BL Bamalife

At Home with the Pattersons

MEET DRUID CITY ARTS FESTIVAL HEADLINER
JOHN & JACOB

THE BEST UNDISCOVERED GEMS OF TUSCALOOSA

THE NEWEST LOCAL DINING & DRINKING HOT SPOTS

DCAF

Featuring

Druid City Arts Festival

OFFICIAL PROGRAM INSIDE

DCAF
5 APRIL 2014
FREE EVENT
family friendly!
At **Government Plaza** in **Downtown Tuscaloosa**
Live music, **art** vendors, and **local food**!
DRUIDCITYARTSFESTIVAL.COM

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Letter from the Editor:

It's no secret that The Crimson White has undergone a metamorphosis over the last year.

Under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief Mazie Bryant, The University of Alabama's newspaper has upgraded not only (but most dramatically) in design, but also in the expansion of the magazine department. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Bama Life, the CW's once-a-semester culture magazine, has undergone a transformation of its own. This semester's Bama Life promises, in both design and content, to be bolder, sharper and more compelling than any of its preceding issues.

Within these pages, our writers have explored and laid out the cultural highlights of the Tuscaloosa area, including places and people. Most notable of the latter in this issue is the Patterson family, gracing the cover and featured on page 8, who exemplify not only the University's well-known excellence in sports, but also the importance of giving back and being part of the community that supports our school and city.

Also new to this issue is a partnership with the Druid City Arts Festival, a celebration of music and visual artistry that was created by Creative Campus and is now managed by the Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission. The official program for 2014 DCAF, which takes place on Saturday, can be found in the heart of this issue; however, a significant portion of our editorial content also covers the festival's bands and artists. After all, what could produce a higher-magnitude culture explosion than an arts festival? As our city continues to grow and expand, the arts are finding a foothold to rival the athletics for which our campus is so well known.

While sports are certainly a large part of its identity, Tuscaloosa is not just a town with an impressive football stadium. This city offers more surprises to be learned every day. For example, I've lived in Tuscaloosa all my life and I only just found out about Alcove International Tavern (read more about it on page 6) within the last two years. Even as a native, there is always more to be discovered. Imagine what there is to find in just four years.

That is the underlying spirit of this issue – to inform our readers about what Tuscaloosa has to offer culturally – and what I especially hope everyone takes away from it. Tuscaloosa is evolving and grows more diverse with every addition of a new pub, restaurant or shop. There's more to celebrate and explore in these historic streets than what meets the eye's first glance – all one needs is this guidebook and a little curiosity to get going.

Matt Ford
Magazine Editor

Photo by Austin Bigoney

MEET the ARTISTS of DRUID CITY

BY DEANNE WINSLETT

Sitting in a small chair at the Java City cafe, folk artist Anthony Tavis huddles over his phone as he excitedly reviews pictures of his most recent work.

Images of all sorts swipe across the screen, showcasing his interest in blending genres. For Tavis, who grew up in a small town with an almost nonexistent art scene, sharing his work with others is a therapy.

Since its debut, the Druid City Arts Festival has provided an outlet for artists and performers, such as Tavis, to convene and share their work with the community.

Some artists have become festival staples, returning year after year. Tavis, owner of Anthony Tavis Folk Art, first set up shop at DCAF in 2010, while he was still an undergraduate at The University of Alabama, and has participated in DCAF every year since.

"I gave it a shot, and it was awesome. I sold enough to get me back for more and I've been hooked ever since," Tavis said.

Tavis blends folk and blues genres to create his work, making pieces that he said reflect his personality and background in art. DCAF allows him to share these works with a larger audience than he could otherwise, due to the large local art community in the area.

"Tuscaloosa is a great art market. Everything just kind of comes together, it's got a lot of folk history to it, and it all comes together," Tavis said. "I think between the culture that's already here and having a lot of people in town from other places, [it] just kind of makes it perfect."

And Tavis isn't the only DCAF enthusiast. Lori Watts, owner of This Ol' Thing Vintage, began her DCAF journey in 2011. Watts specializes in putting her own twist on vintage items, taking otherwise average pieces and turning them into collectable, wearable art.

"I am not your typical artist. I am a purveyor of vintage clothing and accessories," Watts said. "I use my artistic flair to find-one-of-a-kind pieces for my clients and customers."

Now entering her fourth year at DCAF, Watts said she continues to participate because of the exposure the festival offers and as the opportunity to connect with the Tuscaloosa community.

"Not only is DCAF a fantastic opportunity for local artists to gain exposure, it is a great event for Tuscaloosa," Watts said. "Once a year DCAF brings the community together for an afternoon of art, music, shopping and good times."

Leah Dodd, of Leah Dodd Creative Colorful Journey, participated in DCAF for the first time in 2013. Dodd's art consists of rings she creates using sterling silver wire, blending different elements together to create one whole piece.

"They are very free-form and asymmetrical, yet they form a cohesive piece," Dodd said. "I used different widths of wires and all sort of stones – no two rings of mine are alike, even if I try. Some of the rings have beads that have reminders, such as a leaf bead to remind the wearer to enjoy nature or eat more salad, whichever is most pertinent."

Dodd said she chose to come back to DCAF for a second year because of the helpfulness of the staff.

"The people who ran the show last year were great. A team unloaded my car in no time at all, which was so unexpected and so wonderful," Dodd said. "Staff members would stop by and check on me during the day to see if I was doing okay."

DCAF, Dodd said, has something for everyone because of its variety of artists, musicians, performers and food vendors. She said she enjoys the sense of community DCAF creates among its participants.

"DCAF has all different kinds of artwork," Dodd said. "I think the crowd that attended last year was people of all ages, not just students. The big stage and the live music really make a great atmosphere."

The 5th Annual Druid City Arts Festival will be held Saturday, April 5, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Government Plaza. The event is free and open to the public.

Photos by Austin Bigoney

John & Jacob

BY ALLIE ELLSWORTH

"Get 'em, get 'em Wildcats! Get 'em, boys!" the band members of John & Jacob cry out over the phone. It has been their pre-show ritual since they played a show in Kentucky and the band's bass player, Jake Thrasher, made up a cheer for the fans of a high school football team.

"We though that was hilarious, so we do it every time before we play a show," said Jacob Davidson, who lends his name to the band. "We all put our hands in the middle, and one of the guys says, 'Get 'em, get 'em Wildcats!' and we all scream 'Get 'em, boys!' And that's what we do."

"But we aren't Kentucky fans at all," John Davidson said. "It's just fun."

The band, mostly native to Alabama, is made up of five members: John Davidson, Jacob Bryant, Jake Thrasher, Trevor Davis and Austin Taylor Smith. John & Jacob will be headlining the Druid City Arts Festival, and the band members took some time to talk to Bama Life while on the road to discuss their music, traveling and, of course, Alabama football.

BamaLife How did you guys get started playing together?

John Davidson We grew up in Alabama. John and I have been playing together for about 10 years. We have had some different bands playing with us over the years. Trevor Davis started playing drums with us. He got on board about four years ago. Jake Thrasher, John's cousin, started playing with us three years ago. And then Austin Taylor Smith – he's the newest addition to the band – is from Texas and started playing with us last year.

Jacob Bryant We had a rock 'n' roll band, and we started playing while we were in school. We would find some time to kind of sneak out of class and go play guitar. We weren't very good, but we got better. We formed a rock band and started playing around Birmingham. We just kept growing from there.

BL What inspires your music?

JB Everything – listening to other music, life experience. You know how you get something in your head like a melody or lick and you just want to see it through? That's how some of our songs come about. They are inspired by all kinds of things, though. Everybody bounces ideas off of each other.

BL Favorite place to play?

JB Back home in Birmingham. We have a lot of friends and family back there, and we love going back home and playing for them.

BL How long have y'all been touring?

Austin Taylor Smith We are just now kicking off. We are heading back to Nashville, Tenn., now, but we have been gone for about nine or 10 days. In the beginning of April, we will be taking off for a whole month, touring with a band called Seryn.

Jake Thrasher We will be playing the Hangout down in Gulf Shores, Ala., and we will be at Bonnaroo as well in June. We are just trying to get on pretty much anything we can. If something is thrown at us, we jump on it.

BL What's touring been like? What do y'all enjoy about it the most?

JT It's just a lot of fun. We just go and hang out and get to meet new people and see new places, party and meet girls and guys, and just a good time!

ATS Eatin' ribs, beans and tater tots!

BL What's the longest you've been in a car?

JT We went from Nashville to South Dakota, and it was about 22 hours. It was the longest road trip we've ever been on, but also the most fun trip we've all ever done.

JB And we just got this new van a couple of weeks ago so we are breaking it in right now.

BL Have y'all played in Tuscaloosa before?

Yeah, we played at the Green Bar around three months ago. It was a lot of fun. I lost a guitar there, though. Maybe spread the word that I am looking for a Telecaster.

BL How did y'all find out about DCAF?

JB Our friend Corie Gilbert contacted us about it. We thought it sounded like a great opportunity.

BL Are y'all excited about being back in Tuscaloosa, despite losing a guitar here?

Band A chorus of "Roll Tide!" intermixed with "War Eagle!"

BL Sounds like you guys are split.

JB We are.

JD We are really excited though. We have a lot of family near there and just a lot of friends in Tuscaloosa, so we look forward to it.

BL What about the new album?

JB We also just finished writing and recording an album. It should be out late June or July. We are really excited about that.

BL How long have you guys been working on that album?

JB Went to record about six months ago, got it knocked out about a month ago. There are two or three songs from our EP on there, but they are recorded how we want people to hear them. EP is more like work tape or a demo, so this is more of what we want people to hear.

BL What about your song that was featured on "Nashville"?

JD Yeah, "Be My Girl" was featured on "Nashville." It was mixed feelings, because we knew that was going to be our single, but we've had some good things come from it – the exposure we got from it. People wanted to know who wrote the song and who the original performers were, so it directed a lot of people to our page. We also became pretty good friends with the cast from "Nashville," so that was pretty cool, too.

For more information about the band and tour dates, visit johnandjacob.com.

Photo by Josh Weichman

UNDISCOVERED GEMS OF TUSCALOOSA

BY TARA MASSOULEH

While four years may have seemed like an eternity in high school, the same cannot be said for our years as undergrads in college. Before we know it, we'll be attending our last games at Bryant-Denny, pulling our final all-nighters in Gorgas and eating our last baskets of 2 a.m. Quick Grill cheese fries. Over the years, we've come to know Tuscaloosa as our new home, and many of us have even developed favorite spots around town, whether it be under a shady tree along Manderson Landing or that perfectly positioned barstool at Egan's. However, before we graduate and prepare to depart from our beloved T-town, we ought to venture away from our familiar collegiate haunts and discover some of Tuscaloosa's hidden gems.

The Alcove

While the Strip often gets the most credit for Tuscaloosa's night life, with a plethora of bars from Galletes to Egan's to Rounders to The Houndstooth, other off-campus areas of Tuscaloosa are getting in on the bar scene, too. The Alcove, located downtown on the corner of 8th Street and 22nd Avenue, offers a different type of bar scene. The high-scale bar offers more than 100 types of beer, as well as a large selection of medium- to top-shelf liquor and wine. The tavern is fairly small, making for an intimate setting. Other positives of The Alcove include its smoke-free atmosphere, daily (4-9 p.m.) happy hour and weekly jazz nights.

The Tuscaloosa Museum of Art

Lying undetected along Jack Warner Parkway, The Tuscaloosa Museum of Art features more than 1,000 works of art and is home to The Westervelt Collection. The exhibit is considered to be one of America's greatest private collections of American Art. The museum is open six days a week, and, as a bonus, The Mildred Westervelt Transportation Museum is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday.

Photos by Austin Bigoney

Sitar Indian Cuisine

As Tuscaloosa's only Indian restaurant, Sitar has amassed a cult following of hungry college students through the years. The restaurant, located on 15th Street next to Ichiban and AMF Bama Lanes, recently closed for renovations but is now back in business. Sitar offers a bountiful lunch buffet and full dinner menu of Indian classics such as korma, chicken tikka masala and naan that provide Tuscaloosa's food scene with the perfect touch of spice.

Capitol Park

Located in the heart of downtown Tuscaloosa on 6th Street, Capitol Park offers a welcomed departure from our other favorite green spaces like the Quad, Snow Hinton Park on McFarland and Manderson Landing. The area was established as a public park in 1992 among the ruins of Alabama's old capitol building. Today, Capitol Park is the perfect spot to get connected with Tuscaloosa's rich history and enjoy a peaceful picnic surrounded by lush greenery.

Archibald's

In the South, there's certainly no shortage of barbecue joints, and Tuscaloosa is no exception. Between Jim 'N Nick's, Moe's, Full Moon and Dreamland, barbecue is available at nearly every street corner and probably in the majority of good Southern households in the area. However, for a truly one-of-a-kind barbecue experience, a trip to Archibald's on Martin Luther King Boulevard, off Highway 69, is a must. And there's really only one way to do barbecue there – order a slab of ribs, grab some napkins and take a seat on a bench outside the establishment to chow down.

Photos by Austin Bigoney

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About DCAF

The Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission is pleased to host the 5th Annual Druid City Arts Festival, also known as DCAF. It is the Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission's goal to position DCAF as a quality arts and music festival which strengthens Tuscaloosa as a destination market for the arts circuit, while also educating, engaging and inspiring both youth and adults about the arts and humanities within the Tuscaloosa community. DCAF has had rich success in introducing new music and visual artists to the Tuscaloosa community and has provided a free day of fun and entertainment for everyone during the past four years.

The Druid City Arts Festival began as a vision that several Creative Campus freshman students at the University of Alabama had, which was to create a festival that promoted the appreciation of the arts, culture and community in Tuscaloosa. Turning their dream in to a reality, the first DCAF took place in 2010 and has continued since then. In 2013, a full line-up of musicians performed every hour during the event, 60 artists displayed a variety of work and approximately 7,500 attended throughout the days activities.

As the students' senior year approached, they knew that they had created a staple event in the Tuscaloosa community and wanted to ensure that the festival would continue for years to come. In 2013, Creative Campus partnered with the Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission in an effort to make DCAF a long-standing event. As of 2014, the Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission has become the event owner and is looks forward to continue providing West Alabama with a quality music and arts festival that is free to all who attend!

Music Line-Up

11:00 a.m. - The Old Paints
11:45 p.m. – Southview Elementary Drum Ensemble
12:00 p.m. - Jimi Squeezebox & the Cajun Gods of Zydeco
1:00 p.m. – The Wheelers
2:00 p.m. – Chase Evan
3:00 p.m. – Alabama Blues Project
4:00 p.m. – Smoke & Arrows
5:00 p.m. – John & Jacob
6:00 p.m. – Sweet Tea Trio

Food Vendors

Buffalo Rock/Pepsi
Chick-fil-a Northport
Jim 'n Nicks
McAlister's Deli
Mr. Bob's Place
Steel City Pops
Wilhagen's & Green Bar Beer Vendor

Artists

Tiki Bar Soap, LLC
Beads by Me for You
All Things Bama
This Ol' Thing Vintage
Kentuck Clay-Op
A.L. Swartz
Waters Hair Accessories
All Things Mona's
2Quilt or Not 2Quilt
Leah Dodd Creative Colorful
Waters Edge Jewelry-Pearl &
Leather Jewelry
Simply Red Designs
Chloe's Jewelry
BOW-Diddles
Core Ventures
Human Society of W AL
Emulzz'z Treasures
Barb's Wired
Anthony Tavis Folk Art
Proverbs
Apple Mountain Photography
Charena D. Designs
Untitled Art
Love Me Knots Designs
Artistic Creations
The Bella Print Shop/The Art
with a Heart
Allison Adams ARTIST
RamJamCreations
Groundwork
Bijouterie by Rachel
A Stroke of Genuis
Sew Jeanie
Le Petit Bijou
The Upcycled Muse
Crimson Clay
Craft E. Tuscaloosa
Diana Francko
MOMster
Stacy McCants
Tuscaloosa Moon
A Painted Piece
Celia O'Kelly Jewelry
Gnoelle Designs
Fire Horse Pottery
JAM Baskets
Ann C. Porter
Sigma Alpha Lota
Sandy Feat Arts
Barbara Thornton
Alabama Dancing Bear
Earl H. Tilford
Cottage Industry Soap Company
Hamaki Box Guitars
Glass on Copper
Larisa Bearden, Artist
Moda
Tony Brock, Painter of Stuff
Davenport Designs
UA Creative Co-Op
Chloe + Lulu Accessories
Coyote Cove
Ronnie Hunt
Cedar House Crafts

DRUID CITY ARTS FEST

GOVERNMENT PLAZA

TUSCALOOSA, AL

1	Entrance/Exit
2	Info Tent
3	Kids Zone
4	Hospitality/Volunteer Area
5	Food Vendors
6	Public Seating
7	Artist Check-in
8	Main Stage
9	Beer and Beverages
10	Artist booths
11	Community Outreach

Downtown Deals

Be sure to wear your DCAF wristband to check out some of our great downtown restaurants and merchants. If you show your DCAF wrist band, you will receive 10% off from the list on the day of festival (excluding alcohol).

- Don Tonos
- Glory Bound
- Innisfree
- Mellow Mushroom
- Moe's BBQ
- Roly Poly
- Sweet Cece's
- Sweets Cupcakes & Cakes
- The Avenue Pub
- Tin Top

Community Arts Culture Tent

As part of Tuscaloosa Tourism & Sports Commission's goal for DCAF, we would like to position DCAF as a quality arts and music festival that is known throughout the Southeast. We think it is important to continue to educate, engage and inspire our community about the arts and humanities. This year we have a specific tent focused on the Tuscaloosa arts culture. Please swing by the 20x20 Community Arts & Culture Tent and see what our community has to offer! The organizations below will be featured in the tent.

Alabama Blues Project
Arts n Autism
Creative Campus
Temporary Emergency Services
Tuscaloosa Arts Council

Discover #DCAF 2014

1. Take pictures of all your favorite DCAF sights, sounds, beats and eats.
2. Tweet these moments at us, and we'll put our favorite pictures on both the Visit Tuscaloosa and DCAF websites!

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Photo by Austin Bigoney

At Home with the Patterson's

BY ABBEY CRAIN

Sarah, David, Jessie and Jordan Patterson are known around Tuscaloosa as champions, but no one would know that from looking around their home. Not one plaque from Sarah and David's nine gymnastics national championship titles hangs above the fireplace, and not one framed softball from Jordan's four years of softball sits on an end table. The Patterson's put family above all else.

Family comes before winning, evident in Jessie and Jordan's decisions to stay in Tuscaloosa and attend The University of Alabama instead of an out-of-state school. The family that watches "West Wing" together on Christmas break, the family that laughs about its patriarch's basketball cheerleading history and the family that loves on its obese dachshund, Fat Louis, started and continues to thrive Tuscaloosa.

Sarah Patterson breathed life into a gymnastics program set for demise, and Tuscaloosa in turn breathed life into her family.

Sarah and David Patterson met at The University of Alabama, where they both coached gymnastics. Sarah and David were Paul "Bear" Bryant's last hires as the University's athletic director – Sarah just 22 years old and David a sophomore basketball cheerleader and former diver. The two never got the chance to properly date. They were either practicing in the evenings or trying to save money on Sarah's then-$5,000-per-year salary. When they did go out, it was usually to a restaurant called Storyville – now T-Burger – and it was usually with other University of Alabama coaches.

"In 1978, we went 7-7," Sarah said. "It was first time there wasn't a losing season, and Coach Bryant decided to keep the program. He gave us several scholarships to recruit athletes, and we recruited a class that came in, and that was the first class in their senior year that went to the national championship."

Thirty-six years and seven NCAA national championships later, the two have been happily married 32 years and have two Alabama-enthused daughters, Jordan and Jessie. Between Karen Guiser, former UA tennis coach and the girls' godmother, and the UA gymnasts who babysat the girls, the University took care of the Patterson girls before they ever enrolled.

Jessie's choice to stay in Tuscaloosa and attend The University of Alabama was primarily influenced by wanting to stay close to her family, especially her younger sister.

"I don't think I really ever thought about leaving," Jessie said.

She was involved with The Crimson White, interviewing family friend Mike Shula for a feature story as sports editor, and was the only journalist to enter his house during his stay in Tuscaloosa. She graduated in 2008 and now serves as a communication specialist for the Office of Student Affairs in addition to working in the journalism department.

"[Tuscaloosa] is home, and I feel like, over the last 10 years since I've been to school, Tuscaloosa has grown up," Jessie said. "It's more of an 'in' town. We have so many of those little things, like the new restaurants and the arts. It makes it fun to be a young professional here."

Jordan grew up attending every UA softball event and said she dragged her parents to each game before the gates opened to watch warm-ups and batting practice.

"I couldn't get enough of it," Jordan said. "I loved sports. I think that's a unique part of living here."

Jordan, a senior majoring in accounting, now plays for the team she grew up watching. Last year, she contributed a national championship ring to Sarah and David's already hefty pile. That was the first year at the University a parent and child won a championship in two different sports in one year.

Having national championship parents was not always easy on the family. Jessie said she remembers counting the number of times someone would ask for her mom's autograph while at the mall. She said she once counted 13.

"One time, Sarah was trying to convince Jordan that we have a normal family life," David said. "And Jordan's like, 'No, we don't. Look, there's your face on the billboard. That's not normal – [other] people don't have to deal with their moms' faces on billboards all the time.'"

With local fame comes a responsibility to the community, something the Patterson family does not take lightly. In 2004, Sarah Patterson started the Power of Pink

initiative to raise awareness and money for breast cancer research. A decade later, through the donations of local businesses, the gymnastics fan base and Jessie's college sorority, Zeta Tau Alpha, Power of Pink has raised $1.45 million for the Druid City Hospital Breast Cancer Fund.

"I think people have picked up on it because I don't think there's a person who doesn't have a family member, a friend, a loved one, someone who was affected by breast cancer," Sarah said. "Everybody knows somebody."

The whole Patterson family is now involved in the Power of Pink initiative. In the beginning, Jessie and Jordan would help pass out fliers and T-shirts in the stands. The family also banded together with Tuscaloosa after the April 27, 2011, tornado. They opened their home for students to do laundry or stay the night, and worked with Tuscaloosa Emergency Services to pass out supplies to affected families.

"It was an emotional time," Sarah said. "Some of the people here, we didn't even know who they were."

Between community service, gymnastics and softball, the Pattersons stay busy. However, they still find time to stay close as a family unit. Some weeks it's catching up with a "West Wing" rerun, while others it's gathering around to enjoy Sarah's locally famous chocolate chip cookies. They stay close to one another and to Tuscaloosa, and they are not leaving anytime soon.

"I don't think there's a way to separate our family from the University," Jessie said as she looked around the living room at her family, who nodded in agreement. "You walk on campus, and it's home."

Sarah said she also believes their personal lives and careers are just as inseparable.

"This is our home," she said. "This is where we live; this is the people who have supported us. We are Tuscaloosa."

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How do people move from just mastering a repertoire to creating innovations?

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Photo by Austin Bigoney

DINING & DRINKING HOT SPOTS

BY DYLAN WALKER

In a town rooted in tradition, new businesses aim to create a fresh and memorable atmosphere for their customers. With specials, discounts and signature menu items, the new faces in T-town dining are ready for the long haul.

Blue Caterpillar Hookah Lounge

Located right off the Strip, Blue Caterpillar Hookah Lounge opened its doors in November 2013. For under $10, customers can try a variety of hookah flavors, and doors open at 6 p.m. daily. The lounge hosts themed nights including Mellow Mondays, Turn't Up Tuesdays and Thursdays and Thursday College Nights. The lounge posts drink and hookah discounts on its Facebook page and has previously offered $2 off hookah and $2 Fireball shots on College Night.

Brumfield's

As the weather continues to warm up, students will cross the Black Warrior River to go to Lake Nicol and other Northport attractions. Brumfield's, located on Rice Mine Road N.E., is in the prime location for lunch or dinner across the waterway. Brumfield's is open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., or 10 p.m. on the weekends and offers casual comfort food. A full-service bar runs in a separate room to maintain the family atmosphere while meeting Northport's need for a bar, said owner Joel Brumfield. Happy hour is daily from 3 to 6 p.m., and signature menu items include a chicken saute melt with Swiss cheese, bell peppers, mushrooms and onions for $10.99. The restaurant also offers catering.

Photos by Austin Bigoney

Chicken Salad Chick

Chicken Salad Chick, a Northport favorite, is now open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., at its second area location at Midtown Village. The restaurant offers 15 flavors of chicken salad, all given quirky names inspired by the founder's family and friends. The most popular flavor is Fancy Nancy, and the most popular side salad is the red and white grape salad with cream cheese dressing, brown sugar and pecans. The Chick Trio includes a choice of any three different flavors of chicken salad. Catering and take-out meals are also available.

The Avenue Pub

Since opening its doors in January, this downtown restaurant and bar keeps things fresh, said owner Craig Williams. All beers on tap are Alabama-brewed, and day-fresh beef is bought locally. Brunch, lunch and dinner are served, with prices ranging from $7 to $14. Menu items include the local, like Black Warrior Brown Beer Battered Chicken Bites, and the unique, like Thai Nachos with peanut butter sauce. The Avenue Pub management believes their Bacon Burger is the best in town, and their daily "House Burger" provides several adaptations of the recipe. Drink specials are offered every day of the week, including $3 Pint Night on Mondays, Whiskey Night on Wednesdays with $6 Maker's Mark cocktails and $5 fresh-squeezed double Mimosas on the weekends. There is live music Thursday nights from 7 p.m. to 11 and Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m.

High Tide Bar

Located off the Strip, next to Blue Caterpillar Hookah Lounge, High Tide Bar pushes the envelope on the traditional bar experience. Since opening in June 2013 High Tide has continued to add menu items and experiment with unique mixed drinks and shots. The signature drink is the High Tide, a mix of rum, coconut rum, pineapple juice and orange juice that comes in its own souvenir cup. The bar offers three draft beers, including a beer of the month, but is known for its unique beverages like the Wagon Wheel, a cherry-limeade flavored drink served in a mason jar. A group favorite is the Rainbow Shot, 10 shots for $12 that are mixed to pour out in a variety of colors, creating a rainbow. "We try to do things that no one else does," said Adam Johnston, general manager and co-owner.

Photos by Austin Bigoney

Glass Half Full

BY REED O'MARA

In a city with a fluctuating population of around 93,000, two breweries hold their own, serving local craft beers to a more than thirsty audience.

"I think [craft beers] are starting to bring Tuscaloosa into the modern era," said Emmeline Fenner, a regular at Druid City Brewing Company who recently moved to Tuscaloosa. "It seems like craft beer goes right along with a lot of other classy things, like the arts, and gets people more involved with Tuscaloosa."

Druid City Brewing opened in November 2012 on 14th Street, while Black Warrior Brewing Company started the November of the following year, opening a taproom downtown. Despite different locales and styles, the founders of each brewery shared a common background of home brewing.

"The guys at Black Warrior, we're all a part of that same home brew club, and I think we both share a love of Tuscaloosa, and I think we both really enjoy brewing," Bo Hicks said, one of the owners of Druid City Brewing. "They went after it with their engineers' perspective, which is very precise and meticulous, and that's a little bit of a different mindset. We ended up being a little more artsy and happy-go-lucky."

Druid City's location isn't too far from the University of Alabama campus, located in a small taproom beside the Sunbeam Bakery. The taproom is rectangular, with yellow woods and custom Druid City posters from previous events and fundraisers, with another room hosting the brewing machines.

"We really want [customers in the taproom] to feel welcome, but also we want to use this like a marketing opportunity to show people all the different kind of beers that we make, so when they go out and visit one of the many great bars and restaurants that carry our beer, they're familiar with the brand … and they have a personal connection with the beer," Hicks said.

Those who drink and taste at the Druid City taproom find an all-encompassing and welcoming environment.

"It's just very chill. Everyone is really welcome there, from the people that are a little more sporty to the people who maybe just dig music," Fenner said. "It's just a really comfortable atmosphere. It's the first place that I went to to make friends whenever I moved to Tuscaloosa."

On the other side of town, across from city hall, lies Black Warrior Brewing Co., a taproom juxtaposing dark woods with steel, with the shiny brewing machines visible

Photo by Austin Bigoney

Left: *Black Warrior Brewing displays its brewing station in public view as part of the interior decor.*

Above: *Druid City Brewing offers several varieties of beer on tap, utilizing its signature crescent-moon logo.*

behind the bar.

"We want a nice, warm feeling for it. We exposed all the original brick from the building. All the wood is reclaimed wood from 1906," said Eric Hull, one of the owners of Black Warrior. "We put a lot of our own blood, sweat and tears into it. We've got a nice pub atmosphere here with all the brick and wood, and then an industrial feel in the backside with the shiny stainless."

Hull said he wants the taproom to become "nothing too fancy," but at least a local spot for people to talk in a family-like atmosphere. Because of its location, much of the business comes from people who are waiting for tables in nearby restaurants or stopping by after dinner.

Besides atmosphere, the two Tuscaloosa breweries remain remarkably different in terms of beers. Druid City tends to have "hoppier" beers, and Black Warrior has more blondes and fruity beers. Druid City's brewers love to experiment with new flavors like last year's pale ale with lime and basil or chocolate cherry brew, and Black Warrior produces classics at high quality. Druid City has mainly American-style beers, alongside an Irish stout and a Belgian saison.

"Each beer is a little different," Hicks said. "Our IPA is something that stands out because it's hoppy, but not in such a great fruity way a lot of people are familiar with. We don't pretend to be Zen-masters of brewing. We still learn something new every day, and I hope we never stop."

One of the trademark beers for Black Warrior is their apple pie blonde, which infuses blonde beer with apple pie spices such as cinnamon sticks. Another staple includes their apricot wheat, which is good for summer weather. Black Warrior has five regulars on tap, but it does vary with smaller experimental batches.

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>
> *-Eric Hull*

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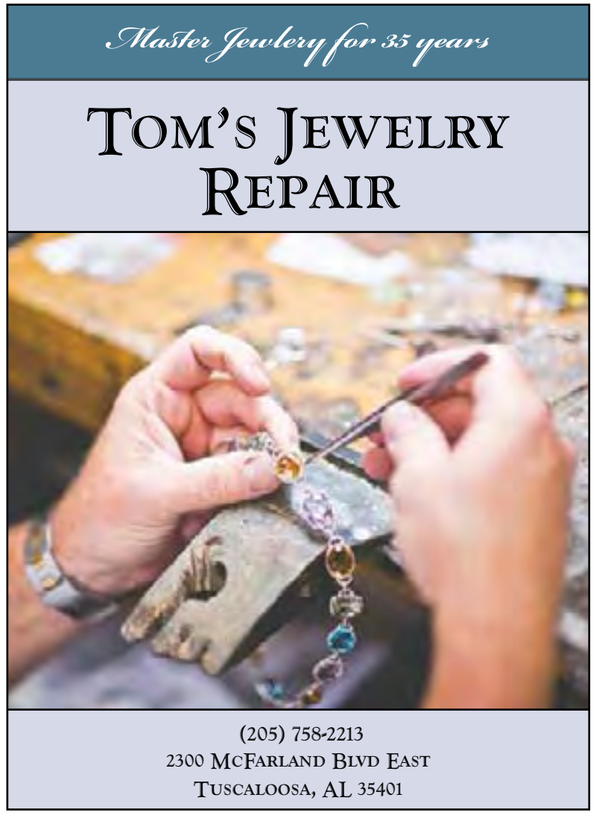
When it comes to locality of ingredients and how each brewery sees their role in Tuscaloosa, both are a part of the charity circuit, though in somewhat different ways. Druid City uses some local fruits for their beers, like strawberries from the Snow's Bend co-op, though both companies are unable to find a local farmer who sells hop – a plant used for stability and flavor in craft beers. However, plans have been made for the future should a hop farm start up.

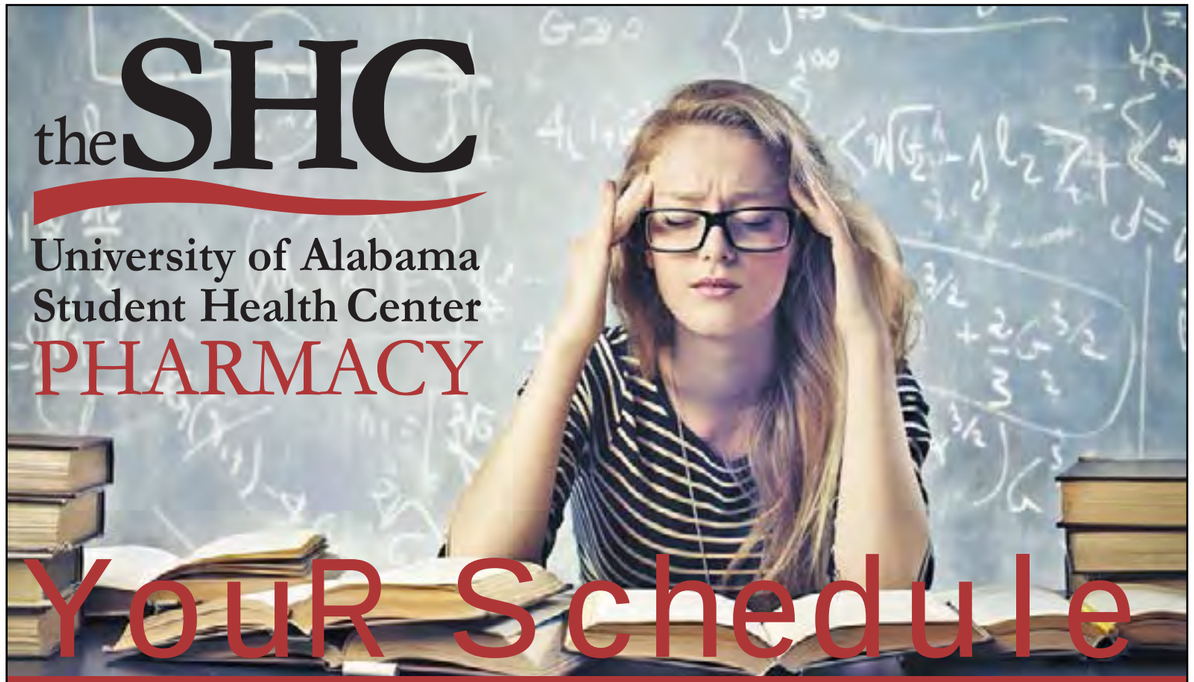
"We definitely want to be a part of the community, help out where we can, both inside the brewery and out. [But] there's not a whole lot of local options for local ingredients right now in Alabama for the beer industry," Hull said.

The owners of Druid City, Bo Hicks and Elliott Roberts, have been in Tuscaloosa for many years now, and describe themselves as hyper-involved with the city.

"When we started this, it was important to us to use everything – brick and mortar – in Tuscaloosa we can, from our insurance, our pest control, our bank, our accountant," Hicks said. "We believe so much in Tuscaloosa. I think you can taste the love that goes into our beers."

Photos by Austin Bigoney





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