

Nashville

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Head beyond the honky-tonks to discover a different side to Music City, says Ella Buchan



People flock to Nashville with dreams of cowboy boots, checked shirts and country music. The Tennessee city is famed for the live music that drifts from honky-tonks on bustling Broadway and world-class performances at the Grand Ole Opry.

But suggest clients consider venturing a little out of downtown for a laid-back, yet still lively, vibe.

Nashville's neighbourhoods offer a different pace of life away from the partying crowds, with great shopping, delicious food and boutique hotels. And, because this is Nashville, there is still plenty of music to enjoy.

With British Airways launching a direct route from Heathrow in May – the first non-stop flight from Europe to the city since 1995 – its popularity for leisure and business travellers looks set to grow.

So here are the neighbourhoods to recommend in Music City.

▶ THE GULCH

Why go: When an area is flanked by districts named SoBro – home to Jack White's Third Man Records – and Pie Town, you know you're in cool company. The Gulch, on the edges of downtown, has a reputation as one of Nashville's hippest 'hoods, with a funky nightlife scene and shops selling everything from cowboy boots to guitar strings.

What to do: Two Old Hippies isn't a live-music venue, shop or

museum – it's all three. This local institution has a huge stage, a guitar room, glass cases stuffed with music memorabilia, and a range of cool clothing and accessories for sale.

Top dining options include Whiskey Kitchen, with pub-style grub and pizza, and Biscuit Love, whose menu is based on the scone-like southern breakfast favourite.

Suggest heading to rooftop cocktail lounge Up for sunset, which is one of the best spots for gazing across Nashville's skyline.

Where to stay: The 404 Hotel is far too cool to pack in hundreds of rooms. There are just four, in fact, and each is a delight of understated, luxurious textures and furnishings. Its restaurant, housed in a former shipping container across the street, serves up seasonal dishes with flair. Doubles from £170. the404nashville.com

▶ EAST NASHVILLE

Why go: This decidedly low-key yet hip neighbourhood has been compared to New York's East Village. It feels like a lovely local secret. The liveliest part, known as Five Points, is stuffed with great restaurants, shops and galleries. The area has long been a magnet for artists and musicians, so there are plenty of places to catch a live gig.

What to do: As in most Nashville districts, visitors should be prepared to eat. A lot.

Popular local hangouts The Post East and Marché are particularly good for breakfast or lazy grazing at any time of day.

Colourful, ramshackle bar Treehouse sums up the eclectic nature of the area. Its elevated bar snacks include mussels with harissa aioli and local cheeses with homemade apple butter.

Suggest clients take home some southern flavours at Oliver & Sinclair, the only bean-to-bar chocolate maker in Tennessee, or grab a cool T-shirt from celeb favourite DCXV Industries. After dusk, the Lipstick Lounge and The 5 Spot are buzzy bars with regular live music.

Where to stay: This is the kind of neighbourhood visitors will want to really get to know, so suggest booking a suite at Urban Cowboy Bed and Breakfast. The enormous and characterful rooms are housed in a Victorian mansion, with marshmallow beds and claw-foot bathtubs. The attached bar and kitchen pours craft cocktails alongside a menu of dishes infused with wood and smoke. Suites start at £250. urbancowboy.com/nashville

▶ 12SOUTH

Why go: This stretch of 12th Avenue South is the place for those looking to shop beyond the big-name brands and malls. Rows of bungalows and craftsman-style homes have been converted into stores selling antiques, cool clothing and cute souvenirs

beyond their broad porches. This is also a hotspot for craft beer and innovative food, with tap rooms, bakeries and restaurants aplenty.

What to do: You could easily spend a full day weaving between shops and pausing for coffee, lunch and cupcake breaks. White's Mercantile sells antiques, foodie gifts and covetable souvenirs from aprons to ceramics. Owner Holly Williams is a singer-songwriter and granddaughter of country legend Hank Williams.

Bartaco has a chic blue-and-white patio with comfy sofas and pots overflowing with plants, making it a glorious spot on a sunny day, while 12South Taproom serves local beers with burgers and barbecue. For something sweet, Five Daughters Bakery is famous for its 100-layer doughnuts. Flavours include chocolate sea salt, lemon blueberry and maple bacon.

Suggest rounding off the day at Ember Ski Lodge. This Alpine-inspired bar serves salmon lox and mountains of fries alongside Nashville's longest whiskey menu.

Where to stay: There are no hotels in 12South, but Loews Vanderbilt, near the main university campus, isn't far away. A super-stylish blend of modernity and tradition, its luxurious rooms blend soothing shades with bright pops of colour and local art. Doubles from £130. loewshotels.com/vanderbilt-hotel

RIGHT:
Urban
Cowboy

FAR RIGHT:
Hattie B's
Hot Chicken
Midtown

BELOW:
Music City
Walk of Fame



PICTURES: VSCO; DAVE KRUGMAN; JOSEPH WOODLEY; GRACE BOTO

▶ BERRY HILL

Why go: This former Nashville suburb is now technically its own city, though locals still regard it as a neighbourhood. Located just to the south, it's great for a day trip when visitors fancy a change of pace. There are dozens of recording studios, brightly coloured bungalows, cosy restaurants and non-touristy shops to explore.

What to do: This is a magpie's paradise. The Beaded Bungalow sells shiny, colourful beads and offers jewellery-making classes, while Gilchrist & Gilchrist is a magnet for lovers of shabby-chic furnishings. Small but luxe labels drape from the rails at Designer Renaissance, and



For a change of pace, Berry Hill has dozens of recording studios, brightly coloured shops and cosy restaurants to explore

Ceri Hoover has become renowned for beautiful handbags.

Suggest lunch on the run from Baja Burrito, or breakfast with a twist at The Pfunky Griddle - each table has a griddle and diners are supplied with the batter and toppings to flip their

own pancakes. Sunny days are best spent grazing locally sourced antipasti on the patio at The Yellow Porch.

Where to stay: The area is residential and non-touristy, with no hotels, so is best-suited to a day trip. Suggest a downtown hotel. The new 21c Museum Hotel, with rooftop suites, onsite galleries and pet-friendly accommodation, has a neighbourhood vibe despite its central location. Doubles from £230.

21cmuseumhotels.com/nashville

▶ MIDTOWN

Why go: This vibrant area is an easy 20-minute walk from downtown via the bars of Broadway, making it an ideal base. There's plenty to check out nearby too, with most activity centering on historic Vanderbilt University (the area is sometimes referred to as 'Vanderbilt'). Suggest a stroll around the grounds, which have grand campus buildings, cherry trees and ancient oaks.

What to do: The area is dotted with cute cafes, bars and quirky boutiques to potter around. Popular brunch spots include Tavern and Caviar & Bananas. At The Catbird Seat, diners can watch chefs prepare seasonal dishes behind the U-shaped counter. Suggest sampling a Nashville classic at Hattie B's Hot Chicken Midtown, and sipping a handcrafted cocktail at The Patterson House.

For a live-music fix with a laid-back crowd, The Row serves chicken wings, barbecue and craft beers with a soundtrack provided by local bands.

Where to stay: The Kimpton



Gold Medal offers four nights' room-only at the four-star Loews Vanderbilt in a Superior Room, with British Airways flights from Heathrow, from £1,279, valid for travel in April 2019. goldmedal.co.uk

USAirtours offers a three-night stay at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel Nashville, including British Airways flights from London, from £797 based on two sharing and travelling on November 18. usairtours.co.uk



→ Aertson Hotel's free wine hour makes an ideal start to the night, while its comfy but chic rooms, seasonal rooftop pool and lounge area will help soothe sore heads the next morning. Doubles start at £140.
aertsonhotel.com

► GERMANTOWN

Why go: Nashville's first suburb was named after the German immigrants who settled here in the mid-19th century. Recently revived with new shops, hotels and some of the city's best restaurants, it retains its historical charm. High-end boutiques and art stores occupy original Victorian buildings, putting the area on the National Register of Historic Places. It's also designated a city arboretum by the Nashville Tree Foundation, as a result of its abundance of leafy lovelies.

What to do: The area has a delicious reputation thanks to restaurants such as Rolf & Daughters. This popular spot serves Mediterranean dishes infused with flavours of southern soul food. Alternatively, recommend Butchertown Hall, a lofty space with chunky wooden tables and a wraparound patio. Its Mexican brunch dishes are especially tasty. One of the newest hangouts, Germantown Bar, has a restaurant, terrace area and vintage trolley car that has been converted into a bar.

Suggest clients walk it all off by exploring the many bookshops and boutiques, including luxury footwear company Peter Nappi, and Wilder, which sells a mix of unique home goods and souvenirs. Or recommend a walking tour with Local Tastes of Nashville, which takes guests around Germantown and the




PICTURE: ALEX BERGER

ABOVE: Germantown Bar

Gulch, with tasty bites to sample along the way. The Tennessee State Museum, due to open on October 4, and the huge outdoor Nashville Farmers' Market are also a short stroll away.

Where to stay: The Germantown Inn became the area's first hotel

in December 2016. The inn, which is believed to pre-date the Civil War, has six suites, which have plush linens and are whimsically decorated with vintage furniture and original artworks. Doubles start from £170.

germantowninn.com 



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