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## Great spots: 17 of Charlottesville's most intriguing places



(<http://www.c-ville.com/great-spots-17-charlottesvilles-intriguing-places/>)

Photo: Martyn Kyle

[Living \(http://www.c-ville.com/category/living/\)](http://www.c-ville.com/category/living/)

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AM

**Be a tourist in your own town. It's a phrase we employ when we start growing tired of the place we've inhabited for...well, let's just say for a while. This week, we put it to the test, uncovering Charlottesville's lesser-knowns (and a few tried-and-true classics, for good measure), from a secret garden to a wizarding world on Grounds.**

By Tami Keaveny, Jessica Luck, Erin O'Hare, Lisa Provence and Caite White

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[http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Garage\\_ByTomDaly-3.jpg](http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Garage_ByTomDaly-3.jpg)

Photo: Tom Daly

...IN SMALL PACKAGES

## The Garage

A one-car garage on First Street that's so indie it doesn't even have a proper address, The Garage packs in visitors for everything from First Fridays art shows to play readings. Or invites them to sit on the hill at Lee Park across the street while a band rocks out on Oriental rugs.

This summer, the space again was part of the LOOK3 Festival of the Photograph. Arresting images from 25 photographers hung on the garage's walls as part of "Everyday Africa: A Look Ahead." After free music shows (concertgoers pay by donation), it's not uncommon to see people peering closely at colorful works of art, gingerly stepping over cords while a band packs up its equipment. The gallery's current exhibit, "Ripe," features the work of Lou Haney, who creates acrylic and gouache images of fruits and vegetables.

And The Garage is adding to its artistic repertoire with the launch of maker workshops, the first of which was a wooden spoon-making workshop in August led by local woodworker Andrew Montgomery. On three consecutive Saturdays, patrons learned the step-by-step process of chiseling their own utensil from a block of wood.

With all these offerings, it's no wonder The Garage received a mention in Southern Living magazine's recent write-up about Charlottesville.

*E. Jefferson Street.*

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WATER FEATURES

# Beaver Creek Reservoir

You can't swim here and you can't bring your cigarette boat. What you can do is soak in what's arguably the most scenic of Albemarle County's bodies of water (with Mint Springs a close second). And you can do that from a kayak, canoe, electric motorboat or paddleboard, while dodging the Western Albemarle High School rowing team.

Built as the water supply for Crozet in 1964, the 104-acre lake on Browns Gap Turnpike is stocked with catfish and largemouth bass, so don't forget your fishing license. And with its Blue Ridge Mountains backdrop, Beaver Creek is a dreamy spot for picnicking—if you can grab one of the four picnic tables—or for just contemplating the view. And it has restrooms.

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[http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/20160729- MG\\_1273.jpg](http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/20160729- MG_1273.jpg)

Photo: Eze Amos

LET ME IN

# C'ville Escape Room

Remember the eerie '90s computer game *Myst*, in which you were dropped off on a remote island and had to solve what seemed to be endless brain teasers and puzzles to eventually free yourself from the shadowy world (or so we think the point was, we never finished the game either)? C'ville Escape Room is the place to enjoy a rematch; you and your code-breaking partners must act as a team and use your logical prowess to solve clues hidden within three different scenarios (don't feel bad if you have to raise the white flag—in this case a pink posterboard with a question mark on it—and ask for help). Unlike the obscure computer game, this one has a time limit of 60 minutes (thank God!).

*218 W. Main St., second floor, Downtown Mall. 566-9499.*

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<http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/070206-Books-026.jpg>

Photo: Eric Kelley

## TEETERING WITH TOMES

# Daedalus Bookshop

With more than 100,000 books stacked on shelves like literary Tetris tiles, it's impossible not to get lost—both literally and figuratively—in this three-floor used bookstore on Fourth Street NE. Sections are clearly labeled—True Crime, Metaphysics, Shakespeare—but aren't organized in any particular manner. Daedalus is best tackled with an open mind; go in with the intention of finding something, anything, to read. But if there's something you must have—*Sophie's World* or *Harry*

*Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*—chances are Daedalus has it. Owner Sandy McAdams, who has run the downtown bookstore in its current space for 43 years, is partial to the vast fiction sections; about 10 years ago, he decided he had enough facts but not enough wisdom, so he vowed to read only novels for the rest of his life. But he packs his bookstore with everything from Agatha Christie's *Murder In Our Midst* to *The Complete Encyclopedia to GI Joe*, biographies of Mozart and Michelangelo and, in one particular room, a shelf of Proust opposite a stack of *Twilight* books. It's like a cool, quirky library where all of the books are for sale. Sorry, Kindle—with its floor-to-ceiling shelves full of surprise and delight, Daedalus Books is a search-and-read experience that can't be beat.

121 Fourth St. NE. [293-7595](tel:293-7595).

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## TRAIL MIX

# Monticello Trail

While hundreds of thousands of people visit the grand house on the mountaintop each year, locals make the most of Monticello's surrounding grounds and trails. At the opening glade of the Saunders-Monticello trailhead (heading south from the visitor's center) there's a half moon-shaped picnic area carved out of the oak and black gum forest, with enough canopy to cast bright green, sun-speckled shade in warm months and reveal a quiet, wooded enclave in winter. It's a welcome respite for hikers reaching the end of their climb, or picnic-packers kicking off at the trailhead.

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## GET OUT THE VOTE

# Polling places

What's cooler than exercising your rights? No matter your party preference, if you can vote come Tuesday, November 8, you should—local, state and national elections alike. Charlottesville has nine polling places, Albemarle County has 28, and all polls are open from 6am to 7pm on Election Day (November 8!), so you have more than half the day to rock the vote.



City residents can visit [charlottesville.org](http://www.charlottesville.org) (<http://www.charlottesville.org>) or call 970-3250 for voter registration status, polling places and required identification information; county residents can find the same information at [albemarle.org](http://www.albemarle.org) (<http://www.albemarle.org>), or by calling 972-4173. Worried about how you'll get to your polling place on November 8? Check out the [CAT schedule](http://www.charlottesville.org/departments-and-services/city-services/charlottesville-area-transit-cat-/routes-schedules-maps) (<http://www.charlottesville.org/departments-and-services/city-services/charlottesville-area-transit-cat-/routes-schedules-maps>), or see if a friend or neighbor can give you a lift. Some local partisan groups offer ride shares.

You might get a heavy dose of nostalgia after hanging out in an elementary school hallway for a while, but you'll definitely get to wear an uber-patriotic "I voted!" stars-and-stripes sticker for the rest of the day (November 8).



([http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/IMG\\_5414-1.jpg](http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/IMG_5414-1.jpg))

Photo: Martyn Kyle

PLAY ON

# Four County Players

One good thing about Charlottesville (among many) is that when someone says the words “community theater,” nary a groan can be heard from the crowd. That’s because true townies know our local productions aren’t the spit-and-mud variety you sometimes see in smaller communities. And that goes double for Four County Players, the longest continuously run community theater in Central Virginia. Housed in the former Barbourville High School, the organization stages four or five shows each season: one musical (at least!), a straight play and a family Christmas show. Now in its 44th season, FCP’s current show list includes *Chicago* and A.R. Gurney’s *Love Letters*. Get tickets to a show on the mainstage (formerly the auditorium) or downstairs in The Cellar (a black box theater that once served as the BHS cafeteria). All the world may be a stage, but this is a good place to start.

*5256 Governor Barbour St., Barbourville. [\(540\) 832-5355](tel:5408325355).*



<http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/3J6A8629.jpg>

## CHEERS, MATES

### La Taza

Sure, there's a lot to love about the finely sourced, exotic variety of ingredients infused into the over-the-top craft cocktail movement, but sometimes you just want a simple, no-frills drink at an everybody-knows-your-name type of watering hole. La Taza's rusted roof, open-air bar forms the centerpiece of a patio that's tucked into the triangle of downtown Belmont's burgeoning restaurant row. And while the live music often draws an energetic crowd, the fire pit and cantina vibe make the terrace a homey, off-the-beaten-path spot to quaff mojitos, rum punch or Mexican Mules among BFFs.

*407 Monticello Rd. [206-8292](tel:206-8292).*

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## UP, UP AND AWAY

### Miller's (*above*)

The third-floor space at Miller's Downtown is like a time warp. Once you climb the stairs and enter the smoky (cigars abound!) sports bar, you feel worlds away from the jazz-thumping scene on the white-and-black checkerboard main floor. Through the haze you'll see regulars have already claimed their spaces—whether perched on stools around the bar or playing pool—so it's best to snag the first open table you see. And when's the best time to go? Just before last call—after you've had your fill of late-night snacks down below.

*109 W. Main St., Downtown Mall. [971-8511](tel:971-8511).*

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([http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CO\\_S.Barling.jpg](http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CO_S.Barling.jpg))

Photo: Stephen Barling

## SECRET SEATING

# Hidden patios

Sometimes we want to sit outside and have a drink far from the madding crowds that can congregate on the Downtown Mall. Fortunately, Charlottesville has more discreet options.

**C&O (pictured):** The classic eatery that once was a railroad bunkhouse turned 40 this year. So well-known for its food, it's easy to forget the Bistro is a popular watering hole as well, at least at the bar. C&O is so booked it might be hard to get on its terrace for just a drink, so plan ahead and make a reservation for dinner.

*515 E. Water St. [971-7044](tel:971-7044).*

**Escafé:** Only one block off the mall on Water Street, Escafé is a relaxing spot to sip a glass of wine and watch the folks stream out of Hot Yoga across the street.

*215 W. Water St. [295-8668](tel:295-8668).*

**Tin Whistle Irish Pub:** Its ample patio is so secluded that it's easy to forget the police station is across Market Street. Have a Guinness—happy hour starts at 3pm!—and listen to the live music playing every night.

*609 E. Market St. [202-8387](tel:202-8387).*

**Bang!:** Behind a historic house on Second Street SW is a tucked-away patio. Bang! predated the craft cocktail movement in Charlottesville, and this is the place to

come for exotic 'tinis with Asian fusion small plates. Order up some goat cheese dumplings to go with your Bangarita.

*213 Second St. SW. [984-2264](tel:984-2264).*

**Twisted Branch Tea Bazaar:** This second-floor balcony on the rear of the Downtown Mall building is just the venue to enjoy a pot of tea and puff a hookah.

*414 E. Main St., Downtown Mall. [293-9947](tel:293-9947).*



[http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/DJI\\_0293.jpg](http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/DJI_0293.jpg)

Photo: Matteus Frankovich/Skycladap

## CENTER RING

# Midtown

While the UVA end of what was known back in Jefferson's day as Three Notch'd Road is becoming a canyon of student apartments with another 10-story hotel in the works, the east end close to downtown is the happening place to eat, drink and shop for high-end provisions.

Continental Divide, Mel's Café and Blue Moon Diner have long contributed to West Main's coolness. Now there are so many options, even locals have a hard time deciding. Will it be Southern fare at Maya? Oysters at Public? See-and-be-seen at Oakhart Social? Korean at Doma? That new Mexican joint, Los Jarochos?

Or shall we cross the street to Orzo (with a new patio, to boot) or go to Threepenny Cafe, both of which have parking?

The purple building housing Main Street Market is a gourmet mecca in itself. There's Feast! for sumptuous cheeses and sandwiches, Albemarle Baking Company, Seafood @ West Main, Spice Diva and the Organic Butcher.

Down the street, J.M. Stock Provisions provides a nose-to-tail meat option.

Eloise clothing boutique and Shenanigans Toy Store have also set up shop on West Main, and we expect there is much more retail to come. Whether we'll be able to afford it is another matter.

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## UNDERGROUND SCENE

# The Southern Café & Music Hall

Want to rub elbows with a rock star? The Southern is your place. With its low ceilings, small stage and small-ish 300-person capacity, audience members can get up-close and personal with the bands, comedians and performers they've come to see—not unlike how it might feel to watch a concert in your friend's parents' basement. Most of the artists who come through the Southern are up-and-comers building their following, but sometimes the venue hosts super rad, lesser-known but legendary acts—like seminal Chicago post-rock band Tortoise—who have shifted the musical landscape and have a small but mighty following. The Southern books a little something for everyone—country, comedy, alternative rock, synth pop, burlesque—and does a swell job of supporting the local music scene, too. Most weeks, a local act can be found opening for a nationally known one, or playing its own album or single release show for a crowd of devoted hometown fans.

*103 S. First St. [977-5590](tel:977-5590).*

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(<http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/L4C1248.jpg>)

Photo: Eze Amos

## SIT FOR A SPELL

# McGregor Room

Pssst. Have you heard? Turns out you don't have to run through the wall at Platform 9 ¾ and ride a magical train to get to Hogwarts. Just walk up a couple flights of stairs to the second floor of Alderman Library to what students call the "Harry Potter Room," a quiet, cozy, lamp-lit study room lined with enclosed bookcases and a selection of semi-rare books. The room held UVA's special collections library—with a starting donation from the room's namesake, Tracy W. McGregor—from 1939 until 2004, when the collection was moved to the current Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library space. While the students sitting at the McGregor Room's large wood tables and in the cushy leather chairs are more likely to be studying history and physics than herbology and potions, they seem to love the space just as much as Harry, Ron and Hermione loved the Gryffindor common room. Rumor has it that one McGregor Room guestbook entry reads, "Love it. Would move in if it had a shower."

*160 McCormick Rd. [924-3021](tel:924-3021).*

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## ART WORLDS

# McGuffey Art Center

Each artist studio in the McGuffey Art Center is its own world, one that belongs to the vision and imagination of the artist who inhabits it. Bob Anderson's studio is full of intricate, detailed drawings and paintings, some finished and some in progress, plus a coffee table covered in copies of his coloring books, crinkled tubes of paint and cans of paintbrushes. Jean Sampson's is neatly full of large-scale abstract paintings that recall water and air, and a few tables and easels where she teaches painting classes. In mixed media artist Brielle DuFlon's studio, large canvases lay atop worktables, waiting for DuFlon to hand-stitch leaves, stems, flower petals or colored yarns to their surfaces. Venture into sculptor Robert Bricker's basement studio and you'll find a skeleton, metal chains, cannonballs, PVC pipe cubes, a stage, spotlights and more; it's a popular spot for one of the center's life-drawing classes. McGuffey is open to the public six days a week, with no admission charge. If an artist is working with his or her door open, visitors are encouraged to step into that artist's world and get lost in the delightful magic of creativity, even if just for a few moments. *Photos in slideshow: Martyn Kyle*

201 Second St. NW. [295-7973](tel:295-7973).



(<http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/John-Randall-Younger-5th-Level.jpg>)

A painting by John Randall Younger. Courtesy the artist.



# Water Street Garage

It's easy to observe a beautiful view in this town. A glance in any direction might offer a hazy glimpse of mountains, a blue sky studded with storybook clouds, an element of art or an icon of history. But it's the keen-eyed observer who discovers beauty while parking a car.

“When I paint plein air, privacy is always a challenge for me,” says artist Krista Townsend. “I prefer to work through the process without an audience, but when you put yourself out there to paint in public, people are curious and they love to watch. The top of a parking garage is as quiet as you can get outside in an urban setting.”

A public parking garage might not be the average person's “happy place,” but Townsend and fellow local plein air painters Edward Thomas, John Randall Younger and Isabelle Abbott have found unique perspective there.

Younger notes the advantage of capturing light as it moves throughout the day.

“Early morning or late evening are my favorite hours,” he says. “The cool light of midday doesn't saturate color the way filtered morning atmosphere does. It can transform plain concrete and glass into something seemingly special.”

When battling it out for that first-floor space, remember the zen that lies above you.



[http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Morea\\_S.Barling.jpg](http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Morea_S.Barling.jpg)



## SECRET GARDEN

# Morea

UVA's pavilion gardens are nice and all, with their serpentine walls, wooden gates, benches and trees. But to find the real secret garden on Grounds, take a stroll down Sprigg Lane to Morea, an arboretum established in the 1830s by John Patten Emmet, UVA's first professor of natural history. Here, Emmet experimented with mulberry trees for the culture of silk ("morus" is Latin for mulberry) and also lived in the house located on the property. The Kentucky coffee trees and Osage orange trees blossomed here for years before the Albemarle Garden Club added more hollies and native plants to the arboretum in the early 1960s. On your peaceful walk sans lunch-eating undergraduates, be sure to admire the enormous linden tree and its chubby, heart-shaped leaves near the Morea house.



<http://www.c-ville.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/3J6A8666.jpg>

Photo: Martyn Kyle

ORDER UP

## Blue Moon Diner

On a recent visit, a friend passed by Blue Moon Diner and said, “Ooooh, you have a record store? I want to go in!” She was mistaken, of course; the colorful concert posters plastering the windows at the West Main Street spot advertise upcoming acts, unique bands that come through town to play in the corner space, cleared of tables, next to the counter. On busy days (Saturday mornings, for one), find the counter packed with regulars. On less busy days, find the hostess offering cups of coffee to those sitting outside waiting for a table. The friendly service is reason enough to see why this weekend brunch staple has stuck around for nearly 40 years, but that says nothing of the food—whether pancakes stenciled in powdered sugar, a take on huevos rancheros or a classic BLT, this place is truly something special. So special, in fact, that while reviewing a proposal for a four-story, mixed-used building behind Blue Moon, the city’s Board of Architectural Review decided the diner (and the convenience store next door) should be saved from demolition.

*512 W. Main St. [980-6666](tel:980-6666).*