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February 2, 2016

*Below: Putting on the Ritz, gumshoe master, exquisitely thrown, play that funky music, be the boss, Nancy Sinatra redux, Mad Max, and superb 'shrooms.*

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## Carolina Adventures

### **Ritz-Carlton | Charlotte, NC** ***Urban Harvest***

Don't you just love it when life offers you upscale, downtown and agritourism rolled up into one glorious adventure? We do, too. The Ritz-Carlton, Charlotte has introduced urban agritourism as one perfect, sustainable getaway. Someone has the heart of a farmer here, and you can plan a weekend getaway that will entertain, educate and fill your tummy with hyper-locally sourced cuisine.

In the heart of downtown Charlotte, this LEED® gold certified hotel already had a green roof with 10,000 plants and two beehives. (Make sure you grab a taste of their very popular honey pecan gelato during their ice cream socials.)

Now, they're going farther. The new rooftop garden is amazingly prolific, and guests can take advantage of the bounty through the lobby farmer's market (and yes, you can take the produce home – on-site consumption not required). Guests will eat, feel and smell the benefits of the garden, with harvests hand-ferried to the chefs, mixologists, and the spa. Check out Bar Cocoa's Mint Chocolate Chip Gelato – another winner. Note: The hotel's 15th floor Punch Room has six new libations for your tasting pleasure, presented in a beautifully appointed environment.

*Urban Agritourism experiences include:*

- An expanded garden, which you can visit as a hotel guest;
- New culinary gardens near the front entrance – sure to inspire green-thumb efforts back home;
- The lobby farmers market for your agri-shopping. Even if you're not a guest, passersby are invited to snip a little something to take home for cooking or mixing;
- Guided tours of Charlotte's vibrant market and garden scene (the hotel's bike valet is there to help);
- Cooking classes: "Live like a local";
- Plant life and conservation experiences for the younger guests, via the green wagon;<
- And more. Your room is spectacular as well as your service. This is a AAA Five-Diamond hotel property, with all the bells and whistles you'd expect.

*WOW Factor:* We do not live by greens alone. That's why you can also sign up for a cooking class at the on-site Cocoa Lab. Now wouldn't you really love to learn how to make the perfect chocolate soufflé? Or, you can buy luscious goodies at Bar Cocoa. Macarons, anyone?

Discover 76 more [Carolina Adventures](#).

## Carolina Famous Faces

*"If you're a singer, you lose your voice. A baseball player loses his arm. A writer gets more knowledge, and if he's good, the older he gets, the better he writes." 'Mickey' Spillane*

### **Mickey Spillane (1918-2006)**

James Morrison 'Mickey' Spillane, the famous author of crime novels, was born in Brooklyn and raised in New Jersey, but after traveling extensively and living in a variety of places, he chose Murrells Inlet, SC, as his hometown for more than 50 years.

The story goes that while working as a flying instructor during World War II 1st Lt. Spillane flew over Murrells inlet and vowed to live there, someday.

It happened about ten years later, because he never let go of that tiny fishing village. Today, Murrells Inlet maintains a good bit of its character, while absorbing the vacationers and golfers who have fallen in love with the area as he did so many years ago.

The tough-guy author had become famous by the time he made the move. He'd acquired money and a reputation for straight talk. It began with his first novel *I, the Jury*, published in 1947 and written in 19 days. The book sold more than six million copies, and started the novelist on his life's path of writing books that openly included sex, violence and often featured the detective, Mike Hammer, who had his own swagger, and revenge-tinged outlook on life. The writer published more than 30 novels, plus screen plays and short stories and once famously said, "Violence will outsell sex every time." He

chose to include both – a financially rewarding decision.

His personal life included an early stint as a trampoline artist with Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, and after he found fame, he worked as an occasional actor. He was famous for his hatred of communism, a position which endeared him to John Wayne (who, it is said, bought him a Cadillac in support of his political views). In Murrells Inlet, he was considered a good friend of the community and enthusiastic advocate of the Grand Strand.

Married three times, his last wife, Jane Johnson, survived him.

At the end, much of the early criticism of his work had turned to praise and he died still loving the town that had caught his eye from the cockpit of an old plane, 60+ years earlier.

More about the [Grand Strand](#).

## Carolina Creatives

### *Art You Can Use*

#### **Suze Lindsay and Kent McLaughlin**

Suze and Kent have made Fork Mountain Pottery their home since 1996. They live, work and showcase their pottery near Roan Mountain, about six miles from downtown Bakersville, NC. Visiting their studio you'll find two distinctive styles, each potter approaching and interpreting their ideas about utilitarian wares.

Kent works in stoneware and porcelain clays, enhancing the surfaces of his pots by using traditional Eastern glazes that include carbon-trap shinos and celadons, as well as rich iron reds and warm yellows. His distinctive brushwork uses a "wax resist" technique.

Suze's stoneware pots subtly suggest figure and character as she manipulates her forms by altering them, then stacks and combines parts to create functional forms with personality. Suze decorates her pieces by patterning and painting slips and glazes then firing in her salt kiln.

They share a passion for working with their hands, and for making pots for everyday use that are well crafted and a pleasure to use.

Suze studied clay as a core fellow from 1987-1989, at Penland

## A Gentle Chill

Hello Tony,

No matter where you live, the Carolina life and adventures await folks like you from Columbia.

Yes, winter is here, too, (see our 'boots' nod to Old Man Winter), but without the deep-freeze temperatures and frostbitten fingers I felt growing up in Minnesota and working in Chicago and Manhattan. Snow forts and ice hockey were thrilling – as a child!

We say, focus on sunnier thoughts. Golf, beach, tennis and trail conditions here invite us outdoors, with seasonally attractive prices. Expect to pay less and get more as you tour the land of "smiling faces" and "beautiful places."

Watch for an abundance of new discoveries on CarolinaLiving.com, including 93 town profiles and current tax advantages, all guaranteed to make the Kester life happier (and easier on the pocketbook). Still true. South Carolina tax burden remains ranked 50th lowest in the USA. NC comes in a touch higher. Another reason to keep the Carolinas on your radar.

Our 2016 wish for you in Columbia:  
Good health and abundant prosperity.  
Happy travels around the Carolinas!  
Finding what feeds your soul.

**Leyla & Patrick Mason**

Co-Founders

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Just share your dream goals and we'll help lead you to smart Carolina life and times.

### ***We hear it over and over.***

Folks visit (and move) to the Carolinas for the four-season climate and the ability to be outdoors most of the year.

How do you get your thrills? Biking? Birdwatching? Hang gliding or Parasailing? What about zip lines? No thanks – no problem.

Get your jollies from a slow day fishing beside a mountain stream, or waiting for the perfect outdoor nature image to come into view.

See how we do it, at [carolinalive.com/outdoor-thrills](http://carolinalive.com/outdoor-thrills)

## Facebook

### **An afternoon at the cinema**

*Revenant? Mad Max:  
Fury Road? Star Wars:  
The Force Awakens?*

We're eager to see

*Room* – the book was amazing and disturbing.

**Share** your favorites with your facebook friends at Carolina Living.

We've got popcorn, a diet coke, and a darkened theatre on our minds.

Let's go to the movies.

## Heading your way

- **Let's Take a Road Trip!**
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