

DISPATCH

The Heat Is On

Walk onto the enclosed overlook above hundreds of fermenting vats, and your eyes start to water. The pungent smell of chili peppers stewing in a fiery bath of vinegar and spices rises from the warehouse floor like a capsicum cloud.

Welcome to the new **Tabasco**

Experience, an enhanced, interactive tour of the McIlhenny Company's iconic production facility on Avery Island, Louisiana. This is the place where Tabasco hot sauce has been made the same way by the same family since 1868. Aged for up to three years in American whiskey barrels, the sauce is beloved in some 160 countries for its flavor-forward, piquant taste—a pick-me-up for everything from barbecue to crawfish etouffee.



Although tradition rules the Tabasco-making process, there are new doings on this natural salt dome island. Table service recently began at **1868!**, a casual, 180-seat restaurant serving Tabasco-fueled Cajun dishes such as jambalaya made with Louisiana rice, chicken, and andouille sausage, and a flavorful gumbo that gets its smoldering hue from a perfectly made roux.

By the end of 2015—for the first time in twenty-six years—visitors will be able to see the processing plant and pepper plant seedlings destined for larger farms in Central and South America. Look also for a brand-new museum and visitors center fashioned from local cypress, and pick up a little heat to take back home at the Tabasco-themed General Store. —**BETH D'ADDONO**

BITE

HALL PASS

These days, we can't seem to get our fill of food halls. These lively, modern-day food courts have been popping up around the South, headlined by chef-driven food stalls and restaurants. Opening this fall, the **Central Food Hall at Ponce City Market** in Atlanta boasts spots from four James Beard Award-winning chefs, including Linton Hopkins and Hugh Acheson. Over in Charleston, the group behind the Macintosh and Indaco just opened **Mercantile**, a food emporium in the Cigar Factory, featuring a crudo bar, pasta bar, coffee bar, charcuterie room, and sandwich spot, plus a bar called Mash. And in New Orleans, the **St. Roch Market** (pictured)—left in disrepair after Hurricane Katrina—reopened in April with a full-service bar and twelve vendor stalls, including Koreole, a Korean-Creole fusion spot by neighborhood resident Kayti Williams.

—**CARLY COOPER**



BY THE NUMBERS

A DOLLY GOOD TIME!

It's a big year for Dolly Parton. Her Pigeon Forge theme park, Dollywood, celebrates its thirtieth anniversary, and her Imagination Library program marks its twentieth. To top it off, Dollywood is throwing open the doors to a brand-new luxury resort called DreamMore. Here, a few numbers that celebrate Tennessee's most famous lady and her ever-growing empire.



2.5 million

Number of annual visitors to Dollywood



126,548

Loaves of fresh-baked cinnamon bread sold in one year at Dollywood's grist mill bakery.

300

Number of chestnut trees planted on Dollywood property through a partnership with the American Chestnut Foundation.



24

Number of non-releasable bald eagles that live in Dollywood's Eagle Mountain Sanctuary, the world's largest aviary dedicated to the rehabilitation of the American bald eagle.



3,127

Length in feet of Dollywood's Wild Eagle roller coaster, named the "best thrill ride in America" by the Weather Channel.



\$1.69

The cost of Dolly's favorite meal, the slaw dog at Frank Allen's Market & Grill in her hometown of Sevierville.



70 million

Number of books distributed to children in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia through Dolly's Imagination Library program since its inception in 1995.



5

Varieties of pancake batter—including banana pudding and birthday cake—used at DreamMore Resort's restaurant, Song & Hearth.

