



the
Lark®

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Food for Thought®

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The First Restaurant Newsletter™

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A European Farmers' Market Dinner. Summer is the best time of year for fresh produce and other goodies at our local farmers' markets. Chef John and Mary can be found at local markets every week during the season. Likewise, in Europe open-air markets abound. In many towns these markets are the center of activity, the heart of the city. In addition to fruits and vegetables, local meats, cheeses, honey, mushrooms and more can be found. This month we celebrate the bounty that our local farmers' markets bring and give a nod to some of the most famous markets in Europe. Please join us for this celebration of summer on Monday or Tuesday August 24th & 25th at 7:00 pm.

The Menu

Barcelona, Spain – La Boqueria

Jamón Ibérico, thinly sliced, with Manchego Cheese & Artisan Bread
Almond-Dusted Fried Artichoke, Local Honey

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Florence Italy – San Lorenzo/Mercato Centrale

Squash Blossoms Stuffed with Duck Confit
Ciliegie (Cherry)-Marsala Sauce

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Lyon, France – Quai des Célestins

Summer Corn Soufflé
Marinated Heirloom Tomatoes, Toasted Pistachios & Chevré

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London, England – Queen's Park Farmers' Market

Your Choice:

Farmers' Market Lamb Chops with a Walnut-Sage Crust & Apricots
Foraged Mushrooms & Aubergine

or

Lobster Tail with Herbed Blue Potatoes & Gooseberry-Pepper Jam
Rocket with Mint

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Vienna, Austria – Naschmarkt

Linzer Torte with Red Currants & Hazelnuts
Sacher Torte

The cost of this exceptional dinner is only \$96 per person, not including beverages, tax and gratuity. A fabulous wine package will be available at an attractive price. To make your reservations please call Cathy at (248)661-4466 between 9:30 am and 3:30 pm. or email us at bookings@thelark.com.

A Road Trip through the South by Adrian Lark. Many summers my family and I are too busy to take more than our annual trip up north to Good Hart with my parents. Though not terribly exciting, we always look forward to a few days away from the hustle and bustle of West Bloomfield, and it's nice to spend time with Grammie and Grampie in a setting other than work. So too is the building of tradition: the annual parade in downtown Harbor Springs, watching fireworks from the park and of course chicken dinners at The Dam Site Inn. Knowing that this summer may be the last time the kids and I would be able to take an extended trip together, since CJ will be a senior at the University of Michigan this year and moving on to his own life soon, I planned a driving trip for us to see a part of America to which the kids have not been – The South.

Our trip began early on a Tuesday morning in late July, as usual an hour behind schedule due to things needing to be done at The Lark. Our goal for the day was to make it to Birmingham, Alabama by evening where we would stay the night with good friend Meg Koss (and her husband Max), whom I have known since age 4 when we were in school together at Gesu in Detroit.

Eight hours in to our drive we stopped for a break in **Nashville**, Tennessee. We first headed to the west side of town to the **Parthenon Replica** site. The building, a to-scale replica of Athens' famous Parthenon, built in 1897 for the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, was impressive indeed but we missed seeing the 42-foot tall **Athena Parthenos** statue within (gilt with more than 8 pounds of gold leaf) as the museum closed five minutes before our arrival. It was inspiring taking in the size of the columns and 24-foot tall doors and thinking of what a feat it was to construct such a building so long ago. On our way out of town it was fun cruising down Broadway Street, with its flashy neon signs and equally flashy revelers.

After driving through two torrential down pours, we arrived safely in **Birmingham, AL**. As the hour was late, we opted for carryout from one of Alabama's best pizza joints –**Slice**. Innovative and excellent. There was no time for restaurants this visit to Atlanta but a brief mention of our dinner at **Chez Fonfon** a few months previous is merited. This chic, casual bistro restaurant was bustling with a crowd of old and young alike. We dined on hangar steak, a dinner omelet and salad, and the local fish special. Everything was excellent and the small touches were memorable. Great bread, interesting wine flights, a tasty salt served with its own tiny spoon, and a coconut cake that was to die for.

We visited with Meg the next morning and then hit the road, heading for **Atlanta**. The drive from Birmingham to Atlanta is only two hours but we scheduled in a couple stops at **The Walking Dead** filming locations on the way. It was fun checking out the hospital scene site (which was still in shambles) and I forced the kids to get out of the car and feign like they were running away from the explosion at the CDC (really the Cobb Energy Center). They did so reluctantly, rolling their eyes. Now I need to Photoshop in some flames!

By the time we arrived at **The Four Seasons** in midtown Atlanta it was mid-afternoon. When we checked in we found out that the concierge had forgotten to make our dinner reservation at highly-lauded **South City Kitchen**. The concierge on duty sheepishly asked if we would mind eating outside in the feels-like-106 degree weather, knowing the answer would be "Yes, we would". While the staff tried to figure out what to do to correct the situation, we rested in our lovely room for a bit. Because I asked, we had been upgraded to a corner room on the 16th floor so we had nice views of Atlanta. The appointments were lush and the beds were super comfortable. As we still had not lunched, we dined at a not-worth-mentioning restaurant around the corner from the hotel (puzzlingly recommended by the concierges, who were now 0 for 2) where the best thing that happened was that our waitress clued us in to a cool place to shop – **Little Five Points**.

CJ requested an Uber driver on his phone and within two minutes a gentleman pulled up to take us shopping. We liked the drive through downtown Atlanta as we saw many sites, and then it occurred to me that downtown was not between midtown and Little Five Points. A brief conversation revealed that CJ had Ubered us towards 'Five Points', not 'Little Five Points'. All turned around, we soon arrived at our destination – a funky, eclectic couple of streets with all kinds of shops and restaurants. There was a lively vibe to it all and the crowd was young and hip. Julia immediately honed in on the 'weed' store and thought it was fun buying her Papa a marijuana-motif do-rag.

We visited many shops but our favorite specialized in apparel from previous decades, into which clothing was divided. I especially liked the clothes from the 60s and 70s. What fun! Julia bought a couple hippie dresses in bright colors with matching scarves. They would have looked great with platform boots but we couldn't find any that fit.

Upon returning to our hotel room we were greeted by a gentleman bringing the kids a complimentary snack tray with popcorn, Coca Cola (which was invented by an Atlanta pharmacist), scones and peach preserves. Very thoughtful. The head concierge, Brad, called to say that he made a dinner reservations at an alternate restaurant, **JCT Kitchen & Bar**, and the hotel would provide us a driver since it was not down the street like the other.



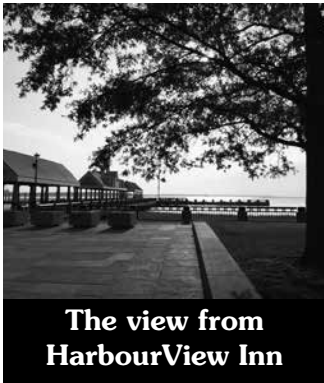
The kids at JCT Kitchen & Bar

We had expected that we would be driven to dinner in some sort of sedan, but when we arrived in the lobby we were greeted by a handsome young driver (George) and a souped-up Tesla. Awesome. The car was super modern and the kids liked how the handles disappeared into the body when not in use. JCT was loud and hopping, and we were seated at a lovely curved booth. Service was a bit slow but we were in no hurry. The food was excellent, as were the drinks, and our waiter had enough charm to make up for any shortfalls. He, like many of the service personnel we encountered in Atlanta, was from Michigan. It was fun finding out from him that we just missed Usher, who dined at the table next to ours earlier that evening.

We feasted on fried green tomatoes, delicious deviled eggs, an enormous heritage pork chop, macaroni and cheese with bacon, a great steak, fried corn-on-the-cob, and Georgia peaches with Crispy Ham & Crème Fraiche – phew! No room for dessert. George (we called him Jeeves) arrived at our beckoning and whisked us back to the Four Seasons. Always-pretty Julia was dressed in her funky 70s outfit and looked like a movie star so when we exited the Tesla at the hotel she turned the heads of the grey-suited business men milling about. We arrived at our room to find two dessert plates – one with chocolate dipped strawberries made to look like tuxedos and the other with chocolate soufflé cookies, chocolate chip brownies and candy, courtesy of concierge Brad as an apology for the reservation mishap. Between all the gift plates and Tesla ride he had more than made up for the gaff.

The next morning included an excellent breakfast at the hotel's restaurant, **Park 75**, and a workout in the gym before we headed off to Savannah. The staff had apparently learned that I was a good tipper so upon our departure we had a bevy of doormen walk us to our car, giving us everything from chilled bottled water to umbrellas for the forecasted rain. We couldn't leave Atlanta without visiting a few more Walking Dead sites. This included stopping in the middle of an intersection so the kids could photograph some street where a tank scene was shot. The locals seemed unbothered by us, used to all the groupies doing the same.

Savannah is a striking town with its cobblestone streets, many squares, beautiful trees and historic buildings, though that day it was uncomfortably steamy to say the least. Stupidly, at the recommendation of the Four Seasons concierge, we dined at **The Lady and the Sons**. This large restaurant was two floors and most of the diners were partaking in a buffet that included good-looking fried chicken and sweaty-looking pulled pork, mac & cheese and sides. The restaurant felt so dirty and sticky that I didn't want to touch anything. Our very nice waitress had food stains all over her shirt. I kept wondering what the kitchen was like if the front of the house was such. The food was hit or miss, with the fried chicken being the best main dish. My father's always-say-something-nice review of the place would have been "They had excellent rolls". We weren't staying the night in Savannah so after walking around town we took a drive around the picturesque city and dawdled behind a tour bus down River Street so we could leisurely take in the **Waving Girl** statue and other sites.



**The view from
HarbourView Inn**

We said goodbye to Georgia and headed up to **Charleston, SC**. On the way we drove past a cute little road-side store that boasted "Fresh Peach Cider". We had to stop, never having had peach 'cider' before. Whilst there we tried the jam samples and ended up with a handful of local jams and jellies in addition to a half gallon of the peachy libation. The 2¼ hour drive went by quickly and we soon found ourselves at our hotel, the **HarbourView Inn**, located on the waterfront in Charleston's downtown historic district. The hotel was lovely and folks were bustling about in the streets outside -- shopping, splashing around in a fountain, and eating gelato from a store on the building's first floor.

Our room was lovely as well. It was quite large and had a balcony from which one could see **Waterfront Park** and the harbor. The beds were Tempur-Pedic -- nice! The hotel doesn't have a restaurant but there are snacks and such in the lobby much of the day. We had missed the evening wine and cheese but that was OK as we were headed out to stroll through the stores on **Market Street** and then to dinner at "World Famous" **Hank's Seafood**. We arrived on time for our 9pm reservation and were seated promptly, much to the annoyance of the crowd waiting in the foyer that had not made reservations.

As no trip to the South would be complete without a bowl of she-crab soup, we started with some and it was great. For dinner we shared shrimp and grits, a shellfish pasta and Seafood a La Wando which had shrimp, scallops, mushrooms, fish and crab all in a saffron cream sauce. Everything was very good and service was top-notch. We skipped dessert in favor of gelato from our hotel and the front desk staff had also saved us some warm cookies!

After an early stroll along the waterfront the next morning, we had breakfast (made at a local bakery) brought to the room. We dined on ham & cheese croissants, bagels with cream cheese and fruit & yogurt parfaits. Danishes, muffins, coffee and juice were available in the lobby as well. Well nourished, we headed in to town. We started our walk along the park and then headed up East Bay Street, checking out the brightly painted houses of '**Rainbow Row**', and then along '**The Battery**', which was lined with impressive mansions. We hid from the hot sun for a few minutes under the live oaks of **White Point Garden** before heading up Meeting Street for more sites and back to the hotel. We were impressed how every little nook and alley was as picturesque as the beautiful mansions, and there were workers everywhere painting, sweeping, polishing, gardening and fixing things.

Rejuvenated by a break back in our air-conditioned hotel room, we headed out for lunch. On the way we stopped in at the **Old Slave Mart Museum**, located at a site where slaves used to be auctioned off -- a grim reminder

for the kids of some of the less-than-laudable chapters in the history of our county. The atmosphere at highly-acclaimed restaurant **Husk** was of a southern home, which I presume is what the building used to be. Some of the food was excellent, most notably the cheeseburger (which has bacon mixed in the patty) and Julia's quail, but the pork belly sandwich was mostly bread and the chicken wings were forgettable. The plateware was fun and eclectic.

Our main afternoon activity was a drive out to perhaps the oldest known live oak on earth – the **Angel Oak**. Pictures don't do it justice. This majestic tree is thought to be 1500 years old. Though it is only about 65 feet tall, the nearly 90 foot long limbs, which sweep down to the ground and in some cases appear to go underground and then re-emerge, are each big enough to be a massive tree with circumferences as much as 11 feet around. Jaw-dropping. Don't miss it if you're ever in the area.

I was excited for our dinner that evening at **Circa 1886** located in the former carriage house of the **Wentworth Mansion**. Longtime patrons of The Lark may remember back in 2004 we held a Guest Chef dinner featuring Chef Marc Collins of said restaurant as my parents had admired his cuisine on a previous trip to Charleston. Before dinner we toured the mansion and were impressed by all of the Tiffany Glass windows. Our meal did not disappoint. We started with vichyssoise, compliments of the chef, and foie gras with cherry rhubarb cobbler & honey bourbon ice cream. Along with our cheese course the chef sent out antelope country pate, which was served with egg brulée, prickly pear, house mustard and brioche. Excellent. CJ's main course was Keegan Farms chicken with saffron dumplings, grapes, trumpet mushrooms and a heavenly Champagne sauce. I ordered the crab cakes with prosciutto & peas and Julia had the baby lamb chops with huckleberry, arugula pesto, goat cheese and horseradish. We were full but couldn't say no to a peaches n' cream soufflé and pecan pie bread pudding for dessert. Chef Collins came out to say hello, a nice touch.

The next morning was devoted to bopping down King Street so Julia could shop in the exact same stores she frequents at 12 Oaks mall. I had the Uber driver drop us off at **Marion Square** first though so we could experience some local flavor. Our timing was good as when we arrived we found a group of street performers showing off their dance and gymnastics skills to a crowd. It was amusing watching the head performer keep inching the tip bucket towards the crowd to no result. Watching such made me crazy so I made my way through the spectators and put \$5 in the bucket. Several people followed suit. My good deed for the morning accomplished, we moved on to the outdoor market and then towards the shops. It would have been nice to leisurely stroll down King Street, stopping in local shops along the way but strong storms moved in suddenly. Without our Four Seasons umbrellas in tow, we were drenched. The only reason I set foot inside of Forever 21 with Julia was to escape the downpour.

Before leaving Charleston, we decided to fit in a Civil War experience. According to the literature, in 1863 the **H.L. Hunley** was the world's first submarine to sink a warship. Ironically, the Confederacy lost 21 crewmen in the three tries it took for the mission to be successful while only five Union forces were killed. The Hunley was lost on its last mission and wasn't located until 1995. It now sits in a bath of greenish treated water at the **Warren Lasch Conservation Center**. Tours occur regularly on weekends and the attached museum, which includes artifacts found inside the Hunley, is interesting and well thought out.

The last two stops on our tour of the South were to visit family. First we drove two hours north to visit older brother Jarratt and his family in Myrtle Beach. Being in the putt-putt capital of the world, we felt we should partake in such, so we did. We ended our round two holes early however as the mosquitoes moved in quickly as

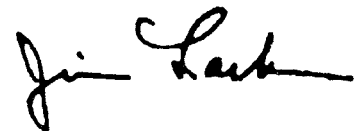
the sun set. We had been going on little side excursions throughout our trip, visiting points of interest found from our I-phone app “Roadside America” so on our way to dinner we knocked off a couple more, checking out the shark-mouth entrance to a T-shirt shop, and waving to 4- ½ ton **Tommy the World’s Largest Crab** perched above one of the seafood buffet restaurants on the strip. The food and atmosphere at **Collector’s Café**, where the artwork on the walls is available for purchase, was good enough and we enjoyed time spent with Jarratt and wife Janet.

The next morning was spent down at the Briarcliffe Acres beach down the road from Jarratt’s house. It was high tide so the throngs of beach-goers at the nearby resorts couldn’t cross the channel separating their beach from the one we were on. How nice! We had the pristine white-sand oceanfront all to ourselves. The waves were the perfect size for riding them on a surf board (not standing) and the morning weather was splendid.

Twenty-one year-old niece Mary Clare accompanied us to lunch at **Croissants Bistro & Bakery**. I had the forethought to make an Open Table reservation so once again we received glares from the crowd waiting for a table as we were seated on arrival. Mary Clare went southern, ordering smothered grits, Julia had a breakfast combo, and I an open-faced warm turkey sandwich with a delectable sauce. All were very good but the real winner was CJ’s Huevos Rancheros with top-rate chorizo, served dramatically on a cutting board. As an extra touch we were presented with mini breakfast muffins.

On to Concord, NC and the next brother. This time #3 son (as my father calls him) Kurt. Wanting to break up the 4 hour drive, we travelled along I-95 to **Dillon, SC** to another Roadside America recommended site – **South of the Border**. What fun! Driving along one first sees the nearly 200 foot tall Sombrero Tower (you can take a ride up to the top in a glass elevator) and then when closer 95-foot tall **Pedro** appears. It’s all very Vegas-like with flashing neon signs and kitschy stores on both sides of the road but it’s worth a quick visit, and if you’re hungry I’m told some of the food at the main restaurant is pretty good. The remainder of our drive took longer than planned as we ended up 9 cars behind a driver going 38-44 miles an hour on a winding two-lane highway for 17 miles before I had had enough. It took three long stretches of road to pass all the wimps in front of us.

Kurt and wife Rebecca live in a lovely **Concord** subdivision, where all the houses are well-kept and on large lots. They had picked up dinner from nationally famous **Lexington BBQ**, known to locals as the “Honeymoon”. Our spread included pulled pork (made from shoulder cooked over Oak or Hickory), coleslaw, sweet corn, rolls and their vinegar-based signature sauce. Scrumptious and satisfying. A perfect final meal to our journey through the South.



Thought for Food®

“I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train.”

Oscar Wilde