

JONATHAN
SAVAGE AT
HOME WITH HIS
DOG, ARTIE

MY HOMETOWN: NASHVILLE

Interior designer *Jonathan Savage* takes us on a tour of his Nashville, from a classic honky-tonk and old-school bar to sleek hotels and sophisticated restaurants, revealing the layered mélange that makes Music City the place to see and be seen

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MEET JONATHAN SAVAGE, the fresh-faced interior designer with boyish good looks, loads of charm, and an eye for style, whether it's for a room or his own sartorial choices. He is quickly changing from one to watch to one who has arrived. Savage grew up in Middle Tennessee and at a young age was deep into illustrating everything—especially architecture—for hours on end. “My family was in the construction and real estate business, so I was exposed to that early on,” he explains. The precocious youth went from

rearranging his own bedroom at least monthly to taking on bigger projects. “When I was about 16 and my mother was out, I rearranged our living room. I dragged a sofa across the floors, and they had to be redone, but the room looked great!” he says. After studying business in college, Savage finally found his footing in interior design, earning a degree from O’More College of Design and working for the highly regarded David Kleinberg Design Associates in New York, where he honed his decorating chops. Returning to Tennessee in 2010, he opened his own firm, SAVAGE Interior Design. He describes his style primarily as a reflection of his clients’ tastes, although he admits to a penchant for low-slung furniture—yet in the same breath he says, “You never know, I may be doing an exaggerated wing chair next.” His profile rose when he was selected to decorate a space at the prestigious Kips Bay Decorator Show House in New York last May. We caught up with Savage at his ultracool Green Hills home full of outstanding design ideas (and lots of low-slung furniture) before heading out on the town.



WHERE TO STAY

If you want to stay in the Gulch—the only true walking neighborhood in Nashville—then I recommend the **Thompson** hotel. There are so many great restaurants and shops close by. The midcentury design is interesting

and unique for a Nashville hotel. The **Omni** is what you’d expect from a big hotel, and it has everything you need—a great steak house, a wonderful spa, and excellent service. For people who want the exact opposite of the Omni, I direct them to **The 404 Hotel**. It’s a small, intimate hideaway with only five suites, and the décor in each room is unique. I think it’s also a bonus that room service



comes from The 404 Kitchen, a James Beard Award semifinalist.

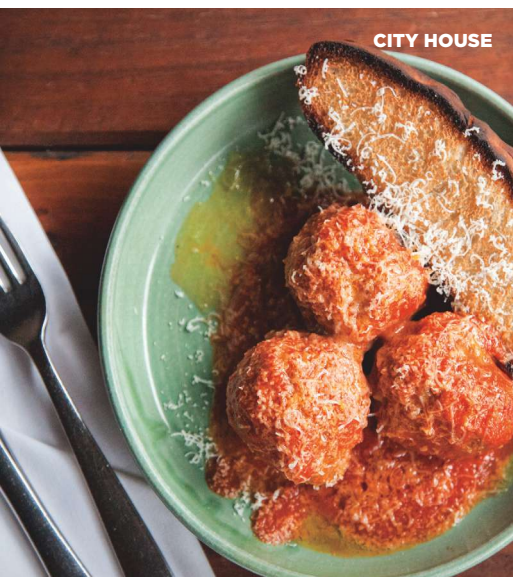


WHERE TO SIP

L.A. Jackson is the rooftop bar at the Thompson hotel. I love sitting out on the terrace with views of downtown. The mixologists are top-notch. One of my favorite drinks is The Crane, with dark rum, Campari, and fruit juices—very refreshing on a hot summer day. **Embers Ski Lodge** in the 12 South neighborhood is, if you can imagine, like the après-ski atmosphere of a ski resort in the heart of Nashville, which makes it very curious. They mix some of the best old-fashioned (my go-to cocktail), and they prepare all sorts of variations on classic drinks. If you like checking out up-and-coming neighborhoods, head to the hip **Bastion**

THE 404 HOTEL





in Wedgewood-Houston. They love a twist on traditional drinks, as well, and give them wacky names but always tell you exactly what's in them so there are no surprises. Call me old-fashioned, but that's my favorite drink there as well.

The Patterson House is a speakeasy with super-talented bartenders. The drink I love, the Elly May, is not on the menu, and I'm not even sure what's in it, but who cares? It's fantastic! The **Oak Bar** in the Hermitage Hotel is an old-school hotel bar with a good wine list. We come here before or after the ballet or other shows at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center. I think they serve the best fried green tomatoes in Nashville, hands down. The Oak Bar is also known for its Art Deco men's room—all true Nashvillians, both men and women (who are welcome), have been in. It's lime green and black, and the original shoeshine station is still there.



WHERE TO SHOP

I go to **Epergne** for the best coffee-table books and hostess gifts. It's well curated with a depth of merchandise. I also buy the pottery of Nicholas Newcomb at the shop. For the best china selections, including brands you might not expect to see in Nashville, go to **Corzine & Co.** I get my Richard Ginori china here, and they also have Hermès and an extensive selection of Herend, William Yeoward, and Simon Pearce. If you want to get a taste of France, you must visit the **Little Gourmand**, especially if you have a sweet tooth—I'm mad for the macarons. The owner, Guenievre Milliner, is French and delightful. If your taste leans more contemporary, then you will want to go to **Wilder**. It's the place for midcentury design and accessories. On the flip side is **White's Mercantile** in the 12 South neighborhood. It's owned by singer/songwriter Holly Williams (Hank Williams Jr.'s daughter) and her husband, Chris Coleman. White's has more rustic offerings, and I go there to buy Chris's art. They also host **Amelia's Flower Truck** once a week in the parking lot. Speaking of flowers, while she doesn't



CITY HOUSE PHOTO BY ANDREA BEHREND





**PARTHENON IN
CENTENNIAL PARK**



BASTION



MARSH HOUSE



WILDER

have a shop, I use the super-talented **Jane Sloan** for my arrangements at home and as gifts. If you are staying at a friend's house while in Nashville, you must have Jane make an arrangement. She will deliver, and your friend will be thrilled. I shop for antiques at **Marymont Plantation**; I think it's the finest antiques store in Nashville, with everything from rococo-style furniture to English sideboards. And for stationery, invitations, and the like, I head to **The Paper Place**—the owner, Sue Valenti, is the best.



WHERE TO SAVOR

Where to start? Well, **City House** is my favorite. When I'm in town, you're likely to find me there twice a week. I love the pizza and the pasta, and I've never had a disappointing dish there. **TKO** in East Nashville is Southern Chinese, which makes for interesting fare. They have fried chicken that is indescribably delicious, and you must have an egg roll if you go there or get takeout. The hippest interiors and the freshest ingredients are at **Little Octopus**, which serves a mix of global flavors in small-plate style. And here I go again, but the pan-roasted chicken is the best chicken in Nashville. **Marsh House** springs from the brilliance of chef John Besh. It leans toward more Cajun flavors, and the presentation is beautiful. At **Salt & Vine**, co-owner Hannah Schneider, co-owner and sommelier Mattie Jackson, and chef Molly Martin create some of the most inventive, one-of-a-kind food and drinks in town. And, while I've had many great dishes there, I do love the snacks, such as street corn and radish toasts. When I am craving oysters and seafood, I head to the raw bar at **Henrietta Red** in Germantown, where they always have a great selection, including Kumamotos from Washington State—one of my favorite oysters.



WHERE TO LISTEN

You can't go to Nashville and not go to the world-renowned **Bluebird Cafe**, located in a nondescript shopping strip. You will hear songwriters sing



covers of their greatest hits or the actual artists singing them—you never know, which I think is part of the fun. **Robert's Western World** is the ultimate honky-tonk—this is where most locals go on Broadway to hear music. All kinds of acts play here, and there is always dancing on the bottom level. They make a mean fried bologna sandwich! **Ryman Auditorium** has some of the finest acoustics around, and there is so much history there—always amazing acts.



WHAT TO SEE

Cheekwood Estate & Gardens is beautiful in every season. I love that it

has top-notch art exhibitions like Chihuly and William Edmondson, and it's a great place to stroll and refresh yourself. At the **Country Music Hall of Fame**, you will really connect with the history of the artists that you can't get anywhere else, and, of course, I love seeing the costumes. The **Johnny Cash Museum** because, well, he's the best. It's so well curated, and the exhibits are engaging. Nashville is fortunate to have a green space in the heart of the city for locals and visitors that includes a replica of the **Parthenon** in Centennial Park. It's pretty spectacular, not to mention the statue of Athena in the interior. **Ryman Auditorium** again, not just for the performances, but also for the tour. After all, it's the mother church of country music. 🎸

For a taste of Savage's style, visit taigan.com/shops/savageinteriordesign.com.

