

GARDEN @ GUN

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TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE FOR THE SOUTHERN SOUL

Staying Power

A peek inside seven of the South's most stylish new hotels

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“GREAT HOTELS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SOCIAL IDEAS,” JOAN DIDION ONCE wrote in *Life* magazine, “flawless mirrors to the particular societies they service.” So what conclusions might we draw from the splashy new wave of Southern boutique hotels that have recently opened (or are just about to)? Apparently, that we’d like a hotel to dazzle us with surroundings dreamed up by the best design minds in the business. To romance us with an unmistakable sense of place. To tempt us to linger with alluring menus and clever cocktails and passionate chefs. To provide an intriguing backdrop for whatever story line, real or imagined, might unfold there. Here are seven inviting escapes worth checking out, and checking in to.

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The Durham

Durham, North Carolina

First off, this place is local and they want you to know it. Your morning cup contains Durham’s own Counter Culture coffee, the blankets come from Raleigh Denim, and the kitchen for the restaurant and sixth-floor rooftop lounge is run by Andrea Reusing, the James Beard Award–winning chef behind Chapel Hill’s Asian-inflected Lantern. (Her menu here leans heavily on Carolina seafood, as in a tempting starter of fried shrimp heads with chile lime salt.) The fifty-three-room Durham opened downtown in July in the erstwhile Home Savings Bank, a mid-century-modern landmark built in 1969, and the conversion—orchestrated by Commune Design, a firm that has also overseen Ace Hotels in L.A. and Palm Springs—mixes and matches elements from the building’s past and present. Floor-to-ceiling ground-level windows illuminate a custom carpet with hip geometrics in red, white, and black. Hand-painted Moroccan tiles mark the entrance to a lobby with a soaring two-story ceiling and the bank’s sturdy safe, dial and all, enjoying its second career as a backdrop for the bar. thedurham.com



GUEST SERVICES

From left: Bellhops and beach cruisers at the Brice; the Durham’s luminous lobby; the glamorous brass-and-tile bathroom in Hotel Emma’s Hopper Suite.