

little london

JUNE/JULY 2018 • £3.99

fact or fad
WHAT KIDS SHOULD BE EATING

HOLIDAY HOT-LIST
INSPIRING GETAWAYS CLOSE TO HOME

Scarlett Johansson

"Motherhood has given me perspective I never knew I had"

win!
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CAROLE MIDDLETON

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sports stars

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- KEEP KIDS ACTIVE IN THE CAPITAL

DINNER IS SERVED

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FREE KIDS' SUNGLASSES

from monkey monkey • for every reader



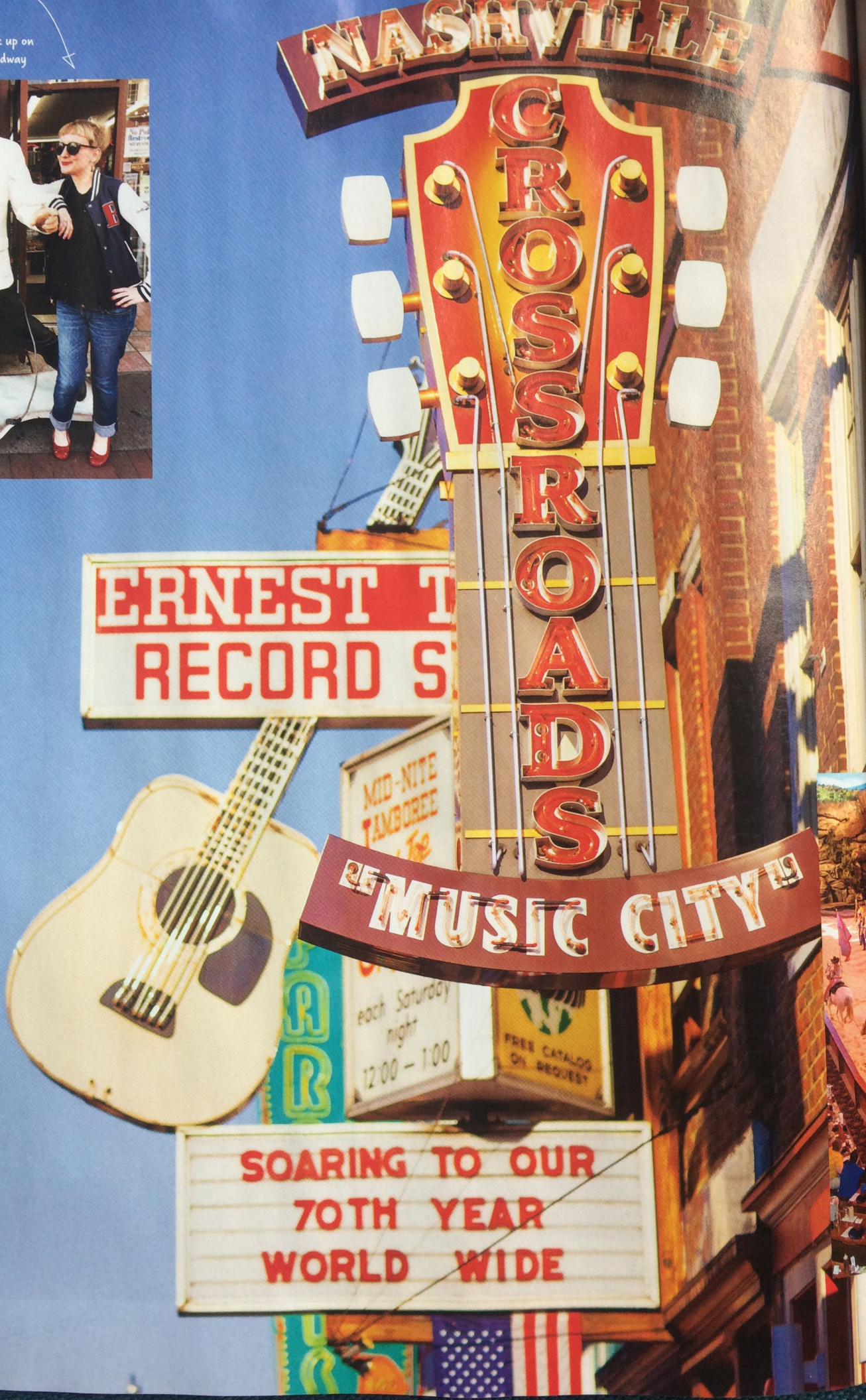
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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS

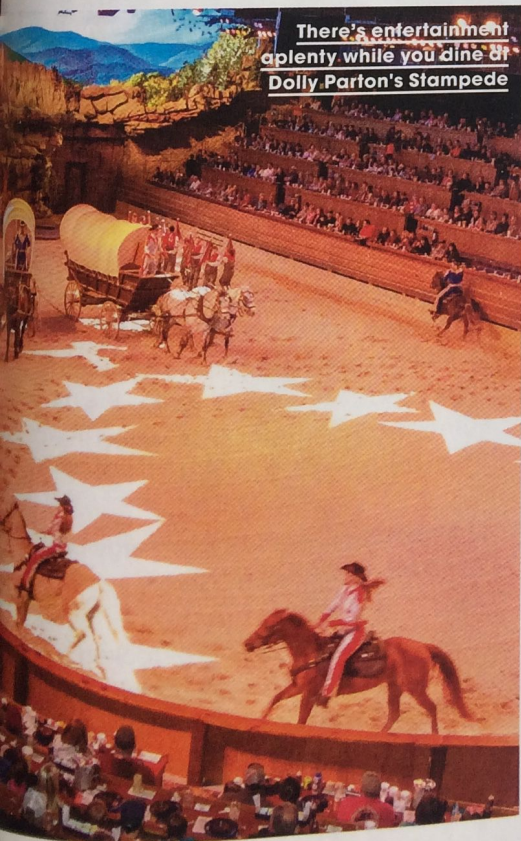
Getting all shook up on
Nashville's Broadway





THE DELIGHTS *of the* DEEP SOUTH

A ROAD TRIP THROUGH SOUTHERN AMERICA WITH A FIVE YEAR OLD, WHILE PREGNANT, MIGHT SOUND LIKE A NIGHTMARE TO SOME. BUT FOR **ZOEY GOTO**, IT PROVED TO BE THE BEST HOLIDAY YET



Our epic Tennessee adventure started as soon as we touched down in Nashville, following a 14-hour trip. With no direct flights from London and a change of planes at Dallas, it was a long journey, but we hit the road running. In our oversized American hire car we headed just over three hours east to Pigeon Forge, an area in the beautiful Smoky Mountains made famous by Dolly Parton's theme park, Dollywood. While I wouldn't class myself as a theme-park fanatic, Dollywood has something to tick most people's boxes – from daredevil rollercoasters to displays of the local Appalachian crafts.

That evening we saddled up and went to Dolly Parton's Stampede, where dinner is washed down with drinks served in kitsch plastic cowboy boots, enjoyed while you sit back to watch an awe-inspiring horse show. We hit the hay that night at The Inn at Christmas Place, a brilliantly bonkers hotel that celebrates the festive season all year round. Our daughter Summer,

unquestioningly accepted that Father Christmas was there to greet her at breakfast, despite the glorious sunshine outside!

On the road again, we headed back to Nashville to explore its musical heritage. While Pigeon Forge is tranquil and scenic, Nashville is bursting with energy. Our first stop was the Country Music Hall of Fame, where interactive screens and high-tech displays engage younger visitors. Summer even got to channel her inner Taylor Swift by recording a track on the singer's tour bus and designing her own album cover. Exhausted from our day of music making, we ambled through the bustling Downtown area. Live music drifted out of the nearby honky-tonk bars, as we found our way to our warehouse apartment at Music City Loft, which was decorated in homage to Elvis Presley.

As Nashville is blessed with a warm climate, there are plenty of outdoor activities to explore, from old plantations (Nashville's most famous is The Hermitage) to the Zoo at Grassmere, which has a great outdoor



The interactive iPad tour around Elvis Presley's Graceland helps to engage younger visitors

jungle gym. To let off steam on a rainy day, head to the Adventure Science Center, which fuses soft play with educational exhibits.

Should you prefer classical music to country, the Schermerhorn Symphony Center is a beautiful venue to experience family-friendly concerts. We were lucky enough to get last-minute tickets for a classical adaptation of Summer's favourite book, Dr. Seuss' *Green Eggs and Ham*. That evening we received a warm welcome at the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel, a short drive from the centre of Nashville. Thankfully, the evening knock on the door wasn't to ask my daughter to keep the noise down, but a friendly face offering cookies, milk and a soft toy for her to play with.

No trip to Nashville would be complete without taking in a show at the Grand Ole Opry – the music concert that

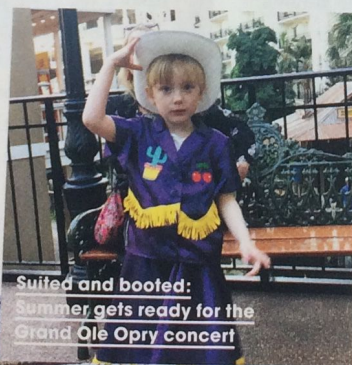
has put country music on the map since 1925. The Opry still attracts a plethora of big-name American musicians and each performer does a song or two – the perfect length to hold children's interest. We stayed at the Gaylord Opryland Resort next to the theatre, a fantastically tropical hotel set in nine acres of lush indoor gardens.

Spurred on by our time in music city, we embarked on our final leg, driving three hours west of Nashville to Memphis to visit Elvis Presley's former mansion, Graceland. There's plenty here to keep children occupied, from Elvis's jungle-themed den to Graceland's

retro diner. Memphis is also home to the best Southern American barbecue food, with slow-cooked pork being its specialty. That evening, we stayed in the Uptown Square apartment where Elvis and his parents had once lived. As my daughter strummed on a guitar, sat in Elvis's actual bedroom, I realised this

holiday had created moments that our family will treasure forever.

If your children can endure the long-haul flight, the Deep South repays you in abundance – with a rich musical heritage, great food and activities, and a healthy dose of good old-fashioned Southern hospitality, there's a lot to love. **L**



Suited and booted: Summer gets ready for the Grand Ole Opry concert

Nashville's Hermitage mansion is rich in history



WHERE TO STAY

PIGEON FORGE

The Inn at Christmas Place: Wish it could be Christmas every day? It is here! innatchristmasplace.com

NASHVILLE

Gaylord Opryland Resort: Set in an atrium with its own river that can be explored by boat. marriott.com

Homewood Suites by Hilton: A budget-friendly condo for families wanting their own kitchen and pool. homewoodsuites3.hilton.com

Loews Vanderbilt Hotel: One of those rare hotels that manages to be both chic and child-friendly in equal measure. loewshotels.com

Music City Loft: These New York-style apartments are decorated in the style of famous musicians, like Johnny Cash. musiccityloft.com

MEMPHIS

Uptown Square: Elvis's two-bed place has been restored to its former 1950s glory. uptownmemphis.org

WHAT TO PACK

- Travel light with the help of Baby's Away (babysaway.com), a rental company that provides everything from car seats and cribs to boxes of toys. It has 70 locations across the US – the Nashville branch delivered the items directly to our hotel.

- Insect repellent – Pigeon Forge can be a bit of a mosquito-fest.

- Road-trip activities. We stocked up on a batch of never-seen-before sticker and activity books, which were miraculously produced whenever a backseat meltdown was brewing!