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with Kitty Bean Yancey, Laura Bly and Jayne Clark

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Best of the South: Hotels, restaurants, speakeasies and more

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By Kitty Bean Yancey, USA TODAY

Southern Living's editorial team has spoken. In the new issue, just out, they list their Travel Awards -- best eateries, hotels and more in 18 states.

Here are some highlights:

"Best new restaurants are **Miller Union in Atlanta** (modern Southern cuisine), **gigi in Miami** (hip noodle bar/diner), **Husk in Charleston** (more modern Southern using native products, see chef Sean Brock at right), **Haven in Houston** (an emphasis on seasonal cuisine) and **A Mano in New Orleans** (Italian).

"Craft cocktails" made from natural ingredients (no bottled margarita mixes) served in intimate surroundings are hot. The magazine cites **The Gibson in Washington, D.C.**, **The Patterson House in Nashville** and the invitation-only **B Bar at The Betsy Hotel in Miami Beach** as the South's best speakeasies.

"As for hotels, the Best of the South new boutique hotel is **Hotel Havana in San Antonio**. Best for romance: **The Restoration Inn on King in Charleston**. Best value: Postcard Inn on the Beach on St. Pete Beach, Fla. Best beach hotel: **The SeagateHotel & Spa on Delray Beach, Fla.** City hotel: The revamped **Jefferson Hotel in Washington, D.C.** Family getaway: **The Ritz-Carlton, Charlotte** with bike valet and staffers who'll read kids bedtime stories.



CAPTION Neighborhood Dining Group

Speaking of Southern cooking, I'm always blown away by eats in New Orleans and more recently, Charleston -- which is a great destination for food lovers and less widely known than the Big Easy. Do readers have opinions on the best Southern eating destination or restaurant?

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