A Weekend in Greenville

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Above: Hotel Domestique  From left: Gallery Seventeen; tins of gourmet tea at Tealoha.
A Weekend in Greenville

GALLERIES, MUSIC, FOOD, AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE—THIS THREE-DAY ITINERARY WILL REACQUAINT YOU WITH THE PLACE YOU USED TO CALL HOME.

Of course there are advantages and disadvantages to all phases in life, and that includes the four years that comprise a college education. Advantage: You immerse in the heady combination of learning and extracurricular activity that will determine your life. Disadvantage: You know little about life beyond those ivory gates. For universities that don't inspire many return visits, this is not a problem, but for a place like Furman, comeback trips are frequent. Each issue of this magazine, we’ll provide in this space an itinerary that you might want to follow next time you’re in the neighborhood. And we invite you to submit your own favorite “comeback” to these pages. After all, the Greenville area is growing so rapidly, and so dynamically, you may know about that great café (or tattoo parlor) before we do.

BY BRENDAN TAPLEY

Courtesy Photos; Gallery and tea photos by Jeremy Fleming
The Comeback

FRIDAY

AFTERNOON
If you’ve just landed at Greenville-Spartanburg Airport, most likely you’ll want to get right to your hotel so you can free yourself of luggage and make the most out of the weekend. The Westin Poinsett is a classic choice (with a fantastic breakfast—more on that later), but if an elegant, romantic bed and breakfast is your goal, we would also suggest Pettigrue Place or Park House.

Pettigrue Place is in the heart of downtown Greenville and offers a Furman Family special package, along with a “bottomless” cookie jar of homemade oatmeal chocolate chip cookies. Pettigrue Place will also supply its guests with wine, cheese, and grapes in your room or in the English garden. Park Place, which was recently featured in Southern Living, offers newly restored 100-year-old charm with a three-course gourmet breakfast at a time of your choosing.

Looking to treat yourselves to something close to Furman but a little out of the way? Try Hotel Domestique in Travelers Rest, which offers views of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Restaurant 17, a dining experience that emphasizes local ingredients to reinvent classic gourmet dishes. Restaurant 17 also offers events for guests if you’re a foodie or mixologist.

EVENING
If your Furman plans allow, start your evening with Main Street Fridays, which feature live music at NOMA Square. There’s even a “kids’ zone” that provides activities for the little ones. NOMA Square is a fairly new development in Greenville and you can listen to the music there as you explore the shops, including Oil & Vinegar, which sells exotic pastas, marinades, rubs, and features a wall of “on tap” exotic oils and vinegars like blood-orange grape-seed. For dinner, you don’t need to go far: Try Roost, located by the Hyatt and one of Greenville’s newer establishments that is all about reinventing Southern cuisine for the urban palate.

For a taste of culture after dinner, there are always the current shows at The Peace Center and Bon Secours Arena, but don’t overlook Greenville’s other offerings, including Centre Stage (which puts on contemporary dramas, comedies, and histories); Greenville Little Theatre, which this fall presents the Southern classic, Steel Magnolias; or the Greenville Symphony Orchestra, which draws renowned performers and features compelling classical programs. In October, the Symphony presents a one-night engagement with Yo-Yo Ma.

This page, from top: The Westin Poinsett in downtown Greenville; yoga in NOMA Square; sweet rolls at Park House; tasting oils at Oil & Vinegar.
SATURDAY

MORNING
If you’re near Furman, grab a creative coffee (like a “snow leopard” or “dirty black cat chai”), pour-over, smoothie, and/or breakfast sandwich at The Forest Coffeehouse in Travelers Rest. If you’re downtown, stop in at Tealoha, which specializes in creative tea combinations like the Carolina Lemon Honey (jasmine green tea mixed with local wildflower honey and freshly squeezed lemon juice) or the London Fog (Earl Grey black tea steamed with milk and organic cane sugar).

From there, head into nature for an invigorating zip-lining experience. You can go farther afield near Asheville to Navitat, which winds you through the Blue Ridge Mountains, or closer to Greenville in Saluda at The Gorge Zipline Canopy Tour, for stunning views of the Green River.

Afterward, reward yourself for your effort by taking lunch at Everyday Organics, started by Furman grads Breighanna (Faulg) Newnam ’08 and William Newnam ’08, in the Cherrydale Plaza. EO’s chicken salad is a perfect blend of savory and creamy; and if it’s on the menu, don’t hesitate to order the quinoa pad thai.

AFTERNOON
It might be time to relax. Get in some reflection time at the Greenville County Museum of Art, or get a glimpse of local artists at Gallery Seventeen or the Art Guild. If you’re looking for an old-time menswear store, look no further than Kostas Custom Tailors and Clothiers, where you can find Italian suits, shirts, and retro cuff links. After, you may want to recharge with a famed slice of cake from Brick Street Café near Fluor Field in the West End. If you enjoy used books, you can peruse the shelves while enjoying the wine bar at Joe’s Place.

EVENING
Get your laughs in at the Alchemy Comedy Theater, which is a weekly improv show that spotlights local talent with two shows on Friday and Saturday nights at Coffee Underground Theater. Music lovers can head over to Smiley’s Acoustic Cafe for moving open mic performances. For something a bit stronger, belly up to the bar at Dark Corner Distillery for the “water of life” or local, small batches of Appalachian moonshine, aged whiskey, gin, absinthe, and other spirits.
SUNDAY

MORNING

For a large brunch, enjoy the Westin Poinsett’s Spoonbread restaurant and its large spread of granola, fresh fruit, pastries, Belgian waffles, and an omelet bar. If you want something simpler, head back to Travelers Rest and Upcountry Provisions. The bakery is another venture by Furman graduate Cheryl (Boles) Kraus ’09 and her husband, Steve, and all the deliciousness is baked on the premises. Upcountry Provisions is also known for its peanut butter diablo cookies (which you might want to grab for the road).

Before getting on the plane, take a nice half-mile saunter on the Fernwood Nature Trail, which was developed by the Greenville Parks and Recreation Department along with the Sierra Club. The trail is known to birdwatchers, but you can also spy other wildlife while generally enjoying the peace and calm.

AFTERNOON

If you have time at the airport, stop and take some nourishment at Windows, the restaurant and lounge, which offers a peaceful spot to enjoy lunch (many tout the peach cobbler) before you fly home. While there, consider when to come back!