

happenings

GUIDE TO IN CHARLOTTE

A CITY ON
THE RISE

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BY MICHAEL J. SOLENDER

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There's no questioning Charlotte's prominence as a New South city and one the fastest-growing urban hubs between Atlanta and New York City.

CHARLOTTE SKYSCRAPERS THAT OFFER MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Fueled by the boom in economic development and jobs in financial services, banking, technology and retail since the late 1980s, the city's physical landscape—especially Uptown's majestic skyline—has been reshaped to better accommodate the area where a growing number of people live, work and play.

Dozens of Queen City skyscrapers boast world-class public art, convenient amenities (free Wi-Fi anyone?), shopping, entertainment and some of the city's best eateries. What's more, many of them also provide seldom-seen glimpses into Charlotte's fascinating past.

With offerings and background stories that far exceed their business purposes, these seven Center City greats tower above the competition.

PHOTOS BY KYO H NAM PHOTOGRAPHY





1

DUKE ENERGY CENTER

550 S. Tryon St.

One of the newer entrants onto Charlotte's high-rise scene, Duke Energy Center is also one of the most architecturally intriguing. A sharp, angular rise 48 floors above South Tryon Street, the building has a granite base and blue-green glass topped with a handle-like feature that bears resemblance to the Shanghai World Financial Center. The center's sophisticated exterior nighttime light scheme fascinates Charlotteans with its colorful variations, which align with city happenings (follow @WFLightsCLT on Twitter for information on the building's light shows).

The building was to be the headquarters for Wachovia Corp. when originally constructed, but the name shifted to the lead tenant, Duke Energy, after the former bank's acquisition by **Wells Fargo & Co.** Charlotte's 1975 city directory listed Firestone Tire and Rubber Company and Charlotte Mutual Insurance as former occupants of the space.

One of the anchor buildings at the **Levine Plaza for the Arts**, Duke Energy Center offers visitors easy access to the **Knight Theater**, **Mint Museum Uptown**, **Bechtler Museum of Modern Art** and the **Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture**. Diners can feast on inventive fare at Levant Mediterranean Cuisine, Asian-fusion delicacies at **EMZY Sushi Bar and Asian Kitchen** and modern-American dishes at **Halcyon**, **Flavors from the Earth**. **Energy Café**, located along the building's colonnade, is a quick-casual stop for healthy snacks, meals and beverages. Bonus: The Duke Energy Center offers free public Wi-Fi on the 500 Block Plaza in front of the Mint Museum.

Located on the roof of the Podium and accessible via the 10th floor is a gorgeous rooftop garden, the **Green Roof**, which is open during business hours for Wells Fargo employees and can be booked for after-hours events for all Duke Energy Center tenants.

2

FIFTH THIRD CENTER

201 N. Tryon St.

Building Owners and Managers International's 2001 TOBY award winner for excellence in office management, Fifth Third Center is a Tryon Street standout. The entrance of Fifth Third is slanted at a 45-degree angle to directly face **Bank of America's Corporate Center**, the building's owner. Charlotte's official city directory in 1975 listed several retailers in this spot, including **Al Goodwin Shoe Salon** and **Style Setter Clothing**.

Soothing sounds emanate from the seven-spigot fountain out front facing Tryon Street, and inside, visitors find a stunning collection of abstract, colorful acrylic works, including those by Milwaukee-born artist Jason Rohif and Indian painter Natvar Bhavsar.

An all-day pick-me-up awaits at **Dilworth Coffee**, where a cozy lounge, hot java, quick bites and free Wi-Fi are all major draws. Power lunch at **The Capital Grille**, where dry aged steaks and fresh catch headline a fine dining menu that satisfies even the pickiest of eaters with its sophisticated fare and ambiance. Both Dilworth Coffee and The Capital Grille are nestled off of Fifth Third's lobby. Craving something a little more casual? Check out the mouthwatering burger spread and full small-batch whiskey bar at **Cowbell Burger & Whiskey Bar**. Live music seeping out from under doors beckons after hours.

3

ONE WELLS FARGO CENTER

301 S. College St.

Nicknamed "The Jukebox" for its rounded top, One Wells Fargo Center is the former world headquarters for Wachovia Corp. It's one of four office towers that comprise the Uptown Wells Fargo complex. The location was once home to Jefferson First Union.

A setback came when mammoth Hurricane Hugo tore through Charlotte in 1989, just a year after the building opened. More than 100 of its windows were destroyed and demanded repair.

The center represents Charlotte's first postmodern high-rise and was North Carolina's tallest building from 1988 to 1992. The **Carolina Raptor Center** once housed a "Falcon cam" here, streaming the antics of nesting peregrine falcons who love the building's overhangs.

Enjoy a brown-bag lunch on the sunny outdoor plaza or pick up treats and eats at **Smoothie King**, **Charlotte Coffee Station** or **Fujo Uptown Bistro**. Meet friends or coworkers for post-daily grind cocktails at the connected **Hilton Charlotte Center City's** hotel bar or catch a great workout at the **Childress Klein YMCA**.





With art-deco panache extending from its lobby design all the way through its exterior facade, Hearst Tower upped the character and class of Uptown's skyline when its doors opened in 2002. The Tower rests on space once occupied by the women's apparel retailer Montaldo's. The building has a unique reverse-floorplate design in which the upper floors average more than 4,000 square feet more than those at the base.

The 46-story building's College Street entrance stands two floors lower than the building's Tryon Street front doors. An ornate, deco-style brass railing flanks the stairway here. A work of art in itself, the staircase was designed by Parisian ironworker Edgar Brandt using railings reclaimed from famed Parisian department store Au Bon Marche.

Hearst's lobby is home to fine dining at **Sea Level NC**, **Luce** and **Malabar**, which are located on the expansive plaza out front. They're nestled alongside **Port City Java** coffeehouse and popular Irish hangout **RIRá Irish Pub & Restaurant**.

Located within Hearst Tower, **The Hearst Service Center** provides accounting, information technology and other business-related support to all Hearst media units (publishers of *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *Country Living* and more).

The tower's plaza offers wonderful people-watching and also affords visitors the chance to take in the free yet rarely visited fine art/glass collection that lies in the lobby of the adjacent **Foundation For The Carolinas** building. Visitors of Hearst can also enjoy pampering services at **Modern Salon & Spa**, which takes residence on the second floor.

Cozy, free work space for tenants and the public can be found off of the Hearst lobby at **Collaborate 214**. Complimentary Wi-Fi, private workstations, charging ports and even small office lots are offered during weekday business hours.

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HEARST TOWER

214 N. Tryon St.



everyone. Get your sweets-and-caffeine fix over a salted caramel brownie and steamy macchiato at **Amélie's French Bakery**, a treat for Fido at **The Dog Deli Food Company**, and your shoes shined or cobbled at **Sam's Shoe Repair**. Other specialty outlets include **Halfpenny's Confections**, **JR's General Store**, **Johnny Burrito** and **Tower Hair Salon**. The atrium boasts fancy and casual culinary mainstays, like **Mimosa Grill** and **Just Fresh**.



Initially coated in a beige tone, Two Wells Fargo was repainted gray to compliment the renovated color scheme of nearby Wells Fargo Main. When it was built in 1971, it surpassed the Winston Tower in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, as the tallest building in the state, reaching 433 feet high. The site was once home to the Charlotte Masonic Temple.

Now home to **College Street Shops**, Two Wells Fargo has something for

Head up to the second floor of the lobby and connect to **Overstreet Mall**, where the skybridge traverses Fourth Street and meanders through a parking garage, easily connecting pedestrians to adjacent **BB&T Center**. **Dunkin' Donuts**, **McDonald's**, **Merle Norman Cosmetics** and **Tinder Box** are among the myriad retailers in a blocks-long network of overhead shops.

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TWO WELLS FARGO CENTER

325 S. Tryon St.

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CARILLON TOWER

227 W. Trade St.

One of Charlotte's most distinguished skyscrapers, the Carillon Tower rests on the former space of the legendary Beaux Arts-style Hotel Charlotte. From 1924 to 1988, dignitaries, like former presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower, Elvis Presley and Babe Ruth, slept here. Today, the sky-high copper roof spire, which is shaped like a bell tower, makes the neo-Gothic edifice a standout. The building's architecture and name (a carillon is a musical instrument often found in the bell tower of a church) were both inspired by the historic First Presbyterian Church located across the street.

Home to Charlotte's **Arts & Science Council**, the Carillon Tower is perhaps best known for two fine works of art in its

lobby. In the center of the space, Swiss artist Jean Tinguely's 40-foot-tall kinetic masterwork **Cascade** is a quirky, kinetic mashup of whirling and whizzing objects that had previously been discarded and then reimagined by Tinguely. Muralist Sol LeWitt's **Wall Drawing #683**, which features geometry saturated in jewel tones, claims the building's far lobby wall.

Other major tenants include **Crescent Communities**, the **U.S. Attorney's Office**, **GreerWalker**, **CliftonLarsonAllen** and more.

Feel like splurging on a dinner to remember? **Morton's, The Steakhouse**, which is located here, is known for prime steaks and chops that are a cut above the rest.



CRANE WATCH

Often called the bird of Charlotte, the crane is a familiar sight in the city. And it's hard at work. Several new skyscrapers are on the rise and will give the city's stunning skyline a new look over the next few years.

CRESCENT STONEWALL STATION
300 E. Stonewall St.

Plans Include:
Whole Foods; 460
apartments; parking deck

615 SOUTH COLLEGE
615 S. College St.

Plans Include:
Regions Bank; WeWork;
office space

300 SOUTH TRYON
300 S. Tryon St.

Plans Include:
Rooftop bar; office space;
Romare Bearden Park
extension; Kimpton Hotel



To learn more about Charlotte's striking skyline, visit charlottesgotalot.com

620 SOUTH TRYON
 600 S. Tryon St. (former site
 of The Charlotte Observer)

Plans Include:
 Office space; potential
 mixed-use space

TRYON PLACE
 601 S. Tryon St.

Plans Include:
 Retail space; office space

**RESIDENCE INN CHARLOTTE CITY CENTER & AC HOTELS
 BY MARRIOTT CHARLOTTE CITY CENTER DOWNTOWN**
 210 E. Trade St.

Plans Include:
 AC Hotels by Marriott Charlotte City Center Downtown;
 Residence Inn Charlotte City Center; rooftop restaurant