

NOVEMBER 2018

**BONNY, BONNY  
SCOTLAND**

**THE CARIBBEAN'S  
BEST-KEPT SECRET**

**WHY WE LOVE  
CHICAGO**

# TRAVEL+ LEISURE

*Alladale, a  
wilderness  
reserve in the  
Scottish Highlands.*

# TRIPS OF A LIFETIME





A lounge in the new Perry Lane Hotel in Savannah, Georgia, with a portrait of the property's muse. Right: The Wayward, one of three bars in the hotel.



I never met Adelaide during my stay. I would imagine a woman like that keeps a busy social calendar. Then again, an in-person encounter might have been alarming, given that Adelaide is fictional. I was ready to roll my eyes at this contrivance—having grown up in the South, I've long since exceeded my lifetime quota of misty-eyed portrayals of *Steel Magnolias* types. But conjuring up an imaginary muse, as it turns out, helps the 167-room Perry Lane feel current while sidestepping the derivative boutique-hotel look of the moment. (You know the one: a brass fixture or a marble countertop here, vaguely vintagey furnishings there.) Adelaide's taste, however notional, lends the property a human feel.

Savannah is best known for its genteel traditionalism—brochure photos still show the 300-year-old, moss-curtained oak trees, the picturesque squares, the Forsyth Park fountain glittering in the sun. But it's got a strong creative current, too. The Savannah College of Art & Design has made its mark with shops, galleries, and a trail of alums who've lingered in town. When my own mother, a woodturner, retired from her nursing job in North Carolina, she made a beeline for this community of artists and craftspeople.

The Perry Lane captures the city's refinement and its quirk in equal measure. Original art—Adelaide's supposed collection—is everywhere, starting in the lobby, where a glass birdcage hangs against a backdrop →

# Southern Charmer

Savannah's latest hotel has an arty, old-meets-new sensibility that hews to the narrative of its hometown and endears it to locals and out-of-towners alike. **By Lila Harron Battis**

**ADELAIDE HARCOURT**, native Savannahian and founder of the city's new **Perry Lane Hotel** ([perrylanehotel.com](http://perrylanehotel.com); doubles from \$279), has had quite a life. Once a dancer, the septuagenarian spent her youth traversing the globe, gathering trinkets in the bazaars of Istanbul and works by up-and-coming artists in Paris and New York. Her personal collection now graces the hotel walls, as does her portrait, by artist Deborah Brown—a riotous painting of Harcourt as a young debutante, with wild brushstrokes that seem incongruent with her prim dress and perfect posture.

of inky roses. Two knee-high sculptures of old men, plump and stark naked and looking like disconcertingly lifelike garden gnomes, stand beneath a supersized reproduction of a Degas painting. The furnishings and objets d'art, the story goes, were passed down by the venerable Harcourt family to their sole surviving heiress. No surface is without an artful vignette: stacks of books, a vintage globe, a worn gold bust. A grand piano waits in the lounge for guests to plunk out a tune.

My room was eclectic and crisp, with cut-glass pendant lights, Byredo bath amenities, and walls painted a buttoned-up shade of slate blue. Yet it had a soft hominess, thanks to its burnished-leather headboard, Netflix-enabled television, and jar of nutty, crunchy Scotch oatmeal cookies from Savannah institution Byrd's (which, it should be noted, is filled to the brim each day, no questions asked).

Unlike New York City and L.A., Savannah is not a place where locals socialize in hotels. The ones I know are more likely to flit among the town's many bars and restaurants or to entertain at home. (The savviest have befriended at least one person in possession of a well-stocked liquor cabinet and a wraparound porch

with a haint-blue ceiling.) But the Perry Lane wants to draw in the community. Area scholars and musicians are invited to give lectures and performances, and you'll often find some artist at work in the lounge. Transitioning from newcomer to native is a near-impossible feat in this town, yet somehow Savannahians have been charmed into embracing Adelaide Harcourt—or at least her hotel—as one of their own.

On the culinary front, the hotel stands apart by steering clear of Southern cooking tropes. The Emporium Kitchen & Wine Market, an atrium-like space divvied up into several outlets, serves regional products at the market, but the restaurant draws from French and New American playbooks. The main bar, the Wayward, has dive appeal (self-serve popcorn, Big Buck Hunter) and a high-low menu where Miller High Life coexists with amaro cocktails.

When I wandered up to the rooftop bar, Peregrin, one Monday afternoon in June, the air was thick with the promise of cloudburst. Splashy, *alebrije*-like gargoyles kept vigil over the slushie machine, and there was greenery galore. Despite the sticky heat and the odd hour, the place was alive. Women in Lilly Pulitzer shifts chatted under the trellis; arty couples played cornhole on the terraced lawn. An acquaintance of my mom's said a sheepish hello, caught playing hooky to grab a midday drink with his wife. A girl snapped selfies in a hammock with a view of Savannah's lone skyscraper, the pale green spire of the Independent Presbyterian Church. With rooftops like this, who needs a front porch? ✖

## WHILE YOU'RE IN TOWN, VISIT...

### THE GREY

Mashama Bailey's restaurant in a former bus terminal is a must. If you can't snag a reservation, stop by the Diner Bar for cocktails and small bites, or the brand-new lunch-counter-cum-bodega, the Grey Market. *thegreyrestaurant.com*; small plates \$4–\$34.

### ATLANTIC

Expect lively, playful fare, like harissa-roasted carrots on a pool of creamy green goddess dressing and tomato-braised sardines served in the tin with a miniature bottle of Tabasco. The drinks list is tightly edited and full of winners. *atlanticsavannah.com*; entrées \$16–\$25.

### ALLEY CAT LOUNGE

This subterranean den in an unmarked alley behind Broughton Street has a menu that reads like an encyclopedia of mixology. The tiki cocktails are excellent, and the liquor flights showcase hard-to-find small-batch spirits. *alleycatsavannah.com*.

### PW SHORT GENERAL STORE

This shop has beautiful versions of household essentials—vintage glassware, carved wooden spoons, cookbooks from regional chefs—and a pantry's worth of Southern-made pickles, cocktail syrups, honeys, and jams. Stop in on a hot day for a *paleta* from the freezer. *pwwshort.com*.

### OLD SAVANNAH TOURS

A little hokey, sure, but these open-air hop-on, hop-off trolleys are an ideal way to see the town and learn about its history—and unlike some competitors, this company is owned and run by locals. *oldsavannahatours.com*.



Peregrin, the rooftop bar at the Perry Lane Hotel.