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- ⑥ Saucisson, Frites





Philadelphia

Forget the Liberty Bell. Artists, designers, and restaurateurs are rewriting this city's history. By Caroline Tiger Photographs by Morgan & Owens

1 Yes, yes—there are cheesesteaks

Two of the oldest cheesesteak restaurants in South Philly—**Pat's** and **Geno's**—have a long-standing feud worth weighing in on. Pat's claims to have invented the cheesesteak. Geno's claims to have perfected it. Both serve equally generous portions of rib-eye steak, grilled onions, and Cheese Whiz on freshly baked Italian rolls; we'll let you decide which is worth lining up for. **Pat's**, 1237 E. Passyunk Ave., 215/468-1546, patskingofsteaks.com, \$7.50; **Geno's**, 1219 S. Ninth St., 215/389-0659, genosteaks.com, \$7.50.

2 There's actually affordable art

With its cheap rents and thriving gallery scene, Philly has become a haven for artists fleeing pricier New York. "You can make your mark quickly here by filling a void," says Daniel Fuller of the Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative, which funds galleries. The upside for visitors: There are plenty of places to pick up one-of-a-kind pieces, such as the **Art for the Cash Poor** festival, where nothing is priced over \$200 (inliquid.com, June 13–14), and the **Art Star Craft Bazaar**, where 150 painters, sculptors, and designers unload their works (artstarcraftbazaar.com, May 30–31).

3 A river runs through it

Date night in Philly could mean dinner and a movie, or something more intrepid: a moonlight kayak tour. Starting at dusk in the summer, instructors from **Hidden River Outfitters** provide a half-hour lesson, followed by a 90-minute guided paddle on the Schuylkill River. 215/222-6030, schuylkillbanks.org, \$50 per person.

4 Latin Emeril is in the house

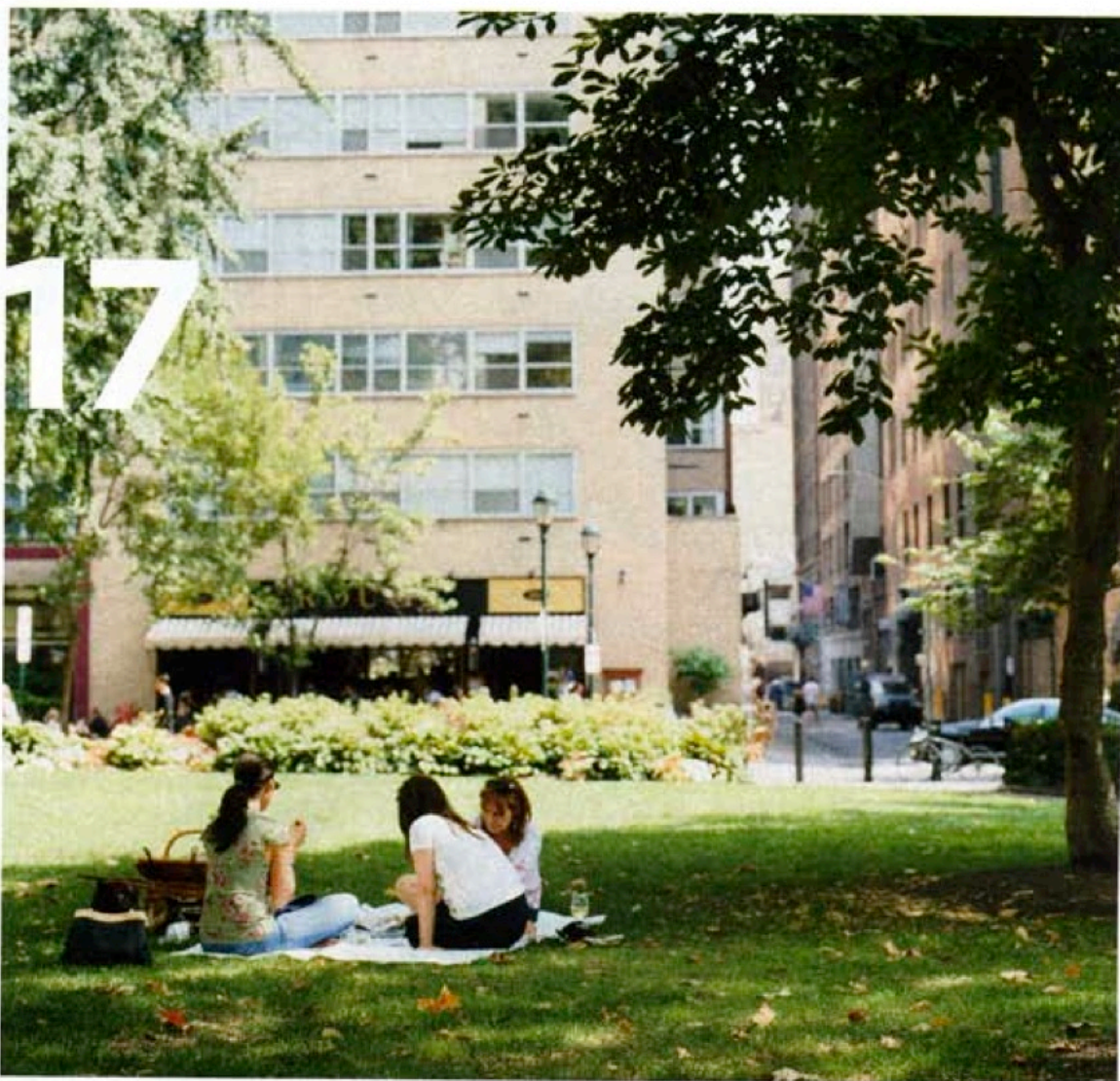
Ecuadoran-American restaurateur Jose Garces, known as the Latin Emeril Lagasse, imported tapas to Philly in 2005 with his Andalusian wine bar **Amada** (217–219 Chestnut St., 215/625-2450, amadarestaurant.com, plates from \$5). Now, he's moved on to Mexican with his candy-colored **Distrito** restaurant—the pulled pork and pineapple-salsa tacos do Mexico City proud (3945 Chestnut St., 215/222-1657, distritorestaurant.com, tacos from \$9).

5 Backstreets are laid bare

Even old-timers don't know all of the narrow streets tucked between the main arteries of the city's oldest neighborhoods. Good thing the guides from the **Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks** have a handle on things. One of the group's most popular walking tours is Littlest Streets East of Broad, which winds its way through a small-scale section of Center City. 321 S. Fourth St., 215/925-2251, philalandmarks.org, \$10.

6 Steve Wynn can't touch this

More than 100,000 pieces of glass make up *The Dream Garden*, a mosaic designed by Philadelphia artist Maxfield Parrish in 1916 that graces the lobby of the **Curtis Center**. Ten years ago, the Tiffany-made rural-landscape mural was sold to casino mogul Steve Wynn, whose plan to move it to Las Vegas provoked a citywide outcry. The Pew Charitable Trusts stepped in with funding to keep the masterpiece in Philly—and Wynn stepped back into the shadows. 601–645 Walnut St.



Picnicking at Rittenhouse Square, one of five parks planned by city founder William Penn in the late 17th century

15 There's a garden fit for a king

Quaker John Bartram earned the title King's Botanist for designing the first garden in North America devoted to native plants in 1728. The 45-acre **Bartram's Garden** continues to flourish at his former estate 25 minutes from the city, where you can spot specimens of *Franklinia alatamaha*, a tree with dogwood-like flowers that Bartram found in Georgia and named for his pal, Benjamin Franklin. 54th St. and Lindbergh Blvd., 215/729-5281, bartramsgarden.org, admission to the grounds is free, tour \$5.

16 Sports superstitions seem to have merit

Fans believe a curse descended upon the city when the 945-foot One Liberty Place skyscraper was built in Center City in 1987, trumping City Hall as Philadelphia's tallest building. The reason? The city's professional sports teams had enjoyed a run of great seasons in the 1970s and early '80s, but the wins ended when the bronze statue of William Penn atop City Hall lost its status as the highest point in Philly. Two years ago, ironworkers affixed a four-inch replica of the Penn statue to the highest beam of the Comcast Center, now the city's tallest building. And last October, the Phillies won the World Series. We're just sayin'...

17 It's peaceful at its core

There's no question that **Rittenhouse Square** is one of the most tranquil spots in Center City, with its wide diagonal walkways, towering oak and maple trees, and central plaza surrounded by an elegant balustrade. It still feels like a retreat even when there's a lot of activity—from the farmers market on its north end every Tuesday and Saturday morning to the annual **Rittenhouse Row Spring Festival** (May 9), during which Walnut Street is closed off to traffic so shops and restaurants can spread out onto the square. Walnut St. between S. 18th and S. 20th Sts.

18 A cinematic setting

Walk into **XIX (Nineteen)** restaurant and bar at the Park Hyatt-Bellevue and you may think you've entered Katharine Hepburn's classic 1940s romantic comedy, *The Philadelphia Story*: The lounge exudes glamour with its elaborately molded, early-1900s rotunda, 20-foot pearl chandelier, polished marble columns, and leather banquettes. What makes this the place to be past sunset, though, are the twinkling views of Philadelphia from the arched windows 19 stories above the streets. 200 S. Broad St., 215/790-1919, parkphiladelphia.hyatt.com, martini \$12.