



Bonnie Raitt Plays the Savannah Music Festival! Win Tickets Inside (p.28)

# SAVANNAH

M A G A Z I N E

MARCH/APRIL 2009  
VOL. 20 NO. 2 \$4.95

**Spring  
Forward  
with Us!**

**THE INSIDER'S  
GUIDE to:**  
St. Patrick's Day,  
Music Festival,  
Garden Tours  
& More!

**19 Pages of  
Inspired  
Fashion**  
(And Smart Local  
Shopping)

**34 Class  
Acts**  
in the Arts

**Top Ethnic  
Eateries:**  
Our Critic's Picks



## PLAYING TO WIN

Times may be tough, but these local businesses are rising to the challenge, inspired by Savannah's unique culture of creativity.

BY KENDA WILLIAMS

WITH THE ECONOMIC downturn front and center, Americans have responded by reducing spending. Nevertheless, a few bright lights shine through the doom and gloom. Particularly in Savannah, certain small businesses have poised themselves to weather the economic downturn and plan to grow despite it.

"We certainly, without question, have a diversified economy," said Brynn Grant, executive director of the Creative Coast Alliance. "We can look to that and see how it can buffer any negative effects of the economy."

"Many small business owners are being creative in their efforts to stave off negative impacts of the economy," added Lynn Vos, director of the University of Georgia's Small Business Development Center for the Savannah area.

Vos explained that some business owners have looked into new markets to sell their products or services, while others have expanded or modified their product or service lines to better compete. Owners are also finding new ways to use the Internet to reach their customers and sell more products, she said.

Though small in employee numbers, several local businesses have big plans and passion for the future of their products and services. Through a creative approach to operations, small-business owners have transformed their economic-downturn lemons into some sweet, Southern-style lemonade.

## Lott + Barber: Technology that Conserves

Lott + Barber was established in 1990 with a diverse platform of architecture, community planning and design, integrated project delivery, visioning technology and multi-media communications.

Principal Forrest Lott said sustainable design and technological advancements have been a big part of his small business' efforts and have remained beneficial, even in tough economic times.

"We think it's important to design in a sustainable way, and technology is (a key) part of what we do," Lott said.

Lott and his colleagues build projects as three-dimensional files using online tools. This enables them to communicate ideas more clearly and quickly, without the hassle or environmental impacts of travel, shipping and printing.

"Better decisions are made earlier in the process, and changes can be made quicker. We, as designers, also have the time to consider projects more fully," he said. "In my view, it allows us to work smart and efficiently."

Lott said the company also has taken advantage of using Podcasts and Webinars to efficiently deliver information on the Internet.

"Our clients are looking to succeed and reduce costs," Lott said. We're helping them do that."