Philly rocks!

Catch a concert by native sons
THE BACON BROTHERS

Your guide to the city's coolest neighborhoods
Discover Philly's Neighborhoods

By Tom Stanley

Philadelphia boasts a diverse, colorful patchwork of neighborhoods, each offering a distinct shopping, dining and nightlife scene. And thanks to Philly's easy-to-navigate grid street design, you won't have any trouble finding your way around. Use the map on pages 54-55 while you explore these essential Philly districts.

CENTER CITY/AVENUE OF THE ARTS

At the heart of Philadelphia is City Hall (Broad and Market sts., 215-686-2840), topped by a statue of city founder William Penn. From here, head south on Broad Street to Avenue of the Arts, where you'll find premier performance venues like the Kimmel Center (Broad and Spruce sts., 215-893-1990). Just north of City Hall, grab a bite at historic Reading Terminal Market (12th and Arch sts., 215-223-2377). Nearby, Friendship Gate (10th and Arch) marks the entrance to Chinatown. In the blocks surrounding 19th and Sansom streets, Midtown Village is a thriving enclave of boutiques and restaurants; the district is also home to a concentration of gay-friendly businesses like Philadelphia Home Art Garden (1225 Walnut St, 215-627-0460).

OLD CITY

A short trip from Old City for colonial attractions and some of Philly's hottest shopping, dining and nightlife. Start at Independence Visitor Center (Sixth and Market sts.) for free tickets to Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell across the street. Meander along Elfreth's Alley (off Second St., between Arch and Race sts.), the nation's oldest continuously inhabited residential street, for a glimpse of Philly's past. Then stroll the blocks from Front to Sixth streets, Walnut to Vine streets, to stumble upon fabulous restaurants like Continental, Second and Market sts., 215-923-6099; boutiques such as Tony, 47 N. Third St., 215-992-8669; galleries like The Clay Studio, 191 N. Second St., 215-925-3400; and nightspots like Checkers, 224 Market St., 215-923-8060. Hint: top on the Big Box at Philadelphia Trolley Works at the corner of Fifth and Market streets for a terrific tour of the city's neighborhoods (215-369-TOUR, www.phillytours.com).

RITTENHOUSE ROW

Rittenhouse Row—ranging from Broad to 22nd streets and Market to Pine streets—is Philly's most swanky address. Walnut Street is lined with chic retailers like Tiffany & Co. (1414 Walnut St., 215-733-1818), Jacques Ferber (1228 Walnut St., 215-233-4773) and Jean Shap (316 Walnut St., 215-735-2656). For a world-class real try, visit the Luxury Row (210 W. Rittenhouse Sq., 215-397-5500) for upscale spots like The Cheesecake Factory (210 W. Rittenhouse Sq., 215-730-2333) or grab a gourmet to go at Di Bruno Bros. (1360 Chestnut St., 215-627-8000) and have a picnick, among the locals in Rittenhouse Square Park (18th and Walnut sts.).

SOUTH STREET

South Street is famous for its colorful shops and eclectic eateries. Spend an afternoon browsing at funky thrift stores like The Catniss Everdeen (529 S. Fourth St., 215-413-2192) or finding fun poster art at Beyond the Wall (415 South St, 215-238-1723). Hungry? Stop for a classic Philly cheesesteak at Jim's Steaks (Fourth and South sts., 215-928-9320) or an enormous slice at Lorenzo and Sons Pizza (335 South St., 215-527-8710) or creative Mexican cuisine at the acclaimed Xochitl (408 S. Second St., 215-238-7280). After dark, catch a concert at the Fillmore at the TLA (340 South St., 215-383-2026) or get your groove on at Fluid Nightclub (613 S. Fourth St., 215-629-3868).

ITALIAN MARKET/SOUTH PHILLY

Philadelphia's iconic Italian Market, on Ninth Street from Wharton to South Street, features a spectacular array of food vendors and specialty stores like Fante's Kitchen Ware Shops (1000 S. Ninth St., 215-922-5557). gates heading south to find the longstanding chee- sted rivalry between Pat's King of Steaks (1237 Passyunk Ave., 215-468-1540) and Geno's Steaks (1219 S. Ninth St., 215-369-0659). Hop on the Broad Street line to get to South Philly's stadium complex. The N.L. East Champions Philadelphia Phillies play this month at Citizens Bank Park (215-463-1000).

UNIVERSITY CITY

On Philly's west side, University City has a vibrant spirit thanks to the five colleges here. To reach the campus, go to the University Square retail district, browse at Black Cat Gift Shop (3428 Sansom St., 215-381-6666). Named one of America's best new restaurants by Esquire, Rac (2929 Arch St., 215-922-3839) is located inside the Cira Center skyscraper. Check out the Institute of Contemporary Art (26th and Sansom Sts., 215-389-7939) for innovative exhibits and World Cafe Live (3201 Walnut St, 215-222-1400) for live music and fun fare. The Annenberg Center hosts Philly's own Bacon Brothers on April 4 (see sidebar below).

PARKWAY DISTRICT/FAIRMOUNT

The majestic Benjamin Franklin Parkway is lined with attractions like the Franklin Institute (222 N. 20th St., 215-448-1200) and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (26th and Benjamin Franklin Parkway, 215-763-8800). Next to the art museum, dine at The Water Works Restaurant and Lounge (640 Water Works Dr., 215-285-2100). In the Fairmount district a few blocks north, explore the East State Penitentiary (1244 Fairmount Ave., 215-236-3000).

NORTHERN LIBERTIES

This hip neighborhood spans Girard Avenue to Callowhill Street, from Freire to Sixth streets. Find cool apparel at Arcadia Boutique (1019 N. Second St., 215-627-8009) and art work at Silico Galleries (908 N. Third St., 215-627-3655). After dark, catch live jazz at Ort's Jazzhouse (847 N. Third St., 215-922-1035) or sip a brew at local dive Standard Tap (901 N. Second St., 215-286-0380 or get the good times roll at North Bowl (909 N. Second St., 215-238-BOWL). Clockwise from left: Continental is among the hip restaurants in Old City; students stroll in University City; colorful South Street.

WHERE: Your father, Edmund N. Bacon, was a renowned Philadelphia city planner who was featured on the cover of TIME magazine. How did your father's career develop? Was he a political figure? Where did you grow up?

MB: Our environment was one that valued creativity above everything else. My father directed me to all the first chairs of the Philadelphia Phillies. Where are there any places you make a point to visit here?

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WHERE: How would you describe the Bacon Brothers' sound?

KB: The Bacon Brothers are a barcoded, and we are all about our simplicity and directness. We sing about the things that are important to us, and we try to make sure that our music is real and honest.

WHERE: Can you give us some details about your April 4 show?

MB: Our sister (Kira) works for Banknote, and this will be our third time performing with them. It's a wonderful experience. We are doing the show at the Annenberg Center, which is a beautiful room. We'll have a simple stage and it's going to be fun because we're going to have fun with the guests, and you'll never know what's going to happen. Tickets for the 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. shows on April 4 start at $55 per ticket on the day of the show. For more information, call (215) 922-1035 or order online at www.concerts.com. Click here to learn more.