

america's music city



NASHVILLE

story Laurie Wallace-Lynch

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My perception of Nashville has been shattered into a thousand pieces—sort of like a guitarist smashing his instrument on stage. I had envisioned Nashville to be a sleepy town by day which comes alive at night when the lights blaze on Music Row and patrons jam into world famous honky tonks like *Tootsie's Orchid Lounge*, *Robert's Western World* and *Legends Corner*—the bars where many country names got their start in the music business.

While the latter is true—Nashville rocks at night with every type of music genre imaginable—not just country - the “sleepy town by day” part is totally off base. Between the 160 live music venues (which are often open day and night), music

studio tours, museums like the *Country Music Hall of Fame* or the new Patsy Cline and Johnny Cash museums, shopping, sports, touring famous venues like the *Ryman Auditorium*, *Grand Ole Opry* or stopping by the *Bluebird Cafe* (the venue for Nashville's top songwriters), there's plenty to keep you hopping 24/7. (By the way, external signs in the shape of a guitar pick indicate live music venues).

For a unique Nashville experience, hop aboard the new SongBird Tours, a luxury tour bus that has been retrofitted with a “listening room on wheels” where two local songwriters perform their hits live during a two hour tour of Nashville.

SongBird Tours is the brainchild of renowned songwriter Patsy Bruce and Emmy-award winning songwriter Trey



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Bruce. Don't let the fact that you are sitting backwards on the bus throw you off—after all, you are facing the songwriter's stage so you can see them perform. Between songs, they point out famous Nashville landmarks.

Songwriters change daily. Today's tour is hosted by Trey Bruce along with fellow songwriter Paul Jefferson. Trey has written hits for artists like Carrie Underwood, Trisha Yearwood, Faith Hill, Randy Travis, Reba McEntire, Diamond Rio, LeAnn Rimes and others. He co-founded *Big Tractor Music* with record producer Scott Hendricks and received 13 ASCAP Awards, an Emmy, five number one hit single records, multiple top five and ten hits and an *Academy of Country Music* Song of the Year nomination. Trey joined *Chrysalis Music* and developed new artists such as Chris Janson and Charlie Worsham, American Idol's Kree Harrison.





top The Parthenon in Nashville's Centennial Park is the world's only full-scale replica of the Greek original. **above** Third Man Records is home to many world famous recording artists including Alabama Shakes, Beck, Neil Young, and Jack White's entire catalogue.

Paul Jefferson co-wrote Aaron Tippin's chart-topping hit "That's as Close as I'll Get to Loving You" and his songs have been recorded by Keith Urban, Little Texas and Buddy Jewell. After the performance, the songwriters held a Q&A, offering the 30 passengers an insider's look at the recording business.

Nashville is a terrific walking city but when time is of the essence, climb aboard the *Music City Trolley* or the double-decker Hop On/Hop Off bus. Make a stop at the historic *RCA Studio B*, Nashville's oldest recording studio. This is a hit-maker studio where Roy Orbison recorded "Only the Lonely," the Everly Brother's recorded "Dream," and Dolly Parton recorded her huge hit "Jolene." Visitors can stand on the spot where Elvis Presley recorded (with the lights off) "Are You Lonesome Tonight?" The tour guide on the trolley pointed out various filming locations including the *Bluebird Café* from the hit TV show *Nashville*.

The *Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum* should be on your Nashville must-see list, even if you are not a die-hard fan of country music. This dynamic facility, now celebrating its 50th anniversary, is often referred to as 'the Smithsonian of country music.' It is also home to the Taylor Swift Education Center, an interactive immersion into

contemporary country music. Canadian music legend Shania Twain is featured in an expansive costume and music history display, as are other great artists like Loretta Lynn, Faith Hill and Tim McGraw. *Hatch Show Print*, one of America's oldest letterpress print shops is housed on the main floor, where you can see concert posters for artists like Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash and *Coldplay*.

No visit to Nashville would be complete without a tour of the historic *Ryman Auditorium* in downtown Nashville and a show at the *Grand Ole Opry* which is located at the magnificent *Gaylord Opryland Resort*; about a 20-minute drive from downtown.

Gaylord Opryland Resort is magical offering over 2,000 luxurious hotel rooms, bars, restaurants, a golf course, indoor tropical forests, exotic fish ponds, a European-style shopping village and more. If you visit at Christmas time, be sure to see the annual ice carving display (the 2017 display was called 'A Charlie Brown Christmas' and featured over two million pounds of ice), while the nearby *Grand Ole Opry* was transformed into a winter wonderland with the stunningly beautiful and jaw-dropping performance of *Cirque Dreams Holiday*.

Although it's known as Music City, Nashville has so much more to offer than just music. There are several distinct neighbourhoods to explore including Germantown, Wedgewood-Houston, The Gulch, Marathon Village and WeHo, where we visited (and did taste tests) *Nashville Craft Distillery* and *Corsair Artisan Distillery*.

Be sure to also visit *The Parthenon*; the world's only full-sized reproduction of the Greek Parthenon which houses the 40-foot high gold statue of Athena. If you love historic homes, visit *Hermitage*, the historic home of Andrew Jackson, the 7th President of the United States, along with *Traveler's Rest Plantation* circa 1799, Cheekwood Estates and botanical gardens and the antebellum Belmont Mansion in downtown Nashville.

Travel & Leisure Magazine named Nashville as one of the "Top 15 Cities in the U.S.", while Frommer's Travel Guide named Nashville as one of the "Best Places to Go in 2017." I would name Music City Nashville the place to go in 2018, or anytime, for music, culture, fun and so much more. ⑥

For more links: www.visitmusiccity.com and www.mississauga.com/goodlifemagazine



WHERE TO EAT:

Check out **Chauhan Ale & Masala House**, **Tansuo** and **The Mockingbird**, a trio of restaurants owned by executive Chef Maneet Chauhan, known for her role as a judge on Food Network's *Chopped*.

Also try **Burger Up** – mile-high, homemade burgers with homemade

sauces in an upscale neighbourhood

Nicky's Coal Fired Grill and Pizza and **Gray & Dudley** where Chef Levon Wallace creates delicious Nashville comfort food.

WHERE TO STAY:

Loews Vanderbilt Hotel in downtown Nashville. Luxe accommodations including a club floor with a glass-room view of downtown. www.loewshotels.com

Union Station Hotel, Nashville's historic landmark hotel which was once the train station, www.UnionStationHotelNashville.com

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Centre, www.marriott.com



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