

# Busy-Man Fitness Secrets

No Gym, No Rules, More Fun (page 99)

# Outside

LIVE THE ACTIVE LIFE

## Where to Live Now

The 20 Best Towns in America  
(MAKE THE MOVE, LIVE THE DREAM)

**Gear Test**  
Running  
Shoes for  
Road + Trail

**Olympics  
Viewing  
Guide**  
What to  
Watch and  
What to Skip

AUGUST 2008



OUTSIDEONLINE.COM

Oakland, California,  
home of the nation's  
best weather

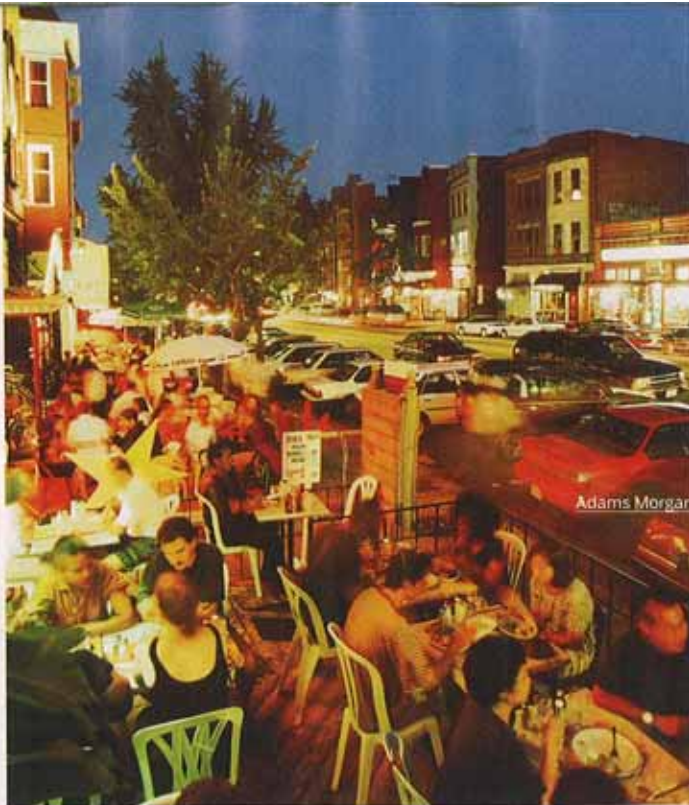
**+** Oakland  
Crested Butte  
Seattle  
Chattanooga  
Corvallis  
Ogden  
Ithaca  
Louisville  
Eureka  
Sacramento  
New Orleans  
(Yes, New Orleans)

EXCLUSIVE  
**Last Flight  
Out of Burma**  
BY PATRICK SYMMES

## 1. Washington, D.C.

**THE REVIVAL:** High crime, buttoned-up Beltway vibe, sweltering summers, a coked-out mayor, taxation without representation, and eight years of an unpopular administration aren't great for a city's image, but don't let all that stuff fool you. D.C. has been busily working for change lately.

After Marion Barry made a mess of the mayor's office, Congress exercised its right to rule



Adams Morgan

### THE WORD ON THE STREET: D.C.

"Don't think D.C. is all about politics; it's full of diversity, and practically any adventure you want is within a three-hour radius of the city!" —SARAH WHITING, SUBSCRIBER

Street in 2002. "Before that, it was like 'Where's the creativity?'" In the Capitol Riverfront 'hood, along the Anacostia River, the Nationals' new baseball stadium debuted this spring as the first LEED-certified ballpark in the country. And this summer, D.C. launched the country's first bike-share program, with a fleet of 100 four-speed cruisers; \$40 gets you a year of access all over town.

**THE LIFE:** Just ask young, ultra-fit D.C. mayor Adrian Fenty. The three-mile run along the National Mall, from Capitol Hill to the Lincoln Memorial, is, um, monumental. Off-road, 1,754-acre

Rock Creek Park offers 40 miles of urban trails, or ride or run the C&O Canal towpath in Georgetown. Upstream, Great Falls offers Class V rapids. On U Street, chill with some vino at Cork, then catch live jazz at Bohemian Caverns.

—KATIE ARNOLD

### THE STATS:

**Pop.** 581,500

**Median age:** 35

**Med. household income:** \$51,900

**Med. home value:** \$437,700

**Avg. commute:** 29 mins.

**Largest employers (metro):**

Federal government, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, SAIC, Inova Health, U. of Maryland



Georgetown

and took charge in 1995. When the D.C. regained control, in 2001, the money started pouring in, jump-starting a civic revival overdue since the race riots of 1968. Run-down neighborhoods—northwest's Adams Morgan, U Street, and Chinatown—began attracting young entrepreneurs. "D.C. has seen an influx of independent business owners," says Warren Brown, a lawyer turned baker who opened hugely popular CakeLove on U

## 2. Chattanooga, Tennessee



**THE REVIVAL:** Chattanooga's surrounded by mountains and rivers, but like so many manufacturing towns, it turned its back on its natural assets. In the mid-'60s, the city went from industrial boom to rusting bust when local steelmakers and foundries closed their doors, leaving a decrepit, nearly abandoned downtown and a community in dire need of an aesthetic and economic overhaul.

The Tennessee River flows through town, and urban renewal in the '90s centered on a total do-over of the nearly nonexistent waterfront, including construction of an aquarium and ten-mile river walk; 2002 saw \$120 million invested in, among other things, a pedestrian pier, free public boat slips, and the new Renaissance Park, on the North Shore. "That's the Chattanooga way," says forester Gene Hyde of the community-driven overhaul. The Greenspaces program will invest \$2 million over three years to transform downtown condos, offices, and shops into LEED-certified buildings;

the Take Root project recruits locals to plant some 2,000 trees in the urban forest; and there are plans to develop 100 miles of singletrack within ten miles of Chattanooga by 2010. All of which has remade

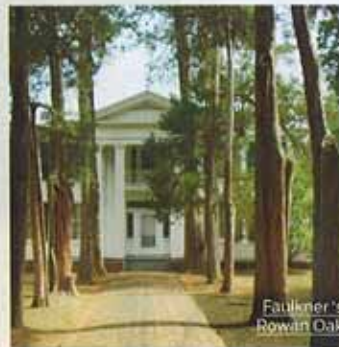
### Bright Idea

#### Use Your Head

**OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI** (POP. 14,100)

In Oxford, bookish is beautiful. Despite Mississippi's ranking last in high school graduation and among the highest in poverty, the town has developed into a cultural hub for the Deep South by taking full advantage of its local institution of higher education, Ole Miss, and by celebrating its unique literary history—both William Faulkner and John Grisham have called Oxford home. The town taps into that history as much as possible, whether through the museum at Rowan Oak, Faulkner's home, or with its famous Double Decker Arts Festival, held each spring. Even the town's mayor is in on the game—he's the owner of the independent bookstore anchoring the town square. And this fall, the Mississippi hamlet will take a national spotlight as it hosts the first general-election presidential debate—expect an unfettered flow of ideas on the nation's future. Just don't be surprised if the best ones come from the Oxonians themselves.

—RYAN KROGH



Faulkner's Rowan Oak



Georgia's Rock City Gardens, outside Chattanooga

## THE WORD ON THE STREET: CHATTANOOGA

"A very scenic, very happening, and very easy place to live, with unlimited options for climbing, caving, biking, hiking, and paddling." —PATRICK JOHNSON, SUBSCRIBER

## Bright Idea

### Do It Yourself

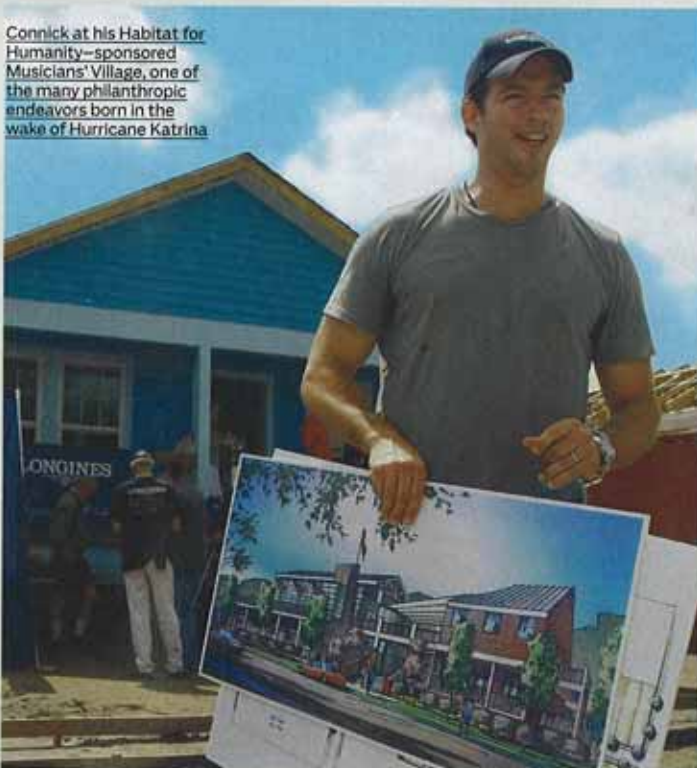
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA (POP. 327,000)

You say you want a reconstruction? In the Big Easy, it's the regular folks, with help from a host of smart nonprofits, who are resurrecting the city. BY WELLS TOWER

Rocheblave Street, in New Orleans's Broadmoor district, resounds with the squabbling of wild parakeets and the whine of power tools. It's a Monday morning in late April in this recovering 2,400-home neighborhood, initially marked for demolition

by the mayor's rebuilding commission. The breeze is thick with the smell of fresh paint. The street is nearly shadowless, the Louisiana sun unbroken. This pronounced absence, open sky where the crowns of trees formerly reigned, is the **continued on page 113**

Connick at his Habitat for Humanity-sponsored Musicians' Village, one of the many philanthropic endeavors born in the wake of Hurricane Katrina



downtown into a live/work/play crossroads with half a dozen parks, a new organic grocer, and the annual Riverbend music festival, which spans nine days and six stages.

**THE LIFE:** The much-revered Tennessee Wall serves up year-round trad climbing, and mountain bikers flock to Raccoon Mountain—both just a few minutes from downtown. Chattanooga's best carbo load comes compliments of Aretha Frankenstein's, an all-day pancake

joint in the up-and-coming North Shore district. —K.A.

### THE STATS:

**Pop.** 151,900

**Median age:** 38

**Med. household income:** \$37,000

**Med. home value:** \$119,900

**Avg. commute:** 19 mins.

**Largest employers:** BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, Hamilton Co. Dept. of Education, Erlanger Health, Tennessee Valley Authority, McKee Foods

BEST TOWNS continued inside foldout



Mardi Gras 2008



Rock 'n' Bowl Mid City Lanes

## Q&A

### Hometown Hero

Harry Connick Jr. on the new New Orleans BY WELLS TOWER

#### OUTSIDE: How did the Musicians' Village come about?

CONNICK: Branford Marsalis and I were driving from New Orleans to the Houston Astrodome to visit some of the people there, and we started talking about what we could do. It's turned out to be a great success, thankfully.

#### New Orleans musicians tend to be a pretty freewheeling, independent tribe. Why was it important to build a place for them to live together?

To have a home. Most of these people were renting before. Now they own their own homes. It's an incredible feeling. It's a great place to be, so they're pretty excited.

#### When you talk to folks in New Orleans about who's rebuilding the city, they talk about you, Brad Pitt—entertainers, not the government. Katrina literally blew

the lid off of a lot of problems, as tragic as it was. Not only the class and race issues but governmental issues. But it's over. Enough already. People are constantly talking, blaming, and—you know, be quiet and do the work. The city itself is just an incredible place, and people want to be a part of it, people who live here and people who visit. We don't want that to go away, and I think folks are going to keep on moving ahead.

#### What else are you up to these days?

The Village is still kicking, and we're just keeping going. I'm also doing a movie down here called *Living Proof*. It's the true story of a doctor who came up with a successful treatment for breast cancer. [What Connick doesn't mention is that he managed to get the studio to move the entire production to New Orleans, providing a huge boost to the local economy. —Ed.]