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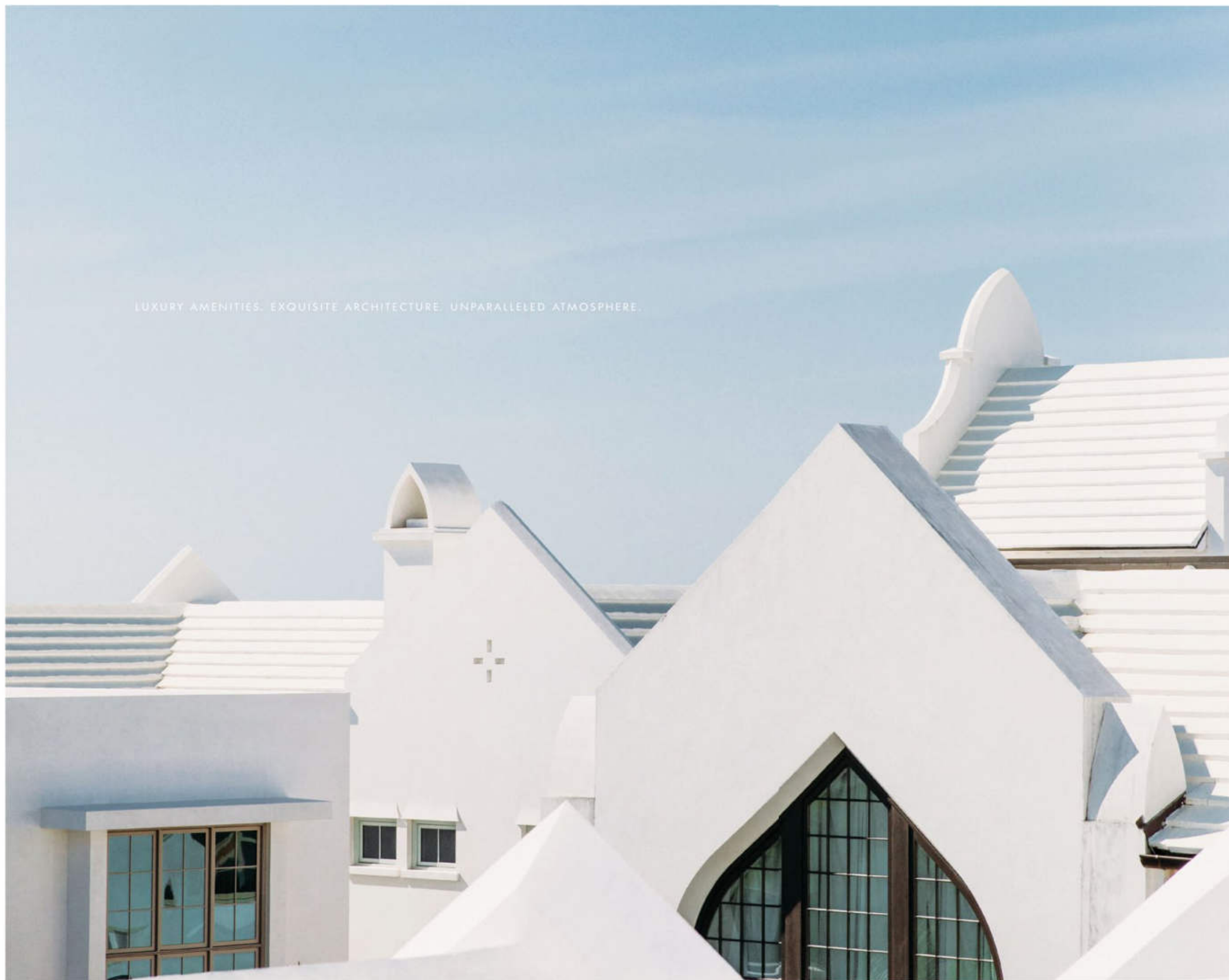
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With the first issue of *Beach Happy* in the rearview mirror and this second issue off the presses, to the stands, and in your hands, I find myself filled with both elation and a sense of wonderment. On the one hand, I am immensely proud of the product our team has created and put before you, our valued readers. While on the other I'm a little in awe of what our group accomplished by bringing a brand-new nationally sold newsstand magazine to fruition in the middle of such seemingly unprecedented times.

I'm sure our first issue wasn't perfect. What is? But I'm also absolutely sure that in my twenty plus years of working in publishing I have never seen a new magazine launched, on a national basis, during a worldwide pandemic. Neither has anyone else. Just as you've never had to do your job during such strange and uncharted times. But we did it. You did it. And we all made it work. That's the beauty of belief and perseverance. It's also what is finally allowing us to get back to a more normalized life, and to again get out and do the things we long for and experience the places we love... including the beach.

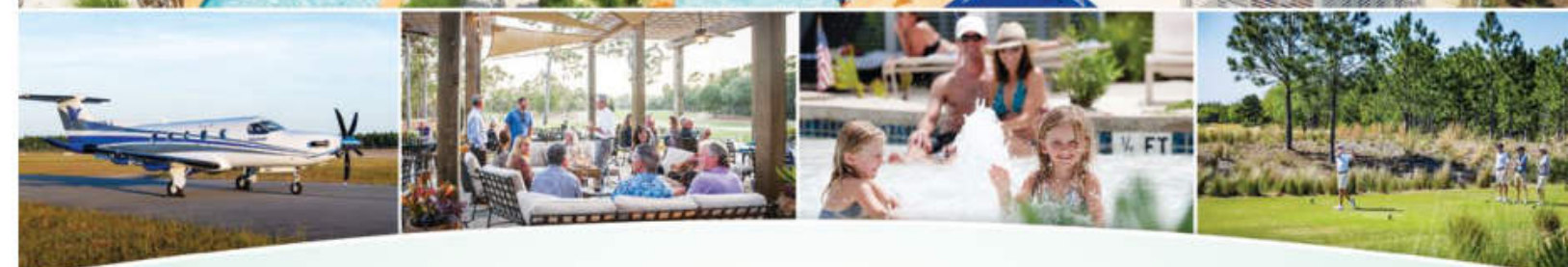


Will Estell
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All of us at The 30A Company and *Beach Happy* magazine are passionately committed to continuing to get better every single issue. Our job is to provide you with the very best beach themed travel and lifestyle publication available anywhere, and to fill it with articles you want to read, photos you want to see, and information you can use for your future coastal explorations. Be it a weekend jaunt to the Alabama Gulf Coast, a weeklong family vacation to the white sands of 30A, or that fulltime move to paradise you've been dreaming of for years, we simply want to be a part of bringing the beach to you, until you can get to the beach.

Whether you bought your copy at a bookstore in Nashville or Dallas, your favorite grocery newsstand in Atlanta or Birmingham, grabbed it while on vacation right here along Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast, or already became a subscriber and had it delivered to your door, one thing is for sure: you now have a way to satisfy that beach itch (or make it worse) until you can be back on the sand, soaking up the sun and living the dream.

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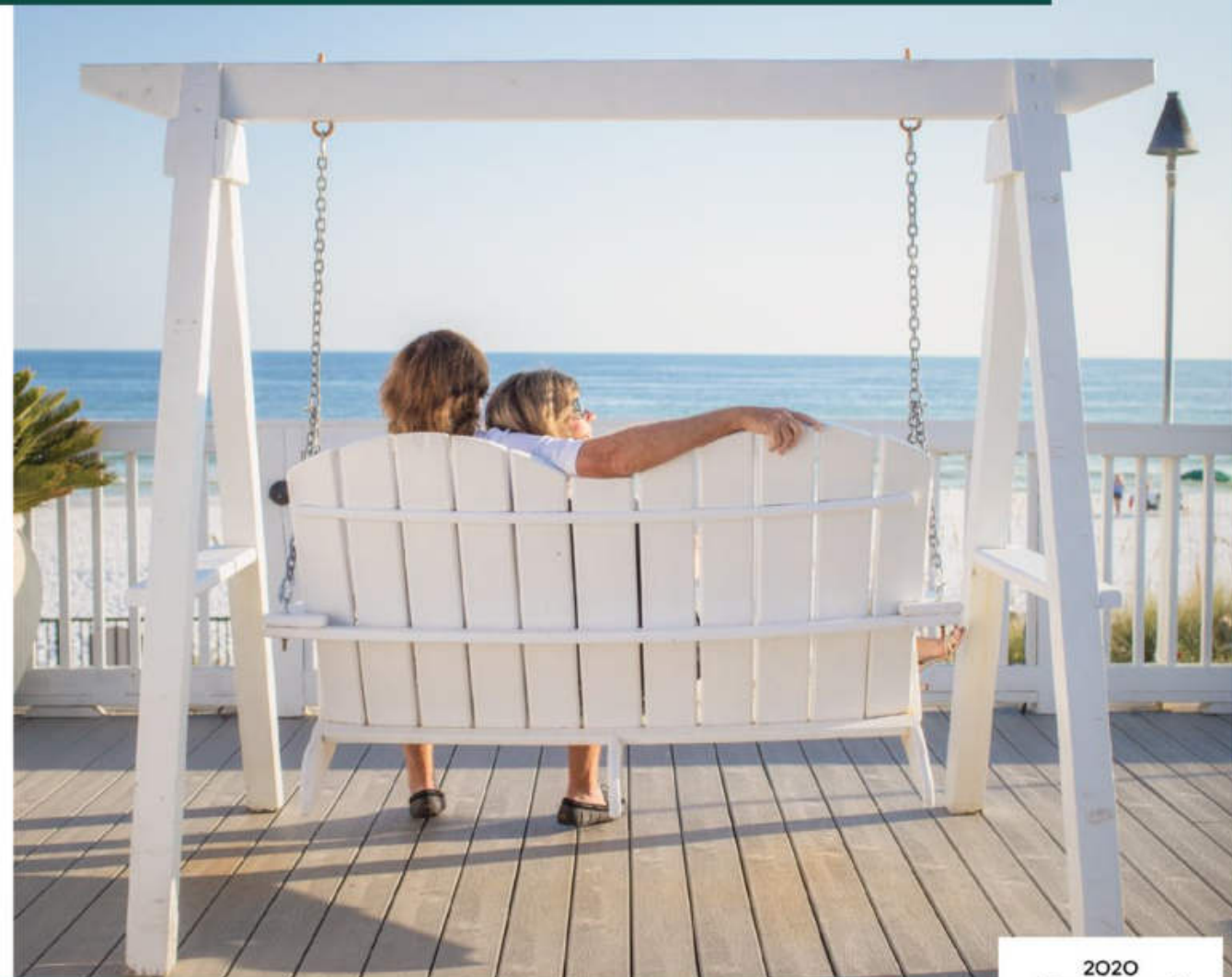
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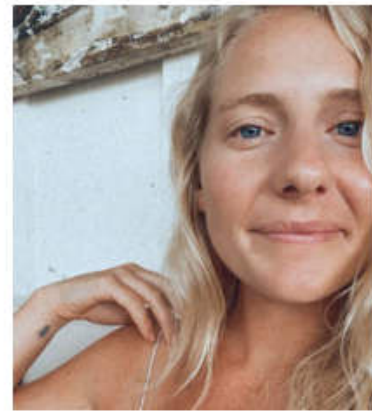


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SEAN MURPHY

has returned to the panhandle after 30 years shooting celebrities and advertising on the west coast. Together with his wife, he has built an inspiring studio in Fort Walton Beach, where they both continue to work on national campaigns. When Sean isn't shooting, he can be found fishing from his BOTE Board or spending time with family.

ON THE COVER

Cover photo by Lauren Athalia. Shot on Blue Mountain Beach, along Florida's Scenic Hwy 30A. Cover models: Ann Delaney and Casey Woods. Electric Bikes by YOLO Board + Bike.



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An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. The top half of the image shows clear, turquoise water with visible coral reefs and sandy patches. A road runs horizontally across the middle. Below the road, a white motorhome is parked on a paved area. The bottom half of the image shows a line of green trees and shrubs along the shore, with more turquoise water in the foreground.

The Long Long Honeymoon

A newlywed couple keeps their honeymoon rolling,
finding beaches, mountains and millions of
viewers along the way.

Writer: Susan Gunn

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you dream of true love? Perhaps it's wishing that the romance will never fade. Perhaps it's the idealistic fantasy that a happy and adventurous life together could bloom and last forever. Naysayers might quip, 'It just doesn't exist.' And it's true — there is no perfect relationship. Yet, one couple embarked on just such a life adventure that began the day they were married. You may already be familiar with Sean and Kristy Michael from their popular YouTube channel, Long Long Honeymoon. They are a couple truly living their best life: an Airstream dream from which they have yet to awake.

Sean was born in Mississippi, and grew up in Cullman, Alabama. A bright kid with a natural wit, Sean also possessed an irrepressible wanderlust and a streak for adventure. In college, searching for what would make him truly happy, Sean hit the highway. On the first cross-country roadtrip of his life, he ventured west with his dear friend and longtime buddy, Mike. The two twenty-year-olds criss-crossed their way across America to Yellowstone National Park, "winging it" as they traveled, forging unforgettable memories.

Back in Birmingham, Kristy DeArman, an intelligent and beautiful graduate of Samford University, unknowingly awaited her vagabonding destiny. After graduating with a BA in Journalism, Kristy became a fundraiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Foundation.



Sean and Kristy first met at a party hosted by mutual friends in 2000. But they didn't start dating until they happened to run into each other a year later. They've been together ever since.

The couple found an encompassing love that brought together family, friends... and the beach.





As talk of formal vows began, there were plans for an elaborate wedding. However, as sometimes happens with weddings, the ambitious planning became overwhelming and stressful. With the intent to return joy to their special occasion, they had a poignant discussion about what would make them truly happy. Their grandiose wedding plans were scrapped in favor of a small intimate ceremony on a beach.

Earlier that same year, the couple purchased their first RV, a traditional aluminum-skinned Airstream Classic travel trailer. Something Sean calls “retro and futuristic at the same time.” Having decided on a destination beach wedding, plans quickly fell into place. They envisioned taking their Airstream to an exotic, eclectic spot for the occasion. In 2007, they were married in a small ceremony on Smathers Beach in Key West. They spent their first night as a married couple inside the RV.

After their wedding day, the couple decided to take their RV on an extended honeymoon journey across America. Thus, “Long Long Honeymoon” began.

Prior to the journey, Sean had graduated from Birmingham-Southern College and attended law school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. However, the legal career path never felt quite right to Sean, and he left law school to co-found one of the first online social media companies, the legendary AOL-backed comedy site, Hecklers Online. He later studied filmmaking at New York Film Academy, directing short films in both Manhattan and in Los Angeles

at Universal Studios. Along the way, he learned one thing for certain — he did not want to be a part of the work-a-day world for his living. Kristy felt the same way. While on their honeymoon, Sean began to document their nomadic trip in the all-American classic RV.

Sean and Kristy were traveling the country in their Airstream, and soon life took a fluid turn onto an unexpected path. As fate would have it, in 2007 Sean started the first video channel dedicated to RV travel. He discovered a new online video sharing service called YouTube, and created a channel as a way to practice his filmmaking skills. He made videos to document adventures, and to share experiences with close friends and family. “This was before the smartphone,” he said. “I was working with an old tape-based camcorder, shooting and editing videos in our Airstream, and uploading them from random campgrounds.”

The initial target audience was simply friends and family, but Sean’s “Long Long Honeymoon” videos soon began to gain attention beyond his closest circles. In the early days, their growing online following consisted of other RV-ers and Airstream owners of the older generation. “We found each time we camped in an RV park, we were easily the youngest people there,” laughed Sean. During their travels, they continued to post and share the adventures and challenges of the Airstream life, which continued to draw more and more followers and fans. “I began to realize that successful RV travel requires a lot of knowledge and some experience,” Sean said. “When you get into the RV lifestyle, there’s a lot to

learn. So we began focusing on videos that would teach others about RV travel, and help them pursue their own adventures.”

When I asked how they decided on the name Long Long Honeymoon for their growing YouTube channel, Kristy laughed and said, “Some friends asked us at dinner one night if we had seen The Long Long Trailer, with Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. It’s the famous movie in which Lucy and Ricky get married and go on an RV trip for their honeymoon. They told us we reminded them of Lucy and Ricky.”

“Long Long Honeymoon is a fun, happy brand,” Sean added. “It can be funny, too. I like to always maintain a sense of humor about what we do.”

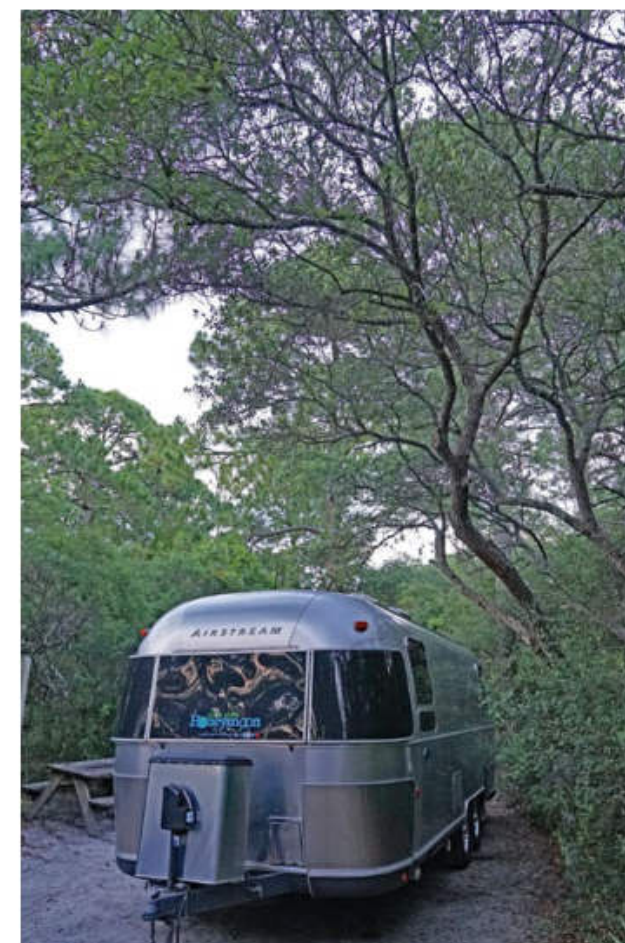
In the early days of Long Long Honeymoon, there was no clear way to make money by creating YouTube videos. “In those days,” Sean recalled, “there was no advertising on YouTube. Companies did not understand the value, but as we continued to grow our following, that began to change.”

Now making their living as popular YouTube influencers, Sean and Kristy said that one of their greatest joys is being able to travel just about anywhere they want, whenever they want.

“People think you have to keep going to the same places over and over,” said Kristy. “What we try to show them is, yes, you can visit Wyoming, but if you drive down the road a bit and just take one turn, you can also see Utah.”

“It’s important to visit places you’ve never been before,” said Sean.

“It’s important to visit places you’ve never been before.”



Their channel's video topics range from subjects like how to get along in an RV, to grill and gadget comparisons to traveling with your pets in confined quarters. Their beloved ten-year-old chihuahua, Baby Girl, often tags along on their many journeys, and "loves a good run in the sand."

The couple travel about six months out of the year, usually heading west in the summer and ending up in one of their many favorite beach camping locales (see sidebar). They share a passionate love of coastlines. I asked Kristy which was her favorite, the beach or the mountains. "Well, one's pizza and the other is ice cream," she laughed. "They're both great, but totally different." Together, they have traveled to 49 U.S. states (towing their rig to Hawaii has proven to be a challenge), and have seen most of Canada. Presently, they have over 41 million views on their YouTube channel, and have become well-known ambassadors to a rapidly growing RV community of all ages. Their 215,000+ subscribers rely on their highly informative how-to videos each week. Today, the RV category is more popular than ever, and Long Long Honeymoon, as the longest running RV related channel, has become one of the staples of the niche.

As living off the grid and minding environmental footprint become more relevant in our modern times, Sean and Kristy's approach to travel has also evolved. For example, they've gone even greener with an impressive install of six full 100-watt solar panels, four lithium ion 100-amp batteries, and a 3,000-watt inverter that Sean said, "will run just about anything."

It's not all fun and games though, and Sean wants people to know there is both hard work and adversity involved.

"When a problem arises or a mistake is made, you have to work together to overcome that problem," said Sean. "I sometimes joke that RV travel will either strengthen the relationship or end it completely. You're working as a team, and playing the blame game isn't productive. By sharing our mistakes, we help others avoid making the same ones. I'd like to think Long Long Honeymoon has helped other couples and families make some special memories together."

Don't give up if you haven't found that magic just yet. There is hope; hope for great love, for an adventurous life, for growth with change, and growth together, whether joyous or born from adversity. In an unpredictable world, Sean and Kristy Michael have found an organically grown niche and through their hard work and challenges, together they have built a lasting happiness that will get them far down the road, both in their travels across the miles and in their journey through married life.

"A honeymoon is the sweetest time in your life," said Sean. "Anyone would want to extend that feeling as long as they could." 📸

Susan Gunn is a retired paramedic, as well as a published writer and photographer. When she isn't working, she can be found in the water or exploring the beauty of Florida, often through a lens. Her website is SusanGunnPhotography.com, and she can also be found on Instagram @susangunnphotography.

To follow Sean and Kristy Michael on their Long Long Honeymoon, subscribe to their YouTube channel (youtube.com/LongLongHoneymoon) and on Instagram @longlonghoneymoon.

Sean and Kristy's Top 5 Favorite Beach Camping Locations

1. Grayton Beach State Park — *Scenic Highway 30A, Florida*
Lush native greenery makes for private campsites. The beach is soft white sand, and the campground is located near the famous resort towns of WaterColor and Seaside.

2. Iditarod Campground — *Seward, Alaska*
Since the historic Alaska Earthquake of 1964, the unstable waterfront cannot support permanent structures, which makes it perfect for RV camping. Scenic Alaska views and wildlife are abundant here. It's a great home base for trips into Kenai Fjords National Park, where you can see orcas and humpback whales frolic amidst the glaciers.

3. Bluewater Key — *Key West, Florida (pictured)*
A stunning private campground in the Florida Keys, it's located a short drive from Key West. Many of the sites have their own tiki huts and piers. The turquoise waters are usually warm and swimmable.

4. Mackinaw Mill Creek Camping — *Mackinaw City, Michigan*
This campground has over one mile of beachfront along the shores of Lake Huron. It looks out across the lake to the famous Mackinac Island, where cars are banned, and horses remain the preferred method of travel. The famous Mackinac Bridge is also visible from here.

5. Harborview Inn & RV Park — *Garibaldi Harbor, Oregon*
This campground offers scenic views of Tillamook Bay and Garibaldi harbor and is located a few miles from Rockaway Beach. Oregon beaches are quite different from those in Florida (more rocks, less sand), but they offer a unique beauty of their own. Keep your eyes peeled for the occasional seal or sea lion.

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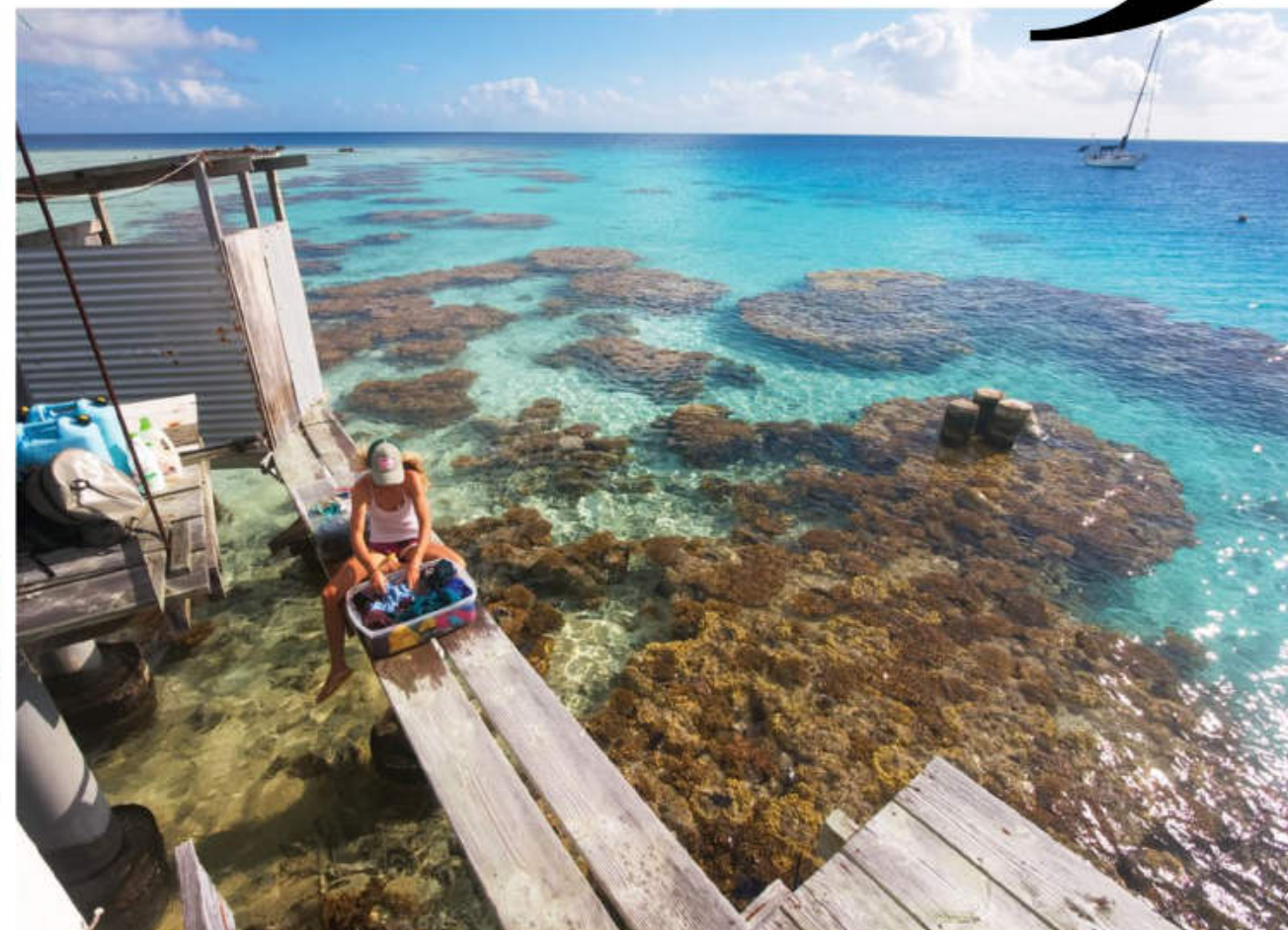
Questions With Captain Liz Clark

The sailboat captain, avid surfer, and new author talks about life at sea, her favorite beach activities, and life mantra.

It seems that Captain Liz Clark was always destined for a life at sea. She was seven years old when she learned to sail in San Diego, California, aboard a red sailing dinghy. At age ten, she completed a 5,000-mile, six-month cruise in Mexico with her family on their sailboat, *The Endless Summer*. This trip inspired Clark to become the captain of her own sailboat and to work to protect the natural world from various aspects of human destruction.

Fast forward to today, and Clark is living out her childhood dream. In 2006, she left California aboard her 40-foot sailboat, *Swell*, in search of waves to surf and a simple life close to nature. Since then, she's sailed more than 20,000 nautical miles and has written a book about the trip titled *Swell: A Sailing Surfer's Voyage of Awakening* (published by Patagonia in 2018). We managed to reach Captain Liz amidst her on-the-go lifestyle of sailing, surfing, and nonprofit work, and asked her a few questions about life at sea and her favorite beach activities.

Writer: Abigail Abesamis Demarest
Photography: Patagonia
Liz Clark Collection



“I love the spaciousness, the feeling of intimacy with the ocean, and the beauty of the open sea.”



To learn more about Captain Liz, follow her on Instagram (@captainlizclark) and check out her website swellvoyage.com. You can pick up a copy of her book, *Swell: A Sailing Surfer's Voyage of Awakening*, on the Patagonia website or Amazon.

1

Beach Happy: What is your favorite part about being at sea?

Captain Liz Clark: I love the spaciousness, the feeling of intimacy with the ocean, and the beauty of the open sea.

2

BH: What's something unexpected that you learned while being out at sea?

Captain Liz: I learned that adversities, both mental and physical, are our greatest opportunities to grow spiritually. Every day of my voyage brought unexpected challenges, and if I didn't learn to see the blessings and opportunities within them, I wouldn't have been able to find the courage to keep going.

For example in 2008, Swell started taking on water from a mysterious leak. With my small budget, I had to haul her out of the water in a boatyard in French Polynesia and figure out how to fix the leak myself in a place where I did not speak the language and had no idea where to start. During that time I learned to speak French and some Tahitian, and grew my faith in the goodness of humanity. I learned more about boat repair and Swell's inner workings than I would ever have thought possible, and I pushed past my own perceived limits of what I could handle, both mentally and physically.

It took three haul-outs over a year-and-a-half before the boat was repaired, but during that time, the vulnerability, suffering, and hardship broke my heart open to a compassion for others and a connection to our inherent oneness that has enriched my life beyond my wildest dreams.

3

BH: What are your top must-have items to take with you to the beach, and what's your favorite beach activity?

Captain Liz: My favorite beach activities are surfing and sand therapy (laying in the sand). My essential items include a surfboard, Avasol suncare (particularly their 50+ SPF Surfer's Barrier Stick), a Patagonia hat, a pareo or sarong, and a Mizu stainless steel water bottle full of water.

4

BH: What message or mantra do you live your life by?

Captain Liz: Follow your heart, and be kind to all beings along the way.

5

BH: How do you spend your free time?

Captain Liz: I like to think that my work and play blend into one as a surf ambassador for Patagonia, and an activist for the planet, people, and animals. I help run two nonprofit organizations: Changing Tides Foundation, an international organization helping to empower women to save the planet, and A Ti'a Matairea Island Protectors, working on solving critical environmental and animal welfare issues in the Tahitian community where I live.

When I do have a little free time, I'm either surfing, cooking yummy plant-based food, free diving, writing, listening to music, reading, or dancing. 🌊



Brothers Osborne

Their Journey From the Shores of Maryland to Musical Stardom Coast to Coast

Writer: Will Estell
Photography: Natalie Osborne
Eric Ryan Anderson
Reid Long

If you're a fan of country music, chances are you've heard more than one hit from this brotherly twosome from Deale, Maryland. They may come from one of the more unlikely specks on the map for country music stardom, but that sure hasn't hindered the popularity of the work along their musical trek from the Mid-Atlantic region to Nashville to airwaves and playlists in your neck of the woods.

I recently spoke with TJ and John to find out what makes Brothers Osborne tick, and just what inspires them to write and perform the songs they have, allowing them to connect with fans from all places and spaces of life along the way.

From the Chesapeake Bay to Nashville's banks of the Cumberland River to the shores of Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast, TJ and John have found inspiration from places, just as they have people. Their critically-acclaimed second album, *Port Saint Joe*, debuted at No. 2 on Billboard's Top Country Albums and No. 15 on the Billboard 200, going on to sell over 110,000 copies to date. Not bad for an album that was recorded on their terms, in the raw, at their producer's beach house.

Skeletons, their third album, just released this Fall, is already getting rave reviews, along with gaining traction on Billboard's Top 40 Country Chart. This newest work has allowed the brothers to really stretch their musical taste and strengths to new levels. After listening to the album (and you should) I think it's safe to say this one will certainly gain the brothers some new fans, along with the growing admiration of their current ones. *Skeletons* features 12 songs, all written or co-written by TJ and John, and rooted in the excitement and electricity of a Brothers Osborne's concert, full of tunes that get the fans going and build new ones at the same time. Produced by well-known, multi-platinum mega producer, Jay Joyce, *Skeletons* is a powerful work of artistry and emotion, and seems to fit perfectly into a world that has so much of both during these unprecedented times.

From the bluesy strut of "All Night" to the classic country story of "Old Man's Boots," the brothers don't hold back on their influences, and it shows. "Back on the Bottle" pays tribute to Merle Haggard, while "Dead Man's Curve" nods to Southern rock. The diversity is very evident in this new album and it seems to portray a vibrancy that so much current music is simply missing.



With Brothers Osborne's long list of musical milestones — including six Grammy nominations, four CMA Awards, five ACM trophies, and more than a half-dozen hits — I think it's safe to say we're going to be hearing a lot more out of this Nashville based brotherhood, for quite some time.

Having grown up in rural, small town Deale, Maryland (population under 5,000), what drew you to country music, and when did you first decide you wanted to pursue the path of music?

TJ: I don't know it was ever a conscious decision to become country music artists, until we decided to move to Nashville. We were just always around it. Our mom and dad both played music and wrote songs, and our family would sit around the kitchen table and play. For a long time, John and I just kind of thought all families did that. Our dad would play with our uncle Billy and our cousin Johnny. We always wanted to participate, and these guys took it seriously. They weren't going to let some kids sit around and bang on guitars. So we had to learn to play and be good for them to let us be a part of it. By our teenage years, we really took it seriously and started going out to some of the local bars on Chesapeake Bay. There's a lot of Tiki bars and other places we could play. It was me, my brother and my dad. Then we came to Nashville and played some of the bars on Broadway for about a year, then moved back to Maryland for a year, then moved here [Nashville] right after I graduated high school.

What was the inspiration for your 2018 album, *Port Saint Joe*, and tell our readers a little about your personal draw to the famous Gulf Coast fishing village by the same name.

John: *Port Saint Joe* was really a bit unorthodox, and was a departure from how we normally record music. We recorded the album in the house of our producer, Jay Joyce, and we wanted that real beach feel. We left a lot of that sound in the finished recording, right down to the parts you mention where you can hear Tommy, Jay's brother, in the kitchen, where the drums were set up. He was cooking and playing drums, along with the music, with a spatula, and just jamming out. So we just decided to keep it real and leave some of that in the there.

TJ: With *Port Saint Joe* we didn't want the feel of recording in a house on the beach, as opposed to in a studio, to be lost. So we didn't tidy it up too much. We really wanted the feel of what Port St. Joe as a place really is to translate on the record. With *Skeletons* we really took a different approach and got back in the traditional studio to make a studio album.

Your third and newest album, *Skeletons*, just dropped in October and is already making waves. Tell me about the basis for the album and what makes it different than your previous works.

TJ: We want this record to show people that we're here to stay. We are a part of the cloth of this genre. Ultimately, what we love to do most is play live, and *Skeletons* is going to allow us to do that better than ever before.

John: If *Pawn Shop* was our introduction, and *Port Saint Joe* was like the first conversation we had with someone over a beer, then *Skeletons* is the moment

“
Our mom and dad
both played music
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”



“ We wanted that song to be a song about putting your arm around the guy next to you, even though he may be different than you. ”



where you start getting down to the real stuff and showing who you really are. If you really want to get to know Brothers Osborne, this is the record.

Your new single, “Hatin’ Somebody” seems particularly relevant

right now. Had this been in the works for a long time, or was it a specific product of the way 2020 has unfolded for you two?

John: You know, we actually wrote that song back in 2019, but, yeah you know, we've been angry and pissed at each other for a lot longer than that [laughing]. This whole 2020 has only exasperated any issue that we had leading up to it. So it wasn't like us trying to capitalize on anything. We wrote this song over a year and a half ago, and it's about something our country has been dealing with for a very long time. It just so happens that now it's reached a boiling point. Really, it's just a coincidence more than anything, but you know, it's something we have struggled with for a very long time and will continue to struggle with. Hopefully it's something we can all improve on over the next few decades. We wanted that song to be about putting your arm around the guy next to you, even though he may be different than you. Change doesn't have to be hard, and we wanted this song to reflect that.

What are some of each of your musical influences? Who helped make you who you are artistically?

TJ: I mean, I listen to a lot of different music. From the Beach Boys to the Everly Brothers to the Allman Brothers. There are just so many influences. I listen to Tom Petty, John Mellencamp, AC/DC. Just lots of influences from different styles and genres.

John: Oh, yeah, I love these questions. They're usually framed as, what are your guilty pleasures [laughing]. TJ might have said this too, but a record that is really badass, that I've been listening to is Dua Lipa, and her record, *Future Nostalgia*. It wouldn't really be reflected in our record, but it's just some of the best pop and musical production that I've ever heard. It's just so fresh and so forward. I'd have to say one of my favorite pop artists of all time is Bruno Mars. I'm a massive Bruno Mars fan. He toured Nashville on his last album and I bought tickets and sang every word.

We love AC/DC because of the guitars. It's a primal kind of music. To play along with it isn't hard to do, though to play

like Angus Young, note for note, is difficult. My wife and I just got our nephew a guitar recently, and that's what he's learning to play. Everyone wants to rock out to AC/DC. That music is all testosterone. When you see that music live, even as a musician, you can't help but say, 'Damn, I want to play like that!'

If you weren't making music for a living, what do you think your job would be?

TJ: I've been asked this question so many times, and you know, I still don't have an answer for it. I never had a plan B. I remember thinking, if I have to live in a cardboard box, but I have a guitar, I will be okay. [laughing] I'm not sure I would adhere to that philosophy now, but I think having a plan B, can be a kiss of death. In an industry like this sometimes you just have to go all in. And that's what we did. Thank God, it panned out because I don't know if I'm really good at anything else.





“In an industry like this sometimes
you just have to go all in.”

If you had to choose one place where you could live, anywhere you want, but the catch is you have to stay there a year, and you can't leave, where would that be?

John: It's always a toss-up between the beach and the mountains for me. I mean, 30A is really just such an incredible spot. There's a reason why it's so coveted and everyone wants to go there. It's not only the beach, it's just very cultural, it's the whole package. I think the older I get though, I think, maybe I just want to go to the mountains for a while. We're buddies with Dierks Bentley, and he has a place out in Telluride and it's just so nice. All the crisp scenery and big beautiful mountains. So if I had to spend an entire year somewhere, and couldn't leave, it would probably be somewhere like Telluride.

TJ: I like the beach and the mountains. I'm not sure I could choose just one. But I also like where I live right here in Nashville. I love Florida's Gulf Coast though, and there's a reason so many people who can go anywhere, go to Destin and the 30A beaches and that whole area. It's beautiful.

What are some of each of your interests and hobbies outside of music?

John: I've always been fairly artistic, but since quarantine happened, I started painting. This is a giant picture of Jimmy Hendrix I did, and then here's one of Elvis, and I've done a couple things for friends, but it's more of a hobby. [John, gives me a quick tour of his art while on Zoom in his Nashville home].

I just put the guitar down for a while during the time we were stuck at home and just painted. With the music, we're working with each other, and our producer, and the label, and with painting it's just me. It's just kind of nice to get in my own solitude and be creative. In a strange way, it's really helped my music too. Because once I got tired of painting, I all of a sudden had a ton of musical ideas. I just had to let my brain rest I think.

Did you ever dream that you'd get this far and be able to live the dream of musical stardom in this musical Cinderella story of sorts?

TJ: Like I said, no plan B. So Thank God it worked.

Any parting words of wisdom for our readers around the country

John: Download the new album, and when the time comes that we can get back out there and play live shows, come out and see us. @

Photo: Three night sold out run at the Ryman Auditorium.

Glamping

Social Distancing in Style

Luxury Camping. Yes, you read that right.

Writer: Martin Liptrot
Photography: Jenna Alexander
Hayley Davis
Shelby Vandenberg



Luxury. Camping. For those of you for whom the word “camping” conjures up memories of damp socks, dirt floors, unwelcomed critters and rummaging through a rucksack on all fours under the dim glow of a rapidly failing flashlight, adding the prefix of “luxury” may create an oxymoron of huge proportions. However, for Megan Langan and her husband Josh, luxury camping is their business.

Perhaps it was always meant to be this way. Megan and her brother Micah were the children of a Florida State Park Ranger and, it would be fair to say, the great outdoors is in their blood. “As kids we were always off on camping adventures,” said Megan.

Luxury Camping — or “glamping” as it’s been nicknamed — comes in many different forms. Uber-VIP tents, yurts, and cabins, complete with chandeliers and massage tables, have welcomed Hollywood’s A-listers at music festivals and special events for quite some time. Often allowing the it-crowd to ‘get down with the people,’ without having to actually ‘get down with the

“I still get a thrill seeing the faces of people when they first arrive at their campsite.”



people.' But Fancy Camps is much more down to earth than all that.

Fancy Camps is about providing you with the uplifting and exhilarating thrill of a night outdoors, under a canvas of stars, but in an ever-so-gentle transition from the indoors. The experience comes complete with some extra comforts that make the occasion even more memorable, while still staying true to the premise of camping.

Accommodations consist of 16-foot bell tents — tall enough to stand up in — with a queen-sized bed, fitted linens, electricity to charge your devices, and an all-important cooling and heating system to make being outdoors in the height of a Floridian summer bearable. The company provides pallets with mattresses and comforters to keep the little ones comfortable too.

“Fancy Camps was my brother’s idea originally,” recalled Megan. “We took the idea to an entrepreneurship conference in Jacksonville called Spark Up, and we got enough encouragement to give it a go.”

Megan reached out to contacts in the Florida State Park Service to share her ideas and before too long, the first sites were identified along Northwest Florida’s Gulf Coast, including Grayton Beach State Park, St. Andrews State Park, and Topsail Hill Preserve State Park.

“Our sites were pretty much booked up from the first moment we advertised them,” said Megan. “People loved that they





“We’ve stayed in all the great national parks and would often take month-long trips to see the sites. We wanted more people to share and enjoy that experience.”



could have the outdoor experiences they remembered from when they were kids, but with a few extra creature comforts.”

Perhaps best of all, Fancy Camps sets up and tears down the luxury bell tent, lawn chairs, tables, fire pit and romantic outdoor lighting. They take care of it all. There’s no wrestling with guide ropes, metal pegs or mallets. No digging. No making up your bed, or preparing the fire pit. Simply unpack and settle into your new magical outdoor spread.

As for the rules of camping, the expectations for Fancy Camps’ guests are exactly the same as any other camper or visitor to Florida’s State Parks: Take Out What You Take In.

“We are passionate about maintaining the pure nature of the camping experience,” said Megan. “Just because you have a more comfortable bed and a little bit of luxury doesn’t absolve you from the responsibilities of environmental stewardship and good behavior. Our guests know and appreciate that. It’s why they want to come camping in the first place.”

With COVID-19 having changed the tourism and hospitality industry worldwide, I asked if the pandemic had impacted luxury camping too.

“Yes, both negatively and positively,” said Megan. “Travel restrictions have impacted everyone in hospitality. We have invested heavily in cleaning and sanitizing too. With the usual vacation trips and destination now out of bounds, many families are looking for something unique. Because of this, we’ve seen a lot of interest in our experiences.” After all, campers are perhaps the original social distancers.

From Spring Break to Labor Day, Fancy Camps sites have been fully booked and reservations and fall and winter weekends are filling up fast. But even with their business thriving, Megan and Josh aren’t sitting idle.

“Next year, we’re expanding our experience at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park (in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida),”

said Megan. “We want to create a village feel, with shared experiences and interactions that are all part of the joy of campsite life. We also just opened our own coffee shop at Topsail, Kith and Kin, because we know how important a good cup of coffee is for planning a day’s adventures.”

Megan said they are also planning to open a rental service to provide bikes, kayaks, paddleboards and other equipment. “Getting out on the water, exploring Coastal Dune Lakes, or riding through miles of nature trails is something our guests really appreciate.”

In this age when we are seeking more authentic experiences and trying to find ways to bring friends and families together to create long lasting memories, Fancy Camps seems to be providing precisely that. Luxury Camping may not be such an oxymoron after all.

“I still get a thrill seeing the faces of people when they first arrive at their campsite,” said Megan. “You know they’re nervous, but when they see the beauty of the park and their campsite, and then they pull open the tent doors and see the luxury inside, their faces light up. It’s a great moment to share.”

To learn more about Fancy Camps, visit www.fancycamps.com or call 850-638-9696. Guests can also book their own campsites directly with state parks, and then work with Fancy Camps to set up their experience prior to arrival. Information about Florida’s State Parks is available at www.floridastateparks.org.

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Farewell to the Oystermen

If you were to ask me what Heaven looks like, I would tell you. It looks like Apalachicola, Florida.

Visit Apalach in the late afternoon when the sun is sinking. Go downtown and look at the brick storefronts. You'll see what I mean.

Walk along the docks where trawlers are moored behind 13 Mile Seafood Market on Water Street, a place that's been selling wild oysters since the '50s. Oysters are the main industry here.

At least they were.

"It's basically like a big mill is closing down," said an elderly local man. "Ain't no boats out there. The bay's empty. The oystermen are gonna be hurting."

He is of course talking about the closing of the oyster beds. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservancy Commission recently made the decision to stop harvesting oysters in Apalach.

Writer: Sean Dietrich
Photography: Franklin County Tourist Development Council
Brett Martina



“
Ninety percent
of Florida’s wild
oysters came from this
fleck-on-the-map
town.
”

It was a blow to the town, but vital to the health of this brittle Floridian ecosystem. This exhausted bay is in serious trouble.

“We’re not just looking at it from an oyster perspective, but from a system perspective,” said Dr. Felicia Coleman, part of an Apalachicola Bay initiative. “How healthy is the Apalachicola Bay? And that’s the problem.”

Outsiders might not care about what goes on in a podunk oystering town, they have their own lives to worry about. But a lot of sunburned oystermen just lost their livelihoods. And it hurt.

This will be Franklin County’s first non-oystering period since Apalachee and Timucua natives began gathering oysters in these waters.

A few years ago, this bay was producing about three million pounds of yearly oysters, a crop worth about nine million bucks. Ninety percent of Florida’s wild oysters came from this fleck-on-the-map town.

Ninety.

And there’s a reason these bivalves are so coveted. Because they will blow your mind.

A few years ago, I was in a fancy seafood joint in Saint Louis, Missouri, of all places. I was very homesick for Florida. My friends ordered oysters. I tasted one and almost wept because it tasted too familiar.

I asked the waiter where the oysters were from.

The waiter couldn’t pronounce the name of the town



printed on the shipping carton, so he just pointed to the label. Apalachicola.

I ate so many oysters I had to be carried home in a wheelbarrow. Homesickness will do that to you.

“It’s a shame,” says an Apalach woman who was shopping downtown, wearing a surgical mask. Her voice was muffled. “First it’s COVID, now this. What else could go wrong in this world?”

It’s been a tough year.

Shannon Hartsfield is a fourth generation oysterman. He comes from commercial fishermen who have saltwater in their blood and barnacles on their shoulders. He fully supports the recent decision. But it’s bittersweet.

“When I was 12 years old,” says Shannon. “My dad started giving us one dollar a bag for what we caught. We was always on the water with my dad. I was raised on an oyster boat.”

But you won’t see kids hoisting oyster tongs from the baywater anymore. Not for a long time. Possessing tongs for capturing wild oysters will be a misdemeanor, punishable by 60 days in the clink. This water is off limits.

This heaven-like town is a special place to a lot of Floridians like me. We Panhandle dwellers live among 24-hour tourism. Our cities are overrun with families, kids, and frat boys with coolers.

So when we go on vacation, most of us want to leave tourism behind. We want to travel backward in time by about 150 years. We visit Apalachicola.

We drive along the water in hopes of seeing the ratty oyster boats scattered on the bay like bath toys. And we fall in love with Florida all over again.

I used to work in a restaurant kitchen in Destin, alongside a guy named Will. He was a former oysterman. We would shuck oysters together. He could shuck about 2,632 before I finished one.

We’d pop shells with oyster knives, seated on buckets, while shivering in a walk-in freezer. Him, with a Marlboro Red dangling from his

mouth. Me trying not to stab myself and contract a deadly viral infection.

He told tales of oystermen, about the long hours, the painted sunsets, and the pop-up thunderstorms. And it all sounded like an Ernest Hemingway novel.

“I hate oysters,” Will admitted one night. Then he slurped an oyster and chased it with what looked like kerosene. “But oysters paid for my car.”

That’s how people are in Apalach. Theirs is a world of its own. An old place. One that looks the same as it did a century ago, back when automobiles were novelties and mules were given as wedding gifts. When the drugstore was Buzzette’s, and the John W. Callahan steamboat sat in the harbor like a floating wedding cake.

“It’s the end of an era,” says one middle-aged waitress. “When customers order a dozen halfshell now, they might get Texas oysters.”

Even so, there is not a feeling of dread in this town. In fact, it’s an upbeat mood. There are no long faces. No self-pity. There is cheerfulness in the air. Maybe it’s the satisfaction that comes with knowing they’re protecting a wonderful bay from oblivion. Maybe this is environmentalism at its best. Either way, it’s an incredible thing.

“People are full of hope,” says Dr. Coleman. “They understand this is like the last shot. If this doesn’t happen now, it won’t exist.”

The oyster beds may be shut down, but the buoyant spirit of Apalachicola is still alive and kicking. And like any good preacher will tell you, there will never be a ‘closed’ sign on Heaven. 🍷



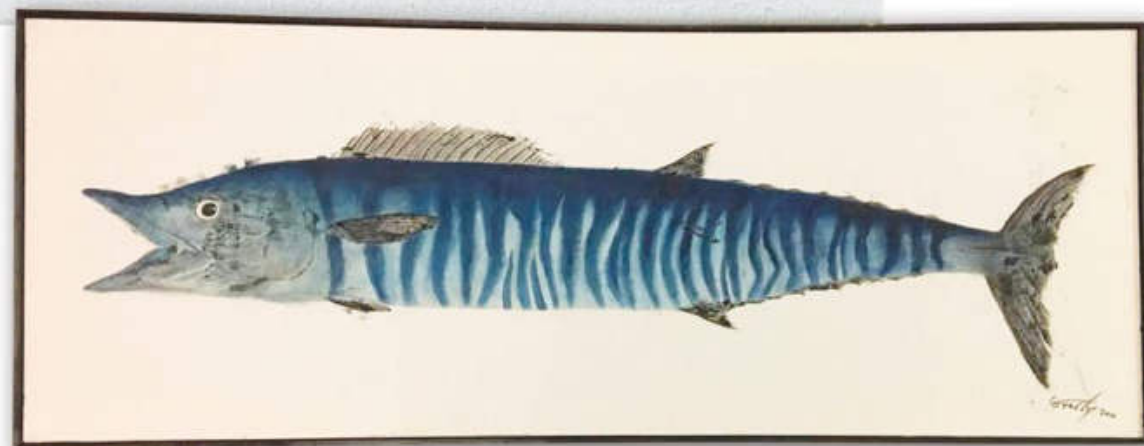
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Writer: Susan Gunn
Photography: Sean Murphy

When Fish Become

Art

HARLEY VAN HYNING HONORS THE OCEAN

Take a drive down any coastal highway and you might find it difficult not to look out over the watery landscape passing before you. I have often done this and found myself daydreaming about that next time I'll spend on the water fishing, or in the water swimming or free-diving. Some people might not give a second thought to what lies beneath our shimmery seas but stop for a moment, close your eyes, and imagine that other-worldly realm where a cornucopia of unusual creatures, mammals, and beautiful fish live out their destinies. Every single creature in our oceans plays a vital role in the ecology of our waters. For thousands of years, humans have found sustenance in the ocean's abundance. But now, the fish taken from our waters not only provide us with a food source but something a bit unexpected — art.

Man has long been fascinated with the sea, mesmerized and challenged by the stunning specimens that live there. Stories of legend have been written, and many a wall in human dwellings bear the fruit of the hard-won battles

between fish and fisherman. Over the years humans have kept records of their catches. The Japanese used a traditional method dating back to the mid-1800s called "Gyotaku" to make actual prints of the fish they brought into port; this being their process of recording and documenting the nature of the species by using inks and rice paper. These fine impressions became lasting images that still exist today.

Gyotaku — "gyo" meaning fish and "taku" meaning "rubbing" — is still practiced and has evolved beyond Japan to inspire a modern art form. Enter Harley Van Hyning, a beach born waterman and surfer turned artist. Harley was born on Eglin Air Force Base in Western Florida and now resides permanently in Destin. Harley has both art and a love of the water





deep in his heart. As a child, he was artistically influenced by his mother Anna, a London born painter educated at The British Royal Academy. "Growing up I was always seeing my mother paint. I think I absorbed that like a sponge and I just took to it naturally." After endless hours of his childhood spent Pompano fishing with his beloved step-father Randy, he began surfing at thirteen and his passion for the gulf and its inhabitants was sealed. "There's a connection I have with the sea that is really special. In high school, I really liked James D. Audobon and Salvador Dali." Harley says throughout his formative years Anna and Randy nurtured and encouraged his organic love of the natural world and different forms of art. He tells me, "If it wasn't for both him and my mother, I wouldn't be who I am today." Harley thought briefly of attending The Savannah College of Art and Design. Instead, after graduating from Fort Walton Beach High School he went on to study advertising and marketing at The University of West Florida.

Six years ago he began his endeavor down on the docks of the harbor painting fish in what he calls raw form to create a print. The Japanese considered this not only a record of their catches but a way to capture the life essence and remain true to the detail of the lifeforms — an art of respect. Today Harley practices a more non-traditional form of Gyotaku to lovingly and painstakingly produce stunning works of art. Where traditional or raw Gyotaku uses Sumi black inks and rice paper, Harley's works have grown outside of the box while still honoring the purpose of the early processes. "I use acrylics and color, and often do additional detail work to the print to capture the full beauty of that life form in its existence. I have a great deal of respect for the creatures of the sea, and I get to honor that life form."

This once-popular method of "nature printing" has diminished over time, but true traditional artists still exist. One such man is Japanese painter Dwight Wang of California, an artist whom Harley holds in high regard. Other fish painters are appearing on the art scene as well, but Harley

"I have a great deal of respect for the creatures of the sea and I get to honor that life form."



wants people to know that the art form is not one of simplicity. It has taken him lifelong study and learning of the different species of fish — their appearance, their identities, their origins. These are all factors he uses when creating each of his works and commissions. "There are different weights of the canvas depending on scale size and the medium used. Using linens, that takes practice and time. There is a discipline in knowing your paints in realism."

Harley's art shows more than technical prowess. His passion for nature, and life in general, is seen in his work. He says that it is a deeply spiritual thing. What's happening with him in his life or with the world is channeled into his painting. He feels there is a need to nurture and protect his energy, keeping his mind, his soul on a positive flow because all of that translates into what he is painting.

Whether it be Red Snapper, Cobia, Blue Marlin, Triggerfish, or Grouper he is recording, this is an artist who deeply values the life that once was in existence. Harley plans to take Gyotaku to a whole new realm with just his imagination. As an artist, he says there is more inside him that's yet to be revealed. He shares that he had a recent request from a client to paint an Amberjack using the colors of the Queen Triggerfish. This extension of the art form is something on which Harley thrives, saying it is always challenging, exciting, and fun. "Gyotaku is an art form that brings both my love for art and the natural world together." The biggest positive influence in his life is his parents whom he refers to as, "the best humans I know, having been constant examples of love, compassion, loyalty, and respect."

Harley's future looks as bright as his works. He now has a small studio in Destin where he works by appointment. His dream is to one day have "a full-on gallery that would be an experience for anyone who loves the creatures of the sea or art."

See more of Harley Van Hyning's work at GnarlyFishPrints.com or on him Facebook at Gnarly Fish Prints. To contact Harley, email him at gnarlyfishprints@gmail.com.

Susan Gunn is a retired paramedic, as well as a published writer and photographer. Her website is susangunnphotography.com that features a gallery of her work. She can also be found on Instagram @susangunnphotography. When she is not working, she can be found in the water or exploring the beauty of Florida.



Destin Wine Events to Support the Arts!

The Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF), a not-for-profit charitable arts organization founded in 1995 to be Northwest Florida's champion of cultural arts and arts education for all, centers its mission on building the foundation of arts and culture in the local community. Located in Destin, Florida, the organization has inspired over 335,000 children in over 70 schools, and United Way agencies including children with special needs and wounded warriors.

8th Annual Ruth's Chris Wine Walkabout

A major part of the milestone year is the continuation of favorite events and the addition of a few new ones. A community favorite, the Ruth's Chris Wine Walkabout enters its 8th year with a special menu from Chef Ruston Johnson, featuring multiple culinary stations with heavy hors-d'oeuvres paired with select fine wines courtesy of a variety of distributors. MKAF CEO Marcia Hull said, "Once again, Mike Sable's team at Ruth's Chris stage an impressive culinary event as valuable supporters of the arts. This annual event provides an opportunity for our members and art enthusiasts to learn the impact of MKAF's cultural contributions to sustain a thriving arts and culture community for our residents and visitors."

Added fun includes live entertainment from the award-winning soul and jazz artist, Cheryl Jones & Company, and "Bubbles & Baubles", allowing patrons to enter to win a variety of eclectic to fine jewelry from local artists and jewelers. Those entering will participate in a complimentary champagne tasting.

Tickets are \$60 per person or \$50 for MKAF members and ticket holders have a chance to enter an amazing charity raffle with an opportunity to win packaged experiences. The MKAF Wine Pull is a popular feature at this event that includes a collection of multiple bottles of fine wines donated from wine enthusiasts, private wine cellars, distributors, and restaurants.

The event takes place at the Ruth's Chris Steak House at Silver Shells Resort in Destin on Thursday, November 12th, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the East Bar and Courtyard. All Ruth's Chris team members, volunteers, and event organizers will be wearing masks for the safety of the attendees. While attendees are encouraged to wear a face covering, it is not required. The event will be held outdoors with adequate space for distancing.



Vin'tij Wine Dinner Honoring Marcia Hull, CEO MKAF

Join Vin'tij Food & Wine in Grand Boulevard, on January 21, 2021, at 6 PM for a special wine dinner honoring Marcia Hull, CEO of MKAF. The dinner benefits the Mattie Kelly Arts Foundation (MKAF) and celebrates Marcia's 22 years with MKAF as she passes the baton. Vin'tij, known for its creative menus and impressive wine boutique, presents Dakota Shy Wine in celebration of MKAF.

The vintner and Chef Ignacio Bernal will educate guests on each flavorful wine, regional influences, and the dishes carefully selected to accompany. Todd Newman, Founder of Dakota Shy Wine, was raised in a small farming town just outside of Minot, North Dakota. An early understanding of hard work and commitment to getting the job done set the tone early in life for what he wanted and how he was going to get there. Now, Todd and winemaker Tom Garrett craft a collection of award-winning wines that can proudly be placed on the table and enjoyed every day. Join us in the celebration of Marcia Hull, great wine, and great food.

Tickets are \$200 (gratuities not included) per person and seating is limited. To ensure proper social distancing, you will need to note who you would like to be seated with at the event. Please list names online when purchasing tickets or provide those names if calling in to purchase.

Vin'tij Food & Wine has been a local favorite restaurant for over 20 years and owner and operator Todd Reber has supported MKAF ever since. Vin'tij is known for its fresh approach to seafood, creative menus, impressive wine boutique, and their dedicated staff who strive to leave their patrons better than when they came in. With over 20 years of rave reviews and a variety of different accolades, Vin'tij Food & Wine is a must-visit dining spot along the Emerald Coast.

Proceeds from both events help to fund the foundation's community outreach mission to provide cultural outreach programs serving K-12 students, adults and children with special needs, at-risk youth, and active/veteran military suffering from visible and invisible injuries in our community.

To purchase tickets and for more information, please visit the foundation's website at MKAF.org or call (850) 650-2226.



PROCEEDS FROM BOTH EVENTS
HELP TO FUND THE FOUNDATION'S
COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS



8TH ANNUAL

Ruth's Chris Wine Walkabout

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH

5:30 - 7:30 PM

PURCHASE TICKETS

ONLINE AT MKAF.ORG
OR BY CALLING (850) 650-2226



Vin'tij Wine Dinner

Honoring:
Marcia Hull, CEO MKAF

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21ST

6:00 PM

Visiting Vintner:

Todd Newman
with Dakota Shy

Rock Stars Fell on Alabama



**ROCK N
ROLL**
SUSHI

CONCEIVED IN BILOXI, BORN IN MOBILE, AND NOW STRUTTING ITS WAY ACROSS THE NATIONAL STAGE, THE LOVE CHILD OF ROCK, ROLL AND SUSHI STRIKES A UNIQUE COASTAL CHORD



It was 1:30 a.m. in Biloxi, Mississippi. Lance Hallmark was a rapidly burning out bartender at Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, and he was hungry. Not just for a late-night meal to pad his liquor-lined stomach. Lance was hungry for a major life change.

"I helped open Hard Rock in 2007, but after three years, I was ready to do my own thing again," said Lance, who once owned a popular nightclub in Birmingham, Alabama. He now wanted to return to Birmingham to open a barbecue joint. His plan was to become the first franchisee for The Shed, a wildly popular run-down blues shack of a place right by the interstate east of Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

But Lance's new girlfriend, Gerri, had rolled up a few ideas of her own.

"I got Lance drunk and convinced him to try sushi for the very first time that night," laughed Gerri, who had recently started working as a cocktail waitress at Hard Rock. Gerri's dad is Vietnamese, and her mom was half Chinese. But despite her family's strong Asian influences, Gerri never tried sushi until she was 15 years old, working as a

waitress at Mikato, a Japanese restaurant chain in Mobile, Alabama.

Lance took to raw tuna much better than he'd anticipated, but he still wasn't completely sold on the idea. "I had this whole business plan for the barbecue place, but one day I was walking onto the gaming floor at Hard Rock, and it just hit me: Rock N Roll Sushi."

A headbanger for life, Lance still couldn't bang that brand name out of his head. "It just flooded my mind. My brain receptors were firing non-stop."

Soon after, in April 2009, Lance was suddenly fired from his job.

"I had been plotting my escape for a while, but this forced me to make decisions much faster. Out of pure spite, I aggressively convinced Gerri to quit too," he laughed.

New girlfriend was, suddenly, new business partner too.

With no college degrees, no formal business training, and

“As the lines for Santa grew longer, so did the line for all the parents who needed a shot from the bar.”



“Watching someone try great sushi for the first time is like watching someone listen to a classic album for the first time. Once they give it a try, you know they’re going to be hooked.”



Lance's very first taste of sushi barely washed down his throat, the unlikely entrepreneurs pooled together all their money. They bet everything on creating a new concept called Rock N Roll Sushi. This would be a sushi bar reinvention. No tapestries depicting shapely geisha silhouettes. No bubbling koi pond. No traditional Japanese Koto music piped through tinny speakers in a white-paneled ceiling. Led Zeppelin, Mötley Crüe, Prince, AC/DC and Nirvana would take center stage here. Everything about the place would be familiar, welcoming and nostalgic. The couple envisioned an unimposing place devoted to introducing stadium-sized crowds of fans to an ancient cuisine.

And the location they chose for their first endeavor? Bel Air Mall in Mobile, Alabama.

"Bel Air was the only mall I'd ever heard of that didn't have a food court," laughed Gerri. "There was a McDonald's and a Chick-fil-A, but that was about it. People thought we were crazy, and I guess we were."

By the time they opened in November, their funds were completely depleted. "We bet everything we had. We had to succeed. There was no other option."

The first Rock N Roll Sushi was a small place, just 1,100 square feet and 38 seats. However, unbeknownst to them, they had a secret mall weapon: they had a full bar.

"It was Black Friday," said Lance. "We were right across from where Santa Claus sets up. As the lines for Santa grew longer, so did the line for all the parents who needed a shot from the bar. We were out of money. If they hadn't pounded down all those shots that weekend, we would've been in serious trouble."



Lance credits Tim Nolan, Bel Air Mall's manager at the time, for ultimately guiding them to success. "Tim believed in us and he fought for us, at a time when most locals had never even considered trying sushi," said Lance.

"We worked in the restaurant seven days a week," added Gerri. "People who had never tried sushi before were suddenly coming back three or four times a week. We were introducing them to a whole new world of cuisine."

With the help of Lance's brother, Ryan, they opened their second location ten months later in Trussville, Alabama. Then quickly came an additional location in Mobile. Then Hoover. Lance and Gerri got married somewhere along the way. By 2015, they had six locations, and the runaway crazy train was only getting crazier.

"We were running five corporate locations, plus we had our first franchisee, and we were about to give birth to our son. So we were pretty maxed out," said Lance, whose son is named (what else?) Axl. "My friend and former business partner, Joe Ragsdale, had just left his job in Vegas, and I needed help expanding the brand and franchise. With his personality and sales experience, I knew Joe could crush it."

Every successful Rock Band needs a savvy manager – someone to reel in the talent when things get a little too wild. If Lance is the Rock N Roll and Gerri is the Sushi, then Joe is the Rock Star Agent, bringing boundless enthusiasm and business discipline to an already full, but ever-expanding table. Born and raised in Cullman,

“From the Flora-Bama in Orange Beach to Bud & Alley's in Seaside, if there's a beach with a bar, that's where you'll find me.”



Alabama, Joe had also lived along the Gulf coast for years, as Director of Sales for Wyndham Vacation Resorts in both Destin and Panama City Beach. Rock N Roll Sushi presented him with a very unique new product to sell.

"It's been very rewarding for Lance, Gerri and Ryan to introduce so many new people to the art of sushi," said Joe. "For me though, the reward has been helping new entrepreneurs launch their first locations. I love feeling that electricity on opening day, when all their friends and family and fans show up to cheer them on. It really is like stepping out onto the big stage for the first time."

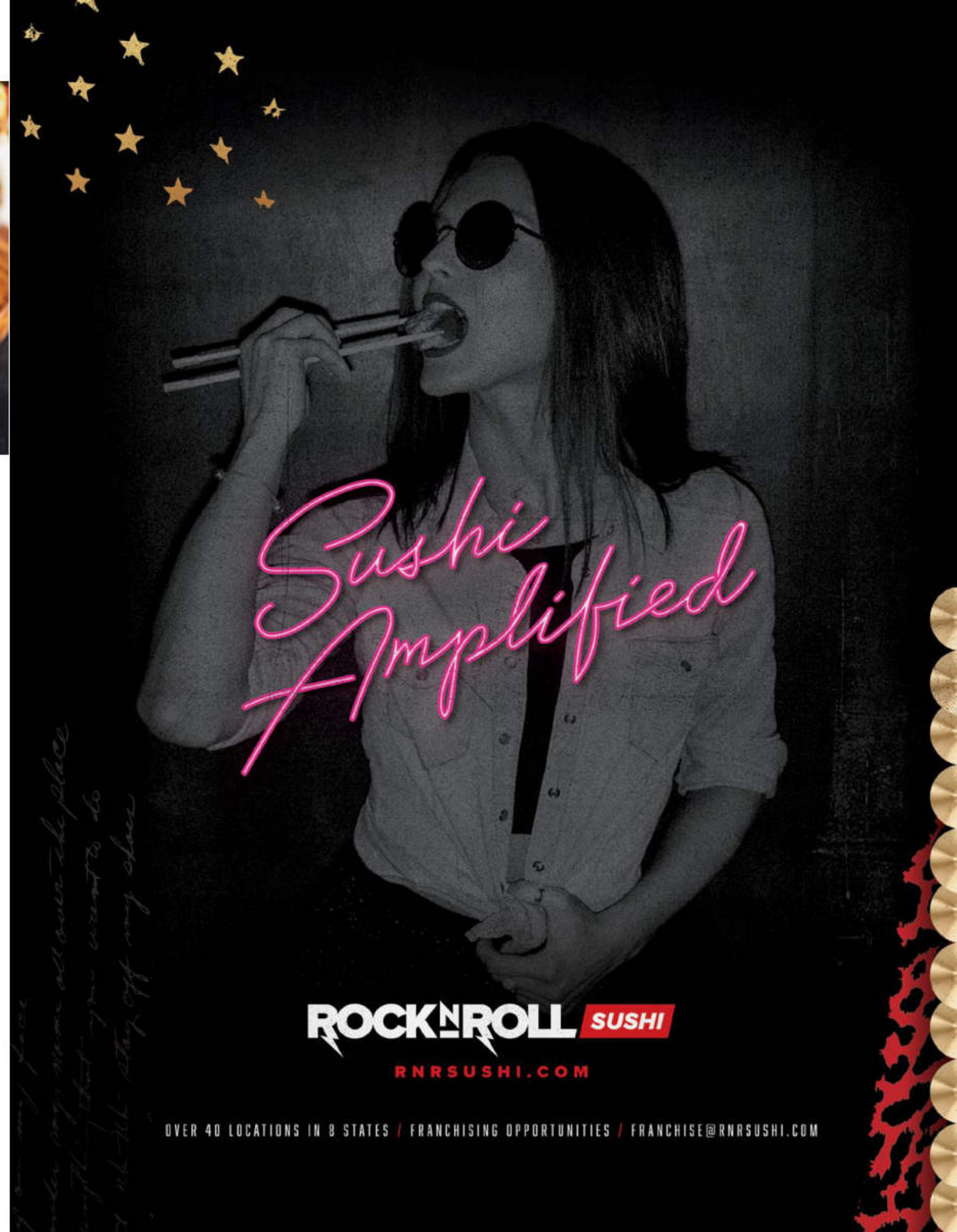
Today, the Rock N Roll Sushi team has quickly riffed their way to well over forty locations across eight states, with eighty more locations sold and in various stages of development. But for Joe, it's all about that first time.

"Watching someone try great sushi for the first time is like someone hearing a classic album for the first time," said Joe. "Once they give it a try, you know they're going to be fans forever."

When they aren't doing the road show though, these sushi stars quickly return to the coast.

"I love everything about the beach, and I always have," said Joe. "From the Flora-Bama in Orange Beach to Bud & Alley's in Seaside, if there's a beach with a bar, that's where you'll find me."

"Gerri's from Mobile, and this is where we got our start, so the Gulf coast is home," said Lance, aboard their new 87-foot yacht, Another Day. Because, you know, that's how Rock Stars roll. 🍣





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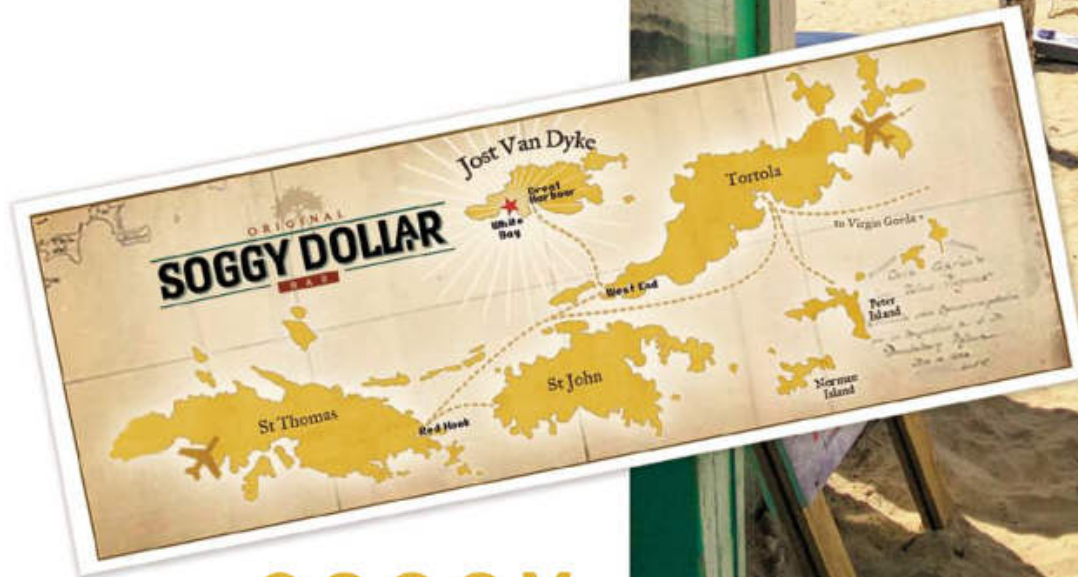


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WORLD'S BEST BEACH BARS



SOGGY DOLLAR

It's possible, if entirely undesirable, to have a great bar without a beach. But it's darn near impossible to have a great beach without a bar. A great beach without a bar is, well, just a beach.

Down in the British Virgin Islands, everyone knows the best beach bar around is Soggy Dollar.

Why soggy? Because unless you live on the island of Jost Van Dyke – and only 220 people do – the only way to get to Soggy Dollar is to swim. There's a clothesline conveniently located behind the bar upon which you can hang your wet cash out to dry, or spend.

"You would never design a bar like this," laughed Jerry O'Connell, who's owned Soggy Dollar, along with his wife Tish, daughter Annie

“No one here gives a darn what your resume says. It's reverse snobbery.”

and son Kevin, for the last 15 years. "You would never say, 'Hey, let's design a bar with no dock, no marina, and no people.'"

Oh, but the people come, just as they have practically every day for the last 50 years. Although by night, they disappear just as predictably.

"Our business peaks between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., because all the boaters have to get back to their islands before dark," said Annie, who runs the whole operation on Jost Van Dyke. Yet, despite the challenge of getting here, people keep flocking back to this beach happy place, time and time again. I have to ask Jerry, what gives? What's the secret sauce?

"I think Soggy Dollar's success is precisely because it takes a little extra effort to get here," he said. "You navigate your boat as close to shore as you can, you strip down to your bare essentials, you jump in and you swim to shore."

"The ritual appeals to the explorer and adventurer in all of us," said Annie. "For many people, this is the exact moment they've been fantasizing about. They can't believe the simplicity of it, and all for a \$7 drink." He also believes it has a lot to do with their 22 employees, 18 of whom have worked here for 15 years or longer.

"Soggy Dollar is the great equalizer," added Jerry. "When you're sitting barefoot in wet shorts with no money in your pockets, we're pretty much all the same. You can have a Russian billionaire sitting next to an unemployed bartender from





St. Thomas sitting next to Johnny Depp. No one here gives a darn what your resume says. It's reverse snobbery."

The infamous rum cocktail known as "The Painkiller" was invented – and most say perfected – here in the 1970s. Kevin claims the proper concoction features cream of coconut, pineapple juice, orange juice, fresh grated Grenadian nutmeg, and just enough premium dark rum to kill whatever pain ails you. The exact recipe was a closely-guarded secret for over 48 years, although they recently shared their legendary mix when they launched their own rum in 2018.

Exact recipe proportions are a closely-guarded island secret, and The Painkiller has become known as "the essence of Caribbean imbibing."

These islanders know more than a little bit about pain, being occasionally walloped by tropical storm systems. Right around daybreak on September 6, 2017, Irma hammered the BVIs as a Category 5 hurricane. She caused widespread destruction with the eye crossing right over Jost Van Dyke.

Immediately after the storm, Jerry and his team set up a 501c3 known as the Soggy Island Virgin Community Fund. They raised almost \$1 million and used that money to help keep the soup kitchen going in neighboring St. John, to clean up their local reefs, and to replant over 150 mature palm trees across Jost Van Dyke.



"In some ways, we seem to be a lot like your 30A company," Jerry said. "We have a 24/7 Soggy Dollar radio station (www.soggydollar.com/radio), a beach cam (www.soggydollar.com/webcam), our own brand of rum (www.shopsoggydollarrum.com), and we love giving back to our community."

We'll certainly drink to that, Jerry. Happy 50th birthday to all of our Soggy friends! 🍹

To learn more about Soggy Dollar Bar, visit soggydollar.com.
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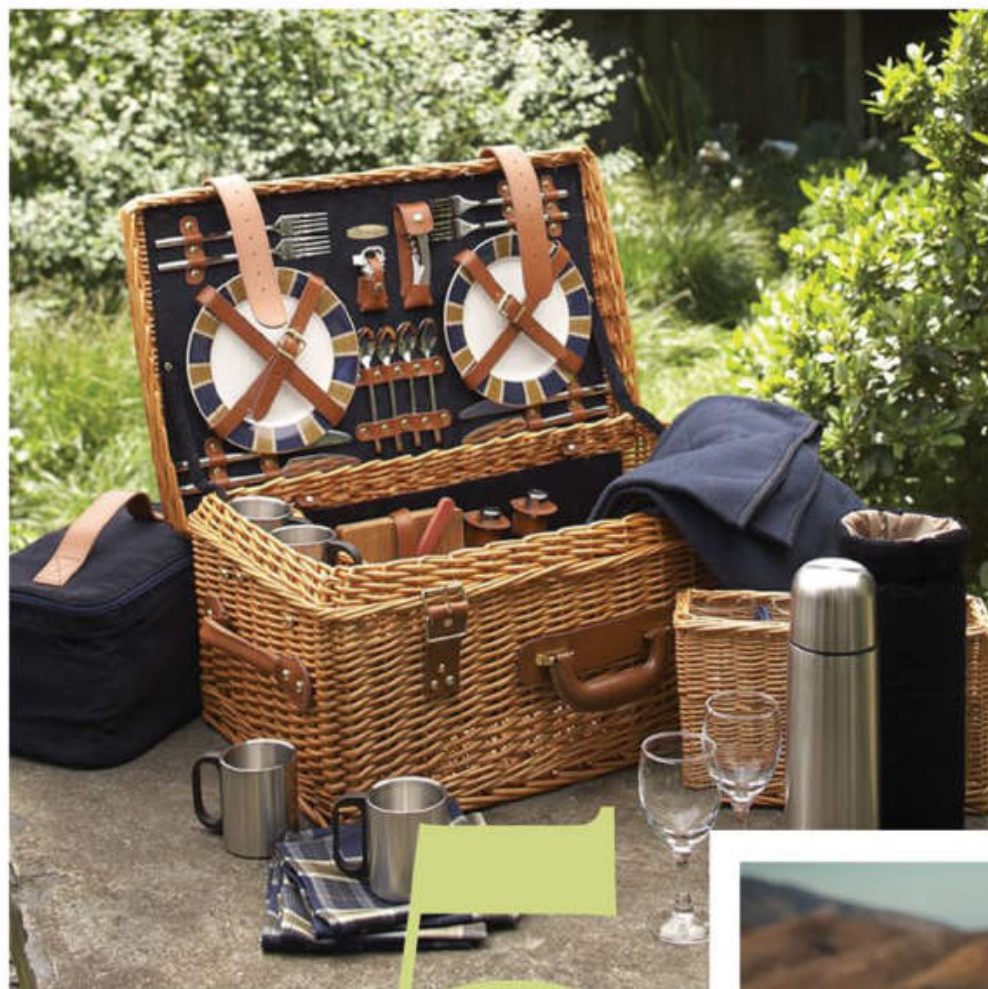
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Writer: Shannon Serpette

Perfect Picnic Basket Picks

Most coastal destinations serve up a diverse menu of great restaurants, especially ones serving up fresh seafood. Sometimes though, nothing beats a good old-fashioned, personally packed picnic out on the beach, on the boat or in your favorite local park.

The very nature of picnics can instantly whisk you and your companion back to simpler times, before "smart phones" dumbed us all down just a little. If you pick the right basket, organizing a picnic can be fast, easy and far more memorable than just another dinner out. But in a world of too many options, picking the right basket can be more challenging than one might think. To help keep it simple, here are five of our favorite picnic picks:



No. 1

The Classic Look

Do you want a picnic basket that looks like one straight out of *The Sound of Music*? If so, go with a retro-feel basket such as the York from Pottery Barn. It feels like a classic, yet has all the modern conveniences. Made of willow, this fully-lined basket has silverware, a corkscrew, wine glasses, plates, and utensils for two. Plus, it comes with a roll-up silverware pouch, napkins, and plenty of space for food.

PotteryBarn.com



No. 2

High-End Luxury

Want a picnic basket that's sure to impress your lunch date? This wicker basket from Williams Sonoma will do the trick. It includes an insulated cooler and wine duffel, so your drinks and food stay chilled. Want some hot soup or drinks on a colder day? Use the insulated flask and thermal mugs. This basket offers upscale luxury with its porcelain plates, hand blown wine glasses, fleece picnic blanket, and a cheeseboard.

Williams-Sonoma.com



No. 3

Affordable

If you're trying to picnic on a budget, check out the cute Country Basket from Home Depot. You'll have to supply the plates, utensils, napkins, and glasses. It isn't insulated, but you can toss a couple of ice packs in and be set for the afternoon. If you're watching your money and already have table settings from a prior picnic basket, this is a great option.

HomeDepot.com



No. 4

Multi-Purpose

If you want an item you can use for more than picnics, this collapsible basket from Wayfair might be the ticket. When you're not planning a picnic, you can use it for transporting groceries, or as a trunk organizer. You'll just need to supply your napkins, utensils, and your favorite food.

Wayfair.com



No. 5

The Cool Kid

Love picnics, but hate the idea of lugging around a cumbersome basket? Or perhaps you just don't want to look like Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*. Go for a picnic backpack instead. These are much simpler to carry, they free up your hands, and they definitely up the cool factor. This Picnic Backpack from Wayfair features an insulated food compartment and two insulated, detachable bottle holders. It comes with settings for four, a bottle opener, cutting board, bottle stopper, salt and pepper shakers, and more.

Wayfair.com



Healing WATERS

If you're one to venture out on the water often, you've likely noticed there is a peculiar mindset about how vast your surroundings seem to be. A feeling that makes you feel small in relation to where you are. Suddenly, the clamoring thoughts, swelling to-do lists and inevitable stresses of daily life also shrink in comparison. However, if you pay close attention, you may discover something even greater begin to unfold.

There's a kind of surrender that happens here, an acceptance that you're part of something far bigger, as if you're merely floating atop a world you can't even see, with depths you can't even begin to imagine. On shore some half-mile away, life goes on as usual. All while though, you find yourself in another world, here, among the gentle, rolling waves and the emerald waters of the Gulf, lapping against your paddleboard. And for a brief yet powerful time, you have nowhere to be but right here.

Writer: Kristy Gustafson
Photography: Lauren Athalia

As 6 a.m. comes around, the bell-like chimes of a sound called “Silk” blare from my iPhone speaker. It’s annoying, but it’s done the trick. I’m out of bed and, with the help of coffee, poised for the morning. As I drive west on Scenic Highway 30A, my YOLO board strapped above me, I pass only a handful of cars and all (two) of the lights are turning green on the spot. For those unfamiliar with the busy summer months down here in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, these are two miracles each on their own – especially for a Friday. Cyndi Lauper’s “Time After Time” plays on the radio and I find myself thinking, so, this is what they play when the rest of the world is still asleep.

There is a pink and orange tint to the buildings I pass, and in spite of the rising sun, a slight sprinkle begins overhead. I wonder how this will affect our scheduled paddle, though the idea of a rainy morning on the water sounds sort of magical. On second thought, maybe that’s the haze of the 6 a.m. wake-up call talking.

I pull into Grayton Beach just as the rain stops. As I park at the boat launch, the colors, sounds and stillness of the morning become one, right before my eyes. The water is a mirror of the scene above it; silhouetted pines and a collection of clouds with rays of light beaming every which way.

I’m early so I sip my coffee and wait, listening to see which ‘80s mega hit will grace the radio next. By the time I get settled, people are already arriving, one by one. They unload their equipment and within minutes, over a dozen

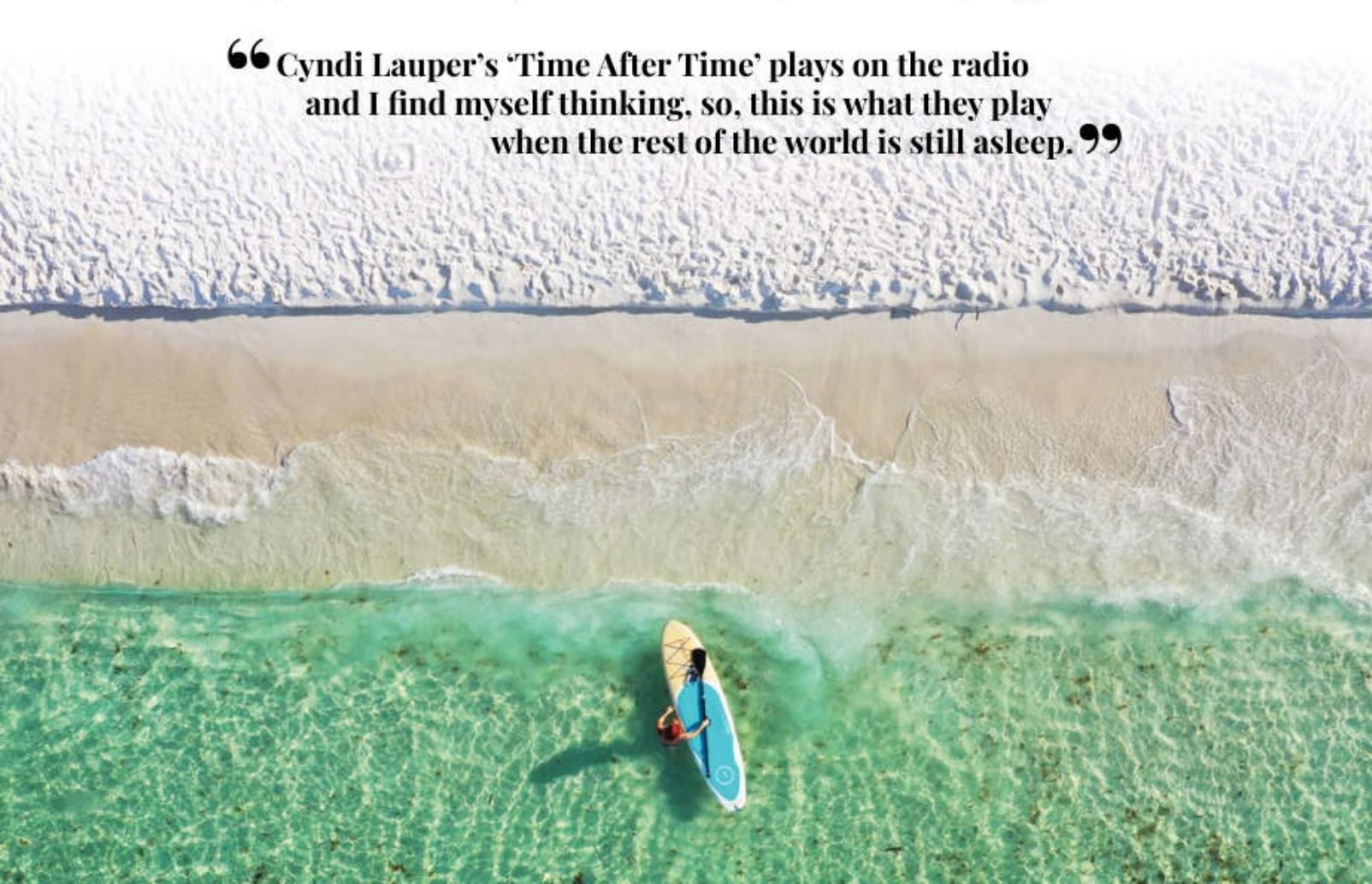
paddleboards line the narrow wooden dock at the end of Grayton’s main street, Hotz Avenue. It’s an array that’s almost as diverse as the people now gathering, with all walks of life seemingly accounted for. And amidst the tune of friendly and sleepy *good morning’s* stands the reason we’re all here: Amanda Abbott.

“Welcome to Gulf Therapy,” smiled Amanda.

With long, red hair flowing effortlessly past her shoulders, and a turquoise swimsuit not far from the color of the water we’re about to embark on, she exudes the poise of a person ready to take on the world, coupled with the laid-back yet adventurous spirit of someone who’s spent the majority of her days soaking up life by the water. Both of which are exactly what Amanda is all about. Having called this stretch of beach home on and off for over 30 years, Amanda told me, “The water is like my sanctuary. It’s where I feel the most happy and calm.”

As we make our way around the bend where Dune Lake connects to the Gulf of Mexico, we arrive at the sugar-white sands of Grayton Beach, where a small handful of fishing charters have already begun their day, peppering the horizon. At the end of the pier, a yellow flag warns of medium hazards and moderate surf conditions, though the crystal clear water of the barely-present waves tell another story. Without hesitation (at least none that show), the group paddles out toward an undesignated spot on the water. This is about the time any reminders of my dawn wake-up call evade me completely, gone with the now-

“Cyndi Lauper’s ‘Time After Time’ plays on the radio and I find myself thinking, so, this is what they play when the rest of the world is still asleep.”



distant rain clouds. I start to forget what time, or even day, it is, which proves to be a popular opinion amongst my peers.

From above, we must look like a cluster of colors and shapes dotting a sea of emerald green with no rhyme or reason. Here on the surface of the water, strangers become friends; some swimming and splashing, some deep in conversation. Some are on the hunt for exotic marine life, while others leisurely drape themselves over their boards, eyes serene, simply taking it all in. The common denominator being unencumbered smiles as wide and boundless as the ocean beneath.

This is where the “therapy” part of Gulf Therapy comes in, and yes, it’s as simple as that. As local and long-time attendee Stacie Boudreaux said, “It’s where the magic happens.” This is a foolproof recipe of salt water, sun, and community that paves the way for so much more.

“It’s almost become a pay-it-forward thing,” said Abbott, who normally brings anywhere from 3 to 43 paddlers out at a time. “People come to connect with the group. They’re coming not just for the outlet on the water, they’re coming here to connect with people that are real and being supportive, and that are there for you.”



For more information on Gulf Therapy and how to get involved, visit gulftherapy.org.

Another veteran of the group, Joel Mitchell explained, "The door opens for that kind of stuff because there's no pretense at all. There's no showy vibes. Everyone's just 'here.'"

“One might ask what Gulf Therapy really is, but the simple truth is that it's whatever you need it to be.”

When you see the Gulf Therapy Founder in her element, out on the water or crushing 10-plus-hour work days with her brother's real estate firm, you would never know that just years prior held some of the darkest days she would ever know. Times weighed heavy by pain, shame, and guilt made hope dim for this woman who now radiates with unending positivity. The saving grace, just as it is now, water became her solace. "It's like she gets to sprinkle this healing dust on people," said Boudreaux, who can probably count the Gulf Therapy days she's missed on a single hand.

One might ask what Gulf Therapy really is, but the simple truth is that it's whatever you need it to be.

"You just have these natural, real, genuine conversations on the water," explained Abbott. "And then you can see this release start to happen. That's when I'm just like, yes, this really does work for other people. This didn't just work for me."

Amanda said the hardships she went through have no doubt helped mould her into the person she is today. "During my trauma, I would go out on the water to heal. And somewhere along the way, it became something I wanted to do for other people."

This led her to organize a Paddle for Prevention event to help raise awareness around mental illness. "Being out on the water like that was something people really connected with," Amanda told me. Afterwards, the desire to recreate that on a smaller, more intimate scale led her to launch Gulf Therapy in 2017. And in just a few years, it grew organically to become so much more than she ever imagined.

"We did the group for a couple years and then, people just kept trying to give me money," she told me, with a humble laugh. "They were like, we love what you're doing. Can we donate?"

With the help of continued generosity and a partnership with Adventure 30A, who provides the board rentals, Amanda eventually turned Gulf Therapy into the non-profit it is today. She shared with me how grateful she is for the opportunity to be able to give back to the community, not just on the water, but off the water.

"A lot of times when you have those one-on-one conversations that naturally unfold on the water," she said. "There are multiple incidences where you get the sense of those people that need a little more support and might be afraid to ask for it. When I see where there's that extra layer needed, I help align them with local therapists, massage therapists, or even a yoga session. Whatever is needed."

One such person who has been on the receiving end of Gulf Therapy's healing power is Julie Spears. After losing her son back in 2016, Julie eventually heeded the call and found not only her own healing on the water, but also herself.

"It was a very safe place," she recalled her first time. "I didn't have to talk. There was no pressure." Eventually it grew to mean even more. "It was a place I didn't have to hide what I'd been through."

In no time, paddleboarding became her outlet. "When I'm out on the water, I just feel so close to God," said Spears. "So close to my son."

If she could sum Gulf Therapy into just two words, it would be: life-changing. Spears said it was about the community of people also there. "The people I met through Gulf Therapy were really what changed me," she said.



Looking at the faces all around me, sunlit and glistening with salt water, I could see what she meant. I found myself engulfed with a feeling of surrender, this time, out of an unspoken respect and understanding for my peers and the long-winded journeys that had brought all of us to this very moment. The dark days have paved the way for brighter ones.

"Early in the morning when the sun's coming up, the animals are coming alive and the creatures of the water are swimming with us, you just feel one with the earth," said Abbott. "You are able to strip down and just take in the environment. Even heal. That kind of thing happens on the water, these beautiful mornings where you're just drifting away." 🌊

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The Real Answer Might Surprise You

We get asked that question a lot. In fact, we're always surprised by how many of our 1.5 million social media fans don't know anything at all about the scenic two-lane roads that hug the beach along Florida's Gulf Coast.

Yes, we said "roads." Plural.

See? Even many locals don't know the whole story.

Of course, there are roads named "30-A" all over the world (sometimes with a hyphen; sometimes without), including a national highway in India, a 35-mile drive in New York State and Route 30A in Vermont. But did you know there are at least four roads named 30-A right here in Florida? These roads once served as "alternate routes" (hence the "A") to Old Florida State Road 30.

Old Florida State Road 30 (SR 30) once originated at the Alabama state line and meandered 283 miles east across the panhandle, stopping shy of Perry, past Florida's "Big Bend." In the late 1970s, Florida's Department of Transportation returned maintenance responsibilities of various state roads back to the counties. When that happened, many State Road designations simply disappeared from maps forever.

Old State Road 30 is mostly hidden these days, in effect paved over by what we now know as U.S. Highway 98. In Bay County, Florida, old SR 30 is referred

to as Front Beach Road, connecting the communities of Hollywood Beach, Laguna Beach, and Panama City Beach, while State Road 30-A is actually the same thing today as Panama City Beach Parkway.

In Franklin and Gulf counties, the road known as 30-A follows the shore along Bay San Blas, Indian Lagoon and St. Vincent Sound. Those in-the-know will be quick to note that one of their favorite restaurants can be found here along 30-A: Indian Pass Raw Bar. You can even enjoy an ice-cold 30A beer there!

In Walton County, CR 30-A starts in the west near Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, dipping southeast and passing through Blue Mountain Beach, Grayton Beach and Seaside, before rejoining old SR 30 some 19-miles away in Inlet Beach. On April 9, 2008, the State of Florida officially designated this particular stretch of road a Scenic Highway.

Special places invoke special emotions. A stunningly gorgeous but sparsely populated region in South America inspired the now-famous Patagonia® brand. Founded in 1938 along the banks of Columbia River, Columbia® still calls Washington County, Oregon home today. We don't think of 30A as disconnected miles of soulless asphalt. 30A is a celebration of small town beach life, the kind that's been enjoyed by families for

decades, all along the Gulf Coast. 30A is a lifestyle. It's a mindset. 30A is the decision to take the "alternate route" – to favor a slower, more deliberate, and happier way of living. We hope you'll join us for the ride.



Our Love Affair with Palm Trees

Writer: Martin Liptrot



As fir trees became synonymous with Christmas long ago, the palm tree has become the de-facto universal symbol of the beach, beautiful weather, and good times. Whether on a magazine cover, movie screen, t-shirt, or even inked on a beach bum's arm, the symbolism of implied tropical freedom is recognized by all.

So iconic has the palm tree become that it decorates the state seal of Florida and the state flag of South Carolina. In addition, the palm tree is represented on the national flags of Fiji, The Cocos and Haiti, as well as the Malaysian state of Penang, and the city of Miami, among other places around the world.

The palm tree has also become a must-have design element for many affluent brands, luxury resorts, grand hotels, ritzy boardwalks and esplanades. Despite the small inconvenience of the palm not being native to many of these locations, designers, architects and municipalities pay a small fortune to have them transplanted onto their properties. More often than not, neither tourists nor locals are aware that these trees are not native to the area.

So how did this tree become the ubiquitous symbol of Summer?





“
As early as
two millennia ago,
the ‘brand’ of
the palm as
something
luxurious was
already taking
root.
”

Well, it helps that there are 2,500 different types of palms, many species being more like tall grass or shrubbery than a tree. Their large evergreen fronds shelter a range of fruits – from coconuts and dates to acai and betel nuts – along with serving as natural habitats for everything from squirrel to birds.

The palms’ energy-giving fruits, its coir for rope, and pliable fronds for building shelters were so important to the early people of its native regions that it quickly became a symbol of peace, prosperity and fertility, rapidly working its way into the culture and folklore of the Romans, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. As early as two millennia ago, the ‘brand’ of the palm as something luxurious was already taking root.

The palm’s status was further enhanced by the late Victorian passions for both landscape gardening and warm weather vacations. Many of the Mediterranean resorts where the British and European aristocracy ‘took their winters’ were built with design flourishes that reflected the territories in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, upon which their fortunes were based. Because of this, incorporating the elegant palm tree into their design was seen as a symbol of wealth and prosperity.

As with all fads and fashions, when the royal and wealthy ‘influencers’ adopted it, followers picked it up pretty soon after. Palm decorations, illustrations and décor began appearing in homes, businesses, and civic developments around the world.

It’s not all about pretense, however, as palm trees aren’t just a symbol denoting wealth. For many locations around the world, they have been a key economic driver. Sometimes, with shocking environmental consequences.

Mature palm trees provide an oil valued in food processing and for the creation of biodiesel fuels. Because of their relatively high yield – ten times more than rapeseed or sunflower oil crops – palms have been extensively farmed and cultivated. Research suggests each human consumes 17 pounds of high-calorie, saturated palm

“
Research suggests each human
consumes 17 pounds of high-calorie,
saturated palm oil every year.
”

oil every year. Products such as peanut butter, frozen pizza and ice cream can contain palm oil. In areas such as the Indonesian island of Borneo, millions of acres of virgin rainforest have been cleared to accommodate palm oil plantations. The resulting deforestation has had a huge impact on their native wildlife, including orangutan, pygmy elephants and Sumatran rhinos, all of whom are now threatened with extinction.

Still, the enduring status of the palm as a symbol of prosperity and wealth remains so staunchly intact that in the world’s flashiest, most affluent location, Dubai, developers have created a series of man-made islands off the coast in the shape of the famed Palm. This

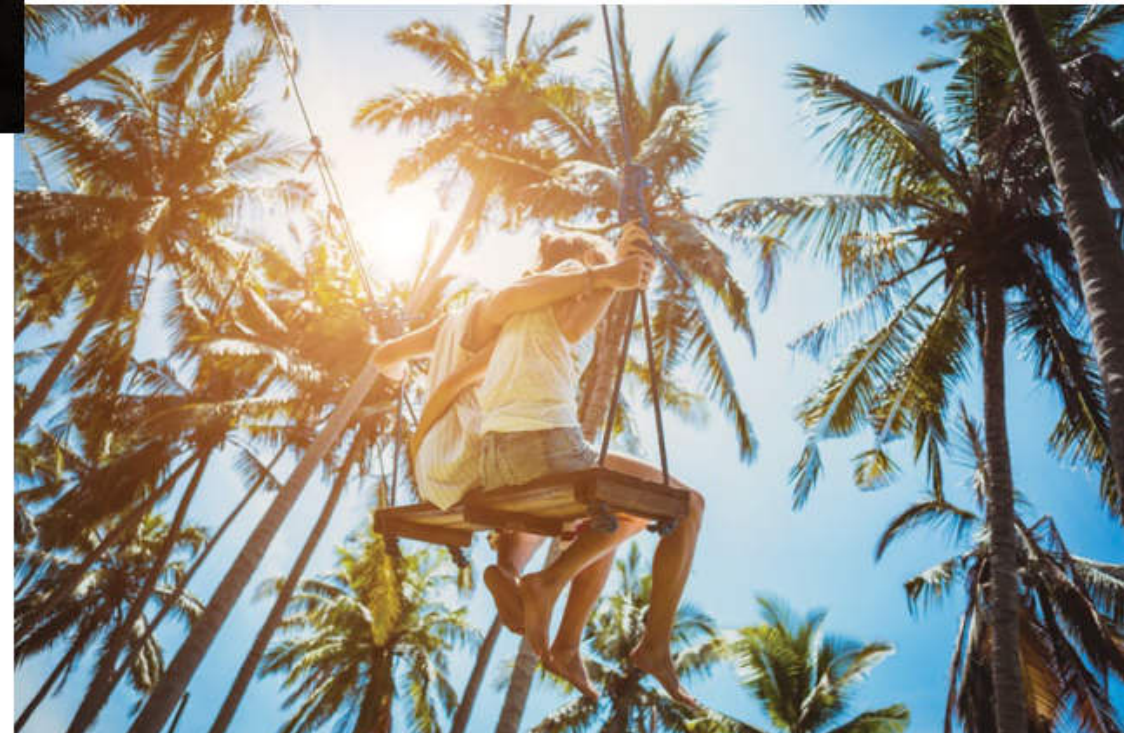
intricately designed island, visible from space, is home to many of the world’s top hotels and resorts as well as private homes owned by rock stars, sports stars and entertainment glitterati from around the world. Why settle for simply having palms on your property when you can actually live on a palm tree island?

So, what fuels our enduring love affair with palms in hot, sunny locations?

Well, for one, the fibrous material of palms makes them flexible and therefore capable of withstanding high winds and storms that are prevalent in such tropical and subtropical climates. Another reason is how easy they are to move around, replace or rearrange. Palms don’t have complicated

deep root systems such as pines, oaks, cedars and other trees. Even large palms have a small dense root ball, which can be easily dug up and moved. Should one blow over in a storm, you can usually just prop it back up the next day as if nothing happened. Additionally, palm trees are pretty uniform in look and size – one palm looks pretty much like every other palm in its genus. This is a huge advantage for a resort developer or luxury hotel operator who can easily find large numbers of similar palms to line avenues, decorate boulevards and fringe entrances and gateways along their properties.

For these reasons and more, palm trees are showing no sign of losing their immense appeal in the coastal and luxury circles of society. They’re beautiful. They’re resilient. They’re versatile. And hey, let’s admit it: they make us happy. 🌴



A Country Club for Beach Lovers?



J
The Clubs
by JOE™

Sign me up!

Writer: Abigail Abesamis Demarest

INSIDE THE CLUBS BY JOE

When you hear the words "country club," a stuffy setting with a golf course, a few tennis courts, a community pool, and a couple of dining rooms with average food is ordinarily what leaps to mind.

But throw in a private plane, a beach club with a 39,000-square-foot pool deck, and a laid-back coastal vibe, and you've got something that's anything but ordinary. The Clubs by JOE is a unique new collection of highly sought-after properties along the beaches of Northwest Florida, and The Club offers some truly extraordinary and exclusive amenities for its lucky members.

WaterSound Beach Club

A stunning beach lover's paradise, WaterSound Beach Club has it all: a prime location along the white-sand beaches and blue-green waters of Florida's Gulf Coast, a massive pool deck featuring two 7,000-square-foot zero entry pools, and fabulous on-site dining and social gathering spaces.

The Club features everything you love about the beach, minus the hassles of crowds and increasingly hard-to-find parking spots. There's a members-only boardwalk out to an expansive private beach, changing rooms, complimentary beach setups that include an umbrella and two chairs, stand-up paddleboards and kayak rentals, and discounted member pricing on beach bonfires. There's also complimentary towel service, along with casual outside dining where you can show up in flip-flops and board shorts, or a bathing suit and cover up.

"It's the perfect place to take the family," said John David Sullivan, a longtime member of The Clubs by JOE. "You can enjoy the pools, go to the beach, or just sit upstairs at the club bar. There's really something for everyone."

Sullivan noted that Watersound's Beach Club sits on some of the most valuable real estate in the world. He should know, as he's CEO of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida, one of the top real estate agencies in the U.S.

"It would have been really easy for St. Joe to just build condos or sell vacant lots," said Sullivan. "Instead, they had the vision to create this Beach Club with amazing access and protected views so its members will always be able to enjoy a world-class experience while visiting the area."

Private Air Charter

The Clubs by JOE recently took their membership to new heights, quite literally, adding a private plane service operated by Western Aircraft. The Pilatus PC-12 NG is available to Club Members on a reservation basis. The plane can hold up to eight passengers, has a maximum range of 1,800 nautical miles, and can reach a maximum altitude of 28,000 feet. Whether you're flying for business or pleasure, the spacious, leather-outfitted cabin, complete with inflight



Wi-Fi, offers a luxurious flying experience that is everything commercial travel usually isn't: comfortable, stress-free, and enjoyable.

Golf Courses

Even though the beach is obviously a huge draw, members still like to swing the clubs now and again, so we'd be remiss if we didn't mention the three award-winning golf courses that are also part of The Clubs by JOE.

Camp Creek Golf Club: Located between Highway 98 and Scenic Highway 30A, Camp Creek Golf Club is a Tom Fazio-designed golf course that's home to nearly 7,200 yards of fairways, greens, and bunkers. It's characterized by a mixture of manicured turf and native plants, which give the course a more natural look and provide habitats for local wildlife. A multi-million dollar expansion of Camp Creek Golf Club is currently underway, with plans to add a health and wellness center, a kids club, a casual cafe, multi-sport courts (including tennis and pickleball courts), leisure pools, a playground, and a 75-room boutique inn.

Shark's Tooth Golf Club: In the nearby coastal community of Wild Heron, adjacent to the gorgeous Lake Powell, Shark's Tooth Golf Club is ideal for golfers of all skill levels. Designed by Greg Norman, the course takes players around the lake's shore with several wooden cart bridges that cross over protected wetlands and uplands. It's a thoughtful design that really lends a feeling of connectivity to the surrounding landscape.

Origins Golf Club: Davis Love III, the designer of Origins, describes this course as, "golf made simple and fun again, yet challenging enough to retain the interest of avid players." Unlike the other two golf courses, which are exclusive to Members of The Clubs by JOE, Origins Golf Course is also open to the public. This short course is perfect for families, beginners, and casual golfers.

Whether you're golfing, dining, socializing, flying high in the sky or just kicking back by the beach or pool, The Clubs at JOE boasts amenities you simply can't find anywhere else. And yet, it's all casual enough to be enjoyed in shorts and flip-flops. For true beach lovers, it just doesn't get any better than that.



To learn more about The Clubs by JOE, visit clubsbyjoe.com.

IMAGINE



**entire cities becoming
silent and pollution-free,
as electric bikes replace
fossil-fueled motorcycles**



HOW ELECTRIC BIKES WILL *change the World*

In 1897, Hosea W. Libbey of Boston registered a patent for a bicycle powered by an electric motor. While Libbey tweaked his invention so he could bring the concept to production, along came the internal combustion engine. The automobile roared to life, and transportation was defined for the next century.

Today, there is no disputing that, when it comes to personal transportation, the car is still king. But now, over 120 years after Libbey's invention, electric bikes are making a quiet but dramatic comeback. Air pollution, noise pollution, traffic congestion and the pursuit of healthier lifestyles are now global concerns, and people are looking for better alternatives to meet their transport and commuting needs. In fact, in 2018, electric bike riders covered 586 billion kilometres worldwide. And the movement is growing, fast. "Electric bikes are one of the most environmentally sound modes of motorized transport today," said Jon Egan, a leading urban transport and planning consultant and commentator on electric and autonomous vehicles. "Their battery-powered motors make short commutes easy and longer journeys more feasible."

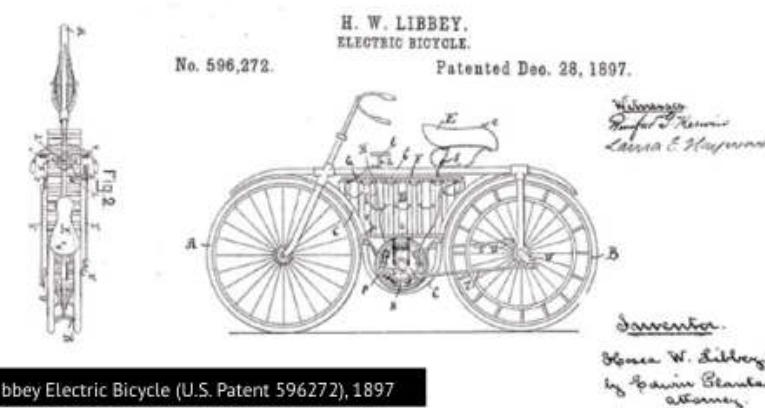
Egan said that as technology continues to advance and the price of batteries drop, electric bikes will become more affordable and will increasingly challenge fossil-fuel consuming motorcycles and cars as the preferred form of transportation in many of the world's most congested cities.

And it is in the rapidly urbanizing nations where electric bikes are taking root most quickly.

Writer: Martin Liptrot
Beach Photography: Lauren Athalia



“Over 120 years
after Libbey’s invention,
electric bikes are making a quiet
but dramatic comeback.”



Hosea W. Libbey Electric Bicycle (U.S. Patent 596272), 1897

In the 1990's, China implemented strict anti-pollution laws to combat toxic air quality, which was having a terrible public health and economic impact. Promoted as a stylish and youthful transport alternative, electric bikes are now seen as a 'must have' with young urban professionals in China's big cities, where e-bikes outnumber cars two to one.

"You have to consider the history of personal transportation in places like China and across Southeast Asia to understand why electric bikes have been so warmly embraced," said Egan. "Cars were always too expensive for most families and bikes, so motorbikes and scooters were the established transport choice. That not only makes adoption of the electric bike a more natural progression, it also means the road and transport infrastructure is already more bike-friendly."

The pace at which electric bikes are being adopted across Asia shows the promise they hold worldwide.

"For anyone who has spent time in Bangkok, Hanoi, Guangzhou or Manila, you can only imagine the potential improvements to air quality, the reduction in noise pollution and, hopefully, fewer road traffic fatalities as electric bikes continue to reshape transportation," said Egan.

But what about in the West? Are U.S. and European commuters ready to make the change too? In 2018, the global market for electric bikes was estimated to be worth nearly \$21 billion. And even though e-bike sales in the U.S. were only around \$77 million, that was almost double the total from the year before.

Egan believes much more can and should be done to encourage electric bikes.

"Persuading a suburban family to swap their SUV for electric bikes is already a big enough challenge," said Egan. "Our cities have been designed around the car — multi-lane highways, strip malls. The automobile's absolute dominance has led to an absence of sidewalks and bike lanes. We will have to make significant changes to our urban landscape to accommodate huge numbers of electric bikes."

But there are places in the U.S. where electric bikes are being successfully trialled. For example, the new urbanist community of Seaside, Florida, has promoted electric bikes as part of its solution to address growing traffic and parking challenges.

"Seaside and neighboring new urban communities attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year," said Justin Dunwald, manager of the YOLO Board + Bike store in Gulf Place, Florida. "As traffic congestion increases, electric bikes are rapidly being adopted as a solution."

Seaside authorities have recently had to impose parking bans, close roads to automobile traffic and even pedestrianise its town center — all measures being taken to re-establish the town's founding principle of being a walkable, bikeable community where cars simply aren't necessary.

Tourist destinations are often a great way to seed ideas and try new things. Visitors to Seaside from car-centric locations such as Dallas, Atlanta, and New Orleans are more likely to rent electric bikes, use them to head out for a day at the beach or for dinner one evening as a vacation experience. If the experience is a good one, perhaps they will consider trying it out again when they return home, initially as a leisure option, but starting to break the stranglehold of the car on their transport choices.

So how can the adoption of electric bikes be fast-tracked? Affordability, of course, is critical. The cost can vary considerably. About \$1,000 can get one a very basic entry-level electric bike, but quality and reliability can be issues at that low price point. Between \$2,000 and \$3,000, e-bikes





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”

sport better motors and are often designed for specific uses — commuting, mountain biking, trail riding. It is not an insignificant investment, but it’s a heck of a lot cheaper than a car.

“In my mind, electric bikes are not really an alternative to a regular bicycle,” said Mike Ragsdale, founder of The 30A Company, who markets a line of 30A Electric Bikes by YOLO (www.30Aelectricbikes.com). “Electric bikes are an alternative to a car. When you think about it that way, the price point is extremely reasonable.”



Ragsdale said he rides his electric bike almost every day, and not just for recreation.

“I can’t remember the last time I drove to the office,” said Ragsdale. “Now I ride my electric bike instead; something I never would have done on just a normal bicycle.”

Marketing data suggests, as with other electric vehicles, the battery is a big driver of cost. But as technology advances, prices drop. It will also be important to extend the lifetime of batteries to give value to owners over the life of the bike. In China, cheaper bikes use lead-acid batteries which have a lifespan of around 2 years, whereas higher-end bikes use lithium-ion batteries that last 6 or 7 years.

And following China’s lead in introducing strict air quality and pollution control, regulators in our cities and towns can make electric bikes a more attractive commuting choice too.

In fact, the opportunity for electric bikes to make a telling contribution in reducing global warming is most pronounced in semi-rural or suburban areas. Urban city dwellers in the West already have other low carbon transit alternatives — natural gas buses, subways and e-scooters. In the suburbs, journeys are typically in the electric bike’s ideal range of 5-15 miles and are largely solo riders. Switching to electric bikes for these relatively short trips could save millions of tonnes in carbon emissions and other pollutants.

As with any new technology, there are entrepreneurs and disruptors creating new business models. Seeking to address the high costs, Eric Quidenus-Wahlforss and Alexander Ljung, founders of music streaming service SoundCloud, launched an electric bike subscription start-up called Dance (www.dance.co).

“We set out to create a frictionless e-bike subscription service with no upfront costs and all-inclusive services,” Quidenus-Wahlforss told reporters at CNBC. “Dance is the perfect solution for those who are looking for a healthy, environmentally friendly, time-saving and joyful form of mobility.”

For urban professionals who have already taken the step of ditching car ownership in favor of ride-sharing apps, they can now download apps for electric bike sharing services. Citi Bike, owned by Lyft, has 4,000 e-bikes at hundreds of locations in New York City, while Motivate, also a Lyft company, has nearly 1,000 electric bikes in the Bay Area.

These subscription services are big business in India too. Founded in 2017, Yulu currently boasts 2.5 million users and 10,000 electric two-wheelers operating across Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and Bengaluru. The e-bike membership program plans to increase its fleet size to 100,000 electric bikes by 2021, according to Amit Gupta, Yulu’s CEO.

Electric bikes are on the cusp of changing the way we travel. They meet our need for mobile independence. They don’t require parking spaces. They don’t get stuck in traffic. They don’t consume gasoline. They promote a healthier lifestyle. They reduce noise and air pollution, and they help combat global warming. Oh, and they’re a whole lot of fun too. 🚲

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The Wine Bar

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Writer: Kristy Gustafson
Photography: Sean Murphy
Land Air Sea Productions
Tiare Miranda Photography

International Champions Flock to an Unlikely Shore: Pickos Waterski School

It's a thick Florida morning, and the surface of the lake before me is glass; untouched and mirroring the stillness all around it. But it won't be for long.

In the center of the lake sits a red and white ski jump with corresponding buoys measuring out a landing zone of 100 feet, 150, 200. I suddenly find myself wondering the level of fearlessness that propels a person to strap a pair of water skis to their feet and launch themselves off a ramp at speeds over 70 mph. Oh, and then land themselves right side up atop the water on the other side. When I imagine my own attempt at something like this, it ends a lot of different ways, but right side up is definitely not one of them.

Through the pines of the surrounding state park comes a gentle breeze, and the summer cicadas are announcing the start of a new day.

And then I hear it. The low hum of a motor announcing itself.

Moments later, I see a royal blue Nautique ski boat whiz by. It's pulling a young man in gray swim trunks, a black life vest, and long brown hair pulled tightly into a low bun. When the boat makes its way back around, the skier is now facing backwards, the handle of the rope in a





toehold around a flexed left foot that's folded across his opposite thigh. As he twists and turns, throwing both 180 and 360 spins to the mix, while weaving back and forth across the wake simultaneously, he looks like a cross between a wakeboarder, break dancer, and contortionist. I'm quickly reminded that this is all taking place on the surface of the water at nearly 20 mph.

For mere mortals like most of us, this would be an impossible feat, but for Adam Pickos, this is just another day in the life of a professional water skier.

"I grew up on these lakes," said the 28-year-old Santa Rosa Beach local of the three freshwater lakes that comprise Pickos Waterski School. Here, at age three, is where his father taught him to ski. Two years later, he was slalom skiing, and by age six, he began competing in tournaments. His first Nationals competition took place when Adam was just nine. Now a two-time world champion and national record holder, he's one of only seven people in the world to trick ski for over 12,000 points. Adam trains six days a week, multiple times a day. When asked what's helped keep him going all these years, he laughed. "Skittles. That was my bribe growing up."

In addition to years of hard work and an unwavering passion for the sport, he has yet another thing to thank: good genes.

For those who dabble in the waterski world, Cory Pickos is a household name and a living legend. Like father like son, Cory is also a two-time world champion, one that's earned him twenty-four world records (the first of these at age 13) and a well-earned place in the American Water Ski Educational Foundation (AWSEF) Hall of Fame. Not to mention, back in 2009, he and Adam made history as the first father-son duo to make the finals at the Canada World Championships.

As for Cory's early motivation? "When I was young, my dad would tell me I could either come to the construction site and dig ditches, or I could ski," the Hall of Famer told me. "I chose to ski."

“When I was young, my dad would tell me I could either come to the construction site and dig ditches, or I could ski.”

Since the ripe age of 16, Cory has run a handful of ski schools across Florida. He first began in his parents' backyard in Eagle Lake. Over the years, he's learned to master the art of chasing summers with training and coaching opportunities that have led him all over the world – often with his son, Adam, in tow.

"I have some of the best memories tagging along with my dad to train," said Adam. "Skiing with the Australian team in the Murray River was definitely one of them, long before I really knew how cool that was."

In 1992, Cory and his wife Rose moved to Santa Rosa Beach to open Pickos Waterski School.

Fast forward 28 years, and Adam is now making his final turns while his dad watches proudly from the boat. He makes the switch from toe-tricking to hands (a style of trick skiing very similar to wakeboarding) and proceeds to perform a series of backflips and front flips,

seamlessly, from one side of the wake to the other. A handful of neighbors, out for their morning walk, come to watch the show and, if they're anything like me, are merely trying to keep their bottom jaws in place.

I'm joined at the dock by Adam's wife, Caitlin, who wishes them a cheery good morning, and then says, "I think we surfed too much this weekend. He looks tired." I'm quick to chime in and laugh saying that he definitely doesn't look tired to me.

Caitlin, who's rocking a wet braid, athletic shorts, and a pink PFG long sleeve, married Adam last November and took on a community relations role for the school in order to help gain local awareness,

including that of businesses and schools around the area. Of these, is Ohana Institute just up the road in Inlet Beach, Florida, from which a handful of students flock for lessons and training.

One of these students is Hattan Montgomery, a competitive figure skater who, after relocating from Nashville to Northwest Florida with her family, found her home here at Pickos. "Hattan's transition from elite figure skating to waterskiing was a defining time in her life, and for our family," said her mother Cherie. "It was during our relocation that she skied for the very first time, and she couldn't have landed at a more amazing place." Hattan, who now trains three times a day, six days a week, has since risen to become the 2020 Southern Regional G4 Tricks Champion, 5th overall, and plans to start jumping very soon. All this, in less than a year.

But this wasn't always the plan.





"I had the goal of becoming an Olympic figure skater and was willing to work myself harder than anyone," said the 15-year-old, who as a result, suffered many severe injuries that took her out for months at a time. That's when she realized it was time to embark on a new journey, one that she thought could lead her "to a place figure skating never could." After just a few months, it's safe to say she's hooked.

"I never want to think about not waking up each morning, ready to pull up my hair, throw on my gloves, tighten my boots, jump in the water, and yell, 'Ready!'" said Hattan. "I often call myself an adrenaline junkie and, as Cory tells me, I am a bit crazy. The exhilaration I feel as I fly across the water is something that fills me with excitement and the drive to improve. This is a feeling I never want to, or will ever, give up."

The school is located one mile from the beach, just off the aptly named Slalom Way, and has been a breeding ground

for world-class athletes from all over the globe, including Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Greece, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Spain, and the United Arab Emirates, to name a few. In fact, professional skiers from all of these countries will grace the small beach town next summer for the World Junior Waterski Championships, hosted by the school.

Still, even with their huge international following and an abundant pool of athletic talent continually drawn to these shores year after year, beginners, professionals, and veterans alike are all welcome to experience this little piece of paradise in action.

Take it from Cory Pickos, who is literally in the boat from sunup until sundown.

"That's his office," said Adam as we made our way to the main dock. "I don't think he'd trade it for the world."

Around the lakes sit 46 homes, a good number of those belonging to, or currently resided in, by skiers. As I take a seat beneath the tin-roofed dock in front of the clubhouse, I'm lucky to meet a handful of them arriving for their daily runs. Looking at most, I realize that until you see them strapped, ready, and flying across the water, you wouldn't know you're in the presence of world-renowned athletes.

I soon learned that to my right is 17-year-old Federico Jaramillo, aka 'Fed,' of South Walton High School. Hailing from Bogota, Colombia, he just so happens to be the number one slalom skier in his age group and recently obtained his

**“ This is a feeling
I never want to,
or will ever, give up. ”**



third world record. He's joined by his one-year-old puppy who, ironically enough, hates the water. Fed's girlfriend Kenna Hansen is 15th in the world for girls' slalom and tromping around the dock getting her equipment ready. As she strapped up her custom Reflex boots, a hardshell contraption with large silver buckles and a spring-loaded heel, she laughed and told me, "They're more comfy than they look."

Minutes later, the boat returned with Coach Cory at the helm, who's quick to tell Kenna, "Are you gonna Facebook all day or are we gonna do some skiing?" And then they were off.



Adam jetted off to do some coaching of his own one lake over and up walked 71-year-old Brenda Cavanaugh sporting short hair in a low ponytail and carrying her own gear. I asked if she's here for a lesson, and in a soft Mississippi accent, she told me she first learned to ski back in her 20s then picked it back up when she turned 60, and had since been taking lessons on and off with Cory. What she didn't tell me is she's a top-tier veteran skier, who just years prior took home the gold in trick skiing for the Senior World Championships, at age 66.

There's a reason why skiers of all ages, levels, and disciplines have found their home here at Pickos Waterski School, and to think it all started with one man is nothing short of remarkable.

"He's always been a great mentor and coach," said Adam — who, though Cory shows no signs of stopping anytime soon, will one day take

over the reins. "He's the most patient man on the planet, and he really has a different way of seeing things than 99% of other coaches out there. It's truly a gift, and one of the reasons he's so successful."

"If and when we have kids, I would love for them to be competitive skiers and grow up like Adam did, around all of these international influences," said Adam's wife Caitlin. "It's such a gem to be in a small town like Santa Rosa Beach, but with people flying here from all over the world." 📍

For more on Pickos Waterski School, visit skipickos.com.

Holiday

GEAR & GIFT GUIDE

Writer: Bentley Caldwell

The holidays are upon us, and it's time to look for that just so right gift for those discerning few who seem to have everything they want. Fret no more though, because if said significant others are fans of the beach and great outdoors we've got a few suggestions that will certainly keep you on their nice list.

Besides, I have a sneaky suspicion that a few of these might just make it onto your personal use list too. Oh, the joy of giving.



1 Moke America Electric LSV

British classic becomes American beach icon. The Moke is a street-legal, electric car, that's perfect for American beach life, or getting around your neighborhood. This upgraded version has more legroom, expanded trunk space, a kickin' sound system, and can carry 3,000 lbs. and cruise at 25 mph. The Moke stays true to its roots while keeping you cool in the present.

GOMOKEAMERICA.COM (Starting at \$18,995)



2 Spikeball Pro Kit

Take family fun at the beach, park or backyard to a whole new level with the Spikeball Pro Kit. Complete with features such as sturdier legs and rims, two pro balls, portable pump and gauge, and a serving line, you can be sure you're playing with the best kit around for tournament standards.

SPIKEBALL.COM (\$99)

3 Yamaha 500Li Seascooter

Grab onto the Yamaha 500Li Seascooter featuring the best-in-class power and speed. Designed for professional and recreational divers, this powerful Seascooter offers 500 watts of power to whiz you through the water at up to 4.35mph for 90 minutes on a single charge.

YAMAHASCOOTERS.COM (\$1,595)



4 YETI V Series Hard Cooler

Solid, Stately, and Stainless Steel. This brand new model combines the cold-holding power of Yeti's Rambler® drinkware and the iconic Tundra® Cooler. The YETI V Series™ Stainless Steel Cooler brings you the best of both worlds in one single cooler that can hold 46 cans. This new stainless cooler is both nostalgic and futuristic, while holding true to the tough pedigree that YETI has become known for.

YETI.COM (\$800)



5 YOLO Board, New 11' Inflatable

Just unpack, pump and paddle! Inflatable YOLO boards are light, portable and quickly becoming the go-to option for many paddlers. They come with their own rolling backpack, pump, pressure gauge, removable center fin, molded-in tri fins, bungee system and carry handle. It's everything you need to enjoy a day on the water. The inflatable SUP boards are also great for traveling, storing on boats, and packing on planes. The perfect accessory for all of your Beach Happy adventures.

YOLOBOARD.COM (11' FROM \$1,099)



BEACH HAPPY GEAR

6 Leica Sofort Instant Film Camera

Forget being stuck with phone only photos. Instant film cameras are continuing to make a nostalgic comeback, and the Leica Sofort is one of the coolest around. Moments that must be framed and captured to hold in your hand - transformed into lifelong memories that you can relive again and again. The Leica Sofort was created precisely for these moments. Available in five colors, with built in self timer.

[US.LEICA-CAMERA.COM](https://us.leica-camera.com) (\$349)



7 PK360 By PK Grills

The perfect grill for all your grilling needs on the go or at home. Your PK360 will be with you through decades of sunshine, salt water, rain, sleet, snow, and more. PK grills produced before the moon landing are still cooking strong to this day, thanks to their rust-proof construction. Unlike other grills, the PK360 cook chamber is constructed entirely from aluminum. Aluminum conducts heat 4x more efficiently than steel, which means heat is dispersed evenly throughout the capsule. Say goodbye to expensive mistakes and hello to evenly cooked meats and veggies.

[PKGRILLS.COM](https://pkgrills.com) (\$799)



8 Lamzac: The Original Inflatable Lounger

What could be more comfortable than your sofa on the sand? Lamzac is the original inflatable beach or camp sofa that takes lounging to a new level. Just a few quick pumps and you're ready to kick back with your favorite sofa mate and watch the waves. It inflates and deflates incredibly simply and comes with its own small carry bag.

[AMAZON.COM](https://amazon.com) (FROM \$45)



9 Grady-White Express 370

This new walkaround cabin is ideal for entertaining family and friends, but still flexible enough to be used as an offshore fishing boat. The Express cabin boats are designed for performance, comfort and luxury. With a more modern and sportier look than most walkaround cabin boats, the Express 370, and its smaller sibling Express 350, has plenty of room for overnighting. The 370 series is 36.7 feet, has a hull draft of just 29" yet can be had with 1275 hp. This boat is great for large lakes, rivers to sounds and the open ocean.

[MARINEMAX.COM](https://marinemax.com)

Need a great place to work at the beach?



By Bentley Caldwell

Whether You're Vacationing Or Living The Beach Dream, Beachworx Has Got You Covered.

Let's face it, in today's fast-paced world, there's work of some kind to be done almost all the time. This is also the case for many of us while away on a beach vacation. Sometimes you just need a place to getaway and get it done without the hardships of trying to work from your beach home, condo, resort or home away from home.

Until recently, most of us in this situation didn't have much of a choice other than to whip out the old laptop or iPad and attend to those emails, scans, spreadsheets, calls and whatever else it was that needed to be done from our condos or resorts. However, that's not always the ideal place to work on a project while your family just wants to get away and play. That's where this Destin based company comes in. Whether you're in the area for

a week, a month, or live in Destin, South Walton, or Fort Walton beach full time, Beachworx is your solution.

Beachworx offers aesthetically pleasing shared office space, allowing you to work in a flexible, affordable, energetic, and modern co-working space without having to commit to long-term contracts and lease agreements. It's a state-of-the-art workplace, constantly innovating to provide the very best office environment for anyone in need of just the right place to work at the beach.

Perhaps best of all, Beachworx has membership arrangements with an array of local resorts and rental management companies, enabling their guests to use Beachworx facilities at no additional cost. When booking, be sure to ask if your vacation property offers this amenity through Beachworx.



Work right in the heart of Destin, Florida.



Private Offices

At Beachworx, you benefit from an executive office suite in the heart of Destin. Come and go as you please and always know that you have the best office in town, complete with all the amenities and convenience to get the work done in a place you'll be proud to work from. And did I mention the wonderful panoramic view and convenient location? You'll see what I mean!

Dedicated Desks

Don't need a private office? You can opt to have your own desk in a shared space with one or two others. This unique flexibility encompasses a twist between traditional executive office suites and modern co-working, making it both easy and affordable to get the space you need without being stuck with more than you may need.

Hot Desks

Available on a first-come-first-served basis, these Beachworx hot desks are the most affordable option in a traditional co-working setup. You can surround yourself with other driven and successful entrepreneurs, while still working in a shared co-working space with full access to all the great amenities Beachworx offers you.

Meeting Space

Beachworx has private board rooms of various sizes to meet your individual meeting needs. These board rooms are equipped with full multi-media capabilities such as flat screens, Apple TV & Chromecast for easy presentation capabilities when you need it. The meeting rooms also offer glass whiteboards, conference phones, and the privacy you need to carry out your meeting in a professional manner, any time of day.

Business Support Services

Beachworx offers you an array of business support services including mail and package handling, dedicated roadside digital



(850) 974-3435 TheBeachworx.com

billboard advertising in a highly desired, high traffic area, notary public services, locker rentals, digital imaging (printing, scanning, copying), and even reception and administrative services – from phone calls to client greetings.

Membership Includes

Member Spotlight

Beachworx social media channels and member directories to increase your exposure and introduce you to existing members, visitors and professionals across the Destin and surrounding region. This can be especially beneficial to new



businesses or those that can benefit from area connections with other professionals.

Use of The Hub and Amenities

The Hub is a space used for having lunch and casual meetings between members of Beachworx, and even their client guests. Using this casual and laid-back atmosphere is a great way to grow and connect outside of regular client meetings while you're at the office.

You will also have no-cost access to coffee, tea, water, snacks, WiFi access, printing and free parking, all easily accessible right in the heart of Destin, making it even simpler to do business.

BeachNETworx

With BeachNetworkx, members get exclusive, invitation-only access to personal and professional networking events, seminars and workshops hosted by Beachworx in partnerships with members and business professionals throughout the Destin and Northwest Florida community. These include Chamber of Commerce events, grand openings, public relations group events, magazine and media related events, and an entire array of great opportunities to mingle and meet with other movers and shakers.

Beachworx is also very involved in combining a level of social responsibility with profitable business initiatives throughout the Northwest Florida area. Whether it's by sponsorship or mentorship opportunities, Beachworx is dedicated to the support of multiple causes from military service and women's issues to arts, music, education and youth organizations to special needs, and environmental efforts. If you desire as a member to be involved in giving back and making a real difference in the local community, then Beachworx is a great springboard for boosting your efforts.

Whatever your individual business needs are, Beachworx truly does have something for everyone. Yes, even you.

For more information about the benefits of operating your business within Beachworx, give them a call at (850) 974-3435 or check them out online at TheBeachworx.com

Ask your accommodation provider or resort about their Beachworx membership amenity



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What You Get
**FOR YOUR
MONEY**

If the beach is calling your name, and it's time to make your dream getaway a reality, here's a look at what your money will get you in three popular beach communities across the Northwest Florida and Alabama Gulf Coast.

This piece of paradise has seen 2020 bring some of the lowest inventory availability in years, coupled with consistent gains in value, and record sales.

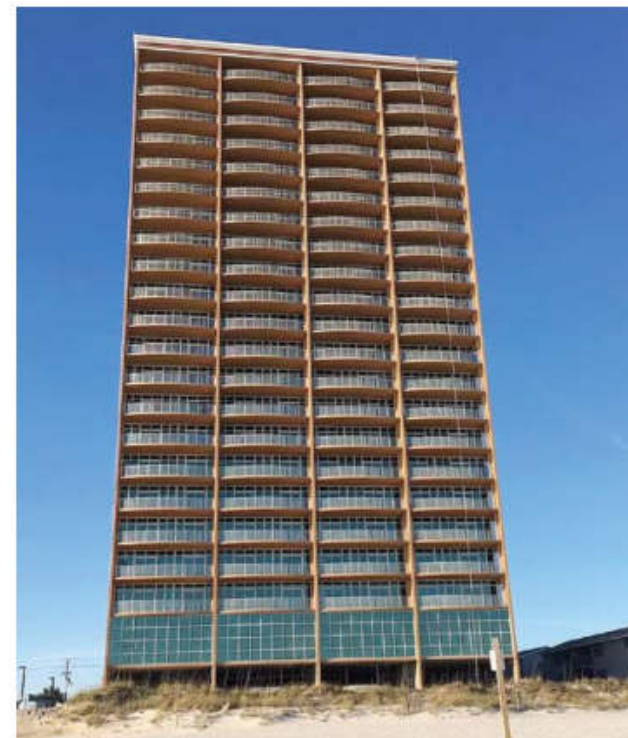
This means the months ahead should prove a great time to find your perfect place and grab it while you still can.



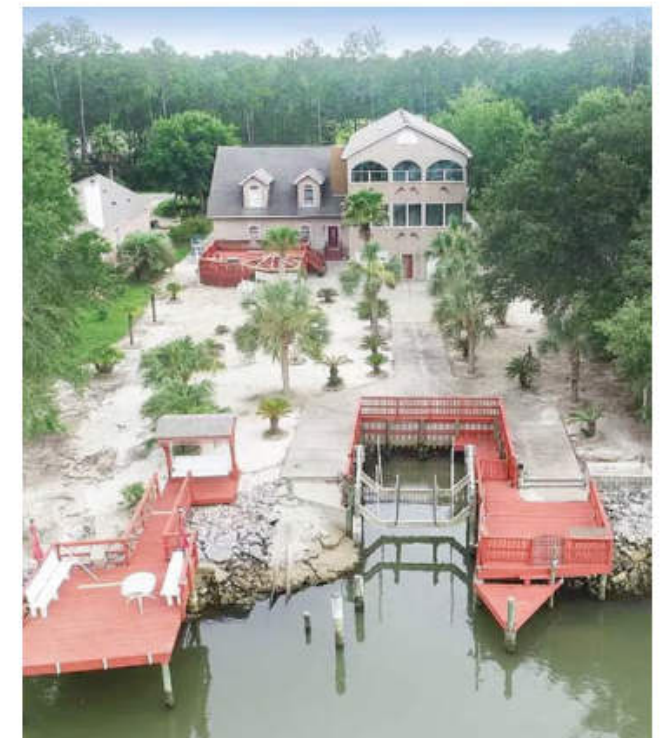
4th Avenue 3 bed / 2 bath 1,152 sq. ft.
\$339,500



Seawind Penthouse 3 bed / 3 bath 1,831 sq. ft.
\$749,900



Beach Blvd 4 bed / 3 bath 1,948 sq. ft.
\$1,259,900



Canal Drive 4 bed / 5 bath 11,000 sq. ft.
\$2,500,000

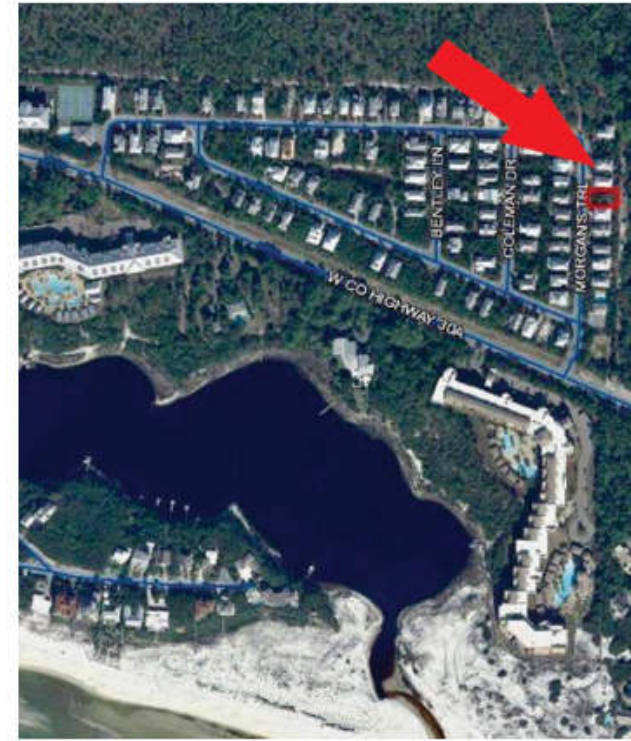
Fort Walton Beach, Florida



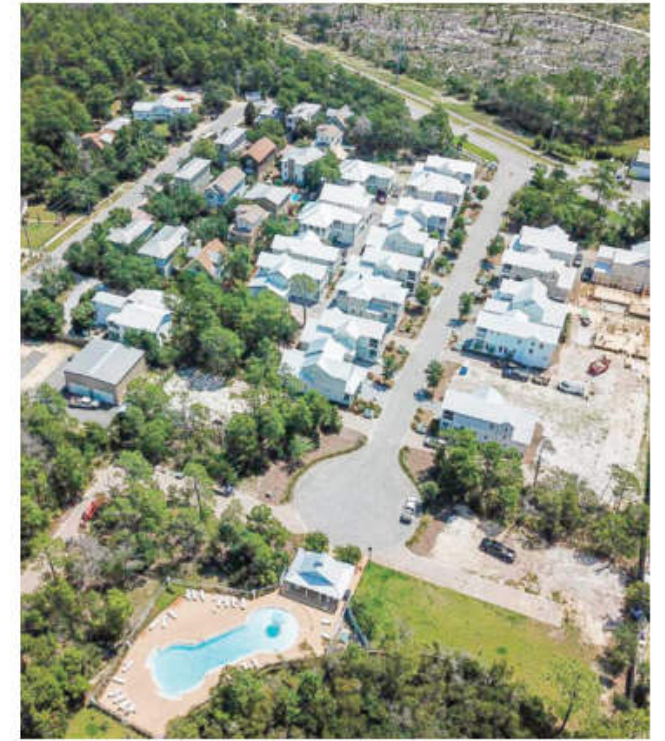
Cinco Bayou 1 bed / 1 bath 1,200 sq. ft.
\$315,000



Okaloosa Island 2 bed / 3 bath 1,292 sq. ft.
\$620,000



The Preserve at Grayton Beach Lot, 0.14 acre
\$399,000



Village of Grayton Beach 4 bed / 4 bath 2,211 sq. ft.
\$685,000



Okaloosa Island 8 bed / 6 bath 6,432 sq. ft.
\$890,000



Beal Pkwy 4 bed / 6 bath 4,906 sq. ft.
\$2,950,000



Grayton Landing 5 bed / 5 bath 3,658 sq. ft.
\$2,300,000



Grayton Beach 5 bed / 5 bath 4,086 sq. ft.
\$3,455,000



swimming with the stars

**FROM HIGH SCHOOL LIFEGUARDING
TO DAYTIME TV TO DANCING WITH
THE STARS, INGO RADEMACHER
SWIMS FULL CIRCLE.**

Fans know Ingo Rademacher from his 25 years portraying Jasper "Jax" Jacks on the long-running soap staple, *General Hospital*. While fans of *Dancing with the Stars* remember his 4th place finish with two-time dance champion, Kym Johnson, they usually don't recognize Ingo when he's pulling distressed people from the southern California surf or when he's rendering first aid to the dehydrated masses.



“ Sometimes I think people are sneaking pictures of me from the side, but then I realize they’re just taking photos of the lifeguard tower because of Baywatch. ”



"A lot of people never put two and two together," said Ingo. "Those that do recognize me know I'm working, so they usually just wave. Sometimes I think people are sneaking pictures of me from the side, but then I realize they're just taking photos of the lifeguard tower because of Baywatch. That brings you back down to earth pretty quick."

Born in West Germany in 1971, Ingo's family moved to Australia when he was ten years old. They lived on a 400-acre cattle and Angora goat ranch, where Ingo learned to be a professional equestrian. At 16, he became a lifeguard, patrolling the beaches near his home. He then started racing. Lots of racing. From sailing Hobie Cats to running marathons to paddleboarding, including the Molokai 2 Oahu Paddleboard Race, a grueling 32-mile race across shark infested waters. After just six months of college, Ingo dropped out to pursue a career in modeling. He landed his first acting role playing surfer Sean Hayden in the Australian soap opera *Paradise Beach*. After the show got canceled, he moved to L.A. in 1994.

"I've been working out with L.A. county lifeguards since moving here, and I get so much time off from the soaps because of the way they shoot," said Ingo. So, last year, Ingo decided to commit more fully, ultimately graduating from

L.A. Lifeguard Academy. "You know what? I really love it. And they need guys like me. College kids are just there for the summer. They need year-round help, and I'm a guy that's generally available to help when they need me."

Ingo works various lifeguard tower assignments — from L.A. Harbor in the south to Will Rogers State Beach near Santa Monica to as far north as Malibu.

So, what's the job like?

Ingo said he might get the call, "Can you be at Manhattan Beach 4th Street Tower at 10 a.m.?" Manhattan Beach is a frequent assignment, as it's just five minutes from his home. "Most days, I ride my YOLO Bolt electric bike to work. I love it." He opens the tower, immediately checking the first aid kit, calling his supervisor if he's short on supplies.

"After that, it's all about keeping an incredibly vigilant eye," said Ingo. "I'm constantly walking the beach. I'm constantly talking to people to provide help. Mostly, we help with minor medical issues such as ray stings, bee stings, sunburn and dehydration."

And what about water rescues?



"Yeah, for sure. Ten minutes into my very first shift, there was a big rip right out in front of my tower," he recalled. "All of a sudden, I saw another lifeguard sprinting down to the water. I saw two heads bobbing up and down, so I knew he needed backup." They rescued a 12-year-old boy and his friend, visiting from Colorado, that day.

"They were very athletic. The rip just grabbed them. They were shocked at how sudden and powerful it was. Your instinct is to swim against it. You have to try to relax and let it take you all the way out, then swim parallel to the shore and then swim back."

Every year, L.A.'s lifeguards make an estimated 12,000 ocean rescues and attend to more than 15,000 medical emergencies.

"When I was visiting 30A in 2012, I actually rescued someone from the rips near Seaside on my morning beach walk," recalled Ingo.

When he's not saving lives, Ingo loves to surf, paddle and spend time with his gorgeous family. Ingo and his wife Ehiku have two sons, both home-schooled, Peanut Kai and Pohaku Zen. The couple also own Mahiku (www.mahiku.com), an activewear brand inspired by their passion for Stand-up Paddleboard racing.

"I just bought my boys a couple of 9-foot race boards," said Ingo. "We love going to Oregon to wind surf on the Hood River. We have a lot of places we love to go, but L.A. has just about everything we need for our active lifestyle."

Ingo's celebrity status isn't unique among L.A. lifeguards. His friend Michael "Newmie" Newman from Baywatch

is also a "real life" lifeguard, as is the show's creator and executive producer, Greg Bonann. Baywatch is a worldwide phenomenon, listed by Guinness Book of World Records as the most widely viewed TV series in the world. "Greg is one of the richest guys in L.A., but he's still out here saving lives every week," said Ingo.

When asked why he does it, it becomes clear that the water is simply in his blood.

"The stakes of being an actor aren't really that high," he said. "I wanted a job where the stakes are higher. If you screw up, someone can die. When you're sitting in that tower, you can't let your guard down, even for a moment. You have to make sure everyone goes home safe that day." @



You can follow Ingo Rademacher's adventures, on and off the water, on his Instagram page: [instagram.com/ingorademacher](https://www.instagram.com/ingorademacher).

What Would You NAME THIS BAR?



If this was your new beach bar biz, what would you name it?
We asked our 1.3 million 30A Facebook fans, and
here are some of our favorite responses!

"Cruisin' Cocktails"
Gale Hampson

"Sandy Spokes"
Robin Hamilton

"Rum Runners"
De Phimeru

"5 O'Clock"
Bill Taylor

"Tiki Trike"
Melanie White Bentley

"The Tippy Tiki"
Amanda Bruson

"Salt on the Rim"
Eric Aist

"Salty Sips"
Tari Butler

"Booze Bike"
Christina Nave Brumitt

"The Tequila Trike"
Vanessa Woodard

"The Happy Clam"
Kathy Alvarez

"High Tide"
Michelle Miller

The Tonight Show

Starring Mother Nature

Photography by Susan Gunn

Who needs Netflix when Mother Nature routinely puts on such dramatic performances?
But as photographer Susan Gunn will attest, capturing Mother Nature in all her
electric majesty requires a keen eye... and more than a little patience.

The Watchman

“Capturing lightning in single-exposures
sometimes means waiting, which gives me time
to reflect. Seeing the empty lifeguard stand
illuminated here reminded me of my years as a
lifeguard and paramedic.”

Fishing Trip

“I love boats, and it’s clear I love storms, but this is the only way I like to experience them together. This was captured in a single exposure at my favorite beach town marina.”



Beach Burn

“This single exposure night scene reminded me of The Wizard of Oz for some reason. The storm and lightning were intense and the wind was howling. If only Dorothy had been a beach girl.”





Amethyst Strike

“This “six-miler” illuminated the Gulf like sunshine in the night. It also raised my heart rate a little.”



Thor's Hammer

“I captured this single exposure shot with my lens pointed directly overhead. It not only reminded me of a heavenly nebula, but also to leave the beach immediately.”

Night Dream

“This was captured late one night with a 200mm telephoto lens over 70 miles out in the Gulf. When I witness a single bolt like this, I think of weather as Mother Nature’s masterpiece.”

Learn more about Susan’s work at www.susangunnphotography.com, and you can follow her electrifying adventures on Instagram @susangunnphotography.

Abandon

“This massive strike nearly blinded me. I try to be safe, but I think I threw caution to the wind to get this one.”

Writer: Bentley Caldwell

OME WANDERR



THE 5-IN-1 BEACH CART

IT'S A CART, IT'S A CHAIR, IT'S A COT.
IT'S THE OME WANDERR, AND IT JUST MAY
BE THE PERFECT BEACH ACCESSORY.

Let's face it, if you've ever carried three kids, a few chairs, towels, toys and snacks on a 60-yard trek to secure your place in the sand, you've wondered if there was an easier way to make it to the beach without breaking your back. Turns out, you are not alone because someone finally created a solution to make the beach haul a breeze.

The OME — a fitting acronym for Oceans, Mountains, Earth — Wanderr is a unique, first of its kind, durable 5-in-1 piece of recreational gear that's a must-have for beach and outdoor lovers.

The durable yet lightweight cart weighs in at just 35 lbs and comes complete with a patented wheel design that rolls easily even on sand and rough terrain. The

Wanderr has a payload of 150 lbs, making it possible to carry just about anything you need for your beach excursion, camping trip or outdoor activity. But, here's what really makes this cool outdoor toy different from the lesser wagons in the market: The Wanderr quickly converts into a field chair, low chair (think beach), fully reclining lounger, and even a cot — all with a 250 lbs weight rating. How's that for versatility?

With the Wanderr in tow, many of the headaches of your recreational activities will definitely subside, and all those jaunts from the car to the beach will suddenly become a lot more pleasant. Ditto for those days spent at the ballfield, or your favorite state park or campsite.

OMEGear.com



OME Wanderr Specs:

- Seating capacity of 250 lbs
- Carries 150 lbs of gear in cart mode
- Fully reclinable in low chair and lounger mode
- Dual cup holders
- Tough aluminum frame that is weather and salt water resistant
- Durable UV resistant fabric
- Patented Sandtrakz® wheels that roll easily on various terrains, including soft sand
- Total product weight 35 lbs
- Comes standard with oversized bungee cargo net to hold things in place when in cart mode
- Comes standard with a large, durable grey tote bag for carrying armrests and other items





GULF COAST JAM

COUNTRY ON THE COAST



LYNYRD SKYNYRD **BRAD PAISLEY** **LUKE BRYAN**

CODY JINKS **COLE SWINDELL** **BROTHERS OSBORNE**

JOE NICHOLS **BILLY RAY CYRUS** **RILEY GREEN**

LINDSAY ELL **JORDAN DAVIS** **WALKER HAYES**

JON LANGSTON **TENILLE TOWNES** **RYAN HURD**

CJ SOLAR **SHY CARTER** **SHELLY FAIRCHILD**

FRANK RAY **ALEX HALL** **PEPSI SOUTHERN ORIGINAL WINNER**

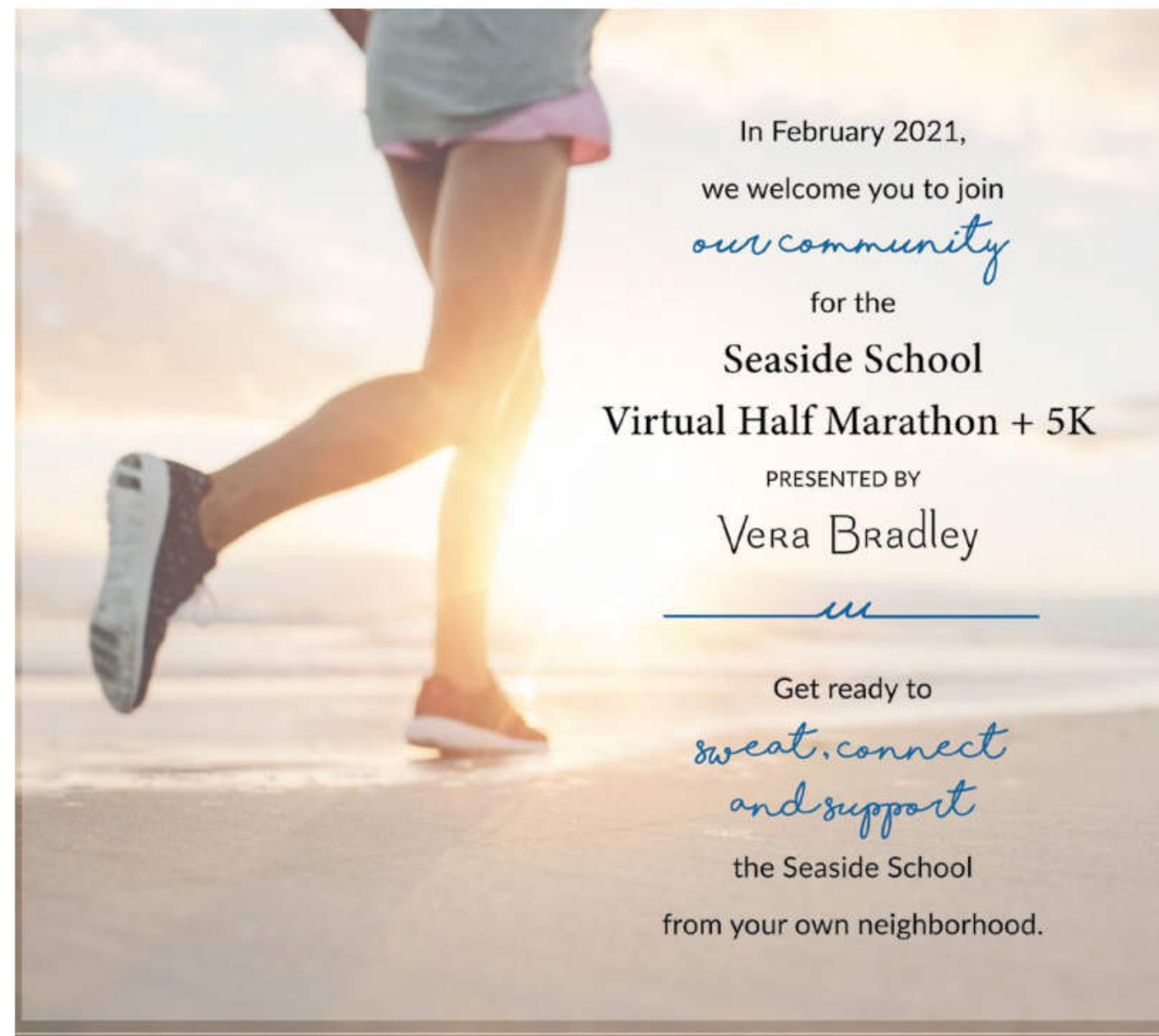
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from your own neighborhood.

run with us from february 14-28, 2021,
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FLORIDA



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OUTSIDE LIVING
OUTSIDE OF ORDINARY.

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so you can easily get to the beach and then get away from it all.

NATUREWALK AT WaterSOUND[®]
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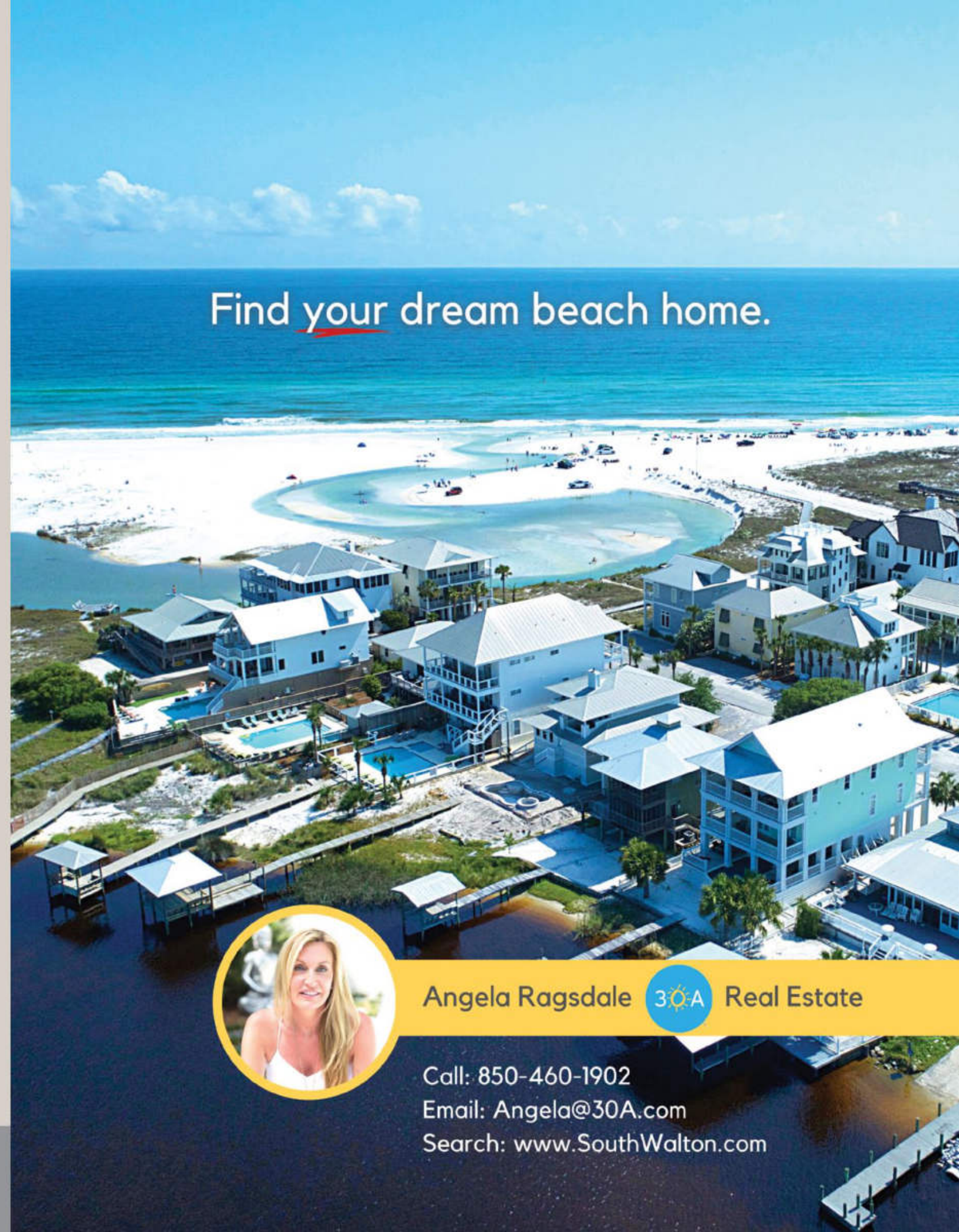
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