



A Few of Your Favorite Things

In our first ever Favorite Things issue, February 2010, we set out to discover the elements that comprise our region's sense of place, as told by the people who call it home. Our readers share a bone-deep understanding that we live somewhere that is like nowhere else. It's a place richly infused with an exotic blend of riveting history, arresting architecture, acclaimed music, coveted cuisine, and people imbued with a welcoming spirit.

More than a thousand of you took our survey and divulged your favorite things, taking the time to explain why they're special to you with glowing descriptions that captured your enthusiasm in ways we couldn't ignore. We hope that the results found in the categories below prove more useful than your average "best of" compilation. They reflect not only the most votes in each category ("the winners"), but also a wide variety of treasures large and small, famous and secret, well-known and off-the-beaten-path.

Houmas House Plantation and Gardens has won awards in 3 categories, Favorite Place to Take an Out-of-State Visitor, Favorite Local Chef and Favorite Regional Dish . The articles follows.

Favorite Place to Take an Out-of-State Visitor

THE WINNERS

The French Quarter, New Orleans, La

"It has history, wonderful little shops, and the occasional freaky person...always an adventure." -Victoria Cooke, Baton Rouge

"It's different from anything else in the world." -Blake Smith, Baton Rouge

"How could a visitor NOT love it?" -Marcus Covbert, Portland, OR

"Beautiful architecture and the culture is so unique. Great food, art, architecture and shopping." -Gwen Voorhies, New Iberia

"It has history, wonderful little shops, and the occasional freaky person...always an adventure." -Victoria Cooke, Baton Rouge

"It is the 'essence' of Louisiana for most visitors." -Felicia Senette, St. Francisville

"Great people watching, great live music every where, great food, great art galleries, great antiques, great shopping, great festivals..." -Jennifer Treadway Morris, Baton Rouge

"Like no other place in the US. Old world charm, great food with wonderful music spilling out from nearly every door. Friendly folks." -Don Leger, Opelousas

Houmas House Plantation, Darrow, La

"It is the finest example of our Louisiana heritage. It represents our culture and heritage in a wonderful setting." -Julio Dumas, Gonzales

"The gardens are astounding and it is rich with history and art." -Donna Braud, Prairieville

"What's not to love? The gardens are exquisite!!! It takes you back to the antebellum days. It is unlike any place in the United States." -Cheryl Grevemberg, New Orleans

"It's a great big WOW! The house, the gardens, and the restaurant are all wonderful. So grand ... yet you can feel right at home. True southern hospitality at its best." -Anita Young, St. Amant

"There is nowhere else in Louisiana that visitors can see a larger collection of art and antiques up-close and personal ... or a more beautiful setting. It never disappoints those who wonder how grand a monor life might have been lived by wealthy plantation owners ... and gives them a chance to experience it first-hand." -April Heckman, Maurepas

"It's a glorious restored Louisiana Plantation home. The grounds, the atmosphere, and the restaurant are all out of this world! First class all the way." -Whitney Vann, Baton Rouge

Louisiana State Museum, Baton Rouge, La

“The museum is beautiful, informative and so much to admire and enjoy and it is downtown across from the capital to also view.” - *Gail St. Amant, Baton Rouge*

“Anyone who visits sees a nice overview of Louisiana's history and artifacts via chronological, well designed, multimedia areas portraying important events and people.” - *Anita Lee, Baton Rouge*

“A superb overview to 'sell' our state.” - *Howard Hall, Baton Rouge*

“This is Louisiana's best museum by far! Incredible exhibits and lots of fun, especially the Louisiana Dance Hall music history section.” - *Arthur Smith, New Orleans*

“Second floor is a perfect, fun overview of the wide variety of cultures that make up Louisiana.” - *Al McDuff, Baton Rouge*

The Myrtles

“It is gorgeous and the most interesting plantation. The staff are informed and very friendly.” - *Michelle Fuselier Stewart, St. Francisville*

“The home and grounds are beautiful, rich in history, and there are many excellent places to eat nearby.” - *Mary Barrios, Baton Rouge*

“People enjoy the mystery of ghosts and the unexplainable. People enjoy the mystery of ghosts and the unexplainable.” - *Charlie Barber, St. Francisville*

“The Myrtles is a world-famous and widely-recognized destination for people who are interested in both antebellum/plantation homes and the paranormal, and the Carriage House is just a perfect place to grab a bite before or after touring there.” - *Beulah Fornea Dwyer, St. Francisville*

“It's beautiful ... and FAMOUS!” - *Melinda Sykes, St. Francisville*

Favorite Local Chef

THE WINNERS

Chef John Folse

“He is so people friendly and accessible. Makes everyone feel welcome and important.” - *Noura Delaire, Baton Rouge*

“Just a wonderful ambassador for Louisiana.” - *Baker*

“Death by Gumbo is a unique and outstanding take on a local tradition. His version uses a whole quail surrounded by chicken and sausage gumbo.” - *A.J. Young, Baton Rouge*

“He is the nicest guy and he gives back to our community, very charitable man. And he has super good YOGURTS!!! Love them. Very good chef too!” - *Joyce Mahan, Baton Rouge*

Jeremy Langlois at Latil's Landing, Darrow, La

“Everything he makes is fabulous and unique!” - *Whitney Vann, Baton Rouge*

Cynthia Schneider at The Grapevine, Donaldsonville, La

“She is very creative,” - *Debbie Peltier, Donaldsonville*

“She listens!!!! She will always welcome your comments - good or bad. Takes recommendations and is not afraid to try something new. She also remembers how you like things cooked - that is special.” - *Donna Schexnaydre, Gonzales*

Favorite Regional Dish

THE WINNERS

Curried Pumpkin & Crawfish Bisque, Latil's Landing, Darrow, La

“Consistently rich soup with loads of flavor--with crawfish and corn.” - *Ann Wilkinson, Port Allen*

“Unique combination of local foods ... both satisfying.” - *April Heckman, Maurepas*

Hallelujah Crab at Juban's, Baton Rouge, La

"Perfectly cooked crab just begging to be eaten!" -*Lisa Broussard, Baton Rouge*

"The seasoning is perfect, ambiance the best in the city, and the plated presentation beautiful. This is my favorite place to take my favorite people for a special meal." -*J.M. Wallyn, Baton Rouge*

"Fried, soft shell crab covered in a delicious sauce. Each bite is mouthwatering!" -*Ryn Jones, Baton Rouge*

"Not sure of the spelling, but it is a wonderful soft shell crab." -*Jan Hill, Baton Rouge*

"Amazing mix of textures and flavors." -*Caroline Alberstadt, St. Francisville*

Crawfish Etouffee at the Chimes, Baton Rouge, La

"Just that. Delicious. Also a nice atmosphere and brings back old college days when it was a movie theater." -*Charles Bennett, Baton Rouge*

"Yummy. And brown!" -*Carolyn Morris, Baton Rouge*

"Just spicy enough." -*Dana, Baton Rouge*

"It's Delicious!" -*Jeff English, Baton Rouge*

Thin-Fried Catfish at Middendorf's, Akers, La

"You know, I'm sure." -*Anne Dunn, Baton Rouge*