

Nightlife

JONATHAN HOLLADA



Latin Sol

Best Place to See and Be Seen

Shout 1197 Peachtree St., 404-846-2000, heretoserve-restaurants.com. On Friday and Saturday nights, the "it" crowd flocks to this trendy Midtown restaurant that put the cool back in Colony Square. Being seen, however, does come at a price. On Friday nights, you'll pay \$10 to visit the VIP upper level, and the über-cool private cabanas go for \$200 an hour.

Best Nightclub Compound

1008 Brady Ave., 404-872-4621, compoundatl.com. Perhaps it's the picturesque outdoor Japanese garden that greets you out front. Maybe it's the seasoned DJs and ultra-contemporary decor in the MB1 lounge. Or it could be the cavernous rear space dubbed "Ride," featuring more than 20 massive video screens. It's hard to pinpoint,

but there's definitely something about this place that makes you feel crazy, sexy and cool.

Best Club Makeover

Vision Nightclub & Lounge 1068 Peachtree St., 404-874-4460, visionatlanta.com. As if Vision's last multimillion-dollar makeover two years ago wasn't enough, the place where hip-hop (Friday) and techno (Saturday) music fans flock every weekend is back on the city's nightlife circuit—with a vengeance. The new and improved version is a sea of vibrantly colored rooms with cryptic names like Heaven, Bliss, Circle, Red Room and the VIP-area Skybar, which overlooks the main dance floor. The cosmetic overhaul added the largest laser system in Georgia after Stone Mountain.

READERS' CHOICE

Best Sports Bar

Jocks & Jills

Best Martini Twist

Best Margarita Nava

Best Wine Store

Pearson's

Best Jazz Club Churchill

Grounds 660 Peachtree St., 404-876-3030, churchill-grounds.com. After dinner and a show, this quaint club located beside the Fox is the perfect place to cap off an evening. No watered-down jazz here; even die-hard fans will savor the authentic live music by artists like Joe Gransden, Russell Gunn and Freddy Cole.

Best New Coffeehouse

Javaology 466 Edgewood Ave., 404-223-3202,

javaology.com. This cozy nook, located at the corner of Edgewood and Boulevard near the King Historic District, is a welcome new hangout for intown loft dwellers and caffeine fiends in search of a java fix. Excellent service, delicious coffee drinks, tasty light fare, free wireless Internet access and intimate seating are building a loyal clientele.

Best Place for a Late-Night

Rendezvous Cafe Intermezzo

1845 Peachtree Road, 404-355-0411; 4505 Ashford Dunwoody Road, 770-396-1344; cafeintermezzo.com. After an enchanting night on the town, grab a cozy candlelit table at this Viennese-style coffeehouse and sip mocha (or merlot) while sharing a cheese platter or delectable desserts—from creamy amaretto cheesecake to tempting tiramisu, some flown in from Europe. Tres chic!

Best Late-Night Eatery

R. Thomas Deluxe Grill

1812 Peachtree St., 404-872-2942, rthomasdeluxegrill.com. Famished night owls and party animals flock to this 24-hour eatery, which has an atmosphere as eclectic as its menu. Where else can you order everything from kefir, organic grains and omelets to burgers, hot wings and Bloody Marys at 4 a.m.? Atlanta music industry heavy-

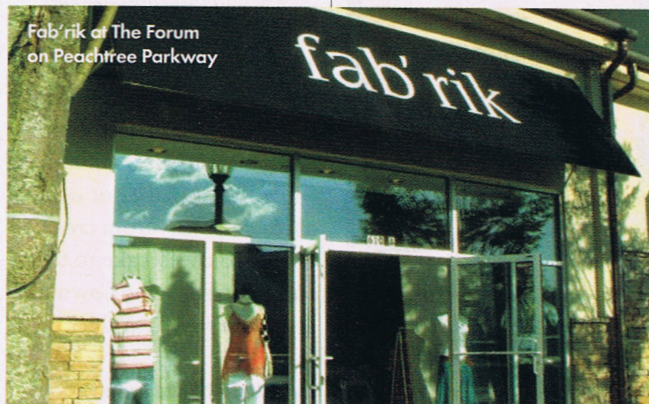
downs, but it will be the best the runway had to offer (Dolce). Insiders know that Queen and Cesar are the names to ask for; the single-named sales consultants have virtual celebrity status.

Best Innovative Salon Soda
597 Atlanta St., Roswell, 770-642-1392, sodasalon.com.
Two parts salon, one part art gallery, Soda brims with bright, happy people, objets d'art and quirky, movable furniture, offering a refreshing boutique alternative to Atlanta's megasalons. Under the direction of co-owners/husband-and-wife team Erik and Tracy Pearson, the staff is culled from the area's top talent, all of whom utilize runway, print and film experience to produce creative, versatile looks with just an ounce of "cutting edge." We're

lusting after Erik Pearson's highlights and Erin Richardson's period-style updos.

Best Massage Ayurvedic Massage by Asha Gomez at NeemTree 1016 Howell Mill Road, Suite 3206, 404-881-6800. Once you experience Asha's ayurvedic technique, you just might ditch Western spas for good. With this massage, the strokes are longer, more fluid, more continuous and infused with non-hokey karma-cleansing vibes. We can't resist Asha's calming persona and the yummy treats she prepares—from hot sweet tea and almonds before your treatment to Indian potato pancakes afterward. \$85.

Best Facial Jessica Kane at Fabu Face Spa 335 West Ponce de Leon Ave., Suite E, Decatur, 404-377-6363,



COURTESY OF FAB'RIK AND SODA

"I like clothing by local Atlanta designer Ryan Kenny, which I buy at Saks Fifth Avenue. Then if I have to have something custom, I like Brazil Fine Italian Menswear in Buckhead— I think it's the variety of different things they offer. Brazil, the owner, has a very flashy style, but he'll pull out stuff that's my traditional style. I want to be the best-looking guy in the room, but I don't want to draw attention to myself. . . . Friedman's is my favorite shoe store—I have ostrich-skin Timberlands I got from Friedman's. Where else can you find those?"

Ryan Cameron, afternoon radio host on V-103 and three-time Best of Atlanta favorite

"I'm all about the discount shopping and the bargain findings! Loehmann's above everything. Whether it's work wear or really fun, unique pieces for going out on the weekends—the backroom is always a great place to find unique things. DSW—whatever kind of shoe I'm in the mood for, DSW delivers. Marshall's, TJ Maxx—I just think you can get amazing work clothes. I need a lot of clothes for work. Sage—you can get the most amazing, cool pieces that are so unique and you just won't believe the prices. When they have a sale you'd better get there fast. . . . I like that it's an independent Atlanta boutique."

Suchita Vadlamani, anchor on Fox5's Good Day Atlanta and 2004 Best of Atlanta pick

"I am not really a fashionista, but when I can, I love to shop at Bob Ellis for shoes. Everything's fabulous over there! And when I need something really special, I love going to Lillie Rubin."

Brenda Wood, anchor on WXIA 11Alive and four-time Best of Atlanta winner

fabufacespa.com. The most worth-the-money facial in the city can be found at this understated Decatur spa. Kane's expert kneading released every ounce of tension in our neck and shoulders, and we swear the Eminence Nourishing Fruit & Vegetable Facial took a decade off our visage. The spa gets equal superlatives for de-stressification. The massage table and covers are the comfiest, coziest we've ever encountered. \$75–\$105.

Best Brows Azita Abedi at Azita Salon and Spa 1320 Johnson Ferry Road, Marietta, 678-560-4070. Proprietor Azita Abedi combines threading, tweezing and trimming to perfect brows—and she is thorough. Abedi whisks away all those pesky hairs surrounding the brows (on the forehead, etc.) for the cleanest finish and expertly places arches so that, finally, naturally uneven brows are transformed to yield symmetrical brightening of the eyes. \$20. ★

weights like producer Dallas Austin and crooner Usher are often spotted here.

Best Reason to Linger

Downtown Barley's Billiards

338 Peachtree St., 404-522-7177, barleysbilliards.com.

Why fight rush-hour traffic after a long day at the office when you can grab a beer and a cue stick at this barely year-old spot that's a cross between a sports bar and an upscale poolroom?

Best Wine Bar The Grape

Multiple locations, including Phipps Plaza, 678-990-9463, yourgrape.com. Whether you consider yourself a true oenophile or don't even know what the word means, this cozy canteen provides a relaxing, upscale atmosphere for exploring deliciously unique wines. A long-time favorite in Vinings Jubilee, The Grape has been sprouting new locations in the hottest neighborhoods all over town—from Atlantic Station and Inman Park to Sandy Springs.

Best Hot Spot for Grown-Ups

Two Urban Licks 820 Ralph McGill Blvd., 404-522-4622, twourbanlicks.com. This

ultra-trendy restaurant tucked away in Poncey-Highland attracts a well-heeled, sophisticated crowd that savors the dramatic ambience and breathtaking view of the Midtown skyline.

Best Alternative to Chastain

Mable House Barnes

Amphitheatre

5239 Floyd Road, Mableton, 770-819-7765, mablehouse-amphitheatre.com. Atlanta's amphitheater craze has spread to the suburbs. Mable House boasts a covered seating area, stocked snack bar and nearly new facilities. Last summer's diverse lineup included everyone from Boyz II Men and Sinbad to Three Dog Night and Patti Loveless.

Best Place to Salsa Latin Sol

Kenny's Alley, 50 Upper Alabama St., 678-904-4357, latinsolatlanta.com. Viva Atlanta! This Underground Atlanta nightspot fills a void in the city's somewhat-limited Latin dancing scene. Whether you're a 20-something native Latino or a 40-something suburban novice, the sizzling beats, colorful flashing lights and that inviting dance floor are sure to have you swiveling those hips like a pro.

"In the late sixties and

seventies, when people from New York came to Atlanta, I would take them to [Paschal's] La Carousel on what was then Hunter Street, now MLK Boulevard. It was a jazz club where Ramsey Lewis, The Three Sounds, Errol Garner and Herbie Hancock—the real icons—played. It was before I started doing comedy, and all I was doing was playing jazz piano. You didn't hear music like that anywhere. I was four feet away from Ramsey Lewis. That was the first place where my heart landed. . . . Later, of course, it was my own club. Jeff Foxworthy, the Indigo Girls, they all performed there. We were a family. We were also one of the first clubs in the country to ban smoking. I had terrible lungs, and my doctor told me I had to do it. One night Ted Turner came in with a cigar. My cousin was managing the club, and he stopped him. Turner thought it was a joke. He was furious."

Jerry Farber, long-time Atlanta comedian and two-time Best of Atlanta favorite entertainer



Best Western Bar Hoedowns

931 Monroe Drive, Midtown Promenade, 404-876-0001, hoedownsatlanta.com. This country & western-themed gay bar, whose motto is "You can't keep a good hoe down," is more dance hall than watering hole, with a split-rail fence corralling a floor where gays and straights two-step and line dance the night away. Check out free dance lessons on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights.

Best Neighborhood Bar

The Earl 488 Flat Shoals Ave., 404-522-3950, badearl.com. The Earl has everything a neighborhood bar should—friendly service, cheap beer (PBR!), surprisingly good food and absolutely no pressure to give up your table for the next customer. Bands like The Posies and OK Go perform in the back room, where comedians too edgy for other local comedy clubs, like hilariously sarcastic Todd Barry, also take the stage.

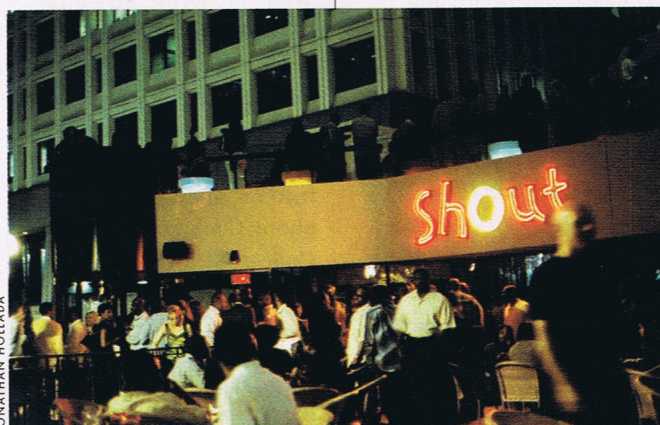
Best Neighborhood Gay Club

Blake's on the Park

227 10th St., 404-892-5786, blakesontheparkatlanta.com. Daily \$3.50 drink specials, fun pop music and beautiful boys everywhere. Popular events like the late-night Wednesday "Brain Freeze" trivia or the legendary Sunday "Big Time" drag show make this spot near Piedmont Park the consummate boy bar.

Best Brandy XO Bar

InterContinental Buckhead Atlanta, 3315 Peachtree Road, 404-946-9060, ichotelsgroup.com. Across from the rococo 24-hour Au Pied de Cochon restaurant inside the swanky InterContinental Buckhead hotel is the opulent XO Bar. With more than 60 bottles of cognac, ranging from Remy Martin to Hardy Perfection (\$28 to \$450 per glass, respectively), the bar offers novices and connoisseurs alike a unique opportunity to sample the trendy yet classic French spirit. ☼



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