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## Bling, Brawn and Beauty

8th annual readers' choice poll lauds perennial favorites, boosts new locales

By the Staff of AmericanStyle Magazine

No doubt about it: the Big Apple is hard to beat.

For the fifth time in the eight years of AmericanStyle magazine's Top 25 Arts Destinations readers poll, New York has rocketed to the top of the list. And why not? It's classy, it's cultured, it's street-smart, and it's got enough creative bling to entice traveling arts enthusiasts into its five boroughs over and over and over again.

Big, brawny Chicago maintains its No. 2 slot again this year, boosted in part by the excitement the Windy City has generated with the opening of Millennium Park, a \$475 million extravaganza next to The Art Institute of Chicago and a hop, skip and street crossing away from the lakefront.

San Francisco pushes up into third place, a quantum leap forward from its No. 7 slot last year. With its extraordinary mix of galleries and museums, historic Victorians and pedestrian-friendly walking streets, it's not surprising the City by the Bay has placed in the Top 10 every year since the competition's inception.

For the first time this year—to allow for a more equal playing field and give small cities a chance to compete among themselves—AmericanStyle structured its Top 25 Arts Destinations ballots into three distinct categories based on population: Big Cities (500,000 and over); Mid-Sized Cities (100,000 to 499,999); and Small Cities and Towns

(under 100,000). The ballots were made available for electronic voting on the magazine's website, americanstyle.com, as well as in printed form in the February 2005 issue of AmericanStyle magazine.

As a result, big cities with major arts institutions and high concentrations of artists were measured against each other, while smaller cities and towns broke free to show their arts stuff against a list of same-sized rivals.

New Orleans was voted No. 1 by AmericanStyle readers in this year's Mid-Sized Cities Category, up from No. 17 last year. The No. 2 slot goes to Albuquerque (No. 11 last year), and Scottsdale, Ariz., (which didn't place at all in 2004) muscled its way into the Top 25 Mid-Sized Arts Cities list at No. 3.

Top winners in the Small Cities and Towns category include New Hope/Lahaska, Pa., at No. 1; Berkeley Springs, W.Va., at No. 2; and Saugatuck, Mich., at No. 3.

### **Category 1: Big Cities**

*(Populations of 500,000 and over)*

1. [New York, N.Y.](#)
2. [Chicago, Ill.](#)
3. [San Francisco, Calif.](#)
4. [Washington, D.C.](#)
5. [Los Angeles, Calif.](#)
6. [Seattle, Wash.](#)
7. [Boston, Mass.](#)
8. [Austin, Texas](#)
9. [Philadelphia, Pa.](#)
10. [San Diego, Calif.](#)
11. [Baltimore, Md.](#)
12. [Charlotte, N.C.](#)
13. [Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas](#)
14. [Denver, Colo.](#)
15. [Portland, Ore.](#)
16. [Phoenix, Ariz.](#)
17. [Houston, Texas](#)
18. [San Antonio, Texas](#)
19. [Nashville, Tenn.](#)
20. [Columbus, Ohio](#)
21. [Milwaukee, Wis.](#)
22. [Memphis, Tenn.](#)
23. [Jacksonville, Fla.](#)
24. [Indianapolis, Ind.](#)
25. [Detroit, Mich.](#)

### **Category 2: Mid-Sized Cities**

*(Populations of 100,000 to 499,000)*

1. [New Orleans, La.](#)
2. [Albuquerque, N.M.](#)
3. [Scottsdale, Ariz.](#)
4. [Las Vegas, Nev.](#)
5. [Honolulu, Hawaii](#)
6. [Atlanta, Ga.](#)
7. [Savannah, Ga.](#)
8. [Ann Arbor, Mich.](#)
9. [Miami, Fla.](#)
10. [Pittsburgh, Pa.](#)
11. [Tucson, Ariz.](#)
12. [Colorado Springs, Colo.](#)

13. [Cleveland, Ohio](#)
14. [Minneapolis, Minn.](#)
15. [Kansas City, Mo.](#)
16. [St. Louis, Mo.](#)
17. [St. Petersburg, Fla.](#)
18. [Providence, R.I.](#)
19. [Alexandria, Va.](#)
20. [Tampa, Fla.](#)
21. [Cincinnati, Ohio](#)
22. [Tacoma, Wash.](#)
23. [Buffalo, N.Y.](#)
24. [Athens, Ga.](#)
25. [Salem, Ore.](#)

### Category 3: Small Cities and Towns

*(Populations under 100,000)*

1. [New Hope/Lahaska, Pa.](#)
2. [Berkeley Springs, W.Va.](#)
3. [Saugatuck, Mich.](#)
4. [Tubac, Ariz.](#)
5. [Eureka Springs, Ark.](#)
6. [Taos, N.M.](#)
7. [Benicia, Calif.](#)
8. [Asheville, N.C.](#)
9. [Northampton, Mass.](#)
10. [Sarasota, Fla.](#)
11. [Aspen, Colo.](#)
12. [Burlington, Vt.](#)
13. [Carmel, Calif.](#)
14. [Portsmouth, N.H.](#)
15. [Charleston, S.C.](#)
16. [Santa Fe, N.M.](#)
17. [Naples, Fla.](#)
18. [Boulder, Colo.](#)
19. [Laguna Beach, Calif.](#)
20. [Key West, Fla.](#)
21. [Cumberland, Md.](#)
22. [Corning, N.Y.](#)
23. [Chapel Hill, N.C.](#)
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