

XTRA LIVING

INSIDE TODAY'S SECTION

Travel: Big cities to little-known destinations and vacation planning.
Plus: The best features stories of the day.

COMING TOMORROW

Lifestyle: Home design and repair, gardening tips, personal fashion.
Plus: The best features stories of the day.



The skyline of downtown Augusta reflects in the Savannah River, the dividing line with North Augusta, South Carolina. Augusta was founded in 1736 and named for Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg, wife of Frederick, Prince of Wales.

BY MARY ANN ANDERSON
Tribune News Service

Augusta, Ga. Ever since Bobby Jones organized the first Masters at Augusta National in 1934, the international tournament has become the holy grail of every golfer hankering to play on its hallowed links or at least snag a coveted ticket to walk the 18-hole course alongside the greats of the sport: Woods, Mickelson, Scheffler, McIlroy and Fowler. Georgia's gift to the golfing universe is the Masters, and the Masters certainly helped put Augusta on the map. Well, that and perhaps a few famous folks from this city of 202,000, including the great rhythm and blues master and Godfather of Soul James Brown, singer and songwriter Amy Grant, Metropolitan Opera soprano Jessye Norman, actor Laurence Fishburne, wrestling star Hulk Hogan, and Danielle Brooks, the Oscar nominee for her performance in the movie remake of "The Color Purple."

With Masters week approaching – it takes place April 8-14 – it's good to know there's more to Augusta than golf and a celebrity or two. Among the fun facts about the Garden City, as Augusta is known because of its profusion

of private gardens and dazzling spring flowers, is that it was named after Princess Augusta of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg and wife of Frederick, Prince of Wales, a title now held by Prince William. The princess was the mother of King George III, and James Oglethorpe, who established Georgia in 1736, attempted to win royal favor with the crown, so he named the former trading post after her. Augusta was also the second capital of Georgia, sharing that honor with Savannah, Louisville, Milledgeville and Atlanta, the now permanent home of state government. The Medical College of Georgia, the state's first medical school, is in the Garden City, and although it has changed names several times over the past few years, it is now and will always be affectionately known to Georgians simply as MCG.

While it may not be politically correct to write of such things, at least 10 Confederate generals, including Maj. Gen. Joe Wheeler and Lt. Gen. James Augustus Longstreet, were either born, once lived in or are interred in Augusta. To top that, two of the three Georgians who signed the Declaration of Independence, George Walton and Lyman Hall, are buried down-

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Spring in Georgia: Go for the Masters, stay for Augusta



Masters Week, this year from April 8-14, draws visitors from around the world to Augusta National and places Augusta, Georgia, in the spotlight. The first Masters was in 1934.

'Steve! (Martin)' review: A documentary that is more than celebrity image management

BY NINA METZ
Chicago Tribune

The barrage of celebrity documentaries that have arrived in the wake of (and seemingly inspired by the success of) 2020's "The Last Dance" tend to be exercises in image management. Unlike the dishier genre of celebrity memoir, these are scrapbooks for the screen. "Steve! (Martin) A Documentary in 2 Pieces" on Apple TV+ avoids some of those pitfalls better than most.

Not entirely. Director Morgan Neville dutifully films Martin and collaborator Harry Bliss as they work on a 2022 memoir that tells the story of Martin's career through cartoon anecdotes, and these moments serve no other purpose than to advertise the book itself. But as a project, "Steve!" has more in common with Judd Apatow's absorbing multipart "The Zen Diaries of Garry Shandling" from 2018. Neville divides the documentary into two

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Steve Martin performing onstage early in his career, as seen in the documentary "Steve! (Martin) A Documentary in 2 Pieces."

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STEVE

90-minute halves. The first part delves into Martin's formative experiences and his career as a stand-up, and he appears only in archival footage or voice-over. In the second part, he's on camera and we see him in the present day, ruminating about his many reinventions — movie actor, screenwriter, playwright, musician — as well as late-in-life fatherhood.

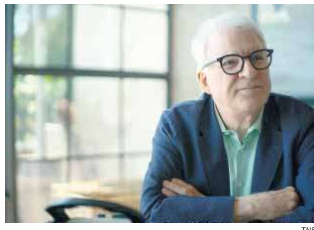
He is most introspective when describing the evolution of his stage act. If comedy is about building and releasing tension through setup and punchline, "I thought, what if I created tension and never released it?" That would mean "the audience would eventually have to pick their own place to laugh."

We see Martin on stage wearing what would become his trademark prop — an arrow through the head — and he turns to the audience: "Do I look stupid?"

"It was aggressively stupid," says fellow comic Martin Mull. "And aggressive stupidity, you can't ignore it."

Though Martin first adopted the more scraggly look of the late '60s, it never really fit. He says everything changed when he cut his hair and put on a suit. "The act looked juvenile. That's why it helped when my hair turned gray a little bit. You always had to think that a grown man was doing this."

This was also how Martin distinguished himself from his peers. So much comedy in the '60s and '70s was political. Martin went in the opposite direction and he frames it as a desire to do something different. But you also wonder if there's an aversion to getting his hands dirty. The film doesn't touch on this directly, but



Steve Marin looks back at his career in "Steve! (Martin) A Documentary in 2 Pieces."

'STEVE! (MARTIN) A DOCUMENTARY IN 2 PIECES'

★★★

Rating: TV-MA

How to watch: On Apple TV+ Friday

later, when he and longtime friend Martin Short are going over material for an upcoming tour, Martin shakes his head "no" at one joke: "We don't want to get that political."

"Well, we have to get a little political," Short says. "Oh, that's right," Martin replies drolly, "you're trying to retire."

Short doesn't miss a beat: "No, I'm just not fraught with fear."

Martin takes this job in good humor — because that's how it's delivered — but it's a piercing observation all the same.

Neville's documentaries include "20 Feet from Stardom" and "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" and what he captures here is a compelling dichotomy between the warmth and faux guilelessness of Martin's persona as a comedian and his recitent personality. He is closed off and shy and can be difficult to connect with. Maybe some

of that grew out of a tense relationship with his father and a household where affection wasn't demonstrative. (Martin grew up in a two-parent home but has almost nothing to say about his mother.) Even people who have worked with Martin have almost no sense of him as a private person. Sometimes that can come off as cold. "I wasn't meant to people," he says. "I was removed. I was somewhere else in my head." He describes his father as a man who could be withholding and cruel and perhaps Martin decided it was safer to retreat into himself, a personality trait that would become a default for his social interactions as an adult.

This was apparent even early in his career. In an old clip, an interviewer says, "I get the sense that you really are quite buttoned up and nobody's going to get too close to Steve Martin. And yet your persona is 'I'm the wild and crazy guy and I'll do anything.'" Martin just nods a little. "Yeah."

Or as Tina Fey puts it: "There's a longing at the center of pretty much everybody he shows us." That's a good use of a celebrity interview, because it gets at something essential about the under-

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Decades ago, your vacation most likely began with a visit to a travel agent, who relied on a combination of expertise and connections to find the best deals on plane tickets, hotels, tours, and more.

When to let a professional plan your trip

BY JULIE WEED
NYT News Service

Decades ago, your vacation most likely began with a visit to a travel agent, who relied on a combination of expertise and connections to find the best deals on plane tickets, hotels, tours and more. Since then, the internet has turned most of us into our own travel agents, and artificial intelligence software is making research and self-booking even easier. But for some trips, that special insider knowledge can still make a big difference.

So when should you hire a professional, and how does it all work? Here are some tips.

Why should I consider a travel adviser?

It's easy for a traveler to do the research for a standard trip, said Chris Anderson, a professor at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, "so they should look for a specialist for the type of tour they are looking for, say a bike trip in Ireland, who can really add value."

The insider knowledge offered by a travel adviser can add the most value to trips that have multifaceted itineraries, involve a wide

range of travelers, are very significant (like an anniversary vacation) or are to destinations you are unfamiliar with, said Gary R. Johnson, who has run the travel agency Woodside Travel in Seattle for nearly 30 years. An adviser could help you decide, for instance, in which order to visit European cities based on local events and transportation options.

What can an adviser give me that a booking site

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GEORGIA

town on Greene Street. The third, Button Gwinnett, is buried in Savannah.

Quick hits: The Augusta Chronicle, first published in 1785, is not only the oldest newspaper in Georgia, but also in the South. Actress Jayne Mansfield lived in Augusta, as her husband Lt. Paul Mansfield, was stationed at Camp Gordon, later to become Fort Gordon. North Augusta is not in Georgia but over the Savannah River in South Carolina. And golfer Larry Mizel is the only Augustan to ever win the Masters.

The Georgia-born Ty Cobb, the first player inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, kickstarted his professional career in 1904, playing for the Augusta Tourists of the South Atlantic League. While he played for Detroit in 1905, he maintained his home in Augusta until 1932. His first wife, Charlotte "Charlie" Lombard was from Augusta, and four of their five children were born here.

Other high-flying tidbits about the city add to its singular character, including that brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright created one of the first commercial flight schools near what is now Daniel Field, one of Augusta's two airports and where most golfers park their jets while they're playing Amen Corner at Augusta National. Peter Carnes, who launched the first hot-air balloon flight in America in 1784 in Philadelphia, lived in and flew hot-air balloons in Augusta.

That's enough trivia to



DESTINATION AUGUSTA, TNS

The Partridge Inn is one of Augusta's most historic buildings. Serving as a hotel for more than a hundred years, it was first built in 1836 as a private home.

whet your appetite to visit Augusta, either during the Masters or any time of the year. But once you get here, you need to know where to eat and stay as you uncover more minutiae of the marvelous city. Augusta is all about food, and its restaurants offer everything Southern from grits and gravy to pecan pie to soul food shacks to fine dining. Try Finch and Fifth for brunch, lunch, dinner and happy hour for fabulous charcuterie and Georgia specialties such as boiled peanuts, Vidalia onion dip or shrimp and grits. For unique dishes of fried pickled okra (you read that correctly), smoked chopped brisket or chili garlic shrimp, then reservations-required Noble Jones, known locally as Nojo, should be on your radar screen.

Frog Hollow Tavern, touted as a "modern res-

taurant meets bar," is downtown on Broad Street and is the place to try regionally grown ingredients that make up dishes that include buttermilk-fried quail or braised Berkshire pork shoulder with collards and mac-and-cheese. Lazza Mediterranean Grill offers an international menu of Mediterranean-inspired goodies of gyros, kebabs and yummy baklava.

For dining and libations with a view, try Edgar's Above Broad, a snazzy rooftop restaurant in downtown for breakfast, lunch or dinner, for Southern palate showstoppers of deviled eggs, pimento cheese dip, blue crab dip and pulled pork nachos.

Beck's on King's Way in the heart of Augusta is known for its seafood, including oysters raw and baked with ingredients of jalapeno, Parmesan and Asiago cheeses, and herb

butter. You can also get Scottish salmon, blackened grouper or a shrimp burger, all with the perfect side of pimento-cheese hush puppies.

That first meal of the day is important, so try starting it out at Brunch House of Augusta for biscuits smothered in pork or turkey sausage gravy, chicken and waffles, or the Garden City breakfast bowl with an omelet over stone-ground grits. Lunch at Brunch House is salads, burger and pasta, but French toast stuffed with Dutch apples, strawberries or blueberries is also on the menu.

Old is the new cool in Augusta, and you have a choice of historic hotels and inns to lay your head at night. The original setting of the iconic Partridge Inn Augusta, managed by Curio Collection by Hilton, is an 1836 home that has been carefully re-



DESTINATION AUGUSTA, TNS

Both Augustans and visitors enjoy the sumptuous breakfasts at the Brunch House of Augusta, from biscuits and gravy to full platters. Augusta is known for its restaurants featuring Southern food.

stored and remains intact inside the inn. For the past 100 years or so, it's been a hotel that has seen the likes of presidents, luminaries of every sort and, of course, Masters golfers. Set high atop the gently sloping, verdant hills of the Summerville neighborhood, the hotel also houses the 8595 Restaurant and Bar with its Southern cuisine and that is known for its "Best of Augusta" lavish brunch on Sundays.

The Olde Town Inn, in Georgia's oldest neighborhood of Olde Town, has only five rooms, each one decorated in period furnishings and each with a full bath and fireplace. Brimming with charm and character, the inn was built in 1896. One of Augusta's best kept secrets is that the Fox's Lair, a cozy underground bar, is downstairs in the basement and features live music.

Another small bed-and-breakfast is the Queen Anne Inn, a Victorian-style home built in 1894. With its wide porch, balconies and soaring chimney

and turret, it's a quiet place to step back in time and unwind. The downtown inn is close to restaurants, museums and attractions, so park the car and put on your walking shoes.

If a historic inn isn't quite for you, nearly every chain hotel is located either in or near Augusta, among them the Augusta Marriott, the Hyatt House Downtown Augusta and Crowne Plaza North Augusta.

Now that you're armed with a basic blueprint of Augusta's history, legend and lore, and whether you're moseying on down, over or up to Augusta to either play or just watch the Masters, know that April is a wonderful time of the year to visit, as the city practically glows with billions of azalea, dogwood and magnolia blossoms as Georgia spectacularly welcomes spring.

Much like the Masters, nature is another of Georgia's gifts to the universe and is best experienced firsthand.