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Iconic Gulf Coast Beach Towns



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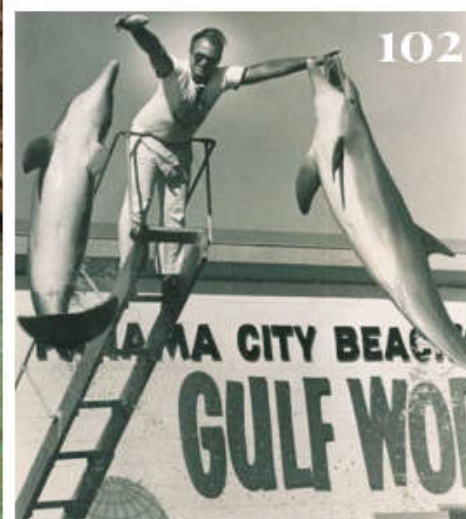


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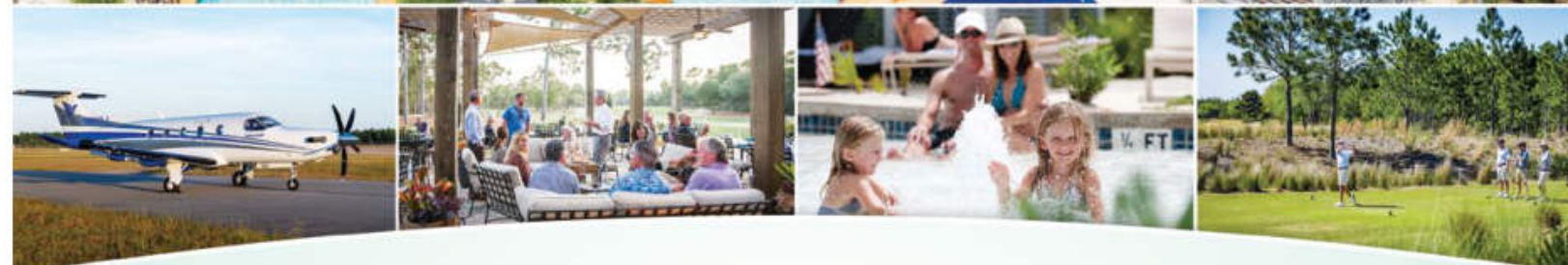
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# The Beauty of Change



As I comprise my thoughts for this letter, I realize by the time you read it, we will all be fully enthralled by the beauty and sense of awakening that another summer season seems to bring upon us. For many of us, it seems as if the real beginning of a new year happens with the ushering in of spring's warmer temperatures, and along with it the excitement of another summer ahead, filled with longer days, adventure and fun.

As with each issue of *Beach Happy* magazine, you will find this edition chock-full of the kind of articles and photos that not only make you think about your vacation, but hopefully help transport you there from wherever you may be. Our story on Gulf Coast Beach Towns, and this issue's historic pictorial on Panama City Beach serve to take you back in time, just as our cover feature pictorial

celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Bikini will do, while articles such as the Cousteau Legacy, the Grace Potter interview, and the Sean Dietrich interview provide you insightful reading on some notable folks with coastal ties. Our features on Pineapple Willy's, nostalgic getaway gear, and the new Latitude Margaritaville community will give you some perspective on the evolution of change and the pivotal role classic beach culture plays in shaping our current coastal landscape.

Speaking of change, this issue is especially monumental to me — and a bit emotional — as it serves as my final issue as Editor-in-Chief of *Beach Happy* magazine. After being in publishing for 23 years, and having served as an editor or publisher for 19 of those, I have decided to move away from the day-to-day responsibilities of the magazine world to pursue other startup interests.

As the 11th magazine title I have been instrumental in helping bring from concept to fruition, I am very proud of what *Beach Happy* is becoming known for editorially, and the profound impact it has on beach lovers, just like you, all over this great country. This is the magazine I am most proud of being a part of creating, and the very best team I've ever worked alongside in any publication for over two decades. I know it will continue to grow and flourish, and I can't wait to see what the 30A team does to make it everything we all know it can be. I will always be a fan, and I will be watching from my little side seat as Editor-at-Large [magazine lingo reserved for a founding editor moving from their daily duties within a company], pitching the occasional story idea, hopefully writing a piece here and there, but more than anything, beaming with pride over getting to be a small part of something that can so positively impact people across the miles. Because that's what the beach does, and *Beach Happy* will continue bringing the beach to you, wherever you, or I, may be.

See you on the sand!

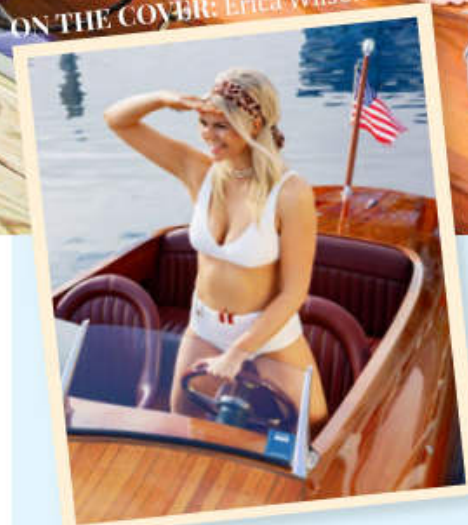
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# BEACH HAPPY



Camilo Giraldo's beautiful all-mahogany wood boat is a perfect reproduction of a 1920s Gentleman's Racer named "Baby Bootlegger." In the 1980s, a Canadian company, Clarion, licensed the original blueprints of this unique craft and built four precise replicas from 1990 to 1994. Each boat required 3,000 hours to make by a team of MasterCraft builders. The boat seats six people, with top speeds up to 50 mph. Three of these extraordinary boats are still in Canada, while this one now resides in Destin, Florida.

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**MARTIN LIPTROT** is British but has lived along Scenic Highway 30A since 2004. After a global career in advertising, he made NorthWest Florida his home and runs local PR and Marketing Agency (98RepublicPR.com). Martin's passions include soccer, cricket, rugby, Formula One and horse racing. He is a fan of craft beers and fine wines and enjoys good company and long, lazy lunches in any of the spectacular restaurants along 30A.



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# Happy Birthday, Bikini!

The Iconic  
Swimsuit Celebrates  
75 Years

Photos: Lauren Athalia  
Hair, Make-up & Styling: Rolland's Beauty Bar  
rollandsbeautybar.com



Created by a French automobile engineer named Louis Réard, the "bikini" was first introduced in Paris on July 5, 1946. Réard named his scandalous design after Bikini Atoll, a small cluster of islands in the Pacific where the U.S. had conducted its first public test of a nuclear bomb only four days prior. "Like the atom bomb, the bikini is small and devastating," claimed Réard, while also declaring a swimsuit could not be called a genuine bikini "unless it could be pulled through a wedding ring." But Réard had trouble finding someone willing to wear his outrageous outfit, so he hired an exotic dancer, 19-year-old Micheline Bernardini, to show it off. The bikini was initially banned by many countries and was declared sinful by the Vatican. The <ahem> "rear view" of the first bikini is so risqué that we don't feel comfortable printing it here – 75 years after its cheeky debut! We asked Tori Von Hoene of Ophelia Swimwear ([www.opheliaswimwear.com](http://www.opheliaswimwear.com)) to walk us through the evolution of Louis Réard's world-changing creation.

## Pin-Up Style

Beach culture caught a huge wave in the 1950s and '60s, glamorized in hit films and TV shows such as *Gidget*, *Beach Blanket Bingo*, *Elvis' Blue Hawaii*, and the legendary 1966 surf documentary, *The Endless Summer*, including the distinctive surf sounds of *The Beach Boys* and *Dick Dale*. "Pin-up models of the 1950s and '60s were curvy and very glamorous," said Von Hoene. "The bikini bottoms were fuller than today's styles, the high-waisted styles emphasized curves and hips, and designers used a lot of textured fabrics like taffeta and cotton infused with lycra."

MODEL: Erica Wilson

## That '70s Suit

Somewhere between Woodstock Flower Power and Disco Balls, bikini tops got a bit skimpier. "Triangle tops were in," said Von Hoene. "The bottoms didn't get much smaller, but they hung lower on the waist, and string styles started to make an appearance. We saw designers introducing more florals, tie-dyes, mod color blocks, and bright patterns."

*Thanks to Tribe Kelley Surf Post ([tribekelley.com](http://tribekelley.com) / Instagram @tribekelleysurfpst) in Grayton Beach, Florida, for letting us chill by their groovy VW!*

MODEL: Janice Welch



MODEL: Jessie Taylor

### Cowabunga, Dude!

The only thing bigger than hair in the '80s was the boomboxes. MTV's rowdy spring break beach bashes kept both teens and parents awake at night, although for different reasons. "The '80s were all about bright neon colors," said Von Hoene. "Bandeau tops came into style, and instead of hanging low, hiplines started moving up on the side. They were high-cut to accentuate legs. Hawaiian prints and neons were trendy. The brighter, the bolder, the better."



## Saving Lives in Slow-Mo

The international smash hit Baywatch was unquestionably the most significant thing to happen to beach culture in the 1990s. Perhaps surprisingly, Baywatch's audience was 65 percent female, with its largest demographic being women between 18 and 34. Pamela Anderson, Carmen Electra, Yasmine Bleeth, and other looker lifesavers famously popularized fiery red, one-piece bathing suits. However, the bikini also saw changes through the decade and into the 2000s. "Triangle tops came back, while bikini bottoms were hiked up even more on the sides," said Von Hoene. Bright neons were replaced with classic black. "Just like the 'little black dress,' everyone in the '90s had to have their go-to black bikini. By the early 2000s, the legs started coming back down to boy shorts and hipster-style briefs."



MODELS: Erica Wilson and Gary Brodek



### The Insta-Fame Game

Nothing says Millennial quite like the selfie. As smartphones, cameras, and social media collided, so did societal desire to digitally brag about travel, fashion, pets, luxury items, and even one's breakfast plate. And it doesn't seem to hurt the "like" meter if you look good in a bathing suit. "Today's swimsuit styles are a mix of triangle string tops, pastels, and flower prints from the '70s, combined with string bottoms pulled up high on the leg like the '90s," said Von Hoene. "The biggest difference today from decades past is that the cheeky, Brazilian style is in, so the buns are out."



### THE GRAYT COW

To keep up with all the latest styles, check out [www.opheliaswimwear.com](http://www.opheliaswimwear.com) and follow Ophelia Swimwear on Instagram (@opheliaswimwear).

MODEL: Skylar Capri

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Fiona Macintyre Is  
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opportunity to  
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we want to live.”

**I**t was a gorgeous sunny afternoon in 2014 when Fiona Macintyre set foot on Necker Island for the very first time. Just the day before, she was in Australia, where she lived at the time.

"I needed a break from my work as a partner of a sustainable energy company," recalled Fiona. She decided to treat herself to a vacation on a beautifully serene spot in the British Virgin Islands, where she hoped to relax, unwind and set her personal and professional priorities for the year ahead. After a few days of clear blue waters, lush greenery, pristine beaches, and splendid company, her vision began to focus. "To be honest, the day my vacation ended is when my journey truly began."

Fiona's new venture, Forming Impact, was born on Necker Island, crystallized during that desperately needed getaway.

"I realized my personal experience on Necker Island must somehow be shared with others," she said. "I wanted to seek out other people who share the same language, which is a desire to create memories, build friendships, and create a better world, all at the same time."



After leaving Necker Island, Fiona shared her vision with a friend and world-famous world-changer, Sir Richard Branson. Armed with Sir Richard's wisdom and words of encouragement, Fiona's mission began to take shape. Today, Forming Impact is a full-fledged organization with the sole objective of bringing together a global community of entrepreneurs, executives, philanthropists, investors, creative minds, and thought leaders. These people are driven to form bonds, build friendships, and nurture projects that create sustained positive impact.

"Drawing from my businesses, my travels, and my personal experiences, I create and host personalized events in truly exceptional places that enable guests to connect with like-minded people while disconnecting from the pressures of our daily lives," she said. Each retreat is designed to help individuals explore their

true purpose and join forces to make a difference in this world.

It should be no surprise that Necker Island is one of Forming Impact's flagship experiences, but now it's one of many exclusive settings where Fiona hosts her unique retreats.

"Our last event was on Bawah Reserve, a cluster of islands in the Indonesian Ocean," said Fiona. "This particular group was focused on starting conversations to drive sustainable climate and ocean practices, but through the lens of cryptocurrency and blockchain technologies."

Fiona aspires to establish Forming Impact as a way of life for its members. "We all have the opportunity to create a life we want to live and a world that we would be proud to leave behind," she said. "It's up to us. Just step out, live life today, and make it happen." @

To learn more about Fiona and Forming Impact's retreats, visit [www.formingimpact.com](http://www.formingimpact.com).

#### FIONA'S FAVORITE BEACHES FOR RETREATS

##### TURTLE BEACH, NECKER ISLAND THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Not surprisingly, Fiona's favorite beach spot is nestled at Forming Impact's flagship gathering location. "It's everything I could ever imagine a paradise island could be," she said. "The blissful surroundings, crystal waters, and thought-provoking environment allow you to immerse yourself completely in its magic. It's heaven on earth."

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“ The day my vacation ended is when my  
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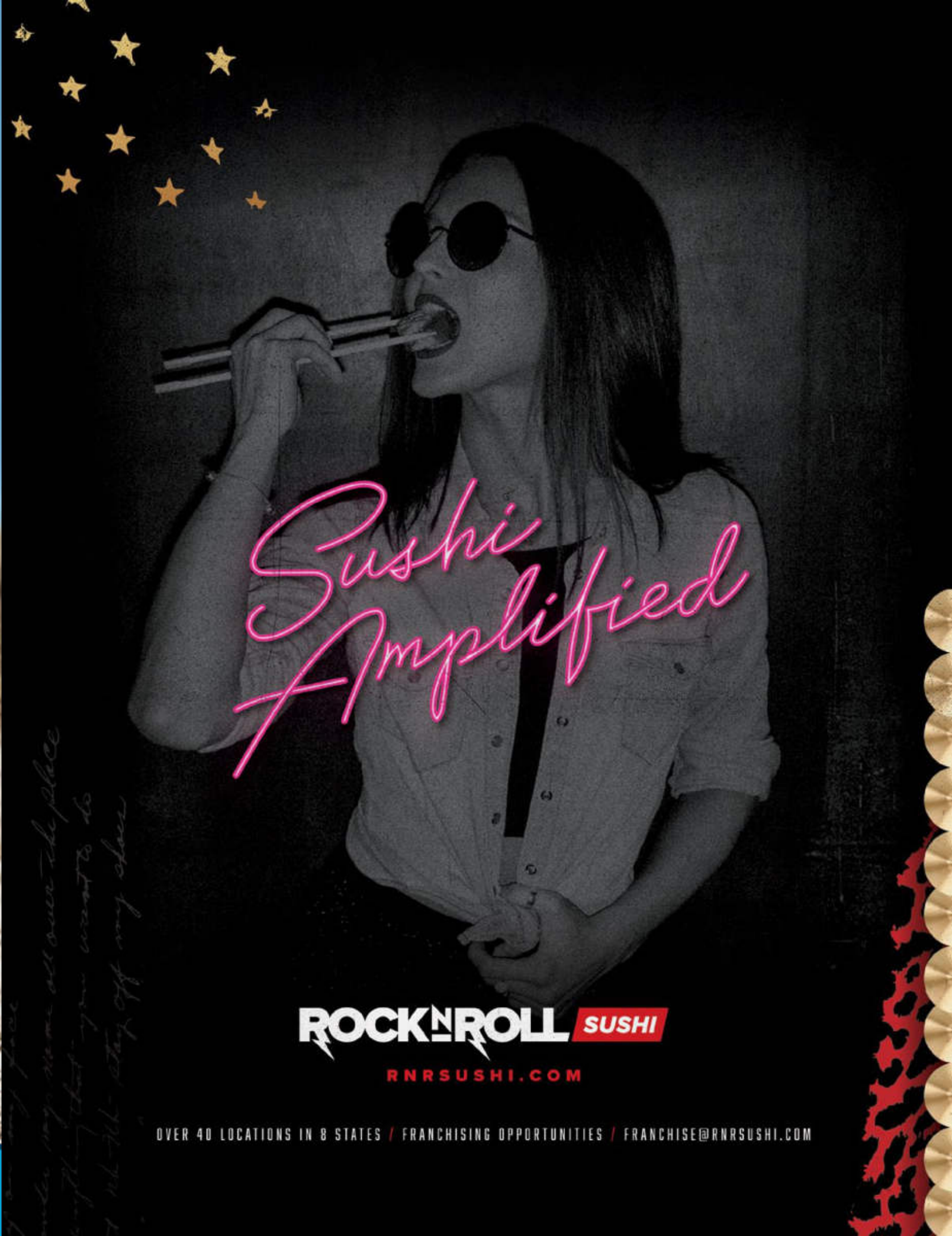
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# BEACHES ABROAD



## OCAM-OCAM BEACH CORON, PHILIPPINES

Banul Beach, Kayangan Lake, and the Twin Lagoons are well-documented “must see” spots when visiting Coron, Philippines. But for adventurers looking for those off-the-beaten-path beaches, the remote Ocam-Ocam Beach on the far west side of a province known as Busuanga is certain to satiate your island fever. Ocam-Ocam beach might not have the white sand sex appeal of Banul Beach, but what it lacks in brochure cover candidacy, it oozes in authenticity.

### WHY GO?

Ocam-Ocam Beach is the real deal. The only thing more scarce than tourists here are mobile phone signals. The uber-friendly villagers go about their daily chores under lush palms, and the local school kids take their recess out on the sand. If you’ve ever fantasized about diving head-first off the proverbial grid, Ocam-Ocam would be an idyllic place to pull that plug.

### HOW DO I GET THERE?

Once you leave the bustling town of Coron, you can get to Ocam-Ocam Beach in about two hours, if you’re in a hurry. But don’t be. Plan on at least 3 to 4 hours to get there, so you can stop and soak in the stunning mountain and sea views along the way. You’ll need to keep a keen eye open for the hand-written “Ocam-Ocam” signs as you traverse the bumpy dirt roads to get here.

### HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Rent a scooter in Coron. You won’t need to sign any paperwork or insurance forms. You’re on a small island after all, so they don’t seem too worried about people stealing their bikes. You can rent a scooter for a full 24 hours for a whopping 500 pesos (about \$10). A handful of thatch hut restaurants on Ocam-Ocam serve fresh and cheap eats, and a large covered beach-front cabana for lounging will set you back 200 pesos (\$4) per day.

### WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

Accommodations here are blissfully sparse and simple. If you’re the type of traveller who’s bold enough to come this far, you’ll no doubt dig the beachfront accommodations for \$10 per night (sometimes less). Feast on seafood that was swimming an hour before, snorkel in clear, calm waters, and pop-open a cheap San Miguel beer to catch the sun when it finally dips down into the South China Sea.



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# When the Family Business is Saving the Planet

By Martin Liptrot  
Photos: Shane Reynolds, Color Earth  
Romona Robbins

"Hope is the best motivator," said Philippe Cousteau Jr., grandson of Jacques Cousteau, famed marine explorer and co-inventor of the Aqua-Lung. Philippe, a French-American dual citizen, lives in California where he and his wife, Ashlan, run their numerous marine conservation campaigns, television, broadcasting, and publishing interests.



"We're storytellers," said Philippe. "We're journalists, broadcasters, explorers — but we're Ocean Advocates first."

In fact, as I learned, no-one in this 'first family of the ocean' is, or ever was, a scientist or marine biologist.

"My grandfather Jacques wasn't a scientist. He was a captain in the French Navy," said Philippe. "My uncle was an architect, and my father was a filmmaker. We are a family of storytellers and advocates for marine conservation rather than actually doing the science."

"That said," the 40-year-old scion clarified, "77 years ago, when my grandfather first tested his invention, the Aqua-Lung, it opened the door to real scientific exploration because prior to that, little was known about what lay under the waves."

**Did being born with such a famous name make his choice of career a bit of a foregone conclusion?**

"My grandfather told me towards the end of his life, 'Conservation starts with education,' and that really shaped my interest," said Philippe. "It is also complicated because my father died six months before I was born, and I had this desire to connect with his work and legacy. I always felt a calling and fascination with what my father and grandfather did, and I'm grateful they had this remarkable catalogue of work — the films, photographs, TV shows — for me to learn from."

Having been raised by his mother, I wondered what influence the women in the Cousteau clan had on the legacy.

"Pure Inspiration," said Philippe. "My



“  
*We know more  
about the  
**MOON**  
than the bottom  
of the sea,*  
”

mother spent 13 years on expeditions with my father Philippe Sr., and my grandmother spent more time on the Cousteau boat *Calypso* than my grandfather did, but principally behind the scenes. My sister — also an environmental campaigner — and I are a testament to their encouragement. My grandmother and mother are an important part of the Cousteau story and now, my wife Ashlan is making her contribution too.”

**Was it easy joining a family so steeped in marine conservation?**

“Thank God I love to swim,” joked Ashlan. “I grew up in North Carolina and spent a lot of time at the beach and out on the water.”

Ashlan first met Philippe at a conference, while working as an entertainment journalist.

“I was working on stories about the Kardashians, Justin Bieber, pop culture — but I kind of had an a-ha moment after learning about Philippe’s work,” she said. “I thought, why can’t we make saving the world cool, too? Why can’t these issues be highlighted and be fun and sexy? Not to lighten the seriousness of the issues, but to make them more accessible, so more people care.”

And that became the couple’s mission.

“People still don’t fully understand the way our oceans work,” said Ashlan. So during the pandemic lockdown, the couple wrote a book, part of the hugely successful ‘... For Dummies’ series called *Oceans for Dummies*!

“It explains how weather patterns work, how the currents work, and all about different species of



animals,” said Ashlan. “It answers questions like, why are the oceans salty? We just want more people to be ocean literate. After all, we know more about the moon than the bottom of the sea.”

“Today’s generation gets it,” added Philippe. “They understand the importance of environmental conservation. It’s part of their curriculum and their school clubs.”

Philippe sees an important shift happening in the conversation: How can solving these ocean-related problems also be an opportunity to grow our economy, provide jobs, and enable people to live healthier and more sustainable lives?

“I think my grandfather and father would be encouraged by that,” said Philippe.

**And are we seeing success?**

“In the 40 years I have been alive, we have lost 50% of our biodiversity — 68% of wildlife is gone,” said Philippe. “So no, we don’t have a good track record over the last 40 years. But we are hopeful for the future. We know what works. The science is clear.”

Their non-profit, EarthEcho International ([www.earthecho.org](http://www.earthecho.org)), is a leading global environmental education organization. They work with Ocean Conservancy, WWF and others to campaign for what they call “30x30” — their goal to protect 30% of the ocean by 2030.



“  
***Nature is  
extremely  
resilient  
— it bounces back —  
if we give  
it a chance.***  
”

“These are areas where we advocate ‘No Take’ — no fishing, drilling or hunting,” explained Ashlan. “Especially in areas of biodiversity hotspots, like Antarctica.”

“We’re not saying we have to stop all fishing,” said Philippe. “But we need to look at the ocean as our ally when it comes to having a healthy planet. Nature is extremely resilient — it bounces back — if we give it a chance.”

“Philippe and I went to Bikini Atoll in the Pacific,” recalled Ashlan. “The U.S. detonated 23 nuclear bombs there during the Cold War. Because of the radiation, no one had been there for 60 years — untouched by humans. But in what had been a dead zone, we now see some of the most amazing and diverse diving environments anywhere in the world.”

**So, are the Cousteaus hopeful for the future?**

“The planet isn’t a partisan political issue,” said Ashlan. “It isn’t just for liberals to care about the environment. After all, it was Richard Nixon’s administration that created the EPA and passed the Marine Mammal Protection

Act. Now, politicians of all stripes are stepping up and looking for solutions to environmental problems for the good of our economy, jobs and health.”

“The new President has already taken positive steps on solving the climate crisis and he has backed 30x30, which is great news,” said Philippe.

“There is also a big push right now to protect three marine areas in Antarctica,” said Ashlan. “If enacted, this will be the single largest act of conservation in history, so yes, we have hope.”

**And what about that Cousteau family lineage?**

“We are proud to be continuing the spirit of my family’s legacy,” said Philippe. “My grandfather was one of the originators of a campaign to protect the landmass of Antarctica, and now Ashlan and I get to carry that challenge forward through a campaign to protect the ocean around Antarctica. As you can imagine, this is really special from a personal point of view, but shows the work is never done.”

*To learn more about EarthEcho International, visit [earthecho.org](http://earthecho.org).*



# THE INCREDIBLE

## Sean Dietrich

By Will Estell



### Sean of the South talks about his humble journey and his newest novel..., *The Incredible Winston Browne*.

Sean Dietrich, affectionately known to many as “Sean of the South,” simply has a way of reaching in and tugging at your heartstrings with his wholesome and nostalgic perspectives on life in the Deep South. His blog posts and syndicated columns are read by over 125,000 folks across the country, and he’s written thirteen books, including his latest work, *The Incredible Winston Browne*.

*The Incredible Winston Browne* is based in the fictitious, tiny, laid-back community of Moab, Florida, where folks are addicted to Jackie Robinson, their paper’s weekly gossip column, and get-togethers with friends during ice cream socials. For decades, Sheriff Winston Browne has watched over Moab with care and concern like no other, and by now, he’s used to the small-town antics that help make Moab, well... Moab. But when a mysterious little girl shows up in his best friend’s henhouse, Sheriff Browne now has a child to protect – as well as a few secrets of his own.

I spoke with Sean Dietrich about his latest book, and to learn a little more about his journey from a jack-of-all-trades to the well-known writer he’s become.

**I love the story you tell about your fifth-grade teacher finding your writing notebook, reading some of it, then suggesting you pursue a career in construction. How’d you first get involved in writing?**

I’ve been writing since I was a child. I’d fill entire notebooks with stories. My mother gave me a seafoam green Lettera 32 typewriter with a crooked space bar. It still works, still has a crooked space bar, and I still use it often. I would write fictional stories, but my highest aspiration was to be a newspaper columnist. My mother and I used to throw the newspaper here in Okaloosa and Walton County. We’d wake up at 2:30 in the morning, and we’d finish deliveries about 7:30am. Then we’d go to Winn-Dixie and have a donut, and I’d read the *Daily News*.

**When was that “Ah-ha!” moment when you knew you were supposed to do this for a living, no matter what anyone else thought?**

I dropped out of school in seventh grade, and I didn’t go back until I was in my twenties. I finally finished when I was thirty. I wanted to do something with my writing, so I applied to Florida State, but I was turned down, and that was sort of a blow. So I decided to start a blog. I took to writing daily columns of 500 to 800 words, and it just took off. It was the only thing that ever did, really. I say it’s the only winning horse I’ve ever ridden. The response I got almost immediately from readers was so positive, and people were so gracious. I kept doing it just because the people were so good to me. Without them, I’d be nothing, and I felt a need to keep giving them what they seemed to want. It was the encouragement of other people. I found that I can feed off a good compliment for six months.

“  
I found that I can  
feed off a good compliment  
for six months.  
”

**Having now authored thirteen books [counting the multi-volume titles] and nearly 2,000 columns, do you find that it gets easier to find and create material as you go?**

I don’t know if it gets easier. All of us as writers have those times when it’s hard to put words together. But for me, there’s inspiration for what I do all around me. The stories are there. We just have to see them and write them.

**How often do you write?**

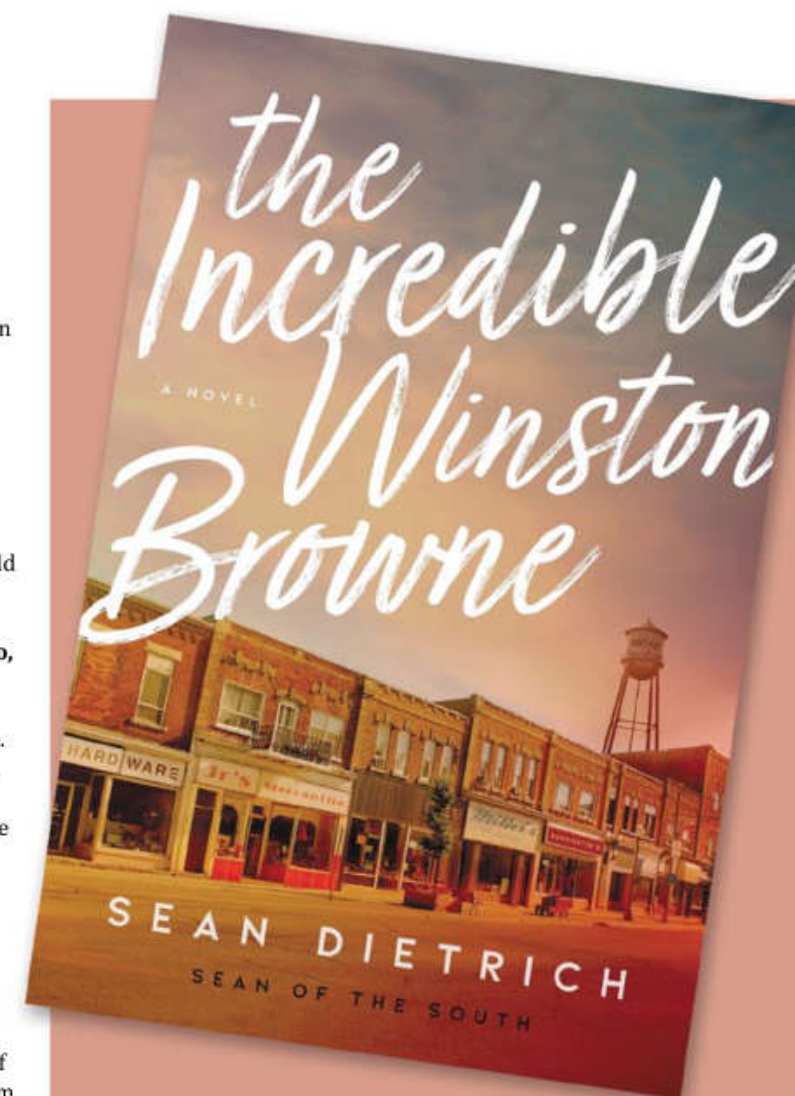
I write every single day, even if we’re traveling or on a book tour. I’ve been doing the “Sean of the South” blog [www.seandietrich.com] since 2014, and I rarely miss a day. I do tell people they should only read one of my stories a day though. Any more gets cloying.

**If you could live anywhere in the world, still doing what you do, where would you go?**

Probably right where we do [Walton County, Florida]. I love it here. Or maybe Brewton, Alabama. That’s where my wife, Jamie, is from, and I love that town and those people. They were truly the first people to get behind me and support me as a writer. They made me feel like somebody when we were there. They still do every time we go back there. It’s such a great community of good, close-knit people.

**If you weren’t writing for a living, what do you think you’d be doing?**

I would probably still be playing music. I loved that and had a lot of fun with it. Or maybe I’d be doing construction still. But I’m glad I’m writing instead. 📖



Sean Dietrich’s newest book, *The Incredible Winston Browne*, weaves an inspiring and heart-warming tale of Southern-influenced comradery, community, and kindness. You can find it online and at your favorite brick-and-mortar bookseller. You can also enjoy Sean’s countless columns on his website at [www.seandietrich.com](http://www.seandietrich.com).



# gumbo

## A Coastal Classic with Deep Roots

By Han Vance  
Photos: LVictory

Perhaps no single dish has enraptured the Gulf Coast more than gumbo. It's so much more than a soup – it's a major cultural touchstone of coastal cuisine. While it's definitely a staple of the entire region, it's in no way hyperbolic to say it practically defines Louisiana. In fact, gumbo is the official dish of the state, first becoming popular in 18th century Louisiana.

I moved to Louisiana, from suburban Atlanta, the summer before 7th grade. We'd been strict vegetarians while my hippie father attended chiropractic school. However, after the move, we decided to immerse ourselves in local cuisines and cultures, in all their zesty iterations, and our culinary confines diversified to include meat.

Our newfound flavors included revelatory piquant and tangy sauces at crawfish boils with my basketball teammate friends on the island, mild but resonant boudin — a rice sausage I immediately adored — and ever abundant varieties of gumbo.

We lived on Grand Lake Island, a beautiful, small community on the

far less-populated Lake Charles side of the boot-shaped state. The locals always referred to it as Big Lake — not only the place, but our school and sports teams. It was named for the brackish lake, a short walking distance from our house. We lived year-round at the edge of the mostly weekend-house tourist area, popular in the warm seasons.

After living in landlocked Atlanta, having a small strip of beach that we could walk to was plenty for my siblings and I. We often frolicked in the crab- and shrimp-filled water, as fishermen frequented the long wooden public pier. Primitive crabbing with only a piece of white string, a long nail, a hunk of raw

“everybody loves gumbo...”



chicken, and a net was a common pastime and major food source. Off in the distance from where we swam, shrimp boats were almost always visible.

Seafood gumbo may taste of the deep ocean to you, but only of Big Lake to this very old boy.

At Fontaine's in Atlanta's venerable Virginia Highland neighborhood, talented young photographer LVictory is clicking away at the daily served gumbo, while I slowly sip a can of cold Classic City Lager on the heated patio.

We both sample it: It tastes dark and earthy as well as plainly of salt water, we surmise. She likes it more than I, a bit of a Cajun and Creole food snob from living down on the bayou.

They aren't interchangeable, by the way. Cajuns are historically the country folks, ancestrally from the Acadia region of Canada. They were French Canadians. They mostly lived off the land and cooked everything they caught each day. There's some contentiousness about what is most authentic, but



it just stems from what side of Louisiana the variety was connected to when it was prepared for you.

Creole were more citified, Spanish-influenced New Orleanians who, via intercontinental trade route access, had products like butter, canned tomatoes from Sicily, cayenne pepper, and file' from sassafras.

All gumbos seem to use “the trinity” of celery, onions and bell peppers.

I flip into a completely different perspective on gumbo at mom's later in the week, where she and my stepdad have grown their own vegetables for years. She prepares me two servings of gumbo z'herbs: a no-meat or seafood version loaded with leafy greens, which I'd heard about from chef Rob Vance (no relation).

and everybody loves  
their mama's gumbo.”

It excites with every bite, and I feel healthy. There's something about familial love at the very essence of the gumbo experience.

Chef Vance first discovered the true world of, and myriad variations on gumbo, while becoming an autodidact disciple of “The Creole Kitchen Cook Book.” The author of that fabled compendium hung around kitchens of locals asking the right questions long enough, and recording answers, to transfer the long oral tradition of passing honed technique details from generation to generation, down through the decades. Finally, it was all there in print for us all.

Already established as a hard worker in the industry, chef Vance took the valuable lessons taught therein to the ribald Bourbon Street in the New Orleans French Quarter, where for four years he was executive chef of Le Bayou and also assistant culinary director for their parent company, Creole Cuisine.

He left to become the culinary director of beloved breakfast and brunch institution, The Ruby Slipper Café. There he supervised the dining empire as it expanded beyond the bayou. Next, he was the general manager of Lager's International Ale House in nearby Metairie, Louisiana, a food and draft beer emporium. He braved the French Quarter again for two years as operations manager of Mahony's Original Po-Boys & Seafood, but due to the global pandemic deeply impacting tourist district business, the location is temporarily closed. He's contemplating relocating to western Florida to run the right restaurant, in the economically better off region.

“Gumbo is an extremely difficult thing to get properly right,” said Vance. “Roux goes through several stages. It's equal parts a lipid and flour. Some use okra as a thickening agent. The origin of the word (gumbo) is from the word for okra.”



“Everyday dish?” I asked.

“My NOLA dinner spots had gumbos every day: chicken and andouille sausage or seafood,” said chef Vance. “Seafood was crab, a white fish of some sort, usually catfish, and it's going to have small Gulf shrimp, and then oysters, put in last, right before it gets served.”

“Do you love gumbo?” I wondered, after he'd clearly been around it thousands of times.

“Oh, sure. Everybody loves gumbo,” he said. “And everybody loves their mama's gumbo.”

So what's the secret to authentic gumbo?

“The key is cooking your roux right and balancing your thickener,” said Chef Andrew Paparella, a native of San Antonio now living along Florida's Scenic Highway 30A.

Certified master chef Tom Catherall – another 30A resident – shared his insights as well:

“Africans like spice, so hot peppers ended up in there,” said Catherall. “One pot over fire. It got wiped but never got washed. The flavor stayed in the pot. Something caught that day, and they maybe only had one iron pot. The culture of one giant pot.”

# The Perfect Chicken + Sausage Gumbo

By Chef Rob Vance

First of all, try not to think of "Gumbo" as a recipe. Instead, think of gumbo as a spell. A creation formed from intent, technique, and the will of the creator, in conjunction with the history and traditions of those creators that came before. What you bring is what you get. I will provide a recipe, but it will only be as good as the creator allows it to be through their judicious application of love, will, intent, and the proper ingredients.

The first thing to know is, you do not make a little pot of gumbo. Ever.

You will be making at least 4 quarts at a time. Probably more. Most definitely more after you learn the unbridled joy that this creation brings to the uninitiated.

#### What you need:

- 2 yellow onions, diced
- 2 green bell peppers, diced
- 4 stalks of celery (leaves included), diced
- 6 cloves of garlic, minced
- 4 sticks of unsalted butter (16 oz.), diced
- 1 pound AP flour
- 2 gallons unsalted chicken stock
- 2 pounds chicken thighs (Skin and bone attached.)
- 2 pounds Andouille sausage, sliced (Do not skimp on this.)
- 5-6 tablespoons kosher salt. (Taste often and add as desired.)
- 2 tablespoons fresh ground black pepper
- 1/2 tablespoon cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 2 tablespoons dry thyme
- Several shakes of Louisiana hot sauce (Crystal or Tabasco recommended.)

To start, you must make the "Roux." This is where the magic comes in. You must never lose focus on the roux. The roux must be your only concern. Forget taking a break, quieting the children, or feeding the dog during this process. The roux is your one job. Got it?

You will need a large heavy bottomed pot — at least a 10-quart pot for this recipe. Place the pot over medium heat and add the butter. After the butter has melted, add the flour, and stir to combine. This will form a loose paste. This is good. Now, the magic happens. With all your focus on the roux, continue stirring. Preferably with your grandmother's wooden spoon. Trust me, it makes a difference.

The goal here is to "toast" the flour. This requires time and attention, so stop looking and worrying about anything else. Focus. You will notice that as you stir, the roux begins to darken and to change. As the color gets darker, the viscosity changes, as does the smell. Remember, smell is your friend here. It will go from a white paste to a beige paste to a reddish-brown paste to a brick brown paste, all rather quickly.

Allow this while stirring. As it reaches the "Brick Brown" stage, you should notice that it smells a bit like popcorn. This is a good thing. It is also the time to make sure that your Mis en Place has been put together. What's that? You didn't dice all of the vegetables, slice the andouille, and gather all of the rest of the ingredients together? If not that is poor planning and maybe a lack of intent. You don't want to burn the roux.

Should this not be the case and you have properly prepared, well, good on you. Now let's get going on this. The color that you are looking for when making gumbo is "brick brown." It will be a loose roux, but not greasy. It will smell like caramelized popcorn. At this point, add the diced vegetables and continue stirring. Allow the onions to cook through and add the chicken stock. Stir it up. Next, place your largest

cast iron pan over high heat and add two tablespoons of oil to this pan. Season the chicken thighs with salt and pepper and add them, skin side down, to the pan. Do not crowd the pan. Cook the chicken in batches. All you need to do is brown the chicken on both sides. After you have removed the last of the chicken, add the sliced Andouille to the same pan and brown it.

Add the browned chicken and the browned Andouille to the pot and stir. Be sure to scrape any remaining fat into the pot. Add the remaining seasonings and stir.

At this point, you should be tasting the gumbo on a regular basis. Adjusting the salt, and thinking about the accolades that you are surely due for this amazing creation. The gumbo should simmer for at least two hours. At that time, remove the chicken thighs. Strip and chop the meat and skin, and add it back to the pot.

Give your masterpiece a final taste, bask in your triumph, and contemplate the next question... Rice or Potato Salad? That one's on you.





## WORLD'S BEST BEACH BARS

Let's face it, there's something almost magical about the way a simple beginning can turn into a recognized establishment that patrons from around the world are proud to show off on their shirt. Such is definitely the case with the connection people feel after visiting the now iconic Pineapple Willy's in Panama City Beach, Florida.

By Will Estell



Chances are, even if you haven't had the opportunity to visit the well-known beach bar, you've likely seen one of the numerous shirts or hats worn by one of the tens of thousands who have been there. And, by the way, if you haven't experienced it firsthand, I sure hope you will on your next trip anywhere near the white sands of PCB. Because when you see it yourself, you'll get it.

Pineapple Willy's started life back in the late 1980s as the Pier 99 Lounge, right next door to what was then the Pier 99 Hotel. Bill Buskell, who was a managing partner of Pier 99 Hotel for several years, wasn't satisfied with the amount of business the lounge was getting, as he saw it as an establishment with a lot more potential than what it was garnering at the time. With determination and a mountain of faith, Buskell purchased the Pier 99 Lounge. He literally started with a small sandwich and salad menu to accompany the numerous beach-themed drinks he was serving.

After being in business for five years, Buskell decided to change the name of his little bar. Going with the namesake of his most popular drink being served, he christened it, Pineapple Willy's.

Bill Buskell was fortunate enough to have two sons who actually cared about following in their father's footsteps, and as such would prove to be a huge part of the catalyst that drove him to enable his little beach bar to become what it is known as today. The establishment just seemed to boom, both in terms of recognition and business, year after year. There were times when Buskell laments that his

sons and he could hardly believe, much less keep up with, the amount of growth they continued to see from season to season.

After about eleven years of dedicated management and expansive growth, the Buskell three were hit with a hard blow... a hurricane that is. Something that has become an unhealthy reality for so many Florida Gulf Coast businesses, but also something that has proven the impressive resilience of Buskell and so many business owners like him. After

Hurricane Opal left their establishment in shambles in 1995 the father and son trio decided to pull themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps and rebuild their labor of love, making it better than ever.

The beloved Pineapple Willy's shortly reopened in 1996 and has continued to grow ever since. In 2007, Pineapple Willy's opened its venue next door, introduced at opening as, "The Pier Bar", then later named "Pineapple Willy's Live."

Later in 2019, they changed the name, again, to "Willy's Pier Bar" which is used as a waiting area for dining guests to enjoy refreshing appetizers and an ice-cold beverage while listening to some of the best local musicians in the area.

Pineapple Willy's is so much more than a restaurant, or a bar, or even one family's effort to keeping a piece of Panama City Beach history alive. It is a standing, working monument to the quintessential American dream, that just happens to be living in reality in one of the most popular Gulf Coast beach towns in the world. @





# Moments

## in time



**P**rofessional photographer Dawn Whitty has specialized in capturing the most magical moments of life for over 20 years. When not at her bay home just north of Florida's Scenic Highway 30A, Dawn spends time back in her hometown of Nashville, as well as traveling the country and abroad for her many clients.

In today's society of commercialism and fast-paced technology, Dawn's free-spirited photographic philosophy exemplifies "going with the flow" in order to get just the right shot. Destination wedding photography has long been one of Dawn's areas of expertise, as she personally connects with brides and grooms to capture those small but significant moments that might otherwise be lost forever.

Here are just a few of Dawn's countless beach wedding portraits, along with some helpful tips for photographing such uniquely precious moments in time.

[www.dawnwhitty.com](http://www.dawnwhitty.com)

**Left:** "COLOR, COLOR, COLOR! Many young photographers ask me how to use color and when to go black and white. I see in black and white, so I always lean toward monochrome. However, on this rainy wedding day, a vintage aqua blue truck with a vivid bouquet brought a little sunny saturation to this bride's special day."

**Above:** "My favorite time to photograph a bride is right after she puts her gown on and her parents and bridesmaids see her for the first time as a bride. The energy is nervous yet excited, and these moments are only around for such a short time. After the ceremony, she is a different woman, and that moment is gone forever."



**Left:** "I've shot many, many locals' weddings through the years, and one of my favorite places to shoot is my long-time stomping ground, Grayton Beach. I love to give the bride and groom their semi-private moments after the wedding. In this case, Niki and Ricky instantly relaxed while sitting on top of their beach cruiser."

**Top:** "I love modern and vogue bridal portraits. In the '90s, I attended several Santa Fe Environmental Portrait workshops where the landscape became a part of the portrait as much as the subject. We shot this portrait at Cypress Springs, where the water stays around 68 degrees. Local designer, Nicole Paloma, created this gorgeous wedding gown."

**Bottom:** "To me, the most memorable bride and groom shots are those where they step away from the party and sit together and reflect on the day, month, or year that brought them to this moment. I try to become invisible during these private occasions."



**Left:** "The smaller, more intimate weddings are where I can be creative and enjoy each couple's uniqueness. It can be difficult to take time away from the guests to capture fun, meaningful photo ops with larger weddings. These adorable locals got engaged under this tree on Western Lake, so they took a horse and carriage ride over to get this shot!"

**Top:** "Very rarely do I set up lighting at a wedding. However, if it's an evening wedding, the exit can be tricky if you don't plan properly. The modern LEDs I use are perfect for a showy, lit-up exit."

**Bottom:** "Don't worry about the weather. You can't control it. Instead, use the elements to your advantage. If the forecast is rain, then make sure you have the most amazing umbrella on hand. If it's windy, then have fun with the veil!"



**Left:** "I guess you could say I'm a bride's photographer. I follow the bride everywhere. Split seconds where she glances up or looks back are cherished moments. Any time I don't have to ask a bride to look my way, and I'm in the right place at the right time, we end up with a gem. Another gorgeous gown by Nicole Paloma."

**Top:** "Obviously, most brides aren't professional models, so they're not accustomed to a camera staring them down during their most vulnerable moments. Communicate freely with your photographer about any fears you may have while being in front of a camera, as you're the star of the day. Find your muse! Get lost in the romance and magic of your very own storybook wedding."

**Bottom:** "Never does the phrase 'Daddy's little Girl' have more meaning than at a wedding. I am always aware of this relationship and how it is about to transition forever. Precious moments captured between father and daughter on this day end up being very significant as the years go on."

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# 6

## SKIN CARE TIPS

### for the Beach and Beyond

Healthy, vibrant skin is the foundation of your appearance. It's one of the first things most people notice when they see you face-to-face. If your skin doesn't look great, your overall appearance will suffer, and you won't feel quite as confident. That said, we're here to help you put your best face forward by implementing these skin-enhancing tips.

By Shannon Serpette

#### 1. REMEMBER THE SUNSCREEN

Red is a good look for lobsters, but not so much for people. Spare your skin that painful sunburn and peeling by preventing sun damage in the first place. Apply your sunscreen religiously whenever you're outside – and don't forget to reapply liberally throughout the day, according to the instructions given by your sunblock brand. This routine will set you up for years of great skin. "Wear sunscreen daily and correctly. Yes, there is a correct way to use sunscreen. To get the most protection from your sunscreen, you should apply early, generously, and often," Michael Stickler, MD, a board-certified dermatologist and Mohs surgeon from Dermatology Specialists of Florida, offered up some great insight on the subject. "I recommend applying a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher to all exposed skin before being outside. One ounce of sunscreen, enough to fill a shot glass, is considered the amount needed to cover the exposed areas of the body," he said. "Make sure to reapply approximately every two hours, even on cloudy days and especially after swimming or sweating." "Which sunscreen is best? The one that you will wear and reapply," Stickler said. "All sunscreen products protect against UVB rays, the main cause of sunburn and skin cancers. But UVA rays also contribute to skin cancer and premature aging, and it's the reason I recommend choosing sunscreen with broad-spectrum protection. Sunscreens with this label protect against both UVA and UVB rays," Stickler said.

#### 2. STAY HYDRATED

It's easy to get dehydrated from the summer sun and heat. Even mild dehydration can make your skin look aged. Drinking plenty of water daily will keep it looking as fresh, plump, and young as possible. If you begin struggling with dry, flaky-looking skin this summer, drink more water and see if that helps, particularly if you've been imbibing in some dehydrating adult cocktails.

#### 3. CHOOSE A LIGHTER CLEANSER

Those heavy cream cleansers that feel hydrating and luxurious in the winter may be overkill in the summer. You won't need anything that heavy because your skin won't be as dry as it is in the colder and less humid months. Pick up a gentle foam cleanser to swap out for those heavier or oil-based cleansers. You want to look dewy, not greasy.

#### 4. GET SOME EXTRA VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is excellent for the skin, so applying a Vitamin C-based serum on your face is a beautiful idea during the summer months. It can help lighten those darker spots that develop due to too much time spent in the sun. And if you have overindulged in the sunshine, it can help your skin heal faster from that abuse. Women and men who are past their 20s may also appreciate that it can help their skin look firmer because Vitamin C serums seem to beef up collagen production. While you can use Vitamin C serum on your face, don't forget to be sure you're eating a lot of Vitamin C during the summer months too. Eating enough can also benefit your skin by improving the appearance of wrinkles and regenerating your skin cells.

#### 5. DON'T FORGET TO EXFOLIATE

Sunblock is vital for protecting your skin during the summer, but we all know how difficult it can be to remove that stubborn sunblock after you've headed inside for the day. That's where exfoliation can help. It can take off that residual sunblock and

make sure your pores stay unclogged, leading to an unblemished and healthier feeling skin. You should exfoliate regularly, depending upon your skin type. If you have sensitive skin, opt for once a week. If your skin tends to be dry or you have combination skin, twice a week is fine.

#### 6. SHORTEN YOUR SHOWERS

Since we can feel sweaty every five minutes during the hot summer days and constantly want to get the chlorine or salt water and sand off our skin, people tend to take more showers during the warmer seasons. To avoid over-drying your skin, keep your showers short and warm instead of using really hot water, as many people tend to do.

#### BE KIND TO YOUR SKIN

By remembering to treat your skin well, you'll be setting yourself up to look better this beach season and for many more to come.

If you're heading to the beach and plan to get in the water, be respectful of the ecosystem around you by using marine-friendly sunscreen such as 30A's SPF 30 sunscreen by Shine On Living.





# Gulf Coast Beach Towns

Through The Decades



**Six**  
beach towns.

**Six**  
distinct histories  
and personalities.

**One**  
common denominator.

Living on the Gulf Coast comes with many advantages, from world-class fishing to spectacular natural beauty, so it's no surprise that the region's popularity has only increased with time. But it certainly didn't happen overnight. Here's a look at the rich and colorful histories of six distinct Gulf Coast beach towns and how each of their origins have shaped the unique character of this coast.

By Abigail Abesamis Demarest

# Gulf Coast Beach Towns

## Fairhope Alabama

Fairhope, a small town on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, was founded on idealistic principles centered on community and equal opportunity—a spirit that endures to this day. “The single tax corporation set aside the beach land to be used as public land forever,” said Gabriel Gold-Vukson, director of the Fairhope Museum of History. “The sense of community that comes with communal use is a central part of Fairhope’s founding principles and its culture today.” Fairhope has long attracted tourists and creative types, and a passion for the arts persists to present day.

**1894:** Fairhope is founded as a radical, socialist “single tax” colony by a small group of followers of economist Henry George. The original settlers believed their location and ideals offered “a fair hope of success” (equal opportunity) for their budding community.

**1908:** The city of Fairhope is established, taking over responsibility for municipal services for its 500 residents.

**Early 1900s:** Fairhope becomes a popular winter getaway, attracting artists, writers, and intellectuals. Notable visitors included novelist Sherwood Anderson, lawyer Clarence Darrow, and writer and political activist Upton Sinclair.

**1930s:** The city government becomes the caretaker of some of Fairhope’s greatest assets: the beachfront park, Henry George Park, Knoll Park, and the Fairhope pier.

**1953:** The first Arts & Crafts tour takes place. Exhibits were displayed inside store windows and represented a wide variety of interests. The tour schedule included entertainment and craft demonstrations and lasted for a week. Now in its 69th year, the Fairhope Arts and Crafts Festival is one of the city’s biggest events and attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year.

**2001:** A small Mission-style cottage is saved from demolition by author Sonny Brewer and other Fairhopians, who proposed turning it into a writers’ residence. The Fairhope Center for the Writing Arts (FCWA) raised money to renovate the cottage, and they welcomed their first writer-in-residence in 2004: Pulitzer Prize winning-journalist, best-selling author, and native of Jacksonville, Alabama, Rick Bragg.

Photos Courtesy of: Fairhope Single Tax Corporation Archives

## Apalachicola Florida

Apalachicola is an old settlement with a history going back long before the town was given its present-day name. The area where the Apalachicola River meets the Gulf of Mexico was home to Native Americans and Spanish settlers drawn to the area for its abundance in natural resources. History and maritime culture remain central to Apalachicola’s identity today, with historic homes lining the streets and fresh-caught seafood populating menus all over town.

**1800s:** With the expansion of railroads across the country and an expanse of cypress forests, Franklin County’s lumber industry takes shape. Lumber magnates from this time are responsible for some of the historic homes that still line the streets of Apalachicola today.

**1831:** The city is officially named Apalachicola and grows quickly as a cotton shipping port town. By the 1850s, Apalachicola’s busy waterfront was lined with brick warehouses and broad streets to handle the loading and unloading of cotton.

**1851:** Dr. John Gorrie creates and patents an ice machine to help cool down his yellow fever patients. His revolutionary invention later became the basis for the ice industry and air conditioning. A replica of Gorrie’s ice machine sits in the John Gorrie Museum State Park.

**1880s:** By the end of the 19th century, harvesting oysters and seafood became an important industry, though oysters were sold locally as early as 1836. At its peak, Franklin County harvested 90 percent of all oysters from Florida.

**1907:** The Gibson Inn is built by James Fulton Buck. The luxury hotel was originally named The Franklin and was built using native heart pine and black cypress. When sisters Annie Gibson Hayes and Mary Ellen “Sunshine” Gibson purchased the hotel in 1923, they renamed it The Gibson Inn.

**1983:** The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designates the Apalachicola Bay, River, and floodplain as a Biosphere Reserve.

Photos Courtesy of: Florida State Archives, Franklin County TDC





# Gulf Coast Beach Towns

## Panama City Beach Florida

With miles of pristine white-sand beaches, ample Gulf-front accommodations, and major events sprinkled throughout the year—including UNwined, Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam, Sand Jam, and the New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop—Panama City Beach has perpetually evolved as a thriving vacation destination. “PCB” (as it’s sometimes abbreviated) has much to offer locals and tourists alike, from hiking trails, marinas and fishing piers to shopping centers and local restaurants highlighting fresh-caught Gulf fare.

**1920s:** The Long Beach area is homesteaded by Hubert Brown. W. T. Sharpless also purchased land there and partnered up with Brown to buy the Pavilion. They moved the building from what is now known as Shell Island over the sand using a mule and wagon.

**1929:** The Coastal Highway (now known as U.S. 98) and the Hathaway Bridge open, making a land connection between white-sand beaches and west Panama City. This ended the need for ferry rides, boat rides, or a long drive around West Bay to get there.

**1932:** J. E. Churchwell purchases Long Beach from Brown and Sharpless, 220 acres, for \$10,000. He constructs rental cottages and later builds Long Beach Resort, which included the famous Hangout.

**1935:** Gideon Marion Thomas purchases 104 acres just east of Long Beach and builds the Panama City Beach Hotel, which had 12 rooms and two stories. Gideon continues to help develop the area, which included cottages, a water supply, three windmills, and a 1,000-foot pier. After his death in 1937, his daughter Claudia and her husband Angus W. Pledger continue the development.

**1935-1937:** Work is done to make the approach channel from the Gulf of Mexico into St. Andrews Bay deep enough for large boats and steamers to dock. This was done to make St. Andrews Bay a viable port for business.

**1953:** Panama City Beach is incorporated. Claudia Pledger is elected mayor in the first election. Thomas Drive is named after her father.

**1959:** Goofy Golf opens. It's the last standing attraction from the old days of amusement parks that were part of the stretch of Front Beach Road known as the Miracle Strip, which also included Florida's first roller coaster (the Starliner, a 2,403-foot roller coaster built by Jimmy Lark for Miracle Strip Amusement Park), and the 200-foot-tall Top o' the Strip observation tower.

**1970s-1980s:** The tourism industry grows and new, more modern hotels and condominiums are built. MTV's Spring Break coverage establishes PCB as a wildly popular destination known worldwide.

**2008:** PCB grows up. Simon Property Group opens Pier Park, a premium outdoor shopping complex with retail stores, dining options, and a movie theater. Events and activities develop to cater to adults and families.

**2010:** Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport opens as part of a plan to develop land surrounding West Bay.

Photos Courtesy of: Visit Panama City Beach, Florida - Division of Tourism

## Pensacola Beach Florida

The history of Santa Rosa Island (where Pensacola Beach is located) includes Native American settlements, Spanish settlements, and the Battle of Santa Rosa Island during the Civil War, but in terms of the Pensacola Beach we know today, its history begins with the opening of two bridges, which gave Pensacola residents and tourists easy access to the beach by car.

“For years, this beach was our local hidden gem, but more and more people from the rest of the world have come to really understand and know that it’s here—this beautiful white sand and blue-green water,” said Robert Overton, Jr., executive director of UWF Historic Trust. “I used to go over and only see my neighbors. Now I see people from all over the country.” One thing that hasn’t changed are the long stretches of pristine beach that are part of Gulf Islands National Seashore, which is maintained by the U.S. National Park Service.

**1931:** A pair of bridges linking Pensacola to Gulf Breeze and Pensacola Beach open. Before this, the only way to reach Santa Rosa Island was by boat. The three-mile bridge spanning Pensacola Bay was built for \$2 million. The Pensacola Beach Casino, a recreational complex with a bath house, dining room, dance hall, and a 1,200-foot-long fishing pier, also opens. Thousands attended the inauguration of the bridges and casino, a grand event with a parade, a dedication ceremony, boat races, and fireworks.

**1940s:** Thomas A. Johnson abolishes the bridge toll as secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation. In 1948, the bridge is renamed in his honor. When it first opened, the Pensacola Bay Bridge had a toll, with monthly permits costing \$5 (around \$78 in today's money).

**1962:** The four-lane Philip Dane Beall Sr. Memorial Bridge opens. The original bridge was converted to a fishing pier and remained in service until 2004, when it was damaged by Hurricane Ivan.

**1972:** The Pensacola Beach Casino is demolished after falling into disrepair in the late 60s. The casino lives on in name, as the main public beach on Pensacola Beach is known as Casino Beach.

**2000:** The original pier at Pensacola Beach is replaced following damage from Hurricanes Erin and Opal. The new pier is wider and taller than the original, and it's one of the longest piers on the Gulf Coast.

Photos Courtesy of: UWF Historic Trust, Visit Pensacola



**Seville Quarter:** In 1967, Bob Snow, a Minnesota native and talented trumpet player, turned a dilapidated 19th century warehouse on Government Street into Rosie O'Grady's. Other distinctive rooms were added over the years, which now make up Seville Quarter, an entertainment and dining complex in historic downtown Pensacola. Wilmer Mitchell, Bob Snow's attorney, helped grow Seville Quarter and took over operations in 1988. Today, Seville Quarter is made up of seven distinct rooms (Rosie O'Grady's, Phineas Phogg's, Lili Marlene's, Apple Annie's, Fast Eddie's, End o' the Alley, and Palace Café), an outdoor concert venue (Seville Party Plaza), and an event facility (Heritage Hall).



# Gulf Coast Beach Towns

## Destin Florida

A lot has changed in Destin through the decades, but some things – like her white sand, emerald waters, and legendary fishing access – have stayed the same. Kathy Marler Blue, executive director of the Destin History & Fishing Museum, told *Beach Happy* about some of the unique ingredients that are central to Destin's appeal. "We're a peninsula, so we have deep sea fishing and back bay fishing. We have a sheltered harbor, which is home to the largest licensed charter and commercial fishing fleet in Florida. It's like God put us in just the right place. We are the closest port in the entire Panhandle to every depth of fishable water for all Gulf of Mexico species."

And if you think Destin is just another white-sand beach, think again. "There's white sand all over the world but none that has the geological history and properties of this beachfront," said Blue. "The sand here is 97% quartz, and when the sunlight goes through the water and reflects off of it, the light refracts through the bodies of microorganisms, casting the emerald green color our waters are known for."

**1852:** Leonard Destin, a fisherman from New London, Connecticut, settles at Moreno Point (the western end of modern day Destin). He had sailed to Key West in 1835 to extend his fishing season and decided to remain in the Gulf Coast area.

**1896:** William Marler, the future first postmaster of Destin, fills out an application to get a post office at East Pass. The Post Office Department rejects Marler's application for "East Pass," instead requesting a single-word name for the town. Marler resubmitted his application using "Destin," the surname of his employer. Marler went on to build Destin's first post office on his property in 1934.

**Mid 1930s:** U.S. Highway 98 is commissioned and constructed. In 1936, the bridge at East Pass is completed. This new access was pivotal in Destin's development.

**1948:** The first Destin Fishing Rodeo takes place. The fishing tournament for saltwater anglers was started to attract tourists to the area.

**1973:** Construction starts on Sandpiper Cove, Destin's first condominium complex.

**1993:** The Mid-Bay Bridge, a 3.6-mile two-lane toll bridge cutting across Choctawhatchee Bay, opens, connecting Destin to Niceville.

**2003:** Destin Commons – an outdoor shopping center with retail stores, restaurants, and a movie theater – open, establishing Destin as a shopping destination.

**2004-2015:** HarborWalk evolves into an entertainment district along Destin Harbor that includes restaurants, shopping, and daily events.

Photos Courtesy of: Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Norwood, Mary Lou, 1925-2007, Norma Calhoun, Gareth Stearns

## Fort Walton Beach Florida

From initial settlements by American Indian tribes to the opening of Eglin Air Force Base, Fort Walton Beach is rich with history and interesting stories that paved its way to becoming a well-known beach community. Events like the Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival pay homage to the city's colorful history, and the gorgeous beaches on Okaloosa Island remain largely unchanged in recent decades.

**A.D. 700-A.D. 1500:** The Fort Walton Culture, a politically advanced Florida tribe, builds the Fort Walton Temple Mound, which is now a National Historic Landmark. The temple mound served as a village center, as well as the home of the tribal chief and a military lookout point.

**16th century:** Spanish exploration of the area now known as Fort Walton Beach ravages Florida tribes with the introduction of new diseases and harsh treatment.

**Late 1700s-early 1800s:** Some historians believe that the legendary pirate and Indian leader William Augustus Bowles, popularly known as Captain Billy Bowlegs, plundered Spanish, English, and French ships and buried his fortune of gold and silver along these particular Gulf shores. His infamous exploits are celebrated at the annual Billy Bowlegs Pirate Festival.

**1922:** James E. Plew starts the Valparaiso Realty Company with a goal of building retirement homes, businesses, and golf courses.

**1930s:** Early Fort Walton citizens Dr. J.H. Beal and Thomas E. Brooks build a casino and cottages to attract tourists to the area.

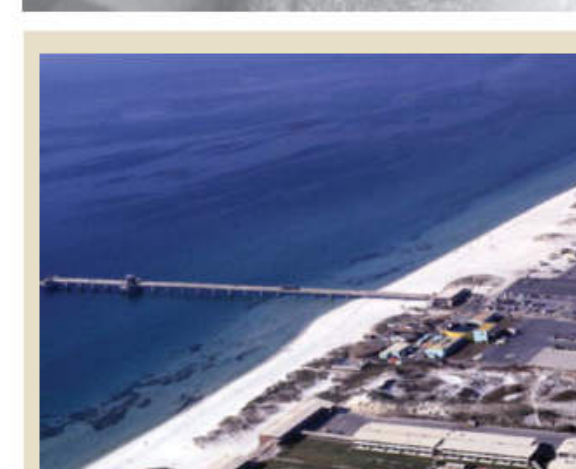
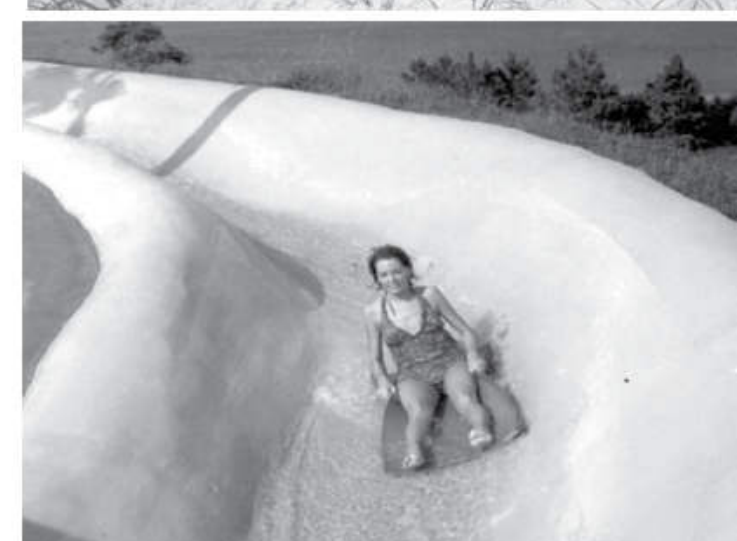
**1934:** Plew donates 1,460 acres to the U.S. government. The plot is named the Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Base, but the name was changed to Eglin Field in 1937. The opening of Eglin Air Force Base was a significant factor in the future growth of the city.

**1940s:** Fort Walton becomes a gambling mecca and earns the nickname "Little Las Vegas of Florida." Local hot spots included the Magnolia Club (which also had dancing and nightly floor shows) and the Shalimar Club.

**1953:** Law enforcement agencies put an end to gambling, and Fort Walton is renamed Fort Walton Beach to help promote family tourism.

**1956:** German artist Emil Holzhauer and other charter members start the Arts and Design Society to promote the arts and artistic endeavors. Today, the non-profit organization has more than 200 members and maintains a free art gallery that is open to the public.

Photos Courtesy of: Destin-Fort Walton Beach, State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory, Holland, Karl E.



**Okaloosa Island :** Okaloosa Island is the narrow three-mile stretch of land on Santa Rosa Island that lies between Fort Walton Beach and Destin. It has a fishing pier and a boardwalk. The land was deeded to Okaloosa County by the federal government for \$4,000 in 1950. The area was previously known as Tower Beach because of the amusement park, boardwalk, and hotel built there in the mid-1930s. Today, tourists enjoy the quiet calm of Okaloosa Island's white-sand beaches and local wildlife.



## Outer Banks: Haves & Have-Nots Seek Sunken Treasure

By Shannon Serpette  
Photos: Curtis Baker/Netflix

One of the hottest television dramas to distract us from the dumpster fire that was 2020 is Netflix's *Outer Banks*. When the new program premiered in April 2020, it instantly drew attention from not only the teens it was clearly created for, but also their parents. It was a surprisingly good show and was quickly recognized as such by viewers around the world.

Shortly after the original 10-episode Season 1 was in play, Netflix greenlighted a second season. Now that the mid-2021 Season 2 premiere is drawing near, it's time to look at some fun facts about the popular show and what makes it such a binge-worthy modern-day soap opera.

[WARNING: Mild spoilers ahead!]

### The Premise

Viewers join a drama already in progress. We meet the protagonist John B. months after his dad has disappeared without a trace. John B. is determined to find out what happened to his father, and his band of loyal buddies is eager to help him along the way. Without giving too much away, they figure out the dad's disappearance is somehow linked to a \$400 million treasure that went down with a ship called *The Royal Merchant*.

### Sea-worthy Talent

Too many teen-based dramas seem to focus exclusively on the physical appearances of the actors, rather than scouting talent who can actually act. *Outer Banks* avoids that trap, delivering dramatic performances that are believable and nuanced from all the cast members. Okay, and they're pretty easy on the eyes too.

The cast includes Chase Stokes as John B., Madelyn Cline as Sarah Cameron, Madison Bailey as Kiara, Jonathon Daviss as Pope, and the scene-stealing Rudy Pankow as JJ. Along with a colorful and crusty array of other cast members, these actors bring their coastal characters to life in a way that many dramas often have difficulty achieving.

Interestingly enough, this tight-knit cast doesn't just play the roles of close-knit kids who grew up living a seaside life. Many of them have real ties to the water. Pankow is a certified kayak guide, Bailey is from North Carolina, and Stokes, who grew up in south Florida, knows how to surf and pilot boats. Cline is actually from Charleston, South Carolina, where *Outer Banks* is filmed.



### A Beachy Take On the Outsiders

Although the series is set in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, the show contains many slice-of-life elements that anyone who lives in a coastal paradise will understand and appreciate.



Like the classic novel, *The Outsiders*, *Outer Banks* showcases the lifestyle differences between the haves, referred to as the Kooks, and the have-nots, otherwise known as the Pogues. The differences in the characters' socioeconomic status becomes a huge plot element throughout the series, and serves as a big reason the program seems to grow on fans who can relate to similar labels in their own lives.

The main character of *Outer Banks*, John B., best summed up the difference in lifestyles in the opening episode: "The Outer Banks, paradise on Earth. It's the sort of place where you either have two jobs or two houses. Two tribes, one island."

Anyone who's ever lived in a beach town will instantly relate to such rigid dichotomy. It's a very real element, and goes a long way in making the show seem that much more believable.

### Fun Facts

In a development that was sure to make teen hearts flutter a little faster, *Outer Banks* stars Madelyn Cline and Chase Stokes confirmed that the on-camera romance between their characters had officially made the leap into real life. The two announced they were dating back in June 2020, and as of this writing, the duo's still steaming ahead. The rest of the cast formed tight bonds by living in the same complex, with Pankow and Stokes even sharing an apartment. Some of the stars — Pankow, Stokes, Cline, and castmate Drew Starkey — spent several weeks quarantining together as well.

Ultimately, *Outer Banks* proves that a fictional treasure hunt can be almost as fun and rewarding as the real thing. If you love treasure hunts, mystery, intrigue, or just a little harmless 20-something drama, you still have time to watch Season 1 before Season 2 sets sail potentially later this year on Netflix. 🌊

### Is the Royal Merchant a Real Ship?

There's a reason movies like *The Goonies* and "reality" shows like *The Curse of Oak Island* are such big hits: people are obsessed with treasure. Who hasn't daydreamed about being the lucky castaway who finds a long-lost treasure that human hands haven't held in centuries?

But before you suit up in your scuba gear and take a stab at finding *The Royal Merchant* in the waters off the Outer Banks, let's set the record straight. While there was a ship called *Merchant Royal*, it didn't go down along the Outer Banks in the 1800s, as the plot of the show goes. Instead, the real ship sank in 1641 near England, while carrying gold, silver and coins that would be worth approximately \$2 billion today. In 2019, an anchor believed to belong to that ship was found by a fishing boat, making the real treasure a hot-topic of well-funded hunters once again.



# Parrot Head Paradise



## Behind-the-Scenes at the Brand New Latitude Margaritaville Watersound

By Abigail Abesamis Demarest  
Photos: Minto Communities



Jimmy Buffett's 1977 hit "Margaritaville" has become so much more than a chart-topping song. The now iconic single off Buffett's *Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes* album has spawned a global lifestyle brand that has included restaurants, retail stores, hotels, and, most recently, active adult communities. The Margaritaville name has become synonymous with tropical escapism, relaxation and fun, and it's no surprise that retired Parrot Heads are flocking to these communities to fully live the Margaritaville lifestyle.

Latitude Margaritaville Watersound is the newest of these communities for those "55 and better." The Gulf Coast property is the third Latitude Margaritaville community to be developed by master developer Minto Communities and global lifestyle brand Margaritaville Holdings. For this newest development, they've partnered with the St. Joe Company, located along Northwest Florida's beautiful Gulf Coast. The already opened Latitude Margaritaville communities are located in Daytona Beach, Florida, and near Hilton Head, South Carolina.

"We really got to cut our teeth both at Daytona and Hilton Head, and brought Latitude Margaritaville to the consumer," said Minto's Latitude Margaritaville Division President William Bullock. "We've learned a lot about our residents' needs and wants." The new community [now under development near West Bay, just north of Panama City Beach], sports unique features that take full advantage of all that learning. "We believe the beaches in the Panhandle are the best in the United States," Bullock said. "This property has an incredible windshield in front of it." He pointed out that the St. Joe property has approximately 15 miles of frontage on the Intracoastal Waterway. St. Joe has plans for a marina and commercial village, which will be located adjacent to the new Latitude Margaritaville community.

Beyond its beautiful Gulf Coast setting, incorporating the four pillars of the Latitude Margaritaville lifestyle—food, fun, music, and escapism—is central to the development. Bullock explained that Minto has a license agreement with Margaritaville to use their intellectual property. "We have weekly meetings, and they're involved in the planning of the community," he said. "It's very important to our consumer that authenticity is attained." In other words, living in Latitude Margaritaville Watersound should feel like you've walked right into Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville universe.





Even if you aren't an avid Buffett fan, the sense of tropical escapism Latitude Margaritaville conveys has universal appeal. "Not everybody who comes is a die-hard Jimmy Buffett fan," said Bullock. "We've been told by our existing residents that they've never been to a place with so many people that share their core values, and that they've made many friends in a short amount of time. There's such an incredible vibe among our residents."



Testimonials from current Latitude Margaritaville residents speak to the success of the developers in capturing that magical Margaritaville spirit. Kim and Doug Mayes moved from Richmond, Virginia, to Latitude Margaritaville Daytona Beach in May of 2019. Doug, a hardcore Buffett fan, plays guitar in the neighborhood Coral Reef Corner Band, along with other musicians living in the community. "Everything has exceeded our expectations here," Doug said. "The lifestyle projected attracts a fun group of people who are big-hearted and genuine. If you need something, they are there for you. We have lots of unique and diverse backgrounds and life histories but we all love music, food, and fun. The quality of people living here differentiates us as a community. Here, in Latitude Margaritaville, something is going on all the time."

When she retired, Gloria Hogue decided to move to Latitude Margaritaville Daytona Beach from Panama City Beach, Florida, to be closer to her two sons who live in Orlando. She gets together with her new friends at Latitude Margaritaville for lunch, live music at the Latitude Bar & Chill, aquatic kickboxing classes, and more. "The friendships here are great," she said. "We have groups for fishing, boating, kayaking, and many other activities. You can do something fun every day."



As for amenities, Latitude Margaritaville Watersound will include a Town Center similar to the ones in Daytona Beach and Hilton Head. These Town Centers act as a centerpiece and social hub for the communities and include resort-style amenities such as a Town Square with a full-size concert stage, a jumbo screen to project live concerts and movies, and a large area for dancing. There's also a "Fins Up!" Fitness Center, a lagoon-like Paradise Pool, a Latitude Bar & Chill Restaurant, a Changes in Attitude Bar, and many other amenities. Bullock noted that the restaurant at Latitude Margaritaville Watersound will be out on a bluff overlooking the beautiful Intracoastal Waterway.

Residents will have access to walking paths along the Intracoastal Waterway, a kayak launch, and other opportunities to soak up the natural beauty of the area. The marina and commercial village that St. Joe is planning will open up a variety of additional water activities and access for residents, including paddleboarding, boating, and sailing.

Those thirsting to live in Latitude Margaritaville Watersound should make an appointment to visit the sales center and tour model homes. The appointment protocol helps to regulate crowd size and keep everyone safe. "When we've done grand openings in the past, we literally have thousands of people show up," Bullock

said. "As we're in the midst of a pandemic, it would not be appropriate to do that." Bullock estimates that the first contracts will be signed in May of 2021, and that the first group of residents will move in by the end of this year. 🍹

For more information on Latitude Margaritaville, visit [latitudemargaritaville.com](http://latitudemargaritaville.com) and follow Latitude Margaritaville on Facebook and Twitter @LatitudeMville.





# *There's Something About The Bloody Mary*

**La Petite Grocery**

## **The long- time staple on bar menus gets an upgrade with craft spirits and over-the-top garnishes**

By Carrie Honaker

It started with a lonely woman named Mary at Harry's New York Bar in Paris. She was nursing a cocktail made with tomato juice and vodka while waiting for her habitually late date. It was the 1920s, and little did bartender Ferdinand "Pete" Petiot know he had launched an iconic drink that would spur backyard barbeques, Sunday brunches, bartending competitions, hangover remedies, and garnish sportsmanship. It was called The Bloody Mary.

In 1936, Petiot brought his famous drink to the King Cole Bar in New York, but vodka was not available in the United States. He substituted gin and changed the name to The Red Snapper. Along with the name change, Petiot also added pepper, Worcestershire, lemon and tabasco to appeal to American palates. In the 1960s, John Martin used the drink as a vehicle to market a new product, Smirnoff vodka, which led to what most people think of as a Bloody Mary today—a spicy, vodka-based cocktail, often made with a dollop of horseradish.

Over the years, the Bloody Mary has seen many iterations on bar menus from the Bloody Maria which swaps out vodka for tequila, the Michelada where a beer is added, the Bloody Caesar which substitutes clam juice for tomato, or the Green Mary where tomatillo juice is the base. Then there are the garnishes, and 'the crazier, the better' seems to be the direction with everything from blue crab to deviled eggs to bacon. Some are meals on their own.

The Bloody Mary is no longer a humble tomato juice cocktail. It's now a staple on menus across the Gulf Coast, and beyond, and so much more than a default brunch beverage, or a bit of the hair of the dog after a long night out. Here are some spots doing interesting things with this venerable drink.

### **La Petite Grocery New Orleans, Louisiana**

James Beard award-winning chef Justin Devillier worked his way up at La Petite Grocery from line cook to sous chef to executive chef, and now chef/owner. His journey in the restaurant housed in a century-old building with a deep past inspires his creative take on nostalgic New Orleans cuisine. When you dine here, you are dining in what was once a circa 1800s full service grocery store that offered exotic teas, locally-roasted coffees, and fresh produce to the neighborhood with a barn in the back for horses, and delivery carriages. La Petite Grocery is still offering local specialties that make you nostalgic for the Crescent City's storied past.

You have two options at this New Orleans institution, the classic Bloody Mary and The Big Red Hammer. The classic is good, but the Hammer is where it's at. The cocktail is shaken with housemade bloody mary mix and Tito's vodka, but it is the garnishes that deserve attention. The mason jar libation is topped with poached gulf shrimp, blue crab, and house-pickled vegetables. The drink is served with a fork because you're going to need it. The whole preparation will make you nostalgic for backyard boils where drinks come in humble jars and seafood is plentiful. [www.lapetitegrocery.com](http://www.lapetitegrocery.com)



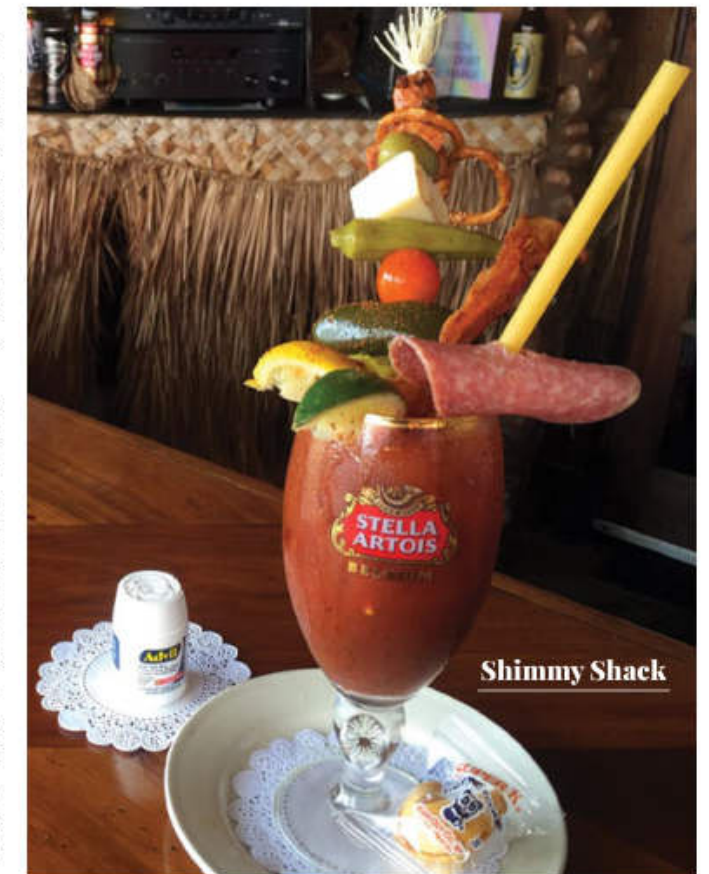
**Ruby Slipper**

### **Shimmy Shack** **Harahan, Louisiana**

It started as a bank. In 2003, owners Sam and Jimmy Collings transformed it into a full-service restaurant and wine bar. Just a 20 minute drive from Bourbon Street in New Orleans, Shimmy Shack is a neighborhood joint. As you drive up, the zydeco music is spilling out of the open-air bar, which was once the bank drive-thru window, and the iconic sign always has a new, unusual greeting.

The kitsch does not stop there. Bar stools are maybe the most unique anywhere—Jimmy Collings created custom seatings honoring important New Orleans figures and athletes. They have dressed mannequin legs attached to the underside, complete with anything from fishing waders to crocs. Don't be fooled by the off-beat decor though, as the food and drinks are outstanding. The New Orleans stuffed shrimp Po' Boy is a perennial sandwich contest winner. And, the Bloody Mary is not to be missed—it is a towering monstrosity of pepperoni, cheese cubes, pickled okra, bacon, wasabi cream cheese stuffed olives, a cocktail weenie, and yes, a cube of king cake with a plastic baby.

[www.shimmyshack.net](http://www.shimmyshack.net)



**Shimmy Shack**

### **Ruby Slipper**

#### **Numerous Gulf Coast Locations**

The story started in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans when owners Jennifer and Erich Weishaupt "...turned a blighted corner store into a cozy restaurant, with the hope that it would help draw people back to their New Orleans community." People came.

In July 2015, they expanded the breakfast and brunch every day concept to Pensacola, Florida. The same New Orleans favorites from their original location are available, including their famous Bloody Mary. It is a pairing of a spicy housemade mix and choice of vodka, bacon-infused vodka, or tequila blanco. The Bacon Bloody Mary is topped with all the fixins', including a piece of bacon—it is a breakfast all by itself, but especially good paired with some classic shrimp and grits.

[www.therubyslippercafe.net](http://www.therubyslippercafe.net)

### **Ella's Americana Folk Art Cafe**

#### **Tampa, Florida**

Just outside of Tampa in eclectic Seminole Heights, Ella's Americana Folk Art Cafe is dedicated to globally-inspired food, eye-catching art, and live music. Soul Food Sundays are a must with the Kansas City-style BBQ, hot jazz, blues, and folk live musical acts, and a front row seat to owner Melissa Deming's rotating collection of found object & outsider art.

The star of this meal though is the Bloody Ella. It is an extra large serving of Ella's ancho-infused vodka, loaded bloody mary mix, BBQ rub rim, topped with a hickory smoked rib. An added bonus is you can order these singly on site, or take a group bucket that serves eight to go.

[www.ellasfolkartcafe.com](http://www.ellasfolkartcafe.com)



**Brick and Spoon**

### **Pescado** **Rosemary Beach, Florida**

If you are looking for one of the best Gulf Coast views, Pescado has it. Ride the elevator up to the rooftop and head out to the deck to imbibe overlooking the sugar sand beaches and emerald water of Rosemary Beach. Founded in 2018 by owners of Shades Bar and Grill right up the street, Pescado quickly established itself as one of the premier sunset destinations on 30A. "The dynamic menu is ever-changing to take advantage of all of the different flavors mother nature has to offer throughout the year," said Lead Bartender Jesse Canady.

Their Signature Bloody Mary is not to be missed. It is made with Wheatley Vodka, and New York International Spirit award-winner Charleston Bold and Spicy Bloody Mary Mix. The salty and smoky garnish of thick-cut bacon leaves a satisfying hint of flavor in the drink and a tasty bite to munch on afterward. "For our guests who would like to kick up the spice, we are more than happy to shake the cocktail with fresh serrano peppers," said Canady. "The most exciting part of our Signature Bloody Mary are the garnishes. We include sweet glazed Nueskes Bacon, Cajun spiced grilled shrimp, lemon, lime, celery, and pickled vegetables. If you are unafraid, ask for it extra spicy—you won't be sorry!"

[www.rooftop30a.com](http://www.rooftop30a.com)



**Pescado**

### **Barefoot BBQ** **Seaside, Florida**

A visit to sunny Seaside should definitely include sampling the fare at the row of retro-style Airstream trailers set up alongside Scenic Highway 30A. The smoke from the meats fill your nostrils with longing as you approach Barefoot BBQ. And with their win over Emeril Lagasse in his annual BBQ Challenge, you know you're in for something good.

Most days you can find owner James Murphy at the window taking orders. His commitment to the finest quality hormone, steroid, and antibiotic free meats is compounded with their dedication to scratch-made sauces and sides that keep you coming back for more, especially the mac and cheese—it's made with their own beer cheese blend. You will want to wash down that tasty 'que with one of their Bloody Marys voted "Best Bloody on 30A."

[www.facebook.com/barefootbbq](https://www.facebook.com/barefootbbq)

### **Brick and Spoon** **Biloxi, Mississippi**

The only thing you really need to know about Brick and Spoon is there is a separate menu for the Bloody Mary. It is divided into vodka type, spice level, and an array of toppings that include deviled eggs. "We are unique in that we have a build your own Bloody with fifty choices," said CEO and President Blane Guillory. "The 'permutation possibilities' give thousands of 'Build Your Own' outcomes." It is basically nirvana in a very large glass.

[www.brickandspoonrestaurant.com](http://www.brickandspoonrestaurant.com)

# Retro

## Beach Gear

*with a modern twist.*

By Blake Estell

We always hear that anything that was once deemed in-style tends to come back around. This well-known adage holds true for cool coastal oriented creations as much as it does for fashion or architecture. Here we've chosen an array of vintage-inspired items that have returned to popularity, but with a modern twist.



### PK360 by PK Grills

Taking you back to the look and feel of the grills used long ago, the PK360 is built to withstand the elements and provide you decades of outdoor grilling fun. In fact, PK grills that were produced over 50 years ago are still fired-up, thanks in part to their rust-proof aluminum chamber that conducts heat four times more efficiently than the steel grills used today. From the saltwater to the sand to rays of sun, this is one grill that is proven to stand all the tests of time.

[PKGRILLS.COM](http://PKGRILLS.COM) (\$800)



### Budsin Phantom 22' Electric Boat

Budsin Boats creates spectacular vintage watercraft reminiscent of the days when wooden boats were plentiful along the coasts and waterways of this great country. However, these hand-made custom watercraft come complete with a very modern twist — they're electric. The top-of-the-line Phantom 22' is available with an array of options ranging from a canopy cover to a concealed ice-chest to a mother-in-law seat. The boat features a sleek and efficient hull combined with exquisitely finished mahogany decks reminiscent of the long deck launches of the early 1900s. A unique boxed keel holds the main battery bank and motor, keeping the weight centered and down low in the boat, and allowing for smooth motoring even in choppy waters. The Phantom 22' weighs only 2,500 lbs., and can carry 6-8 adults at a speed up to 7 MPH for up to five hours on a single charge.

[BUDSIN.COM](http://BUDSIN.COM) (Starting at \$90,600)



### YETI V Series Stainless Steel Cooler

In homage to the coolers of yesteryear, the designers at YETI have introduced this new series that does what YETI does best (keep things cold) while looking cool on the outside too. The YETI V Series measures 23 1/4" x 17 3/8" x 15 1/4" and can hold up to 46 12 oz. cans, along with ice, while providing the same built-to-last durability that the company has become famous for.

[YETI.COM](http://YETI.COM) (\$800)

**Retro**  
Beach Gear



#### 30A Electric Bikes by YOLO

30A has teamed with YOLO Board to produce a top-notch line of eco-friendly E-Cruisers. Helping you travel farther and faster than any regular bike ever could, these electric bikes, powered by pedal assist, are a new form of transportation that will open your eyes to a whole new world. Features include a 350-watt rear hub motor to provide serious acceleration (peaking around 20 mph), a 36V long-lasting lithium battery that allows you to travel 25-75 miles on a single charge, 3" fat tires with front and rear hydraulic disc brakes, a waterproof control panel with backlit LCD screen, an integrated rear wood rack, an LED headlight, and to top it all—a classic bike bell.

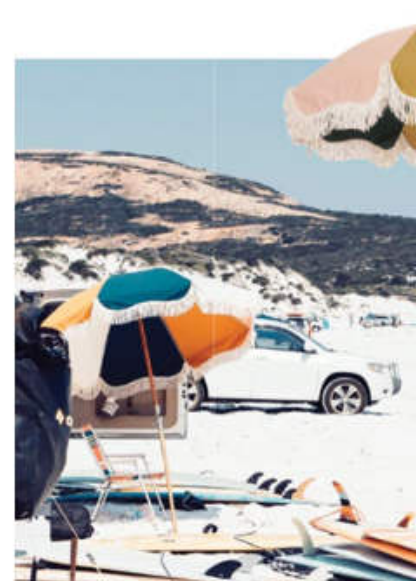
[30AGEAR.COM](http://30AGEAR.COM) (\$2,595)



#### 2021 Airstream Bambi Sport

The Airstream Bambi Sport is a retro-inspired premium compact travel trailer with nostalgic looks wrapped around modern interiors and electronics. The Bambi Sport is packed with upscale features you'd find in much larger campers in the Airstream family, including modern lighting, audio, shower, and kitchen appliances. The Bambi is lightweight, and comes in sizes ranging from 15' to 21' in length. It can sleep up to four adults comfortably within its sleek, compact design.

[AIRSTREAM.COM](http://AIRSTREAM.COM) (Starting at \$54,000)



#### The Premium Beach Umbrella - '70s Panel Cinque

Teleport back to the '70s with this premium quality beach umbrella from Business & Pleasure. Its construction features a reclaimed timber laminated wood pole along with a marine-grade hand-polished aluminum hinge and handle, and a vintage-inspired UV and water resistant canopy with modern fiberglass ribs. The cotton fringed canopy comes in pink, yellow, cream and green block colors, and provides a shade of 6' in circumference, making it cool looking while actually keeping you cool too.

[BUSINESSANDPLEASURECO.COM](http://BUSINESSANDPLEASURECO.COM) (\$299)



#### Ray-Ban New Wayfarer

When it comes to beach life, it's essential to have the right pair of sunglasses. It's safe to say that perhaps no other shades have become more engulfed in coastal lore than the long-standing Wayfarer. Originally released in 1956, Ray-Ban almost discontinued the classic Wayfarer style before a huge wave of film and television product placement drew major attention to the design in the 1980s. From Tom Cruise in Risky Business to Don Johnson in Miami Vice, the style once again became a coastal icon that's showing no signs of losing its cool. The New Wayfarer comes in a large variety of frame and lens colors, where the Original Wayfarer (still available) doesn't offer near the number of choices. The main differences in the New Wayfarer styles, however, lie in the angle, tilt and size of the frame. The New Wayfarer is available in multiple sizes, offering a look that fits almost any face, along with polarized lenses to help keep that glare on the downlow while you hit the beach in style.

[RAYBAN.COM](http://RAYBAN.COM) (Starting at \$144)



# The Sonic Suitcase

By Will Estell

## Dad's Old Luggage Never Sounded (or Looked) So Good



When it comes to custom vintage-inspired gear, you'd be hard-pressed to find anything more retro-cool than The Sonic Suitcase.

These custom-made labors of love actually began their lives as functioning suitcases in all shapes, colors and sizes. But as with many things, those old family suitcases and briefcases eventually got forgotten, lost or discarded; abandoned in garages, attics, and (even worse) landfills.

But one man found a way to breathe new life into these vintage treasure chests.

The Sonic Suitcase is the brainchild of Fairhope, Alabama, native Wade Wellborn (a.k.a., "Dr. Music"), of Dr. Music Records — one of the coolest record stores you'll ever find. Wellborn said he first came across the concept for Sonic Suitcase back around 2002 when a guitarist friend built his guitar amp right into an old suitcase. Wellborn dabbled to build a better version of the guitar amp suitcase, which eventually led him to the idea of repurposing vintage suitcases as

high-end portable speaker systems.

"The first suitcases I built incorporated iPods, because that was what most people were using back around that time," said Wellborn. But Bluetooth technology was quickly catching on, so Wellborn began to incorporate newer technologies in all of his builds.

Wellborn finds authentic vintage suitcases, and after a few weeks of custom work, they're fully recycled and resurrected as unique, full-blown audio systems, complete with all the intricate details that go into high-end compact sound systems. While there were other people doing what Wade does, most were simply sticking a speaker into a suitcase, along with a power supply and a connection.

"I knew that if I was going to do this, I wanted to do it right," said Wellborn. "I wanted to incorporate the science of proper speaker size and enclosures, so that each unit I built sounded the best it could, and

outperformed even the high-end brands of mass produced portable speaker systems." Of course, one downside to this extraordinary attention to detail is that it takes time; not only time to design and build each custom unit, but to source the vintage suitcase that will become each audio system's home.

"I find most of the suitcases at antique stores and flea markets, and I only buy cases that are in good shape and have a real cool factor to them," he said. "This is the part people see, before they hear what's inside, so it's important to someone spending \$400-\$500 on a custom system that it both looks and sounds amazing. And it's important to me too, because my name and reputation is behind it."



From specially designed ported enclosures to crossovers and the perfectly matched speaker, each Sonic Suitcase is hand-made to perform well beyond the run-of-the-mill big chain store-bought portable audio offerings. Complete with Bluetooth technology and a built-in rechargeable battery, the Sonic Suitcase can play for six to eight hours on a single charge, and will certainly look and sound better than anything else you'll see at the beach, pool, or party in the park.

Wellborn's suitcases are so highly sought after that they've been purchased in multiples by everyone from Zac Brown to Sheryl Crow (who purchased three at once from Central Square Records in Seaside). In addition to Central Square Records, you can purchase Sonic Suitcases in-person at Dr. Music Records in Fairhope, Alabama. If you're not here on the coast, check out [www.thesonicsuitcase.com](http://www.thesonicsuitcase.com), or call Dr. Music Records at 251-990-3412 for current availability. But take note: if you find one you like, jump on it immediately, as there will never, ever be another one just like it. 🎧

**THE SONIC SUITCASE**  
by Dr. Music



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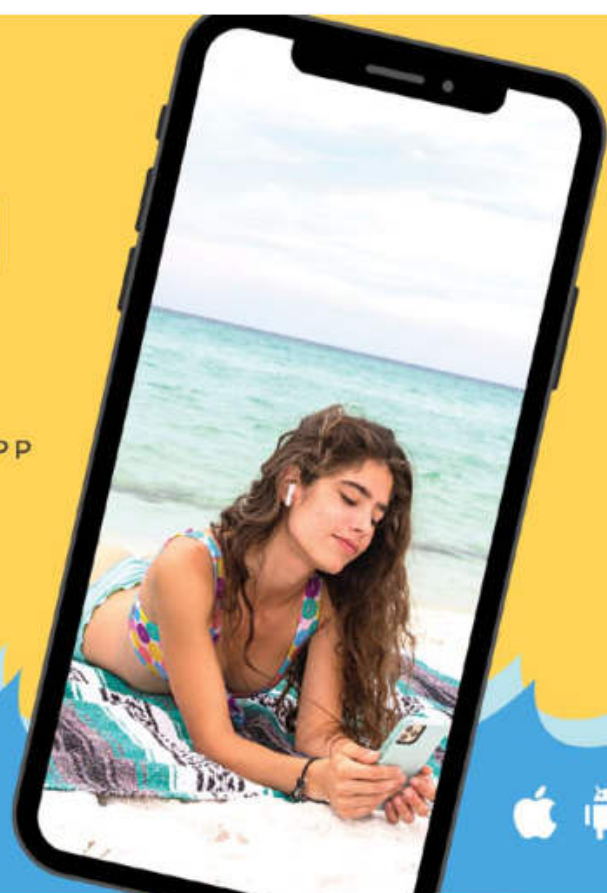


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# Panama City Beach

## A Glimpse Back In Time

Like the emerald tides that roll back and forth along these white sand beaches, many Panama City Beach landmarks have come and gone over the decades. Here's a glimpse back at some of PCB's most iconic institutions.



### Goofy Golf (1972)

In its early years, Goofy Golf's massive Sphinx and Tiki head were the tallest objects along Panama City Beach, long before the multi-story t-shirt shops and 20-story condo buildings. Goofy Golf was built directly opposite Panama City Beach's public pier, so its visitors would forever have a clear view of the beautiful Gulf of Mexico. Creator Lee Koplin's famous Goofy Golf sculptures are so eye-catching that most people don't notice the full-size house behind the brontosaurus. That's where Lee lived with his family (that still owns Goofy Golf) until he died in 1988. Throughout the decades of in-and-out entertainment venues along Panama City Beach, Goofy Golf has remained nearly unchanged since 1959.

### Miracle Strip Tower (1969)

One of the best-known monuments in Panama City Beach was the Miracle Strip Tower, located in front of Miracle Strip Amusement Park. Completed in 1968, the 200-foot tower was built by James Lark. It was torn down in 1995. The structure was built as an observation tower, with a restaurant, a gift shop, and a telescope for visitors on its top floor. The tower was painted black and white, because it served as the finish line for the famous Angel Derby airplane race for years. In addition to a huge American flag, the tower flew the six flags that have flown over the state of Florida.



### Carry-On Luggage (1958)

Roy Martin boarding an Eastern Airlines plane with a 142-pound Tarpon that he caught during a convention in Panama City Beach.

# Panama City Beach



## Petticoat Junction (1967)

In 1935, J. E. Churchwell began to create a family vacation resort at Long Beach, complete with a theme park he called Petticoat Junction. In 1956, the Florida legislature designated Long Beach as a city, and Mr. Churchwell served as its mayor until 1970 when Panama City Beach was founded. Petticoat Junction was home to the Tornado roller coaster and an antique carousel. It also featured a full-size coal-burning train which carried passengers to Ghost Town, a western-themed plaza full of shops. Petticoat Junction closed on February 2, 1985. Today, a Wal-Mart Supercenter sits on what was once this Panama City Beach entertainment favorite.

## Holiday Inn (1969)

Located at 711 West Beach Drive in Panama City, this Holiday Inn opened in 1961. The hotel later became Buccaneer Beach Motel, which operated for four more decades until being demolished by the city in 2019.



## Angelo's Steak House (1967)

A long-time staple of Panama City Beach, Angelo's Steak House opened in 1958. Founded by Angelo "Gus" Butchikas, Angelo's was known for their great steaks, remarkably friendly service, and even pony rides, putting smiles on the faces of children and parents for decades.



Photos and historical information provided by the Local History Department Staff of the Bay County Public Library.



## Gulf World (1970)

Gulf World opened to the public Memorial Day Weekend of 1970, and generations of Panama City Beach tourists have visited Gulf World throughout the decades. An expansion of Gulf World was completed in 2000, adding an indoor garden and bottlenose dolphin stadium. Gulf World joined the Dolphin Discovery family in October 2015, and continues to be one of the most visited of all of the Panama City Beach entertainment venues.

# What You Get FOR YOUR MONEY



469 Turquoise Bch Drive, 6 bed / 7 bath 8,230 sq. ft.  
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One could argue it's always a great time to buy a beach home, and coastal real estate sales have certainly exploded in 2021. The pandemic not only caused more people to start working remotely, but it also prompted many of us to re-evaluate what's most important in our lives. Family. Friends. Health. Happiness. What better place to find those things than a beautiful beach? Are you thinking about finally moving to paradise? In this hot, fast-moving market, these listings might not even be available by the time you read this. Even so, here are a few homes in different price ranges, across different markets, to give you an idea of how far your sand dollars can go.

## Panama City Beach, Florida



1841 Annabellas Drive, 3 bed / 3 bath 1,545 sq. ft.  
**\$235,000**



22608 Lakeside Drive, 3 bed / 2 bath 1,816 sq. ft.  
**\$800,000**



19906 Front Beach Rd, 5 bed / 5 bath 2,783 sq. ft.  
**\$1,250,000**



3732 Preserve Bay Blvd, 4 bed / 4 bath 4,437 sq. ft.  
**\$1,758,430**

Listings by: Brittany "Britt" Matthews Gonzalez, Beachy Beach Real Estate, 732-539-6720 | 850-231-3060  
[www.brittsbeaches.com](http://www.brittsbeaches.com), [www.TheBeachShow.com](http://www.TheBeachShow.com)

*Destin / Miramar Beach, Florida*



2807 Red Plum Court, 3 bed / 3 bath 1,998 sq. ft.  
**\$359,900**



10 Harbor Boulevard, 3 bed / 3 bath 1,566 sq. ft.  
**\$619,999**



33 Cobalt Lane, 3 bed / 4 bath 2,754 sq. ft.  
**\$687,000**



4758 Ocean Boulevard, Gulf Front Lot  
**\$2,295,000**



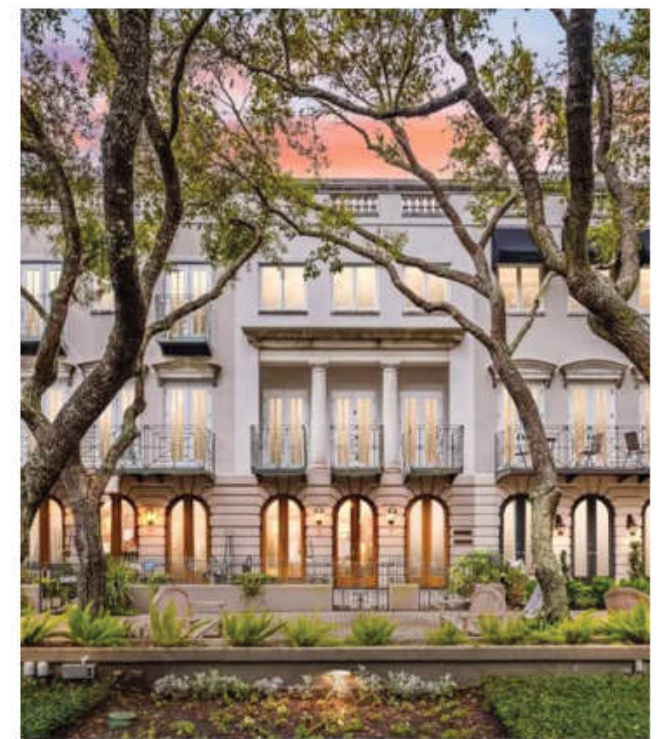
400 W Harborview Road, 3 bed / 3 bath 1,692 sq. ft.  
**\$599,000**



275 Gulfview Circle, 4 bed / 4 bath 2,232 sq. ft.  
**\$829,000**



542 Gulfview Circle, 4 bed / 5 bath 2,903 sq. ft.  
**\$1,199,000**



202 W Ruskin Place, 5 bed / 5 bath 5,526 sq. ft.  
**\$3,495,000**

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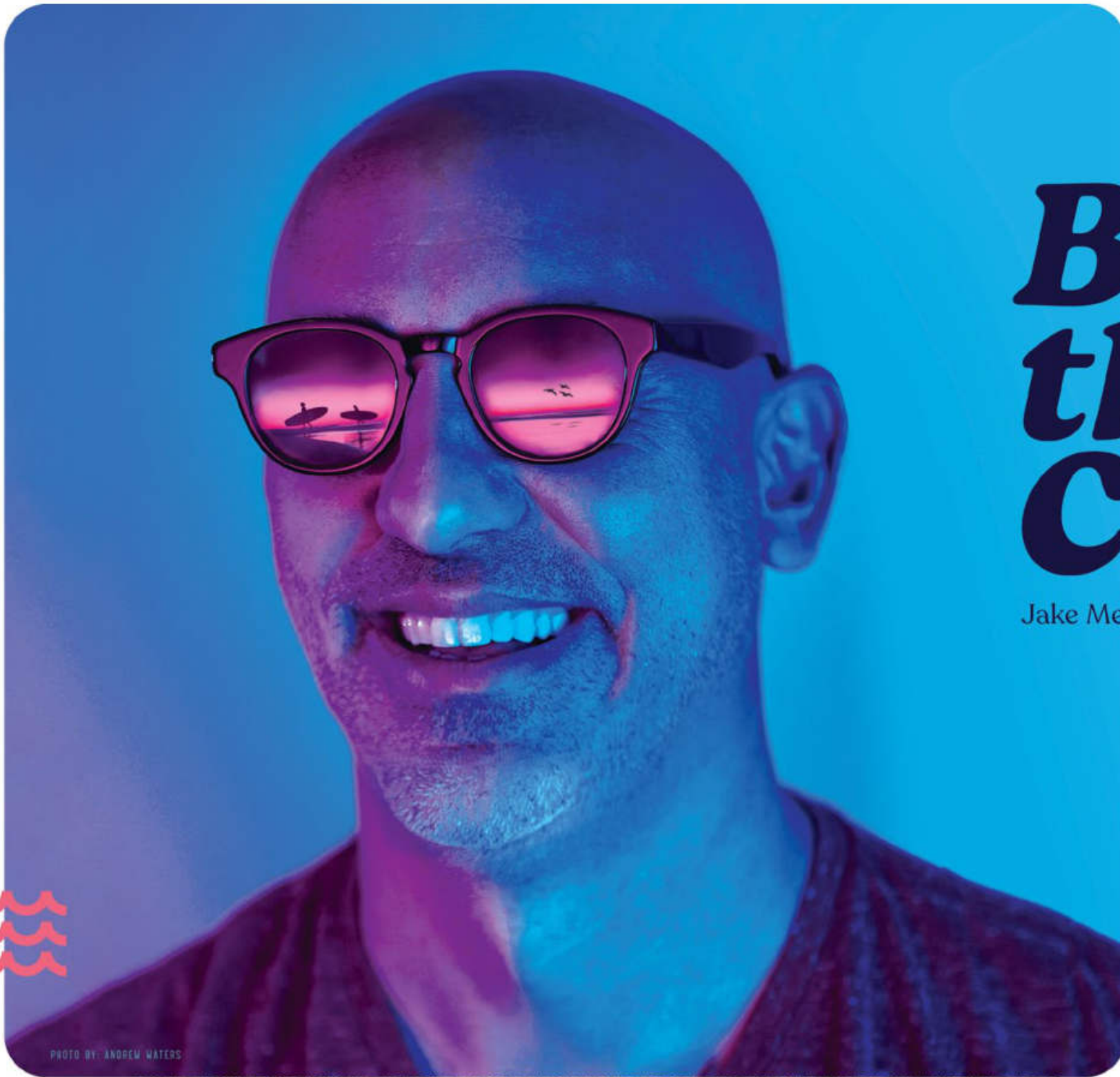


PHOTO BY: ANDREW WATERS

# Branding the Coast



Jake Meyer On Designing A Gulf Coast Legacy

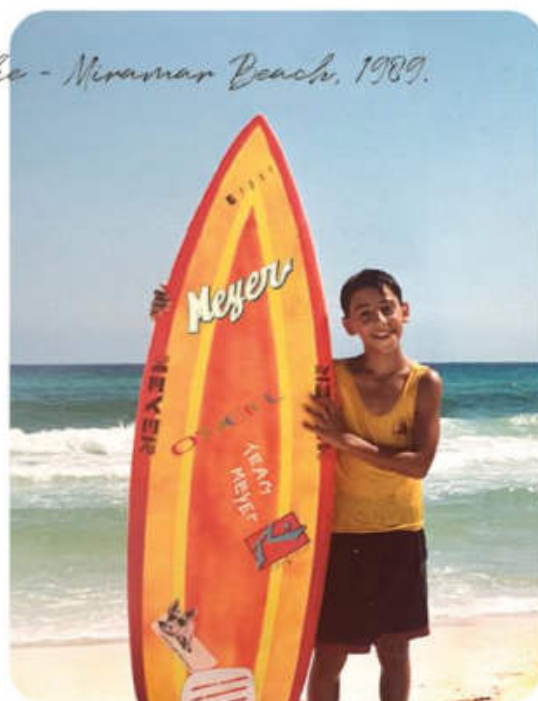
**By Mike Ragsdale**

If you've ever visited Florida's northwest Gulf Coast, you've undoubtedly seen his work. YOLO Board & Bike, Alys Beach, Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, Black Bear Bread Co., Chiringo, Distillery 98, Raw & Juicy, Havana Beach, Seaside, WaterColor, WaterSound, The 30A Company. Jake Meyer's client list reads like a "who's who" roster of famous Gulf Coast brands.

And even if you don't frequent the Emerald Coast, you've likely seen his creative imprint on national and global companies such as Chipotle Mexican Grill, New York's International Culinary Center, The Rose Group in Australia and the rapidly growing Rock N Roll Sushi franchise.

***And it all started here at the beach...***

*Jake - Miramar Beach, 1989.*



**J**ake Meyer arrived on the shores of Miramar Beach, Florida, when he was just one year old. His parents had recently separated, and his dad, Mike Meyer, migrated to the Gulf Coast from the blustery bustle of Toronto, Ontario.

"I began spending every summer, winter and spring break here," said Jake. "You couldn't get me off the beach. Whether I was surfing, skimboarding, or working beach service, it truly became my happy place."

While Jake was growing up around the beach, his father, Mike, was pursuing his own happiness. From a garage workshop on Miramar Beach he began shaping surfboards and skimboards in 1985. Within 10 years, Meyer Skimboard company was the largest manufacturer of skimboards in the world, producing over 40,000 boards a year and clientele from all over the U.S., Europe, South America and as far away as Japan.

In 1995 Jake's dad bought the beach front land where Pompano Joe's restaurant now sits. He donated over 1,000 feet of this beach-front property to Walton County, enabling them to build a public park beside the restaurant. Jake's stepmom and brother still operate the red-and-white beach umbrella service that's become iconic along that stretch of white sand.

Jake has creatives and artists on both sides of his family, which must have inspired his interest in the arts. Added to that, two generations of entrepreneurs, from his Canadian grandfather's successful clothing store chain to his father's skimboard line, and the foundation for Jake's legacy was written.

"The first logo I ever designed was for a surfboard that my dad made," reflected Jake. And although his father passed away a few years back, Mike Meyer's legacy lives on in the heart-warming stories the locals share with Jake about Meyer Skimboards, and his dad's larger-than-life personality.

But Jake's personal legacy had yet to take shape.





It wasn't until his first year at Florida State University that Jake connected his artistic leanings to the profession of graphic design. "I'll never forget walking down the hall in the art building and seeing someone working on one of those candy-colored iMacs. I enrolled in design the next semester and after the first class knew that I had found my calling. My mom remembers me telling her that graphic design was 'in my bones'."

After graduating, Jake met his future bride, Stefanie, while on a photo shoot for the small Florida agency where he was working. Stef, a native of Fort Walton

in-cheek reference to the 2008 economic downturn while also reflecting their shared love of great food.

Pioneers of the digital nomad lifestyle, the two began working for clients in both Australia and back home on Florida's Gulf Coast. They returned home after a year abroad, and in 2010, Jake and Stephanie officially tied the knot at Eden Gardens State Park, just north of Seagrove, Florida.

Through a referral from a lifelong friend, Jake began working with YOLO Board, a small lifestyle and water sports company founded by Jeff and Mitzi Archer.

***"Little did I know that 13 years later, they would be one of my biggest clients and an international brand."***

beach, was modeling to save up money for college. While their attraction was instant, it took crossing paths over several more years for the romance to finally ignite. In 2007, shortly after working together at Cornerstone Marketing and Advertising on Grayton Beach, the two began dating.

Of that time Jake says, "I am really grateful for what I learned at Cornerstone. It truly afforded me the opportunity to gain the wide range of experience that allowed me to do what I do today."

When Jake turned 30, he and Stefanie decided to break away and seek adventure, which took them to Coogie

"They were one of my smallest clients at the time," said Jake. "Little did I know that 13 years later, they would be one of my biggest clients and an international brand."

From paddle boards to electric bikes, to coffee, apparel and interior design, IWDFD has been responsible for developing that now-famous brand from day one.

"I sleep better at night because of Jake Meyer," said Jeff Archer, founder of YOLO Board & Bike. "In the water sports and lifestyle leisure business, we're challenged every year to create a better line. Jake and his team consistently execute greatness, year after year."



Beach, a coastal suburb Sydney, Australia, across the world but still by the beach.

There they created the marketing and design company, "I Will Design For Food" (IWDFD), a slightly tongue-

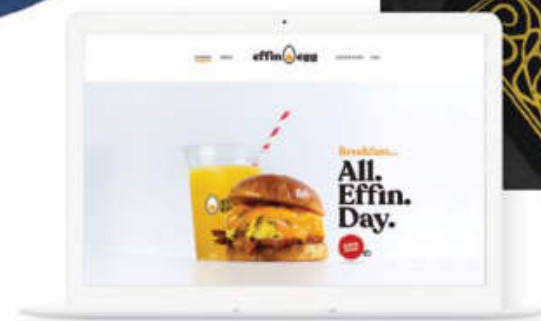
But I Will Design for Food is much more than a design firm. For Jake, it's all about the brand experience.

"We help you uncover what your larger truth is," said Jake. "We don't just design one-off logos and websites. We tell the entire story of your brand. We pride ourselves in being able to extract the soul of a company and translate it into the commercial world."

While I Will Design For Food works with numerous lifestyle brands, they've certainly found a delicious niche among restaurants and culinary brands.

"We have a deep understanding and passion for food and the overall dining experience," said Jake. "If I





hadn't succeeded with a career in design, I would have gone to culinary school."

Jake believes that branding is much more than just coming up with a nice-looking logo, menu, and website, especially for restaurants. With 80% of new restaurants closing within their first year and 80% of the ones left standing failing within 5 years, Jake said it's crucial to get everything right from the start.

***"If I hadn't succeeded with a career in design, I would have gone to culinary school."***

"Restaurant branding is about defining the entire experience," he said. "It's how you look on social media channels, how the restaurant interior makes you feel, how the staff treats you, what music is playing, what paper

you use for the menu, what artwork you hang on the wall, what the staff wears, and how the food is presented. It all has to work together, but in order to achieve that, you have to develop a strategic branding plan. If you're not extraordinary, no one will remember you."

Now based in Atlanta, IWDFW works with companies and brands all across the globe. But Jake said they especially love working with businesses along

Scenic Highway 30A and throughout Florida's panhandle.

"We not only know the area so well but we love the challenge of reinventing each company's interpretation of the beach," he said. "The small towns along Scenic 30A

are still somewhat isolated, and I love bringing bigger market concepts and influence into the area."

But it's not all work and no play. At heart, Jake is still a beach guy. Like those formative springs and summers of his childhood, Jake and Stef are still routinely drawn back to their second home here at the beach.

"You can find us hanging out by our favorite dune lake, Lake Stallworth, eating gumbo at Stinky's Fish Camp, enjoying sunsets at Bud and Alley's and playing in the surf and sand with our daughter at WaterSound Beach Club," said Jake. "It's magical to see the same intrinsic connection to the water as I did in my childhood."

But unlike those tiny footprints in the sand, washing away with every tidal ebb and flow, the Meyer family legacy is destined to shape our Gulf Coast for decades to come.

"My dad created his legacy here, and now I want to do the same for our daughter," said Jake. "One day, I hope she'll follow in our sandy footsteps."



**For more information about Jake Meyer and I Will Design For Food, check out [iwdfw.com](http://iwdfw.com)**

*Branding the Coast Article Credits: Photography: Sean Murphy, Chandler Williams, Andrew Waters, Alissa Aryn Greer, Jack Gardner, Ryan Aaron, Lee Crum, Hunter Meyer, Chris Tipton, Emily Schultz and Jake Meyer. Design and Illustration Credits: Eric Shepard, Jeremy Kennedy and Jake Meyer.*





## She's Got the Medicine Everybody Wants

By Cory Davis



pond skating rink with palm trees and hammocks in the yard. "We even found an organic indigo dye, so we could get a Caribbean blue color when the pond freezes. You're dealing with a real deal crazy person."

Crazy or not, Grace's unique voice and personality connects with fans across all music genres and all walks of life. Kenny Chesney first heard Grace Potter's voice while on a boat in the Caribbean.

"Kenny's a beach guy, and I'm a beach gal," she said. "He said when he heard my voice in St. John, it was the voice he wanted on his song, 'You and Tequila.'" Kenny cold-called her, and a few months later, she found herself on a video shoot at a gorgeous house in Malibu perched on a private beach.

"I've never had a private beach, so of course I do what a Vermont hippie girl does and I tore off all my clothes and got naked," she laughed. "I mean, why wouldn't you at a private beach? But the directors said they didn't allocate for naked beach time, so I got dressed, and shot the video. It was a powerful beach moment for me that I needed to get out of my system."

Grace radiates the hippie vibe. From skinny dipping, her fashion style, her love of pottery, figure skating, art, painting houses, sweeping floors, and lighting spaces. "During COVID-19, I took up pottery. I mean, I'm named Grace Potter. What better use of my time than to become a ceramicist?"

Some believe Grace Potter somehow teleported back in time to give us her song "Empty Heart" prior to 2020, in hopes we could actually hear the lyrics in a more poignant way now. And don't tell Grace that

It's not available at your local pharmacies. You can't order it online from Canada, and no one is peddling it illegally. Grace was born with it. And in 2020, she was doing her best to give it to as many people as she could... which is the shared experience of live music, because it stays in your bones long after a performance. A sonic soul-cleansing administered with reverb and bass. Guitars and screaming vocals. She gifted the souvenir of ringing ears that could just maybe deaden the noise of a world that has gotten a little crazy.

She's Grace Potter. Vermont beach hippie, time traveler, and accidental

farm owner. Oh, and a badass rockstar.

When the music stopped last year, things got quiet for everyone. Still, many musicians somehow rose to the occasion. Groups were singing from balconies in Italy, and rooftop ballets were performed in big cities, for those close enough to listen to and watch. But in many ways, during the pandemic, live music came to a screeching halt. Grace Potter might not have known it was coming, but she definitely learned to navigate it as well as anyone possibly could.

Grace was born in Waitsfield, Vermont, a small town with a small

population, but full of her people. "There is a humility and spirit of community in Vermont that I didn't really appreciate when I was growing up, but it's a place where you can rely on a neighbor to pull you out of a jam," said Grace. "When hurricane Irene hit a decade ago, we all came together in a way that re-established the community so powerfully. It's not a huge city, but the infrastructure is based on the soul connectivity of the community, and definitely translates into my music in a million ways."

Grace built a beautiful home in California, and even gave birth to her son there. "But I felt like I was

chasing the Vermont adventure out in California," she said. "It was wonderful to be home and to have my people: mom, dad, sister, brother, aunts and uncles and cousins. It was a whole community within one household. Not an actual house; more like a compound. My parents are hippies. I'm not sure if you picked up on my hippie vibe." [We'll get to that.]

If you've seen Grace Potter perform live, you've seen "it." There's an energy; a light.

"I'm a pretty shiny person, but at the same time, when I go dark... I don't want to be at that level of despair,"

said Grace, adding that COVID-19 and a long Vermont winter made her confront those uncomfortable moments in life. "Usually I could just go play a show, or jump in my car and go for a trip up the coast of California and pretend it's not happening. But in these moments, you can't do that. You have to really sit with those feelings, and it's been incredibly healing for me. It's making me an even happier person."

Grace admits she misses the beach in California more than she should.

"I miss it so much, because there isn't really a beach in Vermont," she confessed. So she built a tiki

aliens aren't real, or that she couldn't somehow deliver a song back through time. "I travel through time a lot," she said. "I believe in multiple space-time trajectories. Most of my songs I wrote in the future, and they are coming to me in the past. They are all meant to service the world in some way. Sometimes it's for me, sometimes for everyone."

Grace wrote "Empty Heart" at a casino, but she doesn't actually remember writing it.

letting go of intentions, letting go of what she thought her life was going to look like, and wishing her ex well.

"Now that song is a completely different beast," she said. "It's like everything I've experienced since COVID-19 started is exactly that. My whole life is completely different. The sacrifices that the people around me and I have had to make, the loss of human life, it's incomprehensible. It's making me look at my life and how I want to

when I'm around other people."

Grace said the lockdown created a conundrum for her, because she feeds off the energy of live performances, which have been so challenging under recent conditions.

"I have to get thinky again and it feels all brain surgical. I don't like it," she said. "Being on stage is not thinky. I'm not even there. When I'm on stage, I am channeling. I am the antenna of the crowd and universe. Every single concert, every single show they go, they're hoping for something, and I feel that as the performer. The second I walk on stage, I can tell there is something everyone came there for. It changes from night to night and is really this collective consciousness we all experience."

Some liken live music to church. You leave a concert feeling good. Energized. Thankfully, live music is returning, albeit slowly. One such event is coming to Miramar Beach, Florida, this spring: The Moon Crush Connected Music Vacation. It's designed to be a socially-distanced experience for people to connect in a responsible way.

"I'm a renegade live music performance guinea pig," said Grace. "I've played every drive-in in the Northeast; any socially-distanced gig that exists. I have played the boundaries of what is possible in live music to the depths of my capacity. I want to be safe during these times, and I know Moon Crush will work. It has a spectacular collection of artists, and I can't wait to be there."

The medicine Grace has isn't a vaccine... it's life. And we can all use a little dose of that right about now. 🍷

*To learn more about the Moon Crush concert, visit [www.mooncrush.live](http://www.mooncrush.live). Follow Grace Potter at [www.gracepotter.com](http://www.gracepotter.com).*



"The room next to me was playing Usher so loud I could hear the bass, then I just started playing guitar hooks over it, and that's where the song came from," said Grace. "When you can't fight the beat, you gotta roll with it."

move into the future. I'm not going to take a single thing for granted. It's not about me anymore. It's a song about forgiving yourself, and moving forward with your life, and grieving the expectations that we all had; the hopes that we all had. Just because it's not what we thought it was going to be, doesn't mean it can't be amazing."

So what is best for Grace right now, songwriting or live performances?

"Performing," she said, without hesitation. "Writing is very stressful to me. It's usually cathartic, but writing stresses me out because it's the processing. When you get to a music festival, you know that feeling you have one or two days after your body is still dancing? That's what I live off of. I live off the fumes of one experience to the next. I'm super-connected to the vibrations I feel

A combination of rhythm, beats, and spiritual energy, "Empty Heart" is definitely an everyone song. "It cries out to the masses," she said. "It reminds me of all my favorite songs by The Kinks or Bill Withers."

Favorite songs often take on new, more personal meanings during tough times. For Grace, that song was easy to identify. She said "Release" – a song she wrote for the album *Daylight* – was very personal, about letting go of a relationship,



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"HOW WE LIVING" - MICHAEL FRANTI & SPEARHEAD

"ANIMAL SPIRITS" - VULFPECK

"ALL NIGHT" - BROTHERS OSBORNE

"SHAKEN" - DAVID SHAW

"BAD GUY" - THE INTERRUPTERS

"TAHITIAN BLUE" - JOHN BUTLER TRIO

"DAYDREAMER" - THE HIP ABDUCTION

"MOROCCO" - MOON TAXI

"MOVE" - SAINT MOTEL

"GET TO DO IT AGAIN" - ALO

"GO CRAZY" - G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE

"BAMBI" - HIPPO CAMPUS

"BROKE" - TEDDY SWIMS

"30A" - JAKE MASON

"BETTER ON A BEACH" - AUBREY WOLLETT

"TIMES LIKE THESE" - LIVE LOUNGE ALLSTARS



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