make sure you're driving a big vehicle to haul 'em away.



Browse original art, stunning chandeliers and antique-inspired furnishings at **PROVIDENCE LTD. DESIGN**'s studio-slash-shop. (2212 Cantrell Road; providenceltdesign.com)

**HOWSE**, the new concept from IO Metro founder Jay Howard, is filled with a rotating collection of trend-forward, budget-friendly pieces. (2200 Cantrell Road; facebook.com/warehowselr)

Looking to add a little worldly flair to your abode? The duo behind **MARSHALL CLEMENTS** travels the world to stock their space with Old World antiques. (1509 Rebsamen Park Road; marshallclements.com)



From vintage Lucite bar carts to Jonathan Adler pottery, **BEAR-HILL INTERIORS** stocks items you won't find elsewhere in the state. (1420 Rebsamen Park Road; bearhillinteriors.com)

For almost four decades, **CYNTHIA EAST FABRICS** has been the go-to fabric source for Arkansas designers due to its chic, curated collection—we've been eyeing a luxe metallic linen of late. (1523 Rebsamen Park Road; cynthiaeastfabrics.com)

On the hunt for a conversation piece? Check out John Gibson's collection of unexpected art and accessories at **URBAN PAD**. (3513 Old Cantrell Road; urbanpad.net)



Snap up American-made home goods like a chic Robert Abbey "Delta" lamp at longtime Little Rock designer Garry Mertins' **MERTINSDYKE HOME**. (1504 Rebsamen Park Road; mertinsdykehome.com)

PIN BY @KEVINWALSH | PHOTO BY NANCY NOLAN



BEST

## LOCAL PINSPIRATION

KEVIN WALSH, INTERIOR DESIGNER AND CO-OWNER OF BEAR-HILL INTERIORS

Everything we know about lacquer—like the fact that you can (and should) coat your entire entryway in shiny peacock blue, or the fact that a quart of high-gloss black is all you need to glamorize a thrifted sideboard—we learned from Kevin Walsh. Or, rather, from Kevin Walsh's Pinterest account. Walsh's 95 boards—some 30,000 followers strong—are a veritable treasure trove of design-y goodness. We've pinned from "Painted Floors" (hello, stenciled hexagons) and gawked over "Daybeds," and thanks to "Pets," we won't rest until we've procured a custom Lucite dog bed. So thanks, Kevin. (pinterest.com/kevinwalsh)



# HEA

BEST HEALTH & WELLNESS OF 2015

# LTH

## PLACE TO GET YOUR CLEANSE ON

CARROT DIRT ORGANICS

Yes, it's kind of a weird name. But when you consider the Fort Smith juicery's commitment to close-to-the-earth, organic ingredients in crafting their cold-pressed juices, we think it fits. Especially when you're able to get your hands on one of their wonderfully alliterative bottled juices (i.e. Verde Vigor and Beet Box) and their line of nut milks (say, Zenful Almond—and the Banana Nut Bread smoothie it helps make). And if by some curious happenstance you're not entirely refreshed and rejuvenated by the time you leave, we'd recommend heading next door to McP Hot Yoga Studio, where yoga—hot and otherwise—is held seven days a week. (4300 Rogers Ave., No. 32, Fort Smith; carrotdirt.com)

## BEST STAR TREATMENT

SHIE JI CHINESE HERBS AND ACUPUNCTURE CLINIC

Is that nagging shoulder pain interfering with your back swing? A throbbing lower lumbar keeping you from the company float trip down the Buffalo? Well, consider this: If fifth-generation acupuncturist and doctor of Eastern medicine QiaoLi Lei can help Randy Livingston of the Chicago Bulls and Paralympic swimmer Grover Evans (as the testimonials on her website attest), just imagine what she can do for your inner amateur athlete. (Or your inner celebrity—she's also treated Ashley Judd, after all.) Among the handful of restoratives on the clinic's menu? Acupuncture, cupping and Chinese herbs—plus, Lei is always eager to pass along a recipe for a tried-and-true home remedy. (2723 Foxcroft Road, No. 103, Little Rock; littlerockacupuncture.com)

## BEST PLACE TO GET YOUR OMEGA-3S

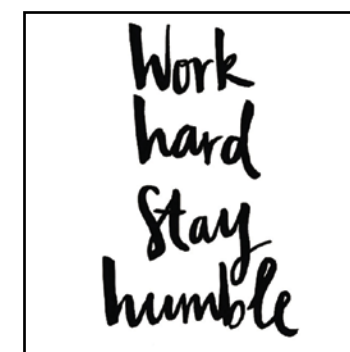
BLU FRESH FISH MARKETPLACE

Frankly, it's still a little tough to believe such a place can exist. Specifically, how oysters, lobsters and halibut pulled in from Boston, from British Columbia, from Nova Scotia, are finding their way to Bentonville's Blu Fresh Fish Marketplace—on *the same frickin' day that they're caught*. (We'd recommend that any naysayers or doubters take a gander at the two large coolers positively brimming with between 20 and 30 kinds of sea-fare fresh off the boat.) We'd also recommend heading to the adjoining cafe and sampling some of that haul—like, ASAP—on the 8-foot-long Arkansas white-oak communal tables. All of which is to say: Omega-3s are way tastier when they're fresh. (607 SE 5th St., Bentonville; blubentonville.com)

## LOCAL "FITSPIRATION"

@RESULTSBYTINA

For many of us, healthy choices are often derailed by internal tete-a-tetes: *I could go to the gym—or I could watch another episode of True Detective. I could order the side salad—but fries are delicious*. Needless to say, a little extra motivation is often in order—and that's exactly what you'll find on the Instagram feed of Tina Glass, owner of Results by Tina Personal Training Studio. Glass motivates her followers not only with snaps of her own healthy food choices, but also with pics of her clients' progress. Selfies and short exercise videos round out this fitspirational feed, which is almost like having your very own pocket personal trainer. (resultsbytina.com)



INSTAGRAMS BY @RESULTSBYTINA



# REASON TO RUN

## HASH RUNS

Really, you won't know what to expect. Because unlike other creative takes on running that involve clouds of rainbow dust and costumes, hash runs depend on the whims of just one runner, following a fox-and-hare principle, where the lead runner charts a course (usually 3 to 5 miles) using chalk or toilet paper, with the rest of the pack in hot pursuit. Even if that course happens to involve running up and down mountains or through darkened tunnels before popping out of a manhole in front of Superior Brewery to the distress of nearby tourists (as was the case on a recent run in Hot Springs). However, so long as you've got a good sense of humor, you can expect one thing: a good time. And booze. (*Hot Springs: "That Time of the Month Hash" Facebook group; Little Rock: lhash.com*)



# BEST PLACE TO TAKE YOGA TO THE NEXT LEVEL (LITERALLY)

## RECREATION STUDIOS

You may have seen its high-flying acts around town, but Little Rock's ReCreation Studios isn't just a cirque-style performing arts troupe—it's also the perfect place for yogis fed up with gravity telling them what they can and can't do. Adventurous folks of all skill levels reach new heights on aerial silks—a gymnastic art made famous by Cirque du Soleil—in ReCreation Studios' aerial fitness classes or find strength in numbers with acro yoga, which sees yogis team up to complete two-person, acrobatic poses. (*1021 Jessie Road, Little Rock; recreationstudioslr.com*)

## YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL:

# HIGH- VS. LOW-INTENSITY WORKOUTS

## FEEL THE BURN

Looking for a blood-pumping, high-intensity interval training class (aka a "HIIT")? That's exactly what you're in for if you show up for a Brickhaus class at **Clubhaus Fitness**. HIIT's quick, intense bursts of exercise—think 40-second intervals of push-ups, sit-ups, squats, box jumps and burpees with 20 seconds of rest, followed by short recovery periods—are said to burn more calories in less time than lower-intensity exercise. (*612 W. Dickson St., Fayetteville; 1207 Rebsamen Park Road, Little Rock; clubhausfitness.com*)

## GO WITH THE FLOW ▲

Yoga has long been considered a great option for a lower-intensity workout—exercise that keeps your heart rate relatively constant for an extended period of time. Even so, the yoga at **Big Rock Yoga** will pose a challenge—the classes offered here are of the vigorous "power yoga" variety, and with the thermostat set at a warm 80 to 90 degrees, your muscles will be nice and stretched out. (*10700 Rodney Parham Road, Little Rock; bigrockyoga.com*)

# BEST WAY TO TRAIN FOR THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

## CONQUER THE GAUNTLET

Yoga, jogging and weightlifting all have their place in the pantheon of healthy living, but if you want to be able to fend off hordes of the undead (should the time come), you'd better be prepared for anything. Luckily, obstacle runs like September's homegrown Conquer the Gauntlet in Little Rock—where contestants will tackle everything from fire pits and swamp crawls to rope walks and wall climbs—offer the perfect way to test your mettle. (*conquerthegauntlet.com*)

## LOCAL PICK

### BEST PLACE TO GET FIT FOR NEW RUNNING KICKS

"This is tough. I worked for and am coached by Gary Taylor, owner of Go! Running, but I am a longtime friend and pseudo-daughter of Bill Torrey, owner of Rock



City Running. I love them both, and both stores are excellent places to be fit for shoes and apparel, and to get advice, from the beginner runner to the ultramarathoner."

—Leah Thorvilson, five-time Little Rock marathon winner



# BEST GET-FIT FRIENDS

We're not sure about you, but our New Year's resolutions kicked the bucket, oh, about seven months, three weeks and six days ago. If that's the case for you as well, know for one that you're not alone—and thanks to these active local groups, you don't have to work out alone, either.

## RUN: LITTLE ROCK ROAD-RUNNERS

You might need a little lead time before dipping into those 20-mile training routes developed with the Little Rock marathoner in mind, but with group runs and route recommendations all around the city, the LRRC is a fine group to help you keep apace of your goals. (*littlerockroadrunners.com*)

## HIKE: TAKAHIK RIVER VALLEY HIKERS

Ah, the great outdoors. Since 1999, these folks have tramped and traipsed everywhere from Pedestal Rocks to Round Top. Also, if there's one good indication that they really know what's up, it's this: They don't start hiking until October. (*takahik.com*)

## BIKE: ARKANSAS BICYCLE CLUB

Over hill, dale, river and everywhere in between, the club's thrice-weekly standing rides offer more than ample proof that it's way easier to appreciate what your hometown has to offer from two wheels than four. (We'd opt for the early-afternoon Sunday rides with Community Bakery as an optional finish-line destination). (*arkansasbicycleclub.wildapricot.org*)

## DANCE: LITTLE ROCK SALSA MEETUP

Look, there's nothing wrong with kicking up your heels in the privacy of your own home. (Maybe.) But for those interested in dancing the night away—burning the midnight oil and calories alike—to the likes of salsa and merengue, just know there's a partner for you somewhere out there, probably at 9 p.m. over at Juanita's. (*meetup.com/little-rock-salsa-meetup/*)

## CROSSFIT: WEST LITTLE ROCK CROSSFIT

Even if you don't speak CrossFit—say, if you're not sure whether WODs and Burpees are exercises or shorthand for baby gear—this is a fine place to start. And seeing as the foundations class is offered free of charge, you can test the waters before taking the plunge. (*westlittlerockcrossfit.com*)

## CANOE: ARKANSAS CANOE CLUB

With such limited space, there's no way to touch on everything the Arkansas Canoe Club does—the message boards with trips posted, the various paddling schools and pool sessions (to say nothing of the club's efforts at conservation or the fact that the club has seven chapters). So, we're just going to recommend you check out the website. (*arkansascanoecub.com*)