

Seafood restaurant helps Durham fight for tasty title

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According to a magazine contest taking place right now, Durham is considered one of the best places to dine in the South.

Southern Living magazine is hosting “The Tastiest Town Awards” sweepstakes to name the town with most delicious restaurants. Durham is currently in second place, nipping the heels of Memphis, Tenn. Anyone can vote online once a day until the contest ends Feb. 28.

Contenders trailing Durham include New Orleans, Asheville, Charleston, S.C.; Louisville, Ky.; Austin, Texas; Atlanta, and Miami, respectively.

GG Fish & Chicken, located on Fayetteville Street in Durham, is one restaurant that has consumers raving and voting for the Bull City.

Famous for its seafood and Philly cheesesteaks, GG Fish & Chicken has been feeding Durham residents and visitors to the Triangle at its current location since June 2010.

GG Fish & Chicken was formerly named Ritzzy Fish & Chicken and was located in the Lakewood Shopping Center in Durham. Owner Haitham Afifi said he decided to relocate to the Phoenix Crossing Shopping Center due to poor working conditions from a neglectful landlord at the other location.

Afifi, who hails from Egypt and has a degree in accounting, said he has enjoyed running the business in safer conditions and in the more prosperous location near North Carolina Central University and other businesses.

“It’s easier when you do something you like,” Afifi said. “The business is like your son, watching it grow in front of you.”

Afifi’s business partner Ali Fakhreddrne, who has worked at GG Fish & Chicken for three years, noted that after church services on Sundays are an extremely busy time for the restaurant. GG’s caters to Mount Vernon Baptist Church, St Titus Episcopal Church and Lincoln Memorial Baptist Church, along with several other churches in the area.



Isaac Pettiford eats at GG’s while he waits for an appointment at a barber-shop nearby next door to the restaurant. (Staff photo by Marissa Peterson)

Vote for Durham

To vote for the Bull City in Southern Living’s “The Tastiest Town Awards,” visit <http://www.southernliving.com/travel/souths-tastiest-towns-00417000076768/>.

The staff stays busy during lunch and dinner hours daily and has even changed the work schedule to cater to people wanting their food earlier than they serve.

“I used to come in at 10:30 to open the store, and there would be a line of people [outside]... so I started coming at 9:30 to prepare,” Fakhreddrne said.

It’s the perfect combination of taste, price and portions at GG Fish & Chicken that brought 24-year-old Issac Pettiford back for a second visit.

“I love seafood, and they have great fish,” Pettiford said while eating a tray of whiting, hushpuppies and fries, a portion he was surprised to find was only “medium.”

The aroma of fried fish can be smelled

outside, luring customers inside where the options on GG Fish & Chicken’s menu are numerous. Customers can choose between catfish, flounder, whiting, trout, clams, oysters, scallops, chicken wings and several other choices.

Speedy service also makes customers at GG Fish & Chicken return for quick pit stops.

“We are famous because we make the food in just five to 10 minutes max,” Afifi said, a time-limit that holds true for take-out and for customers dining in.

The restaurant has planted its roots in the Northeast Central Durham community, helping schools, churches, civic organizations and other groups meet their fundraising goals.

By donating and discounting their food, Afifi and his staff continue to give back to the community they enjoy serving and seeing every day.

GG Fish & Chicken has Durham licking its fingers and coming back for more, helping elevate the Bull City to the position as one of the most scrumptious towns in the South.

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— Haitham Afifi