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ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

An historic city along the banks of the Potomac that is generating its own kind of buzz

Alexandria, VA – Some American cities exude character because of their compelling histories and beautifully preserved architecture. Others draw visitors like a moth to a flame with their rich blend of the arts, culture, and hot dining scenes. Alexandria, Virginia offers it all. With an appealing selection of eclectic boutiques and new destination hotels such as Hotel Monaco Alexandria, along with miles of scenic trails and bike paths, it's no wonder the city on the banks of the Potomac is generating its own kind of buzz. It may be just ten minutes from Washington DC, but Alexandria is thriving as a popular destination in its own right.

Here, you can catch an R&B concert at the intimate Birchmere Music Hall, stroll past Federal style row houses on the gas-lit streets of Old Town, and end up in a stylish bistro where modern Southern cuisine meets new wave cocktails. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson may have strolled the same streets, but chances are the food wasn't quite as exciting as it is today. Top chefs have crossed the Potomac in the past few years (and they're still coming...) and confidently put the town on the national culinary map.

Alexandria's Old Town district includes more than 4,000 historic buildings, outstanding examples of 18th and 19th century architecture. Today, many of them are homes to independently owned businesses—from cheese shops to baby boutiques—all adding to the city's charms. Easy to navigate and full of possibilities for exploration, Alexandria was named one of the "10 Most Walkable Cities" by AAA.

Readers of *American Style* magazine named Alexandria one of the country's "Top 25 Arts Destinations." That honor refers in part to the city's cleverly renovated Torpedo Factory Art Center & The Art League School, a vibrant arts community that includes 82 working artists' studios and six galleries. And, given all its personality, it's no surprise that Alexandria is listed among "50 Fabulous Gay Friendly Places to Live" in the travel/relocation guide of the same name.

A Modern City, Steeped in History

Founded in 1749 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Alexandria was a vital Colonial seaport. It was once George Washington's hometown and his Mount Vernon estate is still a major attraction, just eight miles south of Old Town.

Alexandria is also known as the cradle of the Civil War. On May 24, 1861, an altercation took place at the Marshall House (now the site of the Hotel Monaco Alexandria) between the innkeeper, secessionist James W. Jackson and Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, leader of the 11th New York Infantry "Fire Zouaves."

(more)

In the ensuing melee, both men allegedly became the first martyrs of the long Civil War. Visitors can still hear that tale and dozens of others, including stories of the city's role in the Revolutionary War, its fascinating African American history, unsolved mysteries, romantic legends and folklore of all kinds on entertaining historic tours, or in the bustle of the city's historic taverns.

Between its storied past and its thriving present, it's easy to see why Alexandria stands out as one of America's most intriguing destinations. For more information about Alexandria, Virginia, visit www.funside.com.

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ABOUT KIMPTON

San Francisco-based Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants is the first and leading collection of boutique hotels, throughout the United States and Canada. Founded in 1981 by Bill Kimpton, every Kimpton hotel features personalized guest services, comforting in-room amenities, specialty rooms and suites, and provides a range of exciting culinary experiences through affiliated top-rated destination chef-driven restaurants. Kimpton takes pride in its commitment to social responsibility and leads the hospitality industry in ecological practices through its innovative EarthCare programs. Privately held, Kimpton received the highest ranking in customer satisfaction by the Market Metrix Hospitality Index for the entire year of 2007, exceeding all others in the upscale hotel segment. Among the company's newest properties is the Hotel Monaco Alexandria and Jackson 20 restaurant in Virginia, which opened in January 2008. Additional projects are underway in Los Angeles, New York, Florida, Philadelphia and Virginia. For more information, please visit www.KimptonHotels.com or call 1-800-KIMPTON.