

INDY BEST OF THE TRIANGLE 2026

DURHAM COUNTY

WINNERS!



INDY readers have a tremendous power: To bestow coveted Best of the Triangle stars on the walls, windows, and websites of local businesses and institutions. For two decades, Triangle residents have relied on our reader poll—and the iconic decals winners receive—to find the best of the best in their communities.

In this section, you'll find Best of the Triangle winners in Durham County—a round-up of so many of the people, places, and organizations that make the Bull City special. Here, our readers have selected their favorite restaurants, bookstores, dentists, politicians, yoga studios, and much more.

Whether you're deciding where to eat dinner, where to see art, or where to take your car for a tune-up, our readers' top picks have you covered. We hope you'll find this guide handy and take some time to try something new or revisit an old favorite from these pages.

Thanks to everyone who nominated their favorites and congratulations to all of the finalists. Orange and Chatham County winners were announced back in April (find them online if you missed it). Next up we'll share your picks for Wake County. And stay tuned for a special print edition in December rounding up the Best of the Best across the Triangle.

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ON SALE NOW



7/31 Presented with NS2



9/17 Presented with The Monti



8/9 Presented with NS2



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10/3 Presented with NS2



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9/16 Presented with NS2



10/27

309 WEST MORGAN STREET, DURHAM, NC 27701
TICKETS: CAROLINATHEATRE.ORG / 919-560-3030

DURHAM

ARTS

BEST ART GALLERY FOR PURCHASE

The Scrap Exchange

Runners-up: Five Points Gallery, Cecy's Gallery & Studio

BEST GALLERY FOR VIEWING

Nasher Museum of Art

Runners-up: 21 c Museum Hotel Durham, Durham Arts Council

BEST COMEDY CLUB/EVENT

Bull McCabe's Trivia Night

Runners-up: Mettlesome, Don't Tell Comedy

BEST DRAG SHOW/EVENT

Music Trivia Bingo @ Velvet Hippo
hosted by Stormie Daie

Runners-up: Club Era, Drag Bingo @ Common Market hosted by Miss B Haven

BEST ELECTRONIC CONCERT VENUE

The Fruit

Runners-up: PS37, BOOM Club

BEST FILM THEATRE VENUE/ EVENT

Carolina Theatre of Durham

Runner-up: Shadowbox Studio

BEST LIVE THEATRE COMPANY

The Durham Savoyards, Ltd.

Runners-up: Paperhand Puppet Project, Red Bird Theater Company

BEST LOCAL / REGIONAL PODCAST

Due South on WUNC

Runners-up: Embodied on WUNC, Durham Artist Archive

BEST LOCAL BAND

Sylvan Esso

Runners-up: The Mountain Goats, Durham Symphony Orchestra

BEST MUSEUM

The Museum of Life and Science

Runners-up: Nasher Museum of Art, NC Museum of Art

BEST RADIO STATION

WUNC

Runners-up: WNCU, WXYC

BEST UNPLUGGED CONCERT VENUE

Hayti Heritage Center

Runners-up: Red Hat Amphitheater, Hub RTP



DURHAM

BUSINESSES

BEST AUTO DEALER

Mark Jacobson Toyota

Runners-up: Hendrick Subaru Southpoint,
Johnson Subaru of Cary

BEST AUTO MECHANIC

Champion Tire & Auto

Runners-up: Chapel Hill Tire, Fluid
Community Garage

BEST BARBER SHOP

Rock's Bar and Hair Shop

Runners-up: Hawk & Fade Barbershop,
Dennis Best

BEST BOOKSTORE

Regulator

Runners-up: Letters Community
Bookshop, Golden Fig Books

BEST CBD SHOP

Sherlocks Glass & Dispensary

Runners-up: Oak City Hemp Lounge,
Redhead Hemp

BEST CHILDCARE

Schoolhouse of Wonder

Runners-up: Indigo Montessori School,
Piedmont Wildlife Center

BEST CLOTHING CONSIGNMENT

Rumors

Runners-up: MODE Consignment
Boutique, Beanstalk

BEST DANCE STUDIO

DIA Dance Studio

Runners-up: Ninth Street Dance, All In
Dance Academy

BEST DOG BOARDING

Eno Animal Hospital

Runners-up: Camp Bow Wow, Cornwallis
Road Animal Hospital

BEST DOG GROOMING

Eno Animal Hospital

Runners-up: Elliot's Pet Spa, Camp Bow
Wow

BEST DOG TRAINING

Pawsitive Empowerment

Runners-up: Whole Dog Institute, Yea
Dog

BEST DOG WALKING

Bull City Pet Care

Runners-up: Pawsitive Beginnings,
DogWalk

BEST ELECTRICIAN

Dynamic Electric

Runners-up: Electric Jake, Kellas Electric

BEST FLORIST

Darcy Garcia - The Florapist

Runners-up: Ninth Street Flowers,
One Fun Gal Flowers

BEST HAIR SALON

Fuss & Bother

Runners-up: Rock Paper Scissors Salon,
Posh The Salon

BEST HOME REMODELING OR RENOVATION COMPANY

Trinity Design/Build

Runners-up: Zarazua Painting, Hughes
Contracting LLC



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-  **BEST DOG BOARDING**
-  **BEST DOG GROOMING**

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BEST HVAC SERVICE

Boer Brothers HVAC

Runners-up: Air Experts Heating, Cooling & Plumbing, Brown Brothers Plumbing & Heating

BEST INSURANCE COMPANY

North Carolina Farm Bureau Insurance

Runners-up: State Farm - Bonnie Rose, Herring and Bickers Insurance Agency

BEST INTERIOR DESIGNER

Emma Delon

Runners-up: Alva Horton, Sundholm Studio

BEST JEWELER / JEWELRY STORE

Jewelsmith

Runners-up: Bailey's Fine Jewelry, Hamilton Hill Jewelry

BEST LANDSCAPING / YARD CARE

TROSA Lawn Care

Runners-up: For Garden's Sake, Grow it Yourself

BEST LAW FIRM

Law Offices of James Scott Farrin

Runners-up: Walker Lamb, Lisa M Logan

BEST LOCAL BOOKSTORE

The Regulator

Runners-up: Letters Community Bookshop, Golden Fig Books

BEST NEW BUSINESS

Fluid Community Garage

Runners-up: Giant Robot Fight Club, Nextera Strategies

BEST PAINTER

Zarazua Painting

Runners-up: Gonzalez Painters & Contractors, Puebla's Painting NC

BEST PLACE TO BUY LOCALLY MADE CRAFTS/ART

Durham Farmers Market

Runners-up: The Scrap Exchange, Durham Craft Market

BEST PLUMBER

Brown Brothers Plumbing & Heating

Runners-up: Acme Plumbing Co., Boer Brothers Heating and Cooling

BEST REAL ESTATE COMPANY

Inhabit Real Estate

Runners-up: Nest Realty, Triangle Key Realty

BEST REALTOR

Marie Brockenbrough

Runners-up: Dara Shain, Alison Domnas

BEST ROOFING CONTRACTOR

Saltbox Construction

Runners-up: Baker Roofing Company, Alpine Roofing

BEST VINTAGE STORE

Gibson Girl

Runners-up: TROSA, Vaguely Reminiscent

BEST WOMEN'S CLOTHING STORE

TROSA Thrift Store

Runners-up: MODE Consignment Boutique, Vert & Vogue



DURHAM

FOOD & DRINKS

BEST ALCOHOLIC COCKTAILS

Velvet Hippo

Runners-up: Alley Twenty Six, Kingfisher

BEST ASIAN RESTAURANT

M Sushi

Runners-up: Thaiangle, Rose's Noodles, Dumplings & Sweets

BEST BAKERY

Guglhupf

Runners-up: Ninth Street Bakery, Loaf

BEST BARBECUE

The Original Q Shack

Runners-up: Picnic, Hog Heaven Bar-B-Q

BEST BEER RETAIL STORE

Beer Study

Runners-up: Common Market, Growler Grlz

BEST BISCUITS

Rise Southern Biscuits

Runners-up: Monuts, Bojangles

BEST BREWERY

Ponysaurus Brewing Co.

Runners-up: Hi-Wire Brewing, Fullsteam Brewery-Boxyard RTP

BEST BURGER

Bull City Burger and Brewery

Runners-up: Queeny's, Bar Virgile

BEST CHEAP EATS

Cosmic Cantina

Runners-up: Elmo's Diner, Cook Out

BEST CHEESE SHOP

Weaver Street Market Cheese Counter

Runners-up: The Fresh Market, Wegmans

BEST CHINESE CUISINE

Asian Kitchen

Runners-up: Orient Garden, Hong Kong Chinese Restaurant

BEST COFFEE SHOP

Cocoa Cinnamon

Runners-up: Bean Traders, Joe Van Gogh

BEST DESSERTS

Guglhupf

Runners-up: The Parlour, Rose's Noodles and Sweets

BEST DRAFT SELECTION

Beer Study

Runners-up: Growler Grlz, Durham Beer Garden

BEST ETHNIC GROCERY STORES

Li Ming

Runners-up: H Mart, Compare Foods

BEST FOOD TRUCK

Chirba Chirba Dumpling

Runners-up: Taqueria Cruz, Gussy's Food Truck

BEST INDIAN RESTAURANT

Viceroy

Runners-up: Cheeni, Lime & Lemon Indian Grill & Bar

BEST ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Gocciolina

Runners-up: Mothers & Sons Trattoria, Cucciolo Osteria

BEST LATE NIGHT MEAL (PAST 10 PM)

Queeny's

Runners-up: Cosmic Cantina, Alley Twenty Six

BEST MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Mezcalito

Runners-up: Fonda Lupita, Taqueria La Vaquita

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD BAR

The Velvet Hippo Bar & Lounge

Runners-up: Beer Study, Dain's Place

BEST NEW RESTAURANT

Jean's "By the Sea"

Runners-up: Timber Pizza, Tataco

BEST NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

The Velvet Hippo Bar & Lounge

Runners-up: Lakewood Social, Arcana

BEST PIZZA

Pizzeria Toro

Runners-up: Timber Pizza, Hutchins Garage

BEST RETAIL WINE

Wine Authorities

Runners-up: Louella Wine, Beer & Beverage, Total Wine & More

BEST SEAFOOD

Saltbox Seafood Joint

Runners-up: M Sushi, Jeans by the Sea

BEST SMALL PLATES / TAPAS

Little Bull

Runners-up: Mateo Bar de Tapas, Juju Durham

BEST SUSHI RESTAURANT

M Sushi

Runners-up: Sushi Love, Shiki Sushi

BEST VEGAN RESTAURANT

Pure Soul

Runners-up: Goorsha, Zenfish Poke Bar

BEST VEGETARIAN EATERIES

Pure Soul

Runners-up: Lakewood Social, Goorsha

BEST WINE LIST

Nana's

Runners-up: Louella Wine, Beer & Beverage, Killer Queen Wine Bar

BEST WINGS

Heavenly Buffaloes

Runners-up: Nzingas Kitchen, E.O.'s Athletic Club



Thank you



BEST NEIGHBORHOOD BAR



BEST ALCOHOLIC COCKTAILS



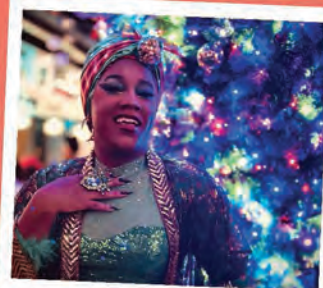
BEST NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES



BEST DANCE VENUE



BEST WEDDING OR EVENT VENUE



BEST DRAG EVENT: MUSIC BINGO W/STORMIE DAIE



BEST MIXOLOGIST: TYLER THOMAS



BEST BARTENDER: CERRISSA OBLUCK



BEST CHEF: REGINA JONES



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DURHAM

HEALTH

BEST ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Compass Health Direct Primary Care

Runners-up: Duke Integrative Medicine, Meridian Health Solutions

BEST CAT VETERINARY

Eno Animal Hospital

Runners-up: Cornwallis Road Animal Hospital, Southpoint Animal Hospital

BEST CHIROPRACTOR

Precision Chiropractic- Dr. David Martin

Runners-up: Bella Vita Chiropractic, Carolina Pain & Performance

BEST DENTIST

Bull City Smiles

Runners-up: Durham Pediatric Dentistry & Orthodontics, Dr. Lionel Nelson

BEST DERMATOLOGIST

Central Dermatology

Runners-up: Regional Dermatology of Durham LLC, Triangle Dermatology - Dr. Janet Tcheung

BEST DOG VETERINARY

Eno Animal Hospital

Runners-up: Urban Tails Veterinary Hospital, Carver Street Animal Hospital

BEST GYM

YMCA-Downtown Durham

Runners-up: Duke Health and Fitness Center, Jewish for Good at the Levin JCC

BEST MASSAGE THERAPIST

Michael J. Savino

Runners-up: Ruth Metz, Mindful Massage - Michael Barriskill

BEST PEDIATRICS

Chapel Hill Pediatrics

Runners-up: Durham Regional Pediatrics, Bull City Family Medicine & Pediatrics

BEST PERSONAL TRAINER

Duke Health and Fitness Center

Runners-up: Chan Little, 360 Approach, Bodfit 510

BEST PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE

Bull City Physical Therapy

Runners-up: Duke Health, Kenny & Associates Physical Therapy

BEST SPA

Blue Water Spa

Runners-up: R&R Wellness Spa, Fuzion Fitness

BEST WOMEN'S HEALTH PRACTICE

Chapel Hill OBGYN - Durham

Runners-up: Compass Health Direct Primary Care, Durham Women's Clinic

BEST YOGA STUDIO

Yoga Off East

Runners-up: Threehouse Studio, Dose



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DURHAM

PEOPLE & MISC.

BEST ADULT NONPROFIT

TROSA

Runners-up: LGBTQ Center of Durham

BEST BARTENDER - DRAFT SLINGER

Cerrissa Obluck – The Velvet Hippo Bar & Lounge

Runners-up: Kaykay - The Velvet Hippo Bar & Lounge, Arturo Sanchez - Pizzeria Toro

BEST CHEF

Regina Jones – The Velvet Hippo Bar & Lounge

Runners-up: Michael Lee - M-Restaurants, Preeti Waas

BEST DJ

DJ Himbo

Runners-up: Jorden the DJ, Gemynii

BEST KEPT SECRET

Club Era

Runners-up: Broken Spoke Ice Cream, Bar Beej at Cheeni

BEST KIDS NONPROFIT

Book Harvest

Runners-up: Schoolhouse of Wonder, Emily K Center

BEST LOCAL ACTIVIST GROUP

Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice

Runners-up: Durham People's Alliance, Food Not Bombs

BEST LOCAL CAUSE / NONPROFIT IMPACT AWARD

TROSA

Runners-up: Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice, Bike Durham

BEST MIXOLOGIST

Tyler Thomas - The Velvet Hippo Bar & Lounge

Runners-up: Jules - The Velvet Hippo Bar & Lounge, Connor - Conniption bar & lounge

BEST USE OF PUBLIC MONEY

Public education

Runners-up: Housing Assistance, Fixing bad roads

WORST WASTE OF MONEY

ICE

Runners-up: NC Legislature, Police



Looking for Answers?

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DURHAM

PLACES

BEST ALCOHOL-FREE VENUE

Eno River State Park

Runners-up: American Tobacco Trail,
Nelson Music Room

BEST ARBORETUM OR GARDEN

Sarah P. Duke Gardens

Runners-up: Little River Regional Park,
Geer Street Learning Garden

BEST CAMPS

Schoolhouse of Wonder

Runners-up: Museum of Life and Science,
Piedmont Wildlife Center

BEST DANCE VENUE

The Velvet Hippo Bar & Lounge

Runners-up: Rubies on Five Points,
Club ERA

BEST DOG PARK

Piney Wood Dog Park

Runners-up: Barkyard RTP, Little River
Regional Park

BEST GOLF COURSE

Hillendale Public Golf Course

Runners-up: Croasdaile Country Club,
Falls Village Golf Club

BEST HOTEL

The Durham Hotel

Runners-up: 21c Museum Hotel Durham,
Washington Duke Inn

BEST HOTEL LOUNGE

The Durham Hotel

Runners-up: 21c Museum Hotel Durham,
Durham Farmers Market

BEST PLACE TO PEOPLE WATCH

Sarah P. Duke Gardens

Runner-up: The Velvet Hippo Bar &
Lounge

BEST WEDDING / EVENT VENUE

The Velvet Hippo Bar & Lounge

Runners-up: Southern Picnics,
Perfect Lovers



Best Place to People Watch: Sarah P. Duke Gardens
PHOTO BY IVY DAWNED VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

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INDY'S BEST OF THE TRIANGLE IS HAPPENING NOW!

Winning *INDY's* "Best of the Triangle" Readers' Poll has been a coveted honor for the past 25 years. The contest is organized in rounds throughout the year by region: Orange & Chatham Counties, Durham County, then Wake County. At the end of the year, the winners of each region go head-to-head to claim the title of "Best of the Best of the Triangle".

Best of Wake County voting opens July 22

ARTS



BUSINESSES



FOOD & DRINKS



HEALTH



PEOPLE & MISC.



PLACES



Presented by



Find this year's winners for Best of Durham, Best of Orange & Chatham Counties, plus winners archives, and so much more at:
INDYWEEK.COM/INDY-BEST-OF-THE-TRIANGLE

