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Sounds

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{SPRING} THOUGHTS

From The  Guy

My youngest daughter Holly recently graduated from nursing school and immediately scored a great position with a hospital near where she lives. She loves her job and seems to have truly found her calling. For the first time in her young adult life, she is earning enough money to afford her own apartment, to furnish it the way she likes, and to even “treat” herself from time to time.

However, just as everything seemed blissfully aligned, she and her longtime boyfriend broke up. Then her 2009 Honda Accord began having major mechanical issues, accompanied by all of the pricey repair bills that you’d expect. Then her beloved dog suddenly suffered major health issues, which was not only traumatic for them both, but the required treatments were also extremely expensive. In a matter of just a few months, Holly went from feeling confident and in control of her brand-new life, to feeling like she was drowning in despair.

I tried to explain to her that this is simply the nature of life. We all think that if we can just somehow rid ourselves of this “one last problem,” then our life will finally become perpetually peachy.

But the reality is that the minute you finally overcome that major obstacle, all-new challenges inevitably present themselves. If you have financial issues, the minute you successfully overcome those money matters, you might soon experience a health scare. The minute you overcome your health issues, an important relationship might suddenly fall apart. The minute



Mike Ragdale
Founder, The 30A Company

you overcome your grief and get back on your feet, you might face unexpected hardships with your business or career. In my experience, there will rarely be times in your life when you’re not facing one or more major obstacles.

Instead of falling into depression or feeling like we’re somehow cursed, I think we should actually embrace and even appreciate our problems, recognizing that they are all opportunities to make ourselves stronger and better humans. We shouldn’t be too quick to try to overcome today’s challenges, because the moment we do, new stresses will inevitably present themselves. In my experience, this is simply how life works. Don’t be too hasty trying to put your problems in the rearview mirror, because one thing is certain: there are even bigger potholes on the road just ahead.

As you delve into our Spring issue, I hope you find inspiration and solace in the stories of personal resilience and renewal. I hope they help remind you that while the road of life is inevitably punctuated with challenges, each one is an opportunity for growth and transformation.

I believe the purpose of life is to be happy. It’s not about awaiting a problem-free existence, but finding joy and fulfillment amidst the many challenges we face during our journey. This mindset is at the heart of living a ‘beach happy’ life – recognizing that happiness is not the absence of problems, but the ability to thrive in spite of them.

Beach Happy, my friends!



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BEACH HAPPY

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For over 12 years at The 30A Company, I've been sharing sun-kissed stories that whisk you to the shore and make each day feel like a beach vacation. My own journey has taken me from Mumbai's bustling streets to the sunny beaches of Goa and has now anchored me to the vibrant shores of Vietnam. At *Beach Happy*, we're all about finding that sweet spot between wanderlust and home, adventure and leisure. And every story, every snapshot, is an invitation for you to kick back and immerse in the essence of beach life. So, pull up a (beach) chair, dive into our latest stories, and let's celebrate life's simple, sandy joys together!

Amandeep K
Editor-in-Chief

1 Hailing from the vibrant city of New Orleans and now residing in North East Alabama, my fondest memories involve vacationing on Florida's Gulf Coast beaches. Embarking on my design journey quite some time ago, I've been privileged to work across a spectrum of genres and platforms. With time, my expertise has honed in on magazine design and publishing, encompassing topics from travel to healthcare, and from education to transportation, with several others sprinkled in between. At *Beach Happy* magazine, I channel this passion and hope to share a sunny greeting with you on the coast someday. (Featured alongside me is my beautiful wife of 22 years, Bobbi.)

David Coffey
Art Director



2 A lifelong local residing in Fort Walton Beach, I'm an Air Force brat with a loving family that includes my wife, and twins. I've witnessed the dynamic transformation of the Gulf Coast since the early 1980s. With a degree in Broadcast Journalism from Louisiana State University, I've embraced various roles within the realms of local radio, television, and advertising sales. Currently, I'm approaching my 10th year with The 30A Company as the Director of Advertising. It's an absolute delight collaborating with both local and national clients in the idyllic paradise we call 30A.

Cory Davis
Sales Director

4 With roots deeply embedded in this coastal haven, I've become an expert in crafting compelling narratives that capture the unique charm and allure of our community. My days are a dance between strategizing impactful marketing campaigns and immersing myself in the Beach Happy lifestyle. Whether it's crafting compelling social media posts, curating engaging content, or fostering connections with the community, I thrive on showcasing the magic of the place I have always called home. After all, when your work revolves around a place as incredible as 30A, every day is an opportunity to spread beach happiness.

Logan Burgess
Marketing Director



3 My role is full of purpose, balance, and fulfillment while promoting all that we have to offer. You'll find me around town with a drone in my hand, slinging our ever-popular 30A stickers, *Beach Happy* magazine, and everything in between. There's a spark within me that is ignited each and every day as I work with this incredible community. Bringing fellow beach lovers together, near and far, is what makes my role feel less like work, and more like catching up with friends all throughout the year!

Ragan Smith
Brand Ambassador

5 Raised in Italy's family advertising legacy, I ventured to New York City in the early '90s, immersing myself in the prestigious world of fashion publishing. Over three decades, I've worked as a Creative Director, with contributions to renowned magazines like *Harper's Bazaar* and *Glamour*. My narrative intertwines Old World charm with New World innovation, marked by collaborative endeavors with industry giants and a ceaseless drive for excellence.

Emiliano Neri
Designer



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Contributors



1



2

1 LAUREN SAGE REINLIE
is an award-winning freelance journalist currently living in Freeport, Florida. Her work has taken her across the South, where she has covered topics ranging from the wily ways of politicians at the Texas state capitol to the storied land of sunshine and swamp sharks (a.k.a. gators) in Florida.

2 LAURA MOLL
is an editorial and lifestyle photographer with a focus on the entertainment industry. Splitting her time between Nashville, Tennessee, and Los Angeles, California, she brings a unique perspective to her work. When not behind the lens, Laura enjoys quality time with loved ones and frequents the scenic beach communities along 30A throughout the year.



3



4

3 CARRIE HONAKER
is a Florida-based freelance writer who is not sure where she will land next, but it will involve messy eating, a spicy Tempranillo and finding the local dive bar. Her work has been featured in *Wine Enthusiast*, *Bon Appétit*, and others. You can find her on Twitter and Instagram (@writeonhonaker).

4 ABIGAIL ABESAMIS DEMAREST
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5



6

5 GUILLAUME LECHAT
is a French photographer who recently moved to the 30A area from Paris and fell in love with the Gulf Coast lifestyle. Check out his modern portrait photography at guillaumelechat.com and familyphotography30a.com.

6 GEN HANDLEY
is a music writer living in Vancouver, BC, where he can be found running its wet streets or trying its many restaurants with his wife and son.



7

7 SUSAN GUNN
is an Atlanta native and retired paramedic who made Florida her permanent home in 2014. She is a nationally published freelance writer and photographer specializing in night sky, storm, and lightning photography. In her spare time she can be found in the Gulf or exploring the natural world around her. You can follow her photography and writing on Instagram (@sgunnphotography) or visit her online gallery at susangunnphotography.com.



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From Bayou to Billboard

LAUREN DAIGLE
BRINGS HYMNS OF
HAPPINESS TO
KALEIDOSCOPE
BEACH WEEKEND

By Gen Handley

Growing up in Lafayette, Louisiana, singer-songwriter Lauren Daigle's music has deep spiritual roots. Louisiana, known as the cradle of jazz, is also a fertile ground for gospel, rock and roll, country, and a myriad of genres that resonate with the state's pioneering spirit. The Bayou State has given rise to a host of diverse and famed musicians, including Jerry Lee Lewis, Lil Wayne, Tim McGraw, The Revivalists, Jon Batiste, Britney Spears, Trombone Shorty, and Lucinda Williams.

Daigle has been captivating audiences worldwide since her debut album *How Can It Be* in 2015, winning Grammys and hearts with her fervent songs and infectious zeal. This passion is evident in her latest, self-titled album, which made an impressive debut at No. 21 on the US Billboard 200 last year.

One of the most uplifting tracks from

that album, “These Are the Days,” is a spiritual rallying cry. No matter what your denomination may be, Daigle encourages the listener right away:

*People out there, people out there
Let go of your cares
Turn your cries into loud hallelujahs
This is what we came for, oh yeah
Leave all your worries behind
We know the future’s burnin’ bright
This is the great jubilation
This is what He came for, what He came for*

Daigle’s musical palette, as colorful and varied as her home state, will be showcased at the Kaleidoscope Beach Weekend at Miramar Beach, Florida. This three-night event from April 25 to 27 features an impressive lineup, including Grammy winner Jon Batiste and Christian artist Kari Jobe.

In a conversation with *Beach Happy*, Daigle shared her excitement about performing at the music event, what attendees can expect, as well as who or what energizes her positive music.

In your view, what is the essence of happiness? How does music act as a catalyst in your pursuit of happiness?

I think taking time to enjoy the little things and come together with others ushers in the purest form of happiness. I feel like music has allowed me to appreciate the world around me more deeply and has given me the chance to look beyond myself.

In your live performances, do you find yourself more immersed in your own musical world or deeply connected with the audience?

There’s a little bit of both. Being on stage and performing these songs is so magical and seeing how people react to the music ignites my creativity. Performing live is one of my greatest joys. Being able to play off everyone’s energy is absolutely incredible. There’s nothing like it.

What are a few of the current sources of inspiration and energy for your music?

PEOPLE! That is my biggest inspiration. Seeing different cities, meeting people,





and hearing their stories opens up a well of creativity within me and keeps me going.

What advice would you give to your fans about finding happiness in their lives and the role that music can play in that journey?

I would say, “Slow down and look up.” I’ve found that we spend so much time on social media and comparing ourselves to others when we could be living life, not missing anything. There is music everywhere, you just have to take a moment to listen.

Your performance at Kaleidoscope Beach Weekend in Miramar Beach is highly anticipated. Do you have a personal connection to the area?

I have spent a lot of time in the 30A area, and I love it here. When we thought of a Beach Weekend, I knew this was the right place.

The anticipation for surprise elements and special guests at the Kaleidoscope Beach Weekend is high. Can you give us a hint of what fans might expect?

This is the first time I’ve done something like this, and I’m so thrilled! It’s going to be such a fun and immersive event and having so many friends join me is just the icing on the cake. I’m going to be playing songs from all my albums, including some songs I haven’t performed in a minute. I can barely contain my excitement!

To learn more about Lauren Daigle, visit her website (laurendaigle.com) or follow her on Facebook (@[laurendaiglemusic](https://www.facebook.com/laurendaiglemusic)) and Instagram (@[lauren_daigle](https://www.instagram.com/lauren_daigle)). To learn more about Kaleidoscope Beach Weekend in Miramar Beach, visit www.topeka.live.



New 30A Charity License Plates Raise \$90,000 for Scenic Walton

The State of Florida's new Scenic Walton / 30A Charity License Plates have already raised over \$90,000 for Scenic Walton, a 501(c)(3) non-profit that works to improve the quality of life in Walton County, Florida.

"One hundred percent of the money goes to promote beautification and safety projects throughout all of Walton County, not just along the beach," said Leigh Moore, Executive Director, Scenic Walton. Scenic Walton's mission is to improve the landscaping in roadway medians, reduce litter, promote underground utilities, expand infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists, and many other improvement projects.

Walton County locals rallied to support the cause with over 3,000 registrants signing up to get the tags for their cars, golf carts, RVs and boat trailers. Like all Florida specialty license plates, the 30A charity tags cost \$33 per year. The State of Florida keeps \$8, and the other \$25 goes directly to Scenic Walton.

"Everyone at the county and state level has been so supportive, as have local media partners and influencers," said Moore. "Our whole community really pulled together to make this happen."

Designed by Gulf Coast native Jake Meyer, the new license plate depicts the famous blue 30A logo against a silhouette of Western Lake, one of Walton County's most iconic vistas.

To get a Scenic Walton / 30A Charity License Plate, Florida residents can visit any local Florida Tax Collector's Office or scenicwalmartag.com.



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Lauren Lane

Harmony in the Hustle

By Lauren Sage Reinlie
Photos: Laura Moll

Lauren Lane and her husband, acclaimed country musician Chris Lane, are starting to feel the fog of early parenthood lift. With two boys under three, they've been in the thick of it. "It felt like the first year of our second son's life was spent just surviving in the trenches," said Lauren.

Her advice for parents in the same boat? Hold on. "At least for us, it was a short time," she said. "And now I can see, yes, it does get easier."

At 34 years old, Lauren, who works full-time as an influencer, shares publicly the joys and challenges of marriage and raising young children. (Lauren and I – working moms who also stay at home with our kids – laughed when we realized we were both parked in our cars in our respective driveways to ensure we could focus on our phone interview.) While it takes work and dedication, Lauren said building a family is the most important project of her life.

From Idyllic Childhood to Reality TV Fame

Lauren's commitment to building a stable family began in childhood. She grew up in Portland, Oregon, the oldest of four kids in a close-knit family. Her mom cooked family dinner every night. The family genuinely enjoyed spending time together, playing cards and board games. She was close with her grandparents, who lived nearby. "We had a happy childhood that was really focused on family," she said.



“
*For a friendship,
a relationship, to grow,
you do need to spend
time on it.*
”

They took one vacation a year, usually in June, often to Palm Springs, California, where they stayed in a small condo. The kids all shared a room. For three weeks, they spent time only with each other, without the distractions of sports and busy schedules at home, without the distractions of iPhones and iPads that families face today. “It sounds silly, but it forced us kids to spend quality time together and to be friends. I think that’s one reason why we are all so close today,” said Lauren.

When Lauren was 24, living in Marina del Rey, California, and working as a flight attendant, she and a friend did something unexpected. They threw their names in to be contestants on the popular reality television show *The Bachelor*. To Lauren’s shock, she was chosen to star in the show, which had about 9 million viewers each week. She won and got engaged to the bachelor in the series finale.

The relationship didn’t last, and the couple went through a very public breakup in 2015. “When you’re 25 and going through a breakup, it’s hard,” Lauren said. “But I was doing it in front of this audience of millions.” And the audience wasn’t always kind. “There was a lot of criticism of me and evil things that people who didn’t know me were saying.”

She took it hard. To get through, Lauren leaned on her family, did a lot of self-reflection, and developed an immunity to public opinion. She could have become absorbed in that world, letting the attention become the sole fulfillment in her life. “But because there was a lot of criticism, it, thankfully, made me learn not to worry so deeply if I’m liked by the public or if I’m still in the spotlight or irrelevant. It just made me lean into my authentic self,” she said.

The Bachelor as a Launchpad

Lauren said she has absolutely no regrets about going on *The Bachelor*. “It has fully led me to where I am today.”

With the audience and experience she gained from *The Bachelor*, Lauren launched her career as an online influencer, at a time when social media influencing was still in its infancy.

At that time, there were no management companies helping influencers get partnerships, and companies didn’t have marketing budgets set aside for influencers to create content like they do today. “None of it existed,” Lauren said. She worked hard to start her business and prove what she could provide to companies, and she rose along with the explosion of social media marketing over the past decade.

Today, Lauren has built a community of 1.5 million Instagram followers, primarily women and many moms, who share tips and tricks for life’s challenges. She posts content on fashion and interior design, creates her own recipes to share, and gives her followers glimpses of her family life. She has partnered with many companies, including creating a capsule swim line for Vitamin A and a clothing collaboration with the department store chain Kohl’s.

From Bahamas Beach Vacations to Bath and Bedtime Routines

In 2015, backstage at an event related to her time on *The Bachelor*, Lauren met country singer Chris Lane. The two became friends, but it was still surprising when, in 2018, he invited her on a trip to the Bahamas with a bunch of friends.



“That’s when we started to realize, oh, we have a lot in common, and maybe we could cross into the more-than-friends zone,” Lauren recalled. Things moved swiftly from there. A few months later, Lauren moved to Nashville, where the two shared a downtown condo in an area called The Gulch. “It was so fun, and I’m so glad I got to experience that with him.”

A few months after that, Chris proposed at a gathering of Lauren’s family in Portland. It was an easy decision for Lauren. “We loved each other so much, we had so much fun together, and we have such a great friendship at the root of our relationship,” she said. They were married in 2019.

In June 2021, Lauren gave birth to their first son, Dutton, throwing the two into first-time parenthood. Sixteen months later, in October 2022, their second son, Baker, was born. Then things got real. In addition to the feeding and cleaning, holding and rocking, crying and soothing, there was the problem of sleepless nights. With two under two, the children’s needs were almost all-encompassing.

Early parenthood can be challenging for couples, and Lauren said she and Chris were no exception. “It wasn’t like we just weren’t prioritizing our relationship; we simply did not have the mental capacity to prioritize it,” Lauren said. “We were just trying our best to give our children what they needed. And at that time, they needed a lot.”

By the time the kids were fed and in bed, Lauren and Chris were exhausted. It was hard to muster the same energy level they had when dating or first married. “It does change a lot of that dynamic.”

New Love Unlocked

Now, Lauren is starting to see the light at the end of the early parenthood tunnel, with the next phase of family life coming around the bend. “If there are parents out there who feel like they don’t have a ton of extra energy to pour into their marriages, you are not alone,” she said. “It will get easier.”



“
Chris is the epitome of a beach person, the type who would like to set up his beach chair at 8 a.m. and not leave until after sunset.
”

Now that their youngest can be away from them for short stretches, Lauren and Chris take out their calendars and schedule time for just the two of them. “It’s not something that just miraculously happens,” Lauren said. “No one else is gonna do it for you; you have to do it yourself and prioritize it.”

The couple has been able to get away for some dinner dates. Chris loves golf, so Lauren got herself a set of clubs and has been joining him. “For a friendship, a relationship, to grow, you do need to spend time on it. So I’m very thankful we’ve been able to start doing that again.”

Though the past few years were intense, Lauren said it has also been an incredible experience. She saw Chris become a father. She gets to see him throw a ball with their sons, and wrestle with them. “It was like a whole new level of love unlocked.”

And while she said being married to a touring musician has its challenges (half the week she does dinner, clean-up, bath, and bedtime all by herself, which is hard), it’s also a source of great awe, seeing him do what he loves and do it so well.

“Anytime he comes back and plays a song that he wrote that day, I’m always like, how did you do that? How did you just create that from your brain? Even if it’s not what they view as a hit, to me, it’s a masterpiece.” She said she has seen hints of musicality in their boys as well. “Anytime you put

on a song, the kids just light up in a way that I can tell music is clearly in their DNA.”

Family Traditions

For the past two years, she and Chris have taken their boys on beach vacations to the now-famous 30A area in Northwest Florida. They plan to do it again this summer. Their vacations are a time for family bonding and, Lauren hopes, will sow the seeds of solid sibling relationships in the future, as they did for Lauren.

Chris is the epitome of a beach person, the type who would like to set up his beach chair at 8 a.m. and not leave until after sunset. “Last year, ironically, our beach vacation was a lot of pool time,” she said. The pool felt more manageable with the little ones. She’s hoping for more beach time this year now that the kids are a little older. “Every year at this age is so different.”

Lauren said her relationship with Chris is similar, going through many different phases, even in the four short years since they married. “But each phase is unique and precious, and I wouldn’t trade any of it.”

To learn more about Lauren, follow her on Instagram (@laurenlane).



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The Tiki Titan



How Jeff "Beachbum" Berry
Revived Tiki Culture

By Carrie Honaker



PHOTO: RANDY SCHMIDT



Scan to get the Total Tiki app on your iOS device

“Before Berry could even sip on a Mai Tai, his parents ferried him around to Polynesian restaurants bedecked with indoor waterfalls, lagoons, oceanic art, and flaming drinks with ice forming around the straw.”

A self-proclaimed bum, nothing slovenly can be found in Jeff “Beachbum” Berry’s dogged search for authentic tiki recipes. Years spent excavating potions concocted in the Caribbean led to seven books on vintage tropical drinks, a circuit of lecturing and speaking engagements, the Total Tiki app containing his encyclopedic knowledge, and Latitude 29—his and his wife Annene Kaye’s (or “Mrs. Bum” as Jeff calls her) love letter to tiki in New Orleans.

The bug for tiki cocktail culture bit young. Before Berry could even sip on a Mai Tai, his parents ferried him around to Polynesian restaurants bedecked with indoor waterfalls, lagoons, oceanic art, and flaming drinks with ice forming around the straw.

“It was all very transported and all-encompassing so when I got old enough to drink, I sought these places out,” said Berry.

When he turned 18, he beelined for Tiki-Ti in his hometown of Los Angeles, California. He ordered Ray’s Mistake, the most popular drink on the menu since 1968 and named after founder Ray Buhen. He was hooked. At the Mai-Kai in Fort Lauderdale, he found the mothership. Built in 1956, it has eight dining rooms, a garden path filled with tiki torches and sculptures, lush foliage, waterfalls, and lagoons. It also has the longest-running Polynesian show in the United States.

“The first time I walked into the Mai-Kai and ordered a drink at the Molokai bar, my mind was blown,” he said.

As tiki bars started closing, Berry embarked on his chase for the elusive recipes of the drinks he loved. With a journalistic background, he started with the research, hitting libraries, combing over old magazines and cocktail books from the 1940s to 1960s, but he came up empty-handed. The recipes he coveted appeared in magazines, but they didn’t turn out when he tried making them—the disconnect between what you got at the bar and what the recipe yielded stymied him.

“When I started doing some footwork, I found out why,” recalled Berry. “I went to the bars that still existed, and I would ask the bartenders what was in the drink. Their response, ‘Rum and fruit juice’ brooked no further inquiry. That was

the end of that.” Gradually, he pried out of them that these recipes were valuable trade secrets nobody gave away. If you wanted a drink like Don the Beachcomber’s Zombie or Trader Vic’s Mai Tai and nobody knows how to make it properly, you would have to go there to get a good one, guaranteeing a solid customer base.

Over time, as bartenders retired (or relented to his dogged inquiries) and passed knowledge to friends and family, those secret recipes started to enter the world. It took years, but Berry began gathering a handful, usually thanks to used bookstores. “The thing that made tiki cocktails so intriguing was the complexity and the layers of flavor you couldn’t quite parse,” he said. “It was a very tasty hobby, but still just a hobby. I wrote for a living but in the movie business. I had no professional interest in cocktails. I just wanted to know how to make a good drink.”

Berry became known as “the drinks guy” among his band of fellow tiki lovers, lauded for his punch. People started asking for recipes and instead of telling them, Berry went to the Xerox place and made a little zine. He handed it out to anyone who asked about drink recipes, and one copy found its way to a comic book publisher in San Jose.

“He liked tiki stuff and asked if I wanted to put out a book. Our little spiral-bound, very DIY book came out in 1998,” he said. It became popular, and one book turned into a second and a third. His screenwriting career started to dry up, but the cocktail renaissance had begun.

In the early 2000s, interest in vintage cocktails took hold but tiki drinks were out of favor. “It was syrupy, slushy, cruise ship stuff,” Berry said. “People didn’t know tiki drinks were actual craft cocktails before that word existed. The conversion started to happen slowly, which led to me speaking at cocktail conventions, and *Potions of the Caribbean* came out, my second real book after *Sipping Safari*.”

Throughout this period, Berry and his wife collected tiki ephemera. Their house burst with iconic pieces like lanterns from Don the Beachcomber and tiki poles from Trader Vic’s. Neo-tiki bars started opening up with modern twists on classic



tiki style. The recipes Berry had unearthed populated the drink menus, and in 2009, the bars started joining “50 Best Bars” lists and earning accolades from drinks awards programs.

“They were making lots of money off the recipes, but I wasn’t making a living off the cocktail books I had written,” said Berry. “So Mrs. Beachbum said, ‘Why don’t we open a place and serve the drinks that you found?’”

Latitude 29, located in the Bienville House Hotel in the historic French Quarter, New Orleans, took seed. He had no restaurant or bar experience other than his research forays, but his wife had occupied just about every position you could in restaurants before she became a writer. She took charge, got it open, and still runs it today.

His latest adventure calls to his early zeal for finding those secret recipes. In 2014, he and Martin Doudoroff launched the Total Tiki app. Recently, they added a web-based version of Total Tiki. “We can post photos of all the places that drinks came from and profiles of all the bartenders who made the drinks with videos of them making them,” Berry said. “We even have an interactive map.”

Berry still generously shares the fruits of his labors, introducing a new generation to the recipes he pried from reluctant

bartenders and excavated from old bar manuals. His office is now one of the rattan barstools at Latitude 29 where he can order his favorite drink, the Mister Curtis, and nosh on Pimento Cheese Crab Rangoons. The gentle chai spice layered with overproof Jamaican Demerara Rum, thinned out a bit with Puerto Rican Rum, is named after Wayne Curtis, a regular customer and author of the book *And a Bottle of Rum: A History of the New World in Ten Cocktails*.

Donn Beach and Victor Jules Bergeron, Jr., may hold the title of grandfathers of tiki, but they rarely revealed their recipes. Without Jeff Berry and his archeological approach to acquiring those closely held recipes, his lifelong love of tiki culture, and his steadfast dedication to transparency, the tiki movement would have faded out as those plankholder bars closed.

“I’m just the guy in the hat with the drinks, but without Beachbum, we would not have the Navy Grog, Mai Tai, and Jungle Bird around for the next generation of ‘bums’ to discover.” 🍹

To learn more about Jeff “Beachbum” Berry, visit his website, beachbumberry.com, or follow his latest updates on Facebook (@therealbeachbumberry).

BEACHBUM’S FIVE FAVORITE TIKI COCKTAILS

Cocktail photos by Randy Schmidt

THE DEEP SIX

(By Beachbum Berry for Latitude 29)

4 oz Myers’s Dark Jamaican rum
1 oz Hamilton 151-proof Demerara rum
2 oz fresh lime juice
2 oz pineapple juice
2 1/2 oz Latitude 29 Formula Falernum
(available at orgeatworks.com)
1 1/4 oz St. Elizabeth Allspice Dram

Shake with ice cubes. Pour into Deep Six Bowl (pictured, available at cocktailkingdom.com) or other tiki bowl for two. Add more ice cubes to fill. Serve with long straws, resting in straw notches on lip of bowl. Garnish with mint.



LUAU DAIQUIRI

(By Beachbum Berry for Latitude 29)

3/4 ounce fresh lime juice
3/4 ounce orange juice
3/4 oz Vanilla Re’al Madagascar Vanilla Infused Syrup
2 ounces white Puerto Rican rum

METHOD: Shake with ice cubes. Strain into a chilled cocktail coupe. Garnish with small edible purple orchid.



NAVY GROG

*(Adapted from the Don The Beachcomber
original by Beachbum Berry for Latitude 29)*

1 1/2 oz Hamilton Beachbum Berry's Navy Grog
Blend Rum
3/4 oz fresh lime juice
3/4 oz Ocean Spray White grapefruit juice
1 oz honey mix*

Shake with ice cubes. Strain into double old-
fashioned glass with ice cone around straw
(pictured, Navy Grog Ice Cone Mold available at
cocktailkingdom.com) or into glass filled with ice
cubes. Garnish with lime wedge and mint sprig.

*Honey mix: Equal parts honey and water, stirred
until honey dissolves.



ZOMBIE

*(Adapted from the Don The Beachcomber
original by Beachbum Berry for Latitude 29)*

2 oz Hamilton Beachbum Berry's
Zombie Rum Blend
3/4 oz fresh lime juice
1/2 oz Ocean Spray White grapefruit juice
1/2 oz Latitude 29 Formula Falernum
(available at orgeatworks.com)
1/2 oz cinnamon syrup
1/8 teaspoon (6 drops) grenadine
1/8 teaspoon (6 drops) Herbsaint
1 dash Angostura bitters
3/4 cup (6 oz) crushed ice

In an electric blender, blend everything at high
speed for no more than 5 seconds. Pour into a
Beachbum Berry Zombie Glass (pictured, available
from cocktailkingdom.com) or other tall glass. Add
ice cubes to fill. Garnish with mint.



OUTCAST OF THE ISLANDS

(By Beachbum Berry for Latitude 29)

1 1/2 ounces Tanqueray gin
1 ounce fresh lime juice
1/2 ounce Domain de Canton ginger liqueur
1/2 ounce cinnamon syrup*
1/4 ounce Latitude 29 Formula Orgeat
(available at orgeatworks.com)
1/8 teaspoon (6 drops) Herbsaint
1/2 oz Fentiman's ginger beer (FLOAT)

METHOD: Shake everything — except ginger beer
— with ice. Strain into a teardrop glass lined with
an ice shell “igloo” (pictured**) or into a cocktail
coupe with no ice. Pour in ginger beer.

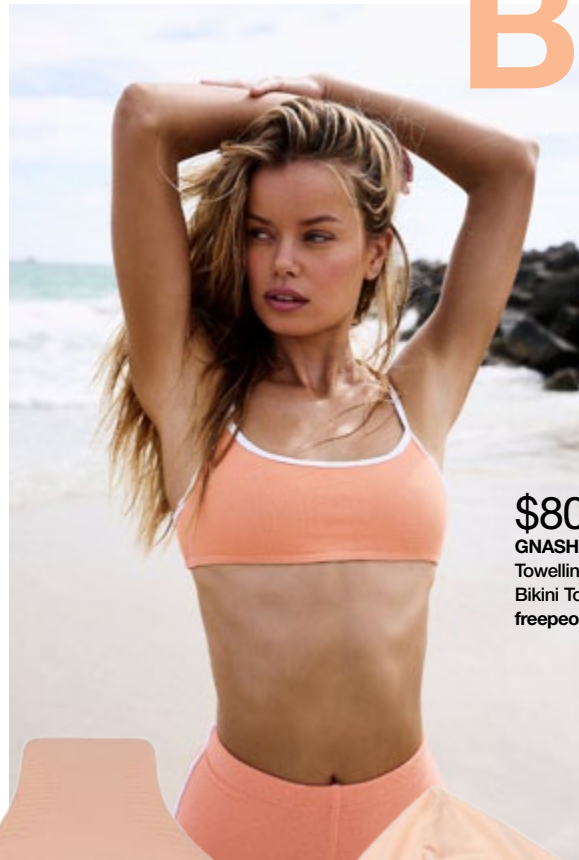


*Cinnamon syrup: Crush 3 cinnamon
sticks with a mortar & pestle. Place
the crushed sticks into a pan with
1 cup water and 1 cup organic cane
sugar. Bring to a boil, stirring until
sugar is dissolved, then cover and
simmer on low heat for 2 minutes.
Remove saucepan from heat and,
keeping it covered, let sit at least 2
hours before straining and bottling.
Lasts one month, refrigerated.

**Ice igloo: Make in advance by filling
the empty glass with shaved ice,
then pressing the ice up the sides of
the glass using a muddler or spoon;
place in freezer for 4 hours, or until
ice shell hardens.

Beachy Peachy

Founded in the 1960s, PANTONE® is the company famous for defining color standards that are utilized by designers, printers, and manufacturers worldwide to ensure color integrity and consistency. Twenty-five years ago, the company began promoting its “Color of the Year” based on global trends and forecasting research. 2024’s Color of the Year is called “Peach Fuzz” (or more specifically, “Pantone 13-1023 Peach Fuzz”). Peach Fuzz certainly brings to mind the soft glow of an early morning sky over the sea, of soft sand beneath tiny toes, and the gentle hue of a tropical cocktail at sunset. Infused with modern elegance, youthful zest, and a timeless touch, Peach Fuzz is the quintessential color to sprinkle into your springtime beach kit. Let’s dive into a curated list of beach essentials, all dressed up in this captivating color that’s capturing hearts and turning heads this season.



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10780 E CO HWY 30A
ROSEMARY BEACH
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30 STRING LILY COVE
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PHOTO: LIZ SUNSHINE

Behind the Bikini

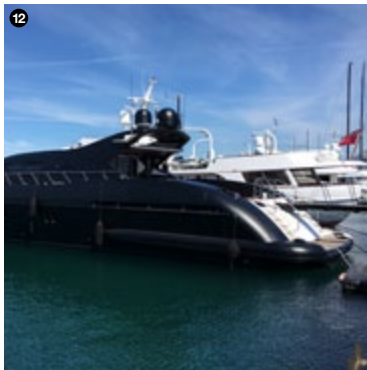
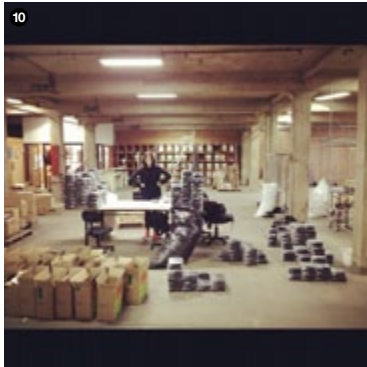
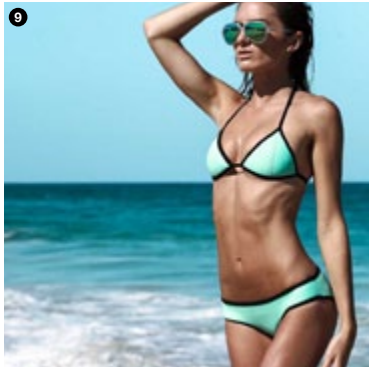
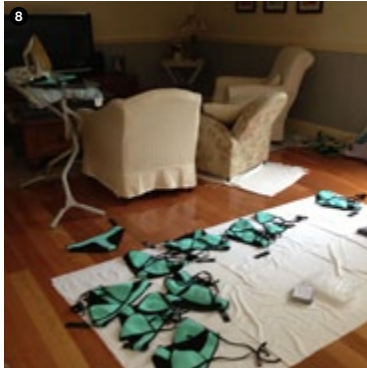
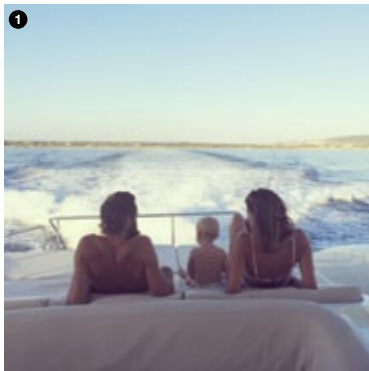
ERIN DEERING'S
TRIANGL OF SUCCESS,
STRUGGLE, AND
SELF-RENEWAL

By Lauren Sage Reinlie

It was snowing every day when Erin Deering moved to New York City from the hot-humid Mediterranean country of Monaco. The 33-year-old had her two-and-a-half-year-old son and three-week-old baby with her and, newly separated from her romantic and business partner, was set on running their \$200-million-dollar global swimsuit company, Triangl, all on her own.

“I must have been on that newborn high with a lot of adrenaline in my body,” said Erin, recalling the intensity of what she set out to do.

Erin’s success had come incredibly quickly. She’d been working herself to the bone and



1. Craig, Erin, and their son Oscar in Spain on the back of their superyacht, Neoprene
2. Kourtney Kardashian wearing one of their Italian Velvet Triangl bikinis
3. A view of the Hong Kong city skyline at night from their apartment
4. Erin modeling their first collection on a beach in Hong Kong in late 2012
5. Erin with Oscar, at La Fontelina, Capri, in August 2017
6. Craig and Erin at La Fontelina
7. A still from the Triangl photo shoot, shot in Sardinia, from their superyacht, in 2016
8. In January 2013, their living room became a makeshift workshop for ironing out every squashed neoprene bikini from their factory in China, a task that took three intensive 16-hour days
9. One of the early and most loved #trianglgirls featured on their Instagram page
10. December 2012 saw the unpacking of their very first delivery of bikinis in Melbourne, featuring nylon/spandex styles
11. Craig and Oscar going for a stroll in Monte Carlo, Monaco, in 2015
12. Neoprene, their matte black Mangusta 108 superyacht

hardly had time to catch up with the lavish life she was living. In just three years, she'd gone from cobbling together rent to running a global business, becoming a mother, owning a super yacht and mansion, and being set financially for the rest of her life.

"I always believed that as soon as you had a level of wealth or a level of success, which I had gotten really quickly, then you would just automatically be happy," Erin said.

But she wasn't.

"I was thinking, if I'm not happy with this, I must be broken. Why do I feel so miserable? What is wrong with me? There was a lot of self-loathing," she said.

In New York, she was hitting roadblock after roadblock, and when she had to move back to Monaco to wait on paperwork, she knew she wasn't going back. "I just knew it would not be me setting the company up in New York."

Instead, she walked away from the still-flourishing business for good.

But Who Am I?

Erin moved home to Melbourne, Australia, where she grew up and where her extended family still lived. At first, she thought she would return to her jet-setting lifestyle, but it didn't take long to realize she was in trouble and needed professional help. Her mental health was suffering, and she was dealing with disordered eating and the challenges of raising two young children. She was

uncomfortable in her own skin and wrestling with an identity crisis. Being around her family, the people who knew her best, made it impossible to ignore the health problems she'd been dismissing for many years.

in Hong Kong and threw themselves into launching the company. The brand caught on, and when they were able to get the product into the hands of American celebrity Kendall Jenner, sales skyrocketed. In two years, they went from zero dollars in revenue to earning \$55 million annually and selling 2,000 bikinis every day.

Erin, who had been answering all the company's customer service requests herself, suddenly didn't know what to do. She was in way over her head and too embarrassed to admit it. She knew starting a business could be chaotic, but nothing had prepared her for the level of success they achieved so quickly.

"At 27, I didn't have any real life skills, no self-development," she said. "And by the age of 28, we had this globally successful business, and I had no idea what I was doing."

Their lifestyle had completely changed as well. The couple suddenly earned so much money they could buy anything they wanted. "It took only probably a year for us to be in a financial position that we knew was going to set us up for life." But with everything happening so quickly, she didn't even have time to put much thought into the lives they were building. They started spending wildly. They moved to Monaco, lived among the rich and famous, drove fancy cars, bought a super yacht, took lavish trips, and had a baby. Two years later, they had another. All the while, Erin spiraled down but was unable to admit it to anyone.



"I had never explored who Erin was and what her values were," she said. "Then I started a business, and then it became this huge thing, and when you don't have a foundational core value or belief system, that's when things just completely go crazy."

In 2011, Erin met Craig Ellis, and on their second date, they developed the concept for Triangl. The following year, when Erin was 27 years old, the couple moved to a studio apartment



Erin with her daughter, Beatrice, born in June 2020 – smack bang in the middle of the COVID pandemic.



A photo with Zac, on their first holiday together in Hawaii in April 2019.

“I did maybe 20 years of growth in a three-year period,” she said. “It was too much for a person to take on.” And she was doing a lot of it alone. She wasn’t talking to anyone about her struggles. “No one could relate to what we were going through. I was too ashamed to tell anyone that I was struggling when I had millions of dollars in the bank and an extremely successful business and a baby and a fiancé and this life that we were living.”

She split with her fiancé just before giving birth to their second son. Soon after, when she realized she needed to leave the company behind as well, the decision was more a necessity than a choice. She started over, accepting her flaws, trying to work on them, and rebuilding herself piece by piece.

“Even though we hear it all the time, that happiness comes from within, I still had to go through it to pay attention to that and go, ah, that is so true,” she said. “There are certain benefits from financial freedom, absolutely, and I lived that. But truly, none of it matters when your internal self is at war.”

The Next Chapter

While undertaking personal healing and professional treatment in Melbourne, Erin met her husband, Zachary Keane. The couple had two more children, and now they live with their four kids, aged two to nine, in a beautiful but quiet suburb outside Melbourne.

Occasionally, Erin said she gets a little bored, but not often. “This season of our lives is all about our children,” she said. “And it’s such a safe place to live. We have so many friends and family around us.” After work, Erin and Zac are able to spend most evenings at home with the children. Erin drops the kids at school in the mornings and attends their sports games and activities. “It’s simple but really nice.”

Last year, Erin published a memoir in Australia about her experience with the quick growth of Triangl and overcoming her mental health struggles. She hopes other people facing personal hardships can find some comfort and inspiration in her story. *Hanging by a Thread* could be released in the United States this year.

After much self-searching, Erin will also launch her own fashion label this September, a project that has brought her incredible joy. She describes it as women’s wear that feels special but can be worn any day.

After Triangl, Erin searched for her purpose, the passionate work she felt she was put on Earth to do. She kept thinking her next venture needed to be something grander than fashion but eventually realized, without shame, that this is the work she loves the most. “I just love the art of dressing up,” she said.

She remembers times in her life when she stopped caring about what she wore, and while that wasn’t the reason for her suffering, it didn’t help her get out of it. Now, she doesn’t save outfits for special occasions. “If I buy something nice and it’s beautiful, I’ll wear it on a Monday. I just want to feel good.”

She’s come to realize fashion isn’t a silly pursuit. “I think it’s one of the easiest ways to show individuality. I love how it can genuinely impact our mental health when we feel good in an outfit. That’s such a powerful tool.”

Soon after the line launches, Erin will turn 40, an age she anticipates with more excitement than any other. “I just feel like every year has given me so much more freedom and growth, and there’s so much more I know about the world. So I’m like, bring it.”

To learn more, follow Erin on Instagram (@erindeering).





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The Future's So Bright...

RAY-BAN
META'S
STYLISH
GAZE INTO A
TECH-SAWY
FUTURE

As endless summers meet technological innovation, the Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses come to shore like a welcome breeze on a sweltering day. This collaboration between the iconic Ray-Ban and the tech titan Meta (you might still know them as “Facebook”) challenges the tide with a simple proposition: What if eyewear didn’t just protect your eyes from the sun, but also featured both timeless style and timely technologies? The latest model isn’t just another gadget—it’s like finding a secret cove in a well-explored island, boasting an upgraded camera, direct access to your social media feeds, speakers that envelop you in sound, and a suite of microphones that can catch every wave crash and seagull call. We’ve been testing the Ray-Ban Meta glasses on beaches, through sunsets and sunrises, for three months. Are these glasses merely a gimmicky accessory for sun worshippers, or do they herald a new wave in wearable tech?

PHOTOS: GUILLAUME LECHAT



FRAME AND LENS

With a full nod to the classic Ray-Ban design, these smart glasses sport a variety of frame styles that blend seamlessly into both casual beach days and upscale seaside soirées. Crafted from materials that balance durability with a light touch on the bridge of your nose, they offer a variety of colors to match any beach attire or mood. The lenses, treated with G-15, ensure that your view remains crisp, clear, and protected from the glaring sun.

DIMENSIONS AND FIT

Designed for comfort, these glasses promise to stay put whether you're paddling, playing beach volleyball, or lounging under the sun. They're crafted to fit snugly, ensuring they won't slip as you move from turf to surf. That said, note that the glasses are water-resistant, not waterproof. So don't take them diving just yet. It's best to stick to the shore or boat.

CAMERA

Elevating from a mere 5 MP to a robust 12 MP camera, these glasses allow you to capture the vibrant hues of the beachscape in fantastic detail, all without ever reaching for your phone or handheld.

AUDIO

Featuring two open-air speakers and an array of five microphones, these glasses bring the sounds of the beach to life, whether you're listening live to 30A Radio or capturing all the ambient sounds during your daily seaside stroll.

CONTROLS AND CONNECTIVITY

With intuitive touch and voice controls, navigating through your day becomes as effortless as sunbathing in a lounge. A 154 mAh Li-ion battery ensures you're powered through the day, while 32 GB of storage means you won't likely run out of memory

space for all your photos and videos. Connectivity options keep you in the loop, even when you're out of office and playing hooky by the sea.

TECH-SAVVY MEETS SEASIDE STYLE

Merging the timeless style of Ray-Bans with the cutting-edge technology of Meta, these glasses offer a new lens through which to experience reality. They're not just about making a style statement; they're about enriching your day with the ability to capture and share moments, immerse yourself in sound, and stay connected by voice or text, all without the need to juggle devices.

The 12 MP camera and sophisticated audio setup promise to make every outing an experience to remember, with AI features that, while still in their nascent stages, hint at a future where your glasses are an integral part of your daily attire. Comfortable for all-day wear and easy to control, the Ray-Ban Meta glasses don't just change how we interact with technology—they redefine how we engage with reality.

RAY-BAN META SUNGLASSES: THE VERDICT

THE BRIGHT SPOTS:

- **Camera Quality:** Capture the spontaneity and beauty of daily life with stunning clarity, making virtually every moment Instagram-worthy.
- **Sound Precision:** From the crashing waves to your favorite summer tunes, the audio experience is as immersive as the ocean itself.
- **Style Diversity:** With a range of styles, these glasses ensure you look as good as you feel, whether you're sunbathing, surfing, shopping, or sipping cocktails at sunset.
- **User Interface:** Seamlessly switch between capturing moments,

navigating playlists, and taking calls with intuitive controls.

COULD BE BETTER:

- **Battery Life:** While improved, a battery that can last from sunrise to sunset without needing a recharge would be optimal. Expect the battery to just keep improving.
- **Video Stability:** The photos are pretty solid, but capturing smoother and higher-quality video of those beach volleyball games or paddleboarding adventures would enhance the experience.
- **AI Capabilities:** As AI features evolve, anticipate a future where your glasses become an even more integral part of your daily wardrobe. It's about to get crazy, folks.

• **LED Indicators:** More discreet yet clear signaling for recording status would perfect the blend of function and style.

RAY-BAN META'S HORIZON

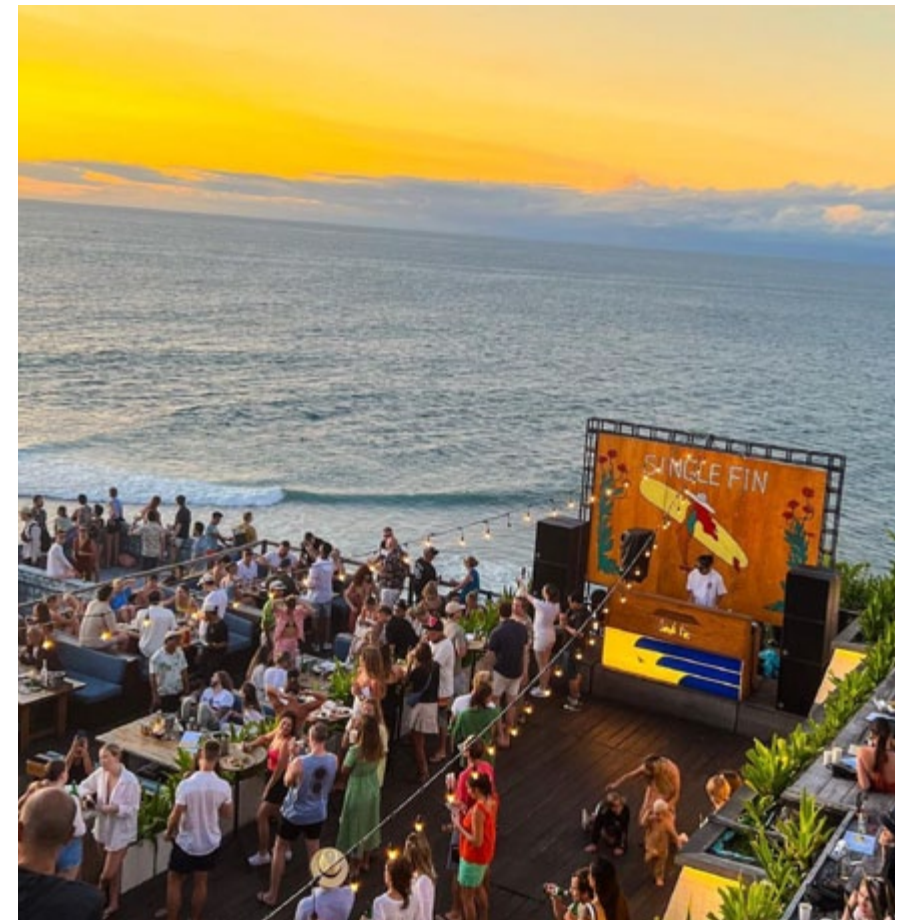
Even though this space is still in its infancy, the Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses clearly have a place in the pantheon of beach essentials. For now, they stand as a testament to what's possible when technology is used to support a laid-back lifestyle, offering a glimpse into a future where we capture and share our stories with ease and style. Whether they'll become as indispensable as sunscreen and paddleboards remains to be seen, but their potential to redefine our life experiences is as vast and alluring as the sea itself.



World's Best
Beach Bars

Single Fin

Uluwatu, Bali



PHOTOS: SINGLE FIN ULUWATU



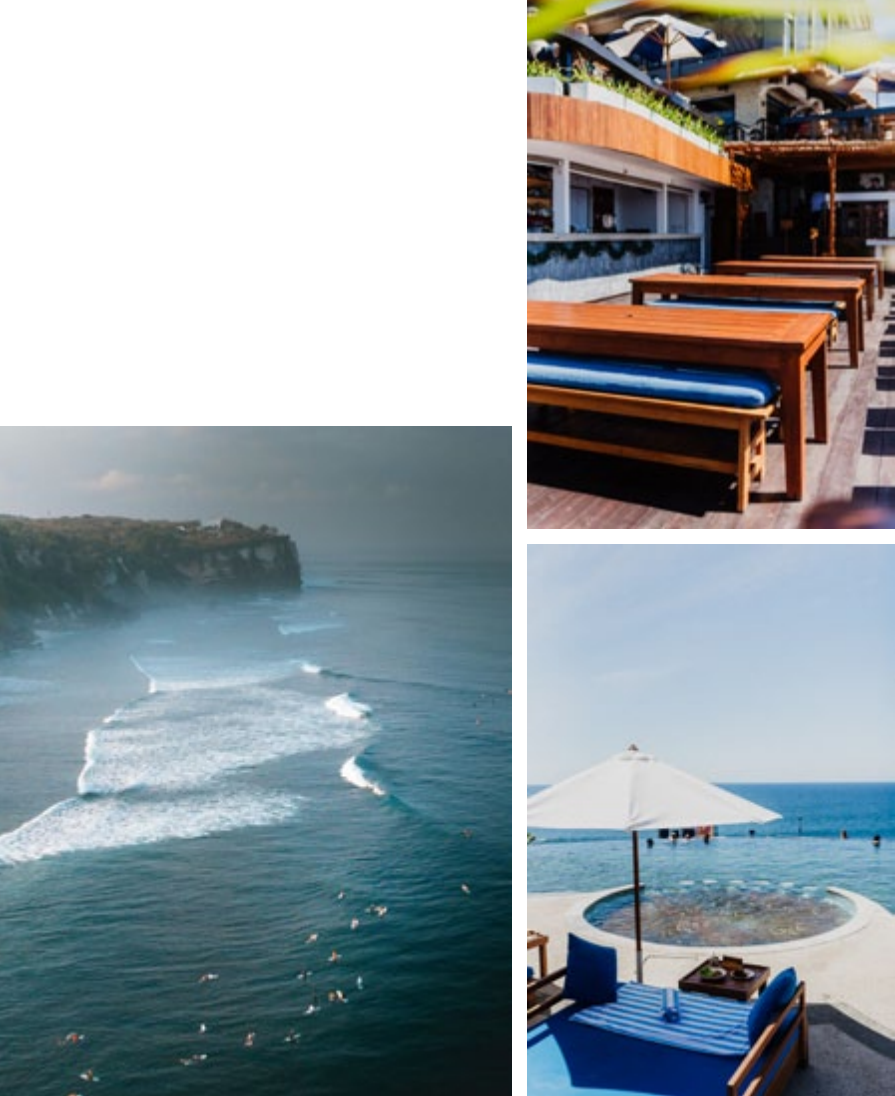
Many people lament the loss of the old Uluwatu. Still, if there is one place that has ridden the most radical wave of progress, it is the Bukit peninsula at the southern tip of Bali, of which Ulus is the centerpiece.

A Surf Haven's Historic Journey

Uluwatu was “discovered” as the ultimate surfing destination in 1972, due to the making of the old-time classic surf movie *Morning of the Earth*. It was filmed in 1971 by Alby Falzon and David Elfick. But watching the movie today will soon reveal why it is a classic; with stoner music, hippy artwork, and a free-wheeling vibe, it caught the zeitgeist of the time.

The Journey to Uluwatu: From Hidden Gem to Surfing Mecca

Back then, getting to Uluwatu required a long hike descending down the temple and emerging through the cave at the beach of Uluwatu. There were no steps, so a makeshift bamboo ladder and ropes had to be used to enter the cave. After the film's release in 1972,



Uluwatu received immediate attention from surfers across the globe. Today, Uluwatu is one of the most famous surf destinations in Bali.

From Bamboo to Business

After discovering the wave, the Uluwatu cliffs soon became a sprawl of warungs. A warung is a small family-owned business, usually made of wood, bamboo, or wooden thatch, and sometimes it's just a deck in front of a house where the family stays. A warung usually offers food and homemade items like clothing and jewelry and a safe place to store stuff while surfing. Over time, as more and more people visited Uluwatu, these warungs became solid structures. Sitting alongside Blue Point Hotel, one of the top warungs became Single Fin, officially opening its doors in 2008.

Sunsets Spectacles

Getting to Uluwatu now involves a tricky climb down a long series of semi-broken and oddly-sized stairs with gaps, broken steps, and slippery sections. The entry to Single Fin is at the

beginning of the steps, so it is at the top of the cliff with the best sunset views in Bali. These sunset views have become world-renowned, and just before the sun goes down, there is a massive influx of scooters from all over the peninsula as visitors all want to get a glimpse of the famous sunset, get a few selfies and a few photos of their friends at sunset. The top of the cliff – the best view spot – has limited space, and a decent-sized strip of the cliff is Single Fin, so they literally have a captive audience.

A Collaboration for Celebration

A few years ago, they did something else that was very clever. Right alongside Single Fin is the Blue Point Hotel, with a vast rim-flow pool, a wedding cathedral, and a large area for outdoor music and chilling. So when Blue Point and Single Fin formed a partnership, you could then enter Single Fin if you were a paying guest of Blue Point. You could also enter Blue Point and get some room to move if you had already paid to enter Single Fin - there are entrances on both sides. It was a massive win for everyone and soon encouraged the two to host sunset parties with live DJ sets and thousands of people.

Midweek to Weekend

Thus began the Wednesday Sessions – a midweek sunset party, and the perfect time for letting your hair loose, not that midweek means much to people on holiday and having a party. Still, the Wednesday Sessions are incredibly popular, with tables booked up left, right, and center, with a DJ stage on the cliff edge and dancing fans going wild. The Wednesday Sessions can only be beaten by the Sunday Sessions, where they usually book popular DJs. Sunday is generally busier than Wednesday, and the party goes to 1 am.

More Than Just a Surf Bar

Despite the many visiting European tourists and the penchant for progressive house DJs, Single Fin is a surf bar at heart. You will see all the people you surfed with during the day, including those who might have been aggressive in the crowded lineup, so it does have that duality. Just remember to keep it cool in the water during the day because any argument in the crowded surf

might have a comeback up at Single Fin later, but that's rare. Usually, it's just a bunch of stoked surfers chilling out.

Single Fin also premieres new surf movies on big screens, and their premier of *Snapt4* was a big evening. There is no best time to go to Single Fin. While Wednesday and Sunday nights are the most crowded and buzzing, it also depends on the weather. A drizzly and cloudy Sunday will be a fizzle, while a clear-skied Monday will reveal the most fantastic sunset and could be the best night of your life at Single Fin.

Fashion and Flavors

There are many good-looking people at Single Fin every night of the week, including people on gap years, influencers, and young and care-free travelers everywhere. Everyone is sun-tanned and wearing skimpy clothing, bikinis, and board shorts on the Blue Point side. Many people end up in the pool at Blue Point anyway, where you can still be right next to the DJ set while cooling off in the water.

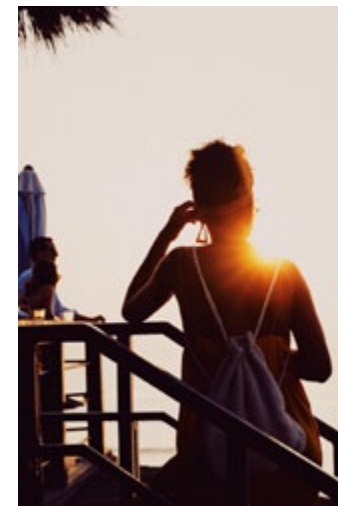
A cold Bintang beer will cost about Rupiah 55k, while a cocktail costs about 120k, but it can be bought in jugs, which are a bit cheaper. With names like Hanalei Bay, Last Wave, Reef Break Rita, and Good Vibrations, you will find a cocktail that you love.

Wine prices are exorbitant, as is wine all over Indonesia.

Embrace the Moment

Nothing is better than a late afternoon high tide, not too many people in the water, and a good swell direction for Racetracks. While in the water, you can hear the music kicking off at Single Fin and the crowds watching the surfers as the sun starts to set. Then it's a quick scramble up the stairs to quench your thirst with your first liquid gold Bintang before the music, the vibes, and the beautiful people start making you smile. You realize that all will be good in your world, at least for today, because that's all we have.

To learn more, follow Single Fin on Facebook and Instagram (@singlefinbali).



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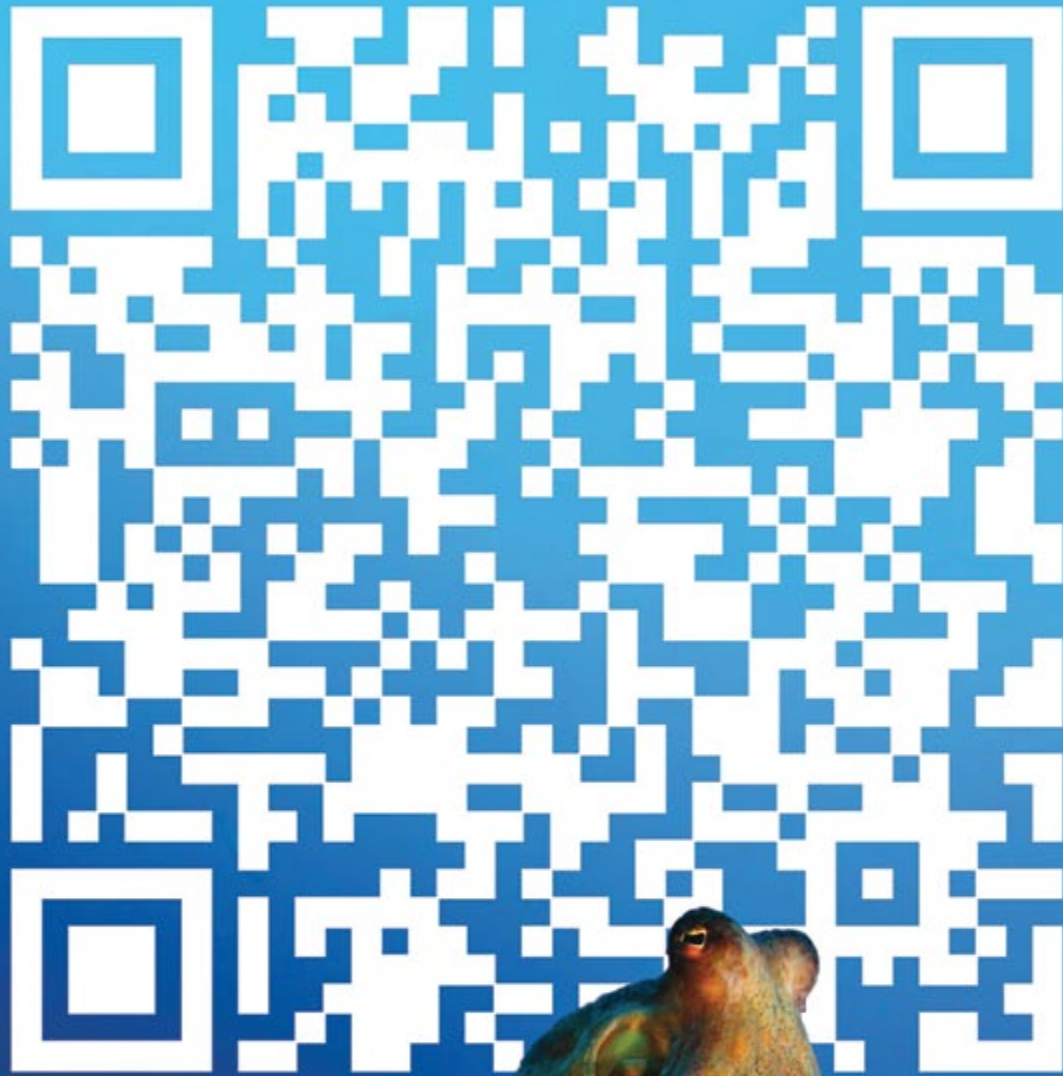


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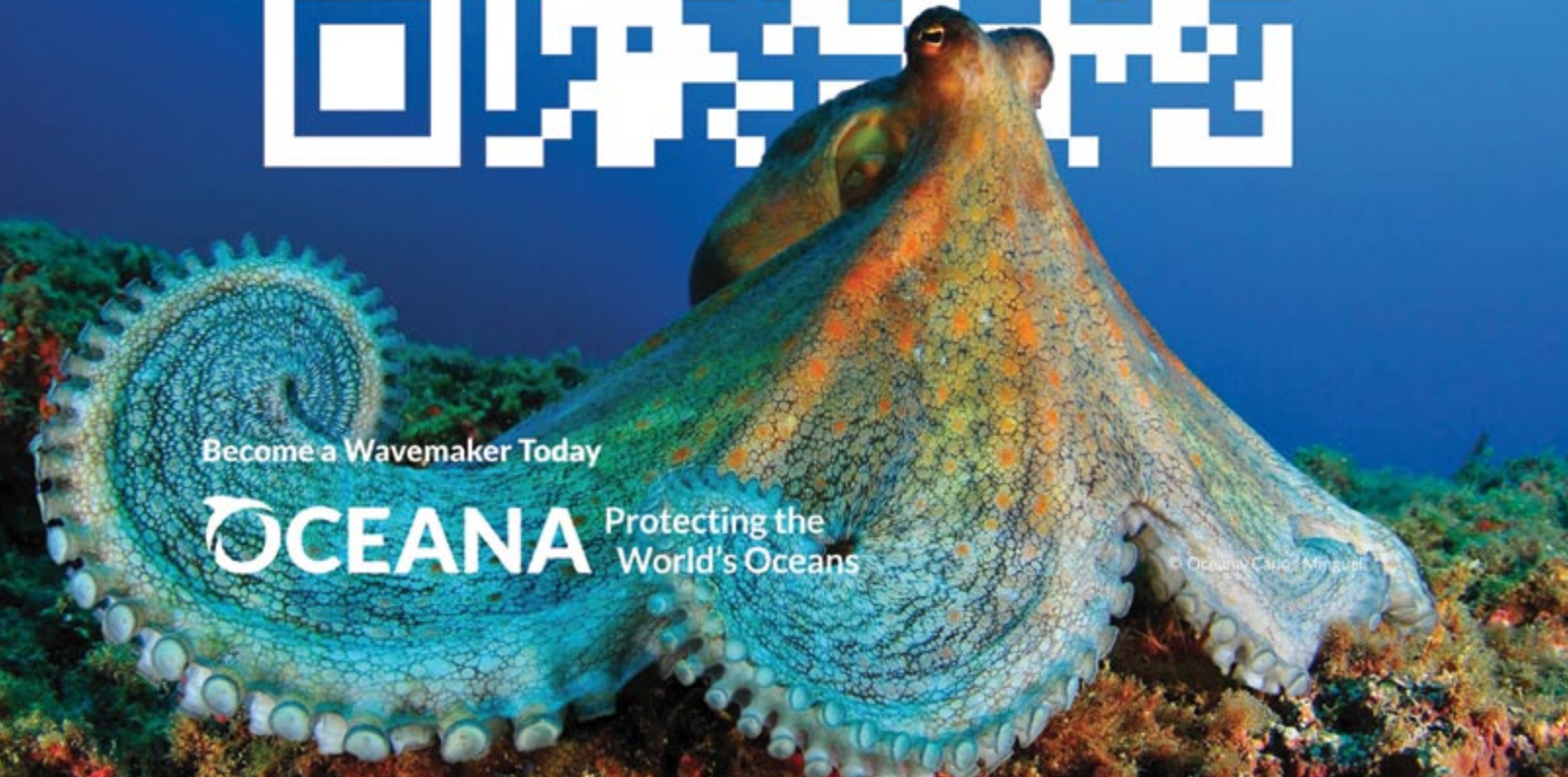


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Beauty

AND THE BEACH

By Susan Gunn



Leah's muse channeling the spirit of Elton John's 'Tiny Dancer' in this picturesque moment.

Leah VanHoose



Ah Spring! Finally, the bright light returns, and with it, warmer gulf waters and wide smiles. If you're lucky enough to call the coast your home, then you know the feeling. Cool morning breezes through open windows give way to warm afternoons and doves cooing quietly into luscious, lengthening evenings. As the chill subsides, it seems every winter ends the same every year—folks appear out of proverbial hiding and flock back to the beaches. People-watching begins and friendly chatter is on among the beach bonfire gatherings of what the year ahead might bring. Are there any new beach spots to visit for live music, or fun new restaurants to try? What new fashions will we see this year? One thing is certain, springtime plus the beach lifestyle equals happiness. As locals and visitors gather, there is always the desire to preserve these memorable days in photographs.

Enter Florida photographer Leah VanHoose. Leah was raised on the eastern shore of Maryland. As a young mother to twin boys, and wife to her once high school classmate, Jason, VanHoose owned her own gym. She and her husband were also the resident caretakers of a 250-acre estate called The Wilderness in Trappe, Maryland. It is there that she fell in love with the outdoors. "I loved the nature that surrounded me and Jason. He bought me a camera and I learned how to use it photographing animals and landscapes," Leah said. Growing up near the coast, Leah says the beach has called to her all her life. On a trip back to Maryland from Louisiana, she and Jason stopped in Miramar Beach, South Walton, Florida, for three days, and she was hooked. Leah and her husband have called Santa Rosa Beach their home now for almost ten years.

These days, VanHoose divides her time between the busy beach real estate market, going to the gym to maintain her high level of fitness, and working on her photography. The self-proclaimed cross-fitter and gym junkie is herself an impressive sight to behold. Standing at a super-fit 5'9", she wears artisan tattoos of brilliant color and proudly sports a bald head. Her passion for empowering women can be seen in her images, and after being diagnosed with alopecia in 2007, she knows something about struggling with self-image. She did not linger at all in self-pity, but instead embraced her appearance and now encourages others to do the same. Finding a perfect balance between the coastal lifestyle and utilizing that through photography to encourage women has been a big confidence booster in her own life.

"I am very much an artist and a creative, and photographing women is my art. I have always wanted to help people, and showing women how to be strong, powerful, and capable has always been my goal," Leah said. "I like to shoot on the beach in the mornings. My subjects and I laugh and play and get comfortable in order to get the best images. I tell them to let out their inner diva! Confidence is the sexiest thing a woman can possess, and I try to give that to women through my photographs."

Leah enjoys the beach regularly and loves to explore all that Florida has to offer. She enjoys spending time in nature with her family, which includes three cats and her beloved dog, Daisy. When asked what advice she would give young women coming up in today's challenging world, she said, "Now that I'm in my 50s, I want to remain strong and capable the rest of my life. Find your strength. It's okay to be different, you don't have to fit in. Find your way and do the things that make you happy."

To learn more, visit leahvanhoosephotography.com or follow her on Instagram (@finding_beautiful_photography).

Discover Leah's captivating portraits, revealing not only beach fashion and the beauty of women, but also the confidence, grace, and resilience they exude. Through masterful use of light and shadow, Leah elevates her photos, capturing the essence of the Gulf coast and empowering women in every frame.



Leah's lens extends beyond just capturing the shoreline. Here, she captures the serene elegance of Rosemary Beach, one of 30A's many charming communities.



Cloudy skies add a touch of drama, creating a striking backdrop that's perfect for early beachside photography—just as long as the rain holds off!

Finding the best light is always a quest for photographers. Katie radiates as she models for a brand in Alys Beach, Florida.

Finding a perfect balance between the coastal lifestyle and utilizing that through photography to encourage women has been a big confidence booster in her own life.



Krystal's embrace of the morning chill at the beach reflects Leah's dedication to capturing women at their most empowered moments.



Morning serenity at the beach: perfect for quiet portrait sessions.



Reflections bring an artistic flair to Leah's photography, adding depth and interest to each shot.

Capturing the beauty of the coast: a stunning blend of blues and tans with a perfectly lit model.



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A Decade's Crescendo

JJ Grey's Stirring Comeback in *Olustee*

By Gen Handley

It took nearly a decade, but the wait was worth it. After nine years since their last record, 2015's soulful *Ol' Glory*, legendary Florida funk rockers JJ Grey and Mofro have finally released the anticipated follow-up, *Olustee*, 11 carefully crafted tracks that grasp your attention the entire time. So why the long wait?

"I've always heard that life is what happens to you while you're making other plans, and that was definitely the case with making this album," said Grey. "Actually, it was probably more like *Olustee* happened while I was making other plans. I had no idea how much time had elapsed between albums. I just worked on it when the inspiration hit."

From the gentle guitar strumming and Grey's vocals on the first song, "The Sea," it's hard not to get drawn into *Olustee* right off the bat, a record that maintains a steady thrum of positive energy throughout with "Top of the World" bringing the funk and a good energy in the second track.

Much of the record's lyrics are inspired by mythical Southern stories of his ancestral Florida home and filled with people from JJ's life, particularly the bluesy rocker and title track "Olustee," a welcome change of pace showing how dynamic this band can be. The entire record pulses with energy and color, giving the listener quieter and more subtle moments like the melancholy "Seminole Wind," the romantic "Starry Night," and the beautiful closer, "Deep Than Belief." But throughout, the album is punctuated with big, bright moments like the very danceable "Wonderland" and the horn-driven "Free High." All these loud and low moments are joined by one common idea – enjoy life.

Olustee is the first record that Grey has self-produced, and that is clear in the quality and in its intimate sound (it would sound amazing on vinyl). The intricacies and nuances of the various instruments, as well as Grey's incredible voice, result in a record that reveals new surprises upon every listen.

"I produced the record strictly through happenstance," he said. "I made my normal demos at home for all the songs like I always do, but then I decided to demo them again with the band in the studio. The first couple of tracks came out so good that I just kept rolling with it. Then COVID hit and no one was traveling, so I just kept working on the album, and before I knew it, it was almost finished."

Over their discography of 10 albums, JJ Grey and Mofro have continued to raise the bar, surprising those who have waited so long for a new record. What makes them unique is their strong respect and admiration for the natural world, which is evident in the lyrics of the song "Olustee":

*Hear it roar, hear it roar
All the way around Olustee like a flaming hurricane
See the deer flashing by
See the crows flying high trying to get away
Hear that pop go tree to tree
See my life now flashing by me, I got to make it to the lake*

"The ocean was a big influence on the album, and it is a big influence on me in general," Grey said. "Three of the songs on the album ("Top of the World," "The Sea," and "On a Breeze") were all inspired at the ocean, but they are completely different sounding. Ultimately, this land here at home in Florida moves me, whether I realize it or not, so it will always be a major contributor to my music."

Believe it or not, JJ Grey and Mofro's roots can be traced to the mid-1990s when they signed with a record label in London, England. A lot has happened since, but that rich history is evident in this hopeful record that keeps you happily wondering until the very end.

You can catch JJ Grey and Mofro at the Sun, Sand and Soul beach weekend scheduled for May 2 - 4 at Seascape, Miramar Beach, Florida. For more info, or to buy tickets, visit www.topeka.live.

PHOTO: STEVE RAPPORT



L to R: Director Arix Zalace with lead actors Max Ivutin and Jason Burkey

Bear Essentials

Director Arix Zalace on Assembling a Dream Cast for *The Paper Bear* Film

Northwest Florida is a global biological hot spot, one worth protecting. *The Paper Bear* is a new feature film, produced by 30A locals Arix Zalace and Sean Couch, and is set to premiere in the summer of 2024.

*“Is that him?” I asked my partner Jen.
“I think so,” she replied.*

It was early morning, and we had just arrived in Trilith, a neighborhood in Fayetteville, Georgia, directly across from the movie studios that shared the same name.

*“Jason?” I asked.
“Yep, that’s me.”*

Jason Burkey, a native of West Chicago, met us in front of Woodstone Bakery. We had driven up from Florida to conduct a series of final auditions for the feature film *The Paper Bear*. Jason was already cast to play the role of the “father” in the movie and now the question was who would play his son. After months, we had narrowed the field from over 2,000 auditions to just Jason and three boys, one of which would be “Max.”

Cowriter and executive producer Sean Couch felt strongly that Max Ivutin was the perfect fit for the role. It was sheer coincidence that Max the actor had the same name as “Max” the character, or perhaps it was serendipitous. Though I shared Sean’s excitement about Max, as the director, I wanted to be certain the chemistry between Jason and Max would be believable. I knew Max was a very strong comedic actor, but I also had to be certain he could perform a strong dramatic scene. I needed both actors in

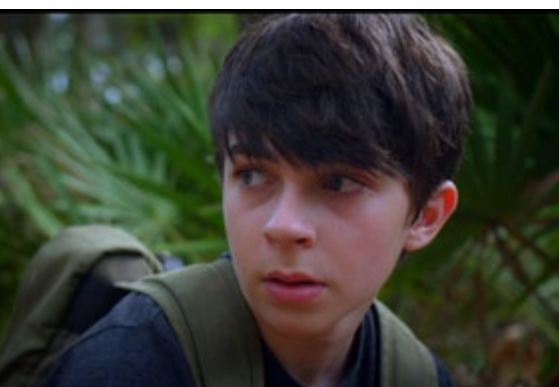
the same room.

Casting is one of the most important aspects of creating a successful film. It is a complex and subjective process. As an example, even though we knew Max was an excellent actor and fit the “look” we needed, if he didn’t jell with Jason, we would have to go a different route. It’s that simple. The chemistry has to work, or the film doesn’t work. It was crucial that we include Jason in the final audition to cast Max.

Of the three boys at the final audition that day, Max went last. The first two auditions were strong, but once Max began, we all knew that he was the one. His quick wit and comfortability with Jason and the other adults in the room had us laughing instantly. He owned the audition and the room. There was still the question of drama. Could he bring it? After calling “action” on the final scene, the room went silent, and we found ourselves lost in Jason and Max’s performance, so much so that I forgot to call cut. It was at that moment that I knew we had our cast.

Since wrapping the live action filming in May of 2023, I have gotten to know both Jason and Max on a personal level and consider them both friends. Part of that friendship has been learning about their journeys as actors.

Jason’s mother was a passionate actress who taught and directed high school drama and performed in local



theater companies. As Jason puts it, “Acting was in my blood.” While his brothers went into sports, he chose acting over baseball. And, he and his best friend realized early on that “all the cute girls” were in theater. His ah-ha moment came in seventh grade during his first performance in front of a live audience. A light bulb went off when he made the entire audience laugh. There was an electricity in that moment as well as a healthy dose of adrenaline. Later, in college, he majored in film and media production, where he spent his time behind the camera.

After graduating, he continued on this path until one day he found an email from one of his former teachers. She expressed how talented he was and how she hoped no matter what he did in life it would include acting in some way.

That was the catalyst Jason needed. He made up his mind to act full-time. Moving to Nashville, he started taking any acting gig he could get his hands on, including a lot of free work, or as he puts it “work I pretty much paid to do.” It’s the classic actor’s journey, even getting his groceries from a nonprofit at one point because he couldn’t afford them on his own. This was all an education while he honed his craft and it began to pay off. He started landing larger roles and eventually moved to Atlanta to be closer to the location where many of these roles were being cast and filmed. Once you meet Jason you realize, “Wait, I’ve seen you on Netflix,” or, “I just saw you in a commercial the other day.” His love of acting is evident by how prolific his work is.

Max, on the other hand, started his professional career at a much younger age. His parents knew he was an actor when he and his brother starred in a school club called Odyssey of the Mind. They had to come up with skits and then perform them. Their undeniable flair for the dramatic propelled them to the world finals, a feat Max achieved at the tender age of eight. Recalling this pivotal moment, his mother shared, “That’s when we realized Max was destined to be an actor.” Things started taking shape when he was cast in Clint Eastwood’s *The 15:17 to Paris*, Comedy Central’s *Robbie*, and Disney’s *Home Sweet Home Alone*.

Then COVID happened. Some projects Max was cast in were put on hold while others were eventually dropped altogether. It wasn’t just coincidence that the timing was right for casting of *The Paper Bear*. The unexpected break in Max’s schedule left the perfect opening for him to join our team. After searching nationally, we had found our two lead actors, both from the same talent agency, Houghton Talent, located in Atlanta, Georgia.

The premise of the film *The Paper Bear* and the non-profit that has grown

from it is this: the Panhandle of Florida is a global biological hot spot, one worth protecting. Biodiversity is the key to adapting to and surviving on an ever-changing planet, and these key global “hotspots” contain the most biodiversity and some of the rarest. Many of the plants, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, and insects located within these hotspots can only be found there. *The Paper Bear* will take viewers on a journey, one with adventure, drama, comedy, and suspense. You will be entertained. You’ll laugh, you’ll cheer, and you might even cry, but most importantly, we hope you will come away from the film with a newfound appreciation and respect for the importance of wild spaces and the role they play in our lives. This is a tall order for a film, one that could only be accomplished with the right cast.

The journey through an acting career is akin to a rollercoaster, filled with its highs and lows. Yet, as Jason and I concur, the key lies in relentless perseverance. Show up, day in and day out, for when talent is in the mix, it’s only a matter of time before it reaps its rewards. That is how Jason and Max ended up being the stars of this upcoming feature film. Not only do they have world-class talent, but they kept showing up for their passion, even during a global pandemic. As I sit in the editing booth every day working through the final edit with *The Paper Bear* team, it is clear that our stars showed up for this project, and they showed up in a major way.

The Paper Bear is going to be an incredibly powerful film, and we can’t wait to share it with you.



The Paper Bear is scheduled to premiere in summer 2024. Follow the film’s journey at thepaperbear.org and stay connected with @ThePaperBearFilm on social media.



“The chemistry has to work, or the film doesn’t work.”



NORTH SHORE, O'AHU

By Abigail Abesamis Demarest
Photos: Turtle Bay Resort

Some of the world's best waves can be found in Hawaii, so it's no wonder that modern surfing has its roots there. The "Seven-Mile Miracle" from Hale'iwa Beach Park to Sunset Beach on the North Shore of O'ahu is the stuff of surfing legend, with more than 30 world-famous surf spots, including Waimea Bay and Banzai Pipeline. The North Shore has a quieter, more relaxed vibe than bustling Waikiki, with stunning vistas in every direction, historic surf breaks, and some of the best poke and shave ice you'll ever have.



WHY GO?

The North Shore of O'ahu is a breathtaking surfing location that's home to some of the world's biggest surfing competitions: the Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational (a.k.a. "the Eddie"), the Vans Triple Crown of Surfing, and the Billabong Pipe Masters—to name a few. But even if you aren't a surfer or a surfing enthusiast, there's the natural scenery, wildlife (including sea turtles, Hawaiian monk seals, and birds in a rainbow of colors), and charming small towns (like Hale'iwa).

WHERE SHOULD I EAT?

From humble poke shacks to upscale waterfront resort restaurants, there's no shortage of places to eat on the North Shore. Get your poke fix at Ry's Poke Shack for a low-key, local vibe, or enjoy an elevated poke plate paired with a lilikoi (passionfruit) cocktail served in a gleaming copper turtle at the stunning Alaia restaurant at Turtle Bay Resort. Other local favorites include Sunrise Shack (for coffee and beautiful acai bowls) and Ted's Bakery (for cream pies). And you can't leave Hawaii without grabbing some shave ice at the iconic Matsumoto, a North Shore standby since 1951. If you want to experience a lu'au, Turtle Bay Resort hosts Paniolo, a Hawaiian Cowboy Lū'au, every week. They offer a buffet-style spread (including roasted Kālua pig and a fresh salad featuring greens and vegetables grown on their on-site farm), hula and fire dancing performances, and lawn games.



HOW DO I GET THERE?

Major airlines such as Delta, United, American, and Alaska fly into O'ahu, and of course, there's also Hawaiian Airlines—the state's largest airline. Once you arrive at Daniel K. Inouye International Airport (HNL) in Honolulu, you can take a rental car, a shuttle service (like North Shore Connection), a taxi, a city bus, or call an Uber. The drive to the North Shore takes around 30-60 minutes depending on traffic.

WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

As far as North Shore accommodations go, you can't beat Turtle Bay Resort. The luxury property is on a peninsula and surrounded by water on three sides, so every guestroom, suite, and bungalow has unobstructed ocean views. It's been around since 1972, but a recent renovation has opened the lobby area to reveal sweeping views on all sides. Turtle Bay Resort sits on 1,300 acres of land—650 acres of which have been permanently allocated as conservation space. With all this space and the incredible views from your room's private balcony, you can enjoy some of the best vistas the North Shore offers without even leaving the resort. Take a surfing or hula lesson, kayak alongside Honu (Pacific green sea turtles) in Kawela Bay, go on a bird-watching safari (the property is home to more than 70 bird species), enjoy a spa treatment (and hear the waves crashing around you in the zen outdoor spa lounge), take a tour of Kuilima Farm (the resort's 468-acre farm which grows 70% of the ingredients served at the property's restaurants), and sip on a Mai Tai while watching the sun go down on another perfect day in paradise.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

A North Shore Connection shuttle from Honolulu Airport to the North Shore starts at \$100 per person for a shared shuttle and \$275 for a private shuttle. An Uber costs \$60-\$90. Guest rooms at Turtle Bay Resort start at \$660, Ocean Bungalows start at \$1,900, and Ocean Club guests (included with certain room types or for an added fee) get access to a spacious, open-air lounge that serves food, drinks, and desserts throughout the day. Food and drink prices vary widely—you can spend a few bucks on shave ice at Matsumoto, \$12 for a poke bowl at Ry's, or \$200 a ticket for Turtle Bay's weekly Lū'au (which comes with a welcome drink, dinner, dessert, and a show).





Spring at Alys Beach Town Center



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Photo: Thomas Gravanis

How Andria Mitsakos is Redefining Sustainability by Weaving Heritage into Modern Design

By Carrie Honaker

For Andria Mitsakos, travel breeds tolerance and serves as a constant source of inspiration.

She grew up surrounded by creatives. One grandmother made shoes, another wove textiles on a loom, her great-aunt dealt in antiques, her great-great-grandfather was a jeweler in Armenia, and her mother, an interior designer, dragged her around to flea markets all over the world. Her wanderlust continued as she launched her namesake public relations agency, AMPR, 21 years ago, but she still dabbled in design.

In 2010, she began designing handbags that quickly became the envy of her friends. Following her move back to Greece, she expanded her creative repertoire to include accessories, decorative arts, and furniture. In 2023, Mitsakos opened the doors to the Anthologist showroom in Athens, in a lovingly renovated 1912 Neoclassical building in Athens' emerging Plateia Anexartisias.

In her downtown Athens studio, a wall of fabrics and tapestries hangs. Some are from Egypt, others from Armenia. There is also stained glass from Greece, mosaics from Mexico, and more. Each represents her dedication to amplifying the arts in danger of being lost around the world.



“It’s sustainability in two senses: antique and vintage because you’re not buying something new,” said Mitsakos. “Cultural preservation to me is the new sustainability. I’m working with women who make these beautiful tapestries and they’re able to continue their work while feeding their families and teaching other women how to make the craft as well.”

The work she does with Anthologist craftspeople takes her back to her roots and allows her to continue what her ancestors couldn’t because they fled the country to find a better life in the United States. Living and working in Athens, surrounded by water and ancient temples, she realized that just like when she was a child and her grandmother made her pencil cases from leftover shoe leather, she could design and make her furniture with found materials and traditional practices.

“Much of what we make for Anthologist involves third- and fourth-generation artisans,” she said. During the pandemic, they maintained production, but were required to melt-down old things because they didn’t have access to the raw materials.

“If we don’t continue to create in this process, the trades will die,” she added. “Metalwork utilizes ancient techniques, sand molds, and everything done by hand. Ceramic work involves firing in a traditional kiln and then painting by hand. It’s important to preserve this culture. The leather work I do here, all the bags are made by hand the way my grandmother made shoes. When you buy something, it needs to have a story and at Anthologist, I’m the curator of these stories.”

Surrounded by the Aegean Sea and living in the shadow of the Acropolis, inspiration for her pieces abounds.

“The mystical energy in Greece enables me to focus on storytelling,” she said. “Sometimes I find the story and create an object from that myth, such as the Arion Dolphin. Other pieces are inspired by sea stories like the immigration of my great-grandmother to the United States which inspired the Seas the Day earrings in my Almas Collection.”

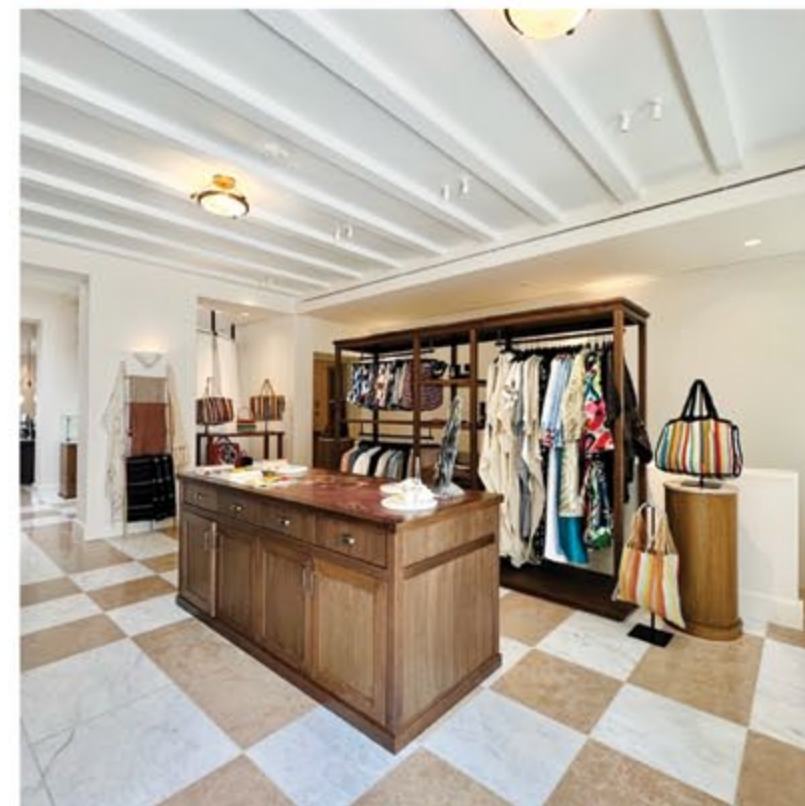


Her great-grandmother crossed the Atlantic Ocean at 15 years old, alone, with no money in her pocket to find a new life in America. Beyond honoring her great-grandmother’s courage, the collection also celebrates her great-great-grandfather, one of Armenia’s most exceptional jewelers, whose story she learned 100 years after his death. “Even our darling Henri, the Hippocampus from my stuffed animal collection, is inspired by the mythical hippocampi that swam in the Mediterranean around the south of France,” she said.

Whether working with women in Cairo to weave their emotions and scenes of daily life through embroidery, turning a national dress from Myanmar into bags and pillows, or finding new audiences for a shoe designer who reminds her of her grandmother’s roots, Mitsakos keeps their legacies alive through their handicrafts.

Mitsakos’ creations can be found online at anthologist.com, at the Anthologist showroom in Athens, on Paros starting in May at Cosme and Parilio, and at Hotel Grande Bretagne Corner’s ever-changing curated selection available year-round. 📍

To learn more, follow Andria’s updates on Instagram (@wanderlista). Check out her website online at anthologist.com.





Verina Astra, Greece

ANDRIA’S FAVORITE BEACH STAYS

We asked Andria Mitsakos to share some of her favorite beaches that have shaped her creative process. The following are her recommendations, places of immense beauty and cultural depth that have each played a pivotal role in honing her artistic vision. Andria reflects that these destinations have served as wellsprings of inspiration, their distinctive landscapes and rich narratives intricately interlacing with the very essence of her design philosophy.

Beaches in Greece

“I live in Athens, and while the city is my home, I’m constantly on the lookout for more destinations to explore throughout Greece. Enter: Crete. My family brought me there on summer vacation when I was 10 years old. I was awestruck by the palace of Knossos, and its frescoes with their striking red pigments. I went back in 2006 with a boyfriend and stayed at Blue Palace in Elounda. We spent leisurely mornings on our terrace while I read Victoria Hislop’s, *The Island*, a tale about Spinalonga, the former leper colony just off the coast of the resort and a UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Maybe it was Hislop’s intimate tale that led me back to Crete again and again, or it could just be the destination’s raw and all-encompassing beauty. Now Blue Palace is my PR client. Lucky me. Knossos still stands. Crete’s magic awaits, and the boyfriend? While we aren’t together, we still speak about that mystical trip,” Andria said.

Stay: Blue Palace is reborn this summer as a boutique hotel with the same commitment to conscious luxury and uplifting local communities, on a smaller, more intimate scale.

“I’ve been coming to Paros for almost 10 years. It’s one of the few Cycladic islands that has sandy beaches. I can’t reveal my favorite as I don’t want anyone to know about it. But go have lunch at Thalassamou on Aliki Beach,” she said.

Stay: Cosme, located beachfront in the quaint village of Naoussa, serves as Anthologist’s Parian flagship.

Mitsakos also loves the beaches on Sifnos and recommends staying at Verina Astra for its sprawling panoramic views of the Aegean, especially at night when the stars are on full display.

If you are looking for the smaller, quieter side of Greece, she recommends Antiparos. Only 1,000 people live on this island, but Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson are counted among them. Mitsakos says not to miss bites at Casa Fistiki, her go-to when on the island.

Isla Holbox, Mexico

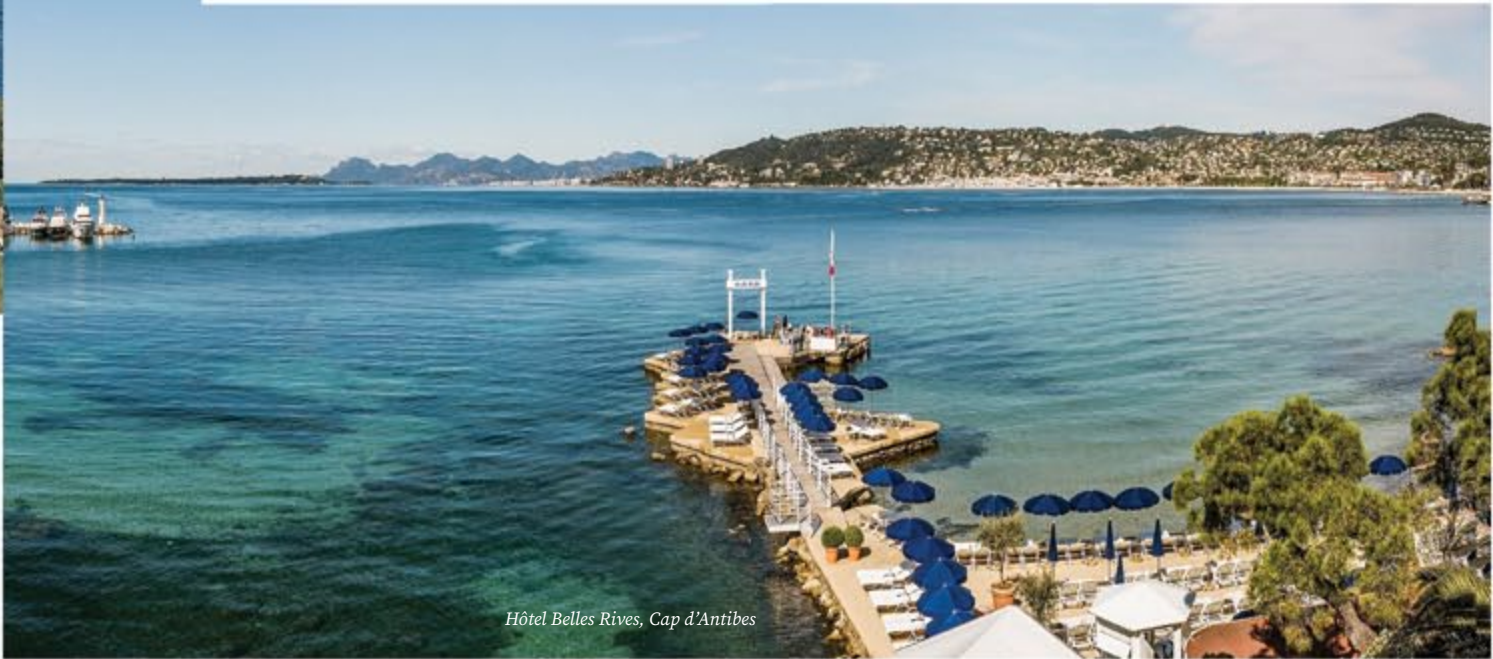
Like Greece, Mitsakos feels drawn to Mexico and its ancient roots. She started going here in the early 2000s when Tulum got popular. Though the world knows about Holbox now, she still considers it “...a magical slice of an island framed on one side by seemingly endless white sand.”

Stay: Ser CasaSandra blends art, therapy, spirituality, and integration with nature and the surrounding community to take you on a personal journey to self-awareness.

Photo: Peter Wesley Brown



Cosme, Greece



Hôtel Belles Rives, Cap d’Antibes

Antigua

“My parents have been going to Antigua since the late 1960s. It’s old-school Caribbean, and home to 365 beaches, each more gorgeous than the next,” Andria said.

Stay: Galley Bay Resort & Spa is an adults-only, all-inclusive property where Andria started her PR career in the mid-90s, and still admires the stunning beaches and their commitment to sustainability—their herb, fruit, and vegetable garden seed all dining at the resort.

Palm Island, The Grenadines

“Palm Island holds a special place in my heart. Twenty five years ago, I went there on a scouting mission before the new owners took over the hotel. Today, the island is still only accessed by private launch from nearby Union Island, and it maintains that off-the-radar Caribbean charm. It reminds me of the Caribbean I remember as a kid—that 1970s super chic, with everyone barefoot, women wearing batik, eating lobster on the beach, and drinking coconut water out of a fresh coconut. My parents liked to add a couple shots of rum!” she said.

Stay: Palm Island Resort & Spa has a storied past Mitsakos is drawn to. It was leased in 1966 for 99 years by Americans, John and Mary Caldwell, from St. Vincent and the Grenadines government for US \$1/year. In exchange, they had to agree to build a hotel to employ local people. That 10-room hotel has evolved into forty-one luxurious rooms and suites, a sumptuous spa, and two villas for groups of friends or family.

Cap d’Antibes

Considered the birthplace of summer holidays, it’s also where F. Scott Fitzgerald penned *Tender Is the Night*. The peninsula is located just south of Antibes between Cannes and Nice and features less-crowded beaches and plenty of serene natural landscape.

Stay: Hôtel Belles Rives is one of the only seafront hotels in the region (direct sea access), and resides in the birthplace of waterskiing. It oozes romance and feels like you’re staying at the home of a fabulous friend. They also have a one-star Michelin restaurant, and a literary prize every June in honor of F. Scott Fitzgerald. The owners have had the property since the late 1920s and it’s now run by the 4th generation.



Since 2007, our annual 30A Hot Spot Awards have been a fun way for you to shout out YOUR favorite local gems.

Throughout January, we invited your nominations for the top 10 contenders in each category. Now, with over 40,000 votes cast, it's time to announce the winners of the **2024 30A Hot Spots Awards!**

PHOTO: GUILLAUME LECHAT

HOTTEST SPOT FOR CASUAL DINING

WINNER: Shunk Gulley Oyster Bar
2nd Place: The Red Bar
3rd Place: North Beach Social

HOTTEST SPOT FOR FINE DINING

WINNER: Gallion's
2nd Place: Cafe Thirty-A
3rd Place: Ambrosia 30A Prime Seafood & Steaks

HOTTEST SPOT FOR OUTDOOR DINING

WINNER: Shunk Gulley Oyster Bar
2nd Place: Old Florida Fish House
3rd Place: North Beach Social

HOTTEST SPOT FOR DINING WITH A VIEW

WINNER: Bud & Alley's
2nd Place: Fish Out of Water
3rd Place: North Beach Social

HOTTEST SPOT FOR DOG-FRIENDLY DINING

WINNER: The Big Chill
2nd Place: North Beach Social
3rd Place: Shunk Gulley Oyster Bar

HOTTEST SPOT FOR COFFEE

WINNER: Black Bear Bread Co.
2nd Place: Fonville Press Market + Café
3rd Place: Bad Ass Coffee

(NOTE: While we sincerely appreciate getting nominated, 30A's Beach Happy Cafe in WaterColor was excluded from this poll to help ensure fairness.)

HOTTEST SPOT FOR BREAKFAST / BRUNCH

WINNER: Donut Hole
2nd Place: The Perfect Pig
3rd Place: Crackings

HOTTEST SPOT FOR SWEETS

(BAKERY, ICE CREAM, CANDY)

WINNER: Pecan Jacks Ice Cream & Candy
2nd Place: La Crema
3rd Place: Blue Mountain Beach Creamery

(NOTE: While we sincerely appreciate getting nominated, 30A's Beach Happy Cafe in WaterColor was excluded from this poll to help ensure fairness.)

HOTTEST SPOT FOR SEAFOOD

WINNER: Shunk Gulley Oyster Bar
2nd Place: Stinky's Fish Camp
3rd Place: Old Florida Fish House

HOTTEST SPOT FOR RAW OYSTERS

WINNER: Shunk Gulley Oyster Bar
2nd Place: Stinky's Fish Camp
3rd Place: The Citizen

HOTTEST SPOT FOR SUSHI / ASIAN / INDIAN CUISINE

WINNER: Shaka Sushi & Cocktail Bar
2nd Place: Old Florida Fish House
3rd Place: Basmati's Asian Cuisine

HOTTEST SPOT FOR ITALIAN CUISINE

WINNER: Mimmo's 30A Ristorante Italiano
2nd Place: Amici 30A Italian Kitchen
3rd Place: Borago Restaurant

HOTTEST SPOT FOR PIZZA

WINNER: Grace Pizza and Shakes 30A
2nd Place: Pizza by the Sea
3rd Place: Bruno's Pizza

HOTTEST SPOT FOR MEXICAN / LATIN CUISINE

WINNER: Amigos 30A Mexican Kitchen
2nd Place: Los Rancheros
3rd Place: Red Fish Taco

HOTTEST SPOT FOR BURGERS

WINNER: Papa Surf Burger Bar
2nd Place: Shades Bar & Grill
3rd Place: Idyll Hound Proper

HOTTEST NEW RESTAURANT (OPENED IN 2023)

WINNER: Idyll Hound Proper
2nd Place: Papa Surf Burger Bar
3rd Place: Daytrader Tiki Bar & Restaurant

HOTTEST VEGAN & GLUTEN FREE

WINNER: Raw & Juicy
2nd Place: Blue Mountain Bakery
3rd Place: Chiringo

HOTTEST SPOT FOR BEER LOVERS

WINNER: Idyll Hounds Brewing Company
2nd Place: Shades Bar & Grill
3rd Place: Growler Garage

HOTTEST SPOT FOR WINE LOVERS

WINNER: The Wine Bar - WaterColor
2nd Place: Gallion's
3rd Place: Vintij Food & Wine

HOTTEST SPOT FOR COCKTAILS

WINNER: Havana Beach Bar & Grill
2nd Place: Daytrader Tiki Bar & Restaurant
3rd Place: The Citizen

HOTTEST HAPPY HOUR

WINNER: Great Southern Café
2nd Place: Hurricane Oyster Bar
3rd Place: Gallion's

MORE WINNERS →



HOTTEST CHEF

WINNER: Chef Frank Szymanski
Shunk Gulley Oyster Bar & Gallions
2nd Place: Chef Jim Shirley
Jim Shirley Restaurant Group
3rd Place: Chef Jim Richard
Stinky's Fish Camp

HOTTEST SPOT FOR LIVE MUSIC

WINNER: The Red Bar
2nd Place: AJ's Grayton Beach
3rd Place: Old Florida Fish House

HOTTEST SPOT TO WATCH THE BIG GAME

WINNER: Shunk Gulley Oyster Bar
2nd Place: Shades Bar and Grill
3rd Place: The Big Chill

HOTTEST LOCAL MUSICIAN OR BAND

WINNER: The Red Bar Jazz Band
2nd Place: Dread Clampitt
3rd Place: The Pickled Pickers

HOTTEST ANNUAL EVENT

WINNER: 30A Songwriters Festival
2nd Place: Digital Graffiti at Alys Beach
3rd Place: Seaside School Half Marathon + 5K

HOTTEST ARTIST

WINNER: Justin Gaffrey
2nd Place: Andy Saczynski
3rd Place: Allison Wickey

HOTTEST PHOTOGRAPHER

WINNER: Jonah Allen
2nd Place: Susan Gunn
3rd Place: Jacqueline Ward

HOTTEST FISHING GUIDE / CHARTER

WINNER: Grayton Girl Fishing Charters
2nd Place: Florida Boy Adventures
3rd Place: Dead Fish Charters

HOTTEST GYM / FITNESS / WORKOUT

WINNER: Grayton Beach Fitness
2nd Place: 30A Gym & Fitness
3rd Place: Grand Fitness

HOTTEST SPOT TO GET PAMPERED

(SPA, SALON, MASSAGE, AESTHETICS)
WINNER: Serenity by the Sea Spa
2nd Place: Spa Pearl
3rd Place: The Spa in Seaside

HOTTEST GOLF COURSE

WINNER: Camp Creek Golf Course
2nd Place: Santa Rosa Golf & Beach Club
3rd Place: Shark's Tooth Golf Club

HOTTEST AREA FOR SHOPPING

WINNER: Grand Boulevard
2nd Place: Seaside
3rd Place: Rosemary Beach

HOTTEST CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

WINNER: Mercantile
2nd Place: Willow + Mercer
3rd Place: Yellow Fly Trading Company
(NOTE: While we sincerely appreciate getting nominated, 30A Stores were excluded from this poll to help ensure fairness.)

HOTTEST KIDS ACTIVITY

WINNER: The Big Chill
2nd Place: Baytowne Adventure Zone
3rd Place: E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center

HOTTEST LOCAL PARK

WINNER: Grayton Beach State Park
2nd Place: Eden Gardens State Park
3rd Place: Topsail Hill Preserve State Park

HOTTEST HOTEL / INN

WINNER: The Pearl Hotel
2nd Place: WaterColor Inn
3rd Place: Hibiscus Coffee & Guesthouse

HOTTEST SPOT FOR A WEDDING

WINNER: Eden Gardens State Park
2nd Place: The Pearl Hotel
3rd Place: Vue on 30A

Congratulations to all our 2024 nominees and winners! Don't forget to follow 30A on Facebook (@scenic30A), Instagram (@hey30A), and YouTube (@30A) for your daily dose of BEACH HAPPY vibes and community news.



LOVE 30A?
JOIN 1.7 MILLION FANS!



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Florida's Scenic Highway 30A is home to unique, upscale and quaint beach communities with collective appeal to just about everyone.

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City of Roses

By Sean Dietrich

Morning. I am seated on a bench in downtown Thomasville with the ghost of someone’s granny beside me. I can feel her spirit, whoever she is. This is her town, where life still ambles slowly. Being here is like taking a trip into the 1950s.

“Not a bad town, huh?” says the ghost.

She wears a bell hat, and a floral dress. Nobody can see her but me.

“It’s nice,” I say.

“City of Roses,” she tells me.

“How about that.”

“It’s changed some,” she says.

The flawless storefronts, getting decorated for Christmas, catch the morning sunlight. Markets and cafés are opening. And the ghost is right, it’s perfect. All that’s missing is Opie Taylor.

“You from around here?” I ask the ghost.

She doesn’t answer.

It’s as though time has overlooked the City of Roses and its elderly patron saint. I look around and immediately travel backward into an earlier age. Her era.

An era when Americans were a little more innocent, and the highest technology we possessed was the KitchenAid mixer. A period before 5G wireless networks, before Netflix, and before the advent of thong underwear.

On cue, a restored Chevy Bel Air passes us, rolling by slowly. Baby blue. White-walled tires. And I’m three quarters of a century away.

Truman is in office. Flags still wing from every post, pole, and porch. Ninety-seven percent of Americans still read a physical newspaper (whereas today it’s only 4 percent). Hitler’s War is long since over, our boys are home from hell. There are new possibilities in the wind.

The old woman is smiling now. We are back in her heyday.

This is the generation that features both the birth of rock and roll and the “Grand Ole Opry.” A time when mankind will begin producing Fords and Chevys with tail fins tall enough to slice low hanging telephone wires.

This historical period will also include the Cold War. American schoolkids will practice atomic-bomb drills in classrooms, simulating Soviet attacks, huddling beneath their desks for protection because these desks are, apparently, nuclear-proof.

I glance across the street and I see several TVs in a shop window. These are early television consoles, the size of chifforobes, with screens no bigger than a slice of Wonderbread.

Jackie Robinson is a household name. Chuck Yeager has just broken the sound barrier. And over in Paris, a little swimsuit nicknamed the “bikini” debuts at a fashion show, and will shake the very core foundations of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Speaking of fundamentalists. This is an age when people’s moms will start using a new kitchen product called Tupperware. Mom loves this stuff. She even sells it.

She holds Tupperware parties in her den where many other neighborhood ladies sit together and chain-smoke Chesterfields, partaking in gossip, eating teeny sandwiches that aren’t big enough to satisfy the appetites of hamsters.

Tupperware is rarely discussed.

Meantime, the theaters of the day are playing movies like, *Red River* with John Wayne and Montgomery Clift. *Monkey Business*, with Marilyn

Monroe. And *On the Town*, starring Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra, tapping their shoes alongside the title holder for America’s tiniest waist, Vera-Ellen.

In this era the average price of a new house is \$8,450. A Chevy Bel Air costs \$1,800. Cost of a gallon of gasoline: 18 cents. A gallon of milk: 82 cents. A cup of coffee will run you a nickel.

And since we’re on the subject of cash, this is also the decade when a guy named Frank McNamara will be eating in a New York City restaurant and realize he has forgotten his wallet.

This will be such an embarrassing experience that Frank will come up with an idea for something he calls the “credit card.” Which is a novel concept, but it will probably never catch on.

Other things that will happen in this period:

Mother Teresa will enter the mission field.

Lucille Ball will have an idea for a new show many executives don’t think will work.

Swanson introduces the TV dinner, and an entire generation of Americans permanently scar the roofs of their mouths on mutant mashed potatoes.

Here comes the kid from Spavinaw, Oklahoma. Mickey Mantle.

Liz Taylor will snag husband number three, four, five, and thirty-seven.

Rosa Parks will change the world.

Young people are easier to please, too. These are the olden days, when teens still get deeply excited over

simple things like outer space, Sandra Dee, and conical brassiers.

There are no cell phones, except in prisons. Text messages are something the preacher reads aloud on Sundays. Technology has not stunted children’s social abilities yet, therefore young people are unafraid of making eye contact with adults.

Celebrities are nothing like today’s lewd variety. Sure, Elvis might have shaken his pelvis a little, but at least he never took it out and showed it to anyone.

“No, it wasn’t a perfect time to be alive,” the old woman tells me. “We had problems just like you. Big problems. But life was much simpler.”

Simpler.

Eighty-nine percent of American families ate supper together. Nearly 20 percent of Americans got married in their teens and yet, somehow, the national divorce rate was 18 percent. Nobody knew what gluten was. There were no ridiculous social media rants like the one you’re reading now.

“Oh, there you are,” says my wife.

I am interrupted from my daze. My wife is walking downtown, carrying shopping bags and a paper cup of coffee.

“I wondered where you were,” she says. “What’re you doing on this bench? And why are you talking to yourself?”

“No reason,” says I.



Sean Dietrich, nicknamed Sean of the South, chronicles life in the American South. Find him online at seandietrich.com.

What You Get FOR YOUR MONEY

By Karina Caraballo

They don't say 'visit once, return for a lifetime' for nothing! From one coastal town to another, 30A embodies a Florida lifestyle that is much different than what one would typically expect. Explore some of the best opportunities to own your own slice of paradise along Scenic Highway 30A.

\$15,900,000



118 S Shingle Lane
WaterSound Beach, FL
6 BED | 6/3 BATH | 6,173 SF

Nestled along the pristine shores of the premier WaterSound Beach community, this one-of-a-kind gulf front haven presents the epitome of coastal elegance. A four-bedroom primary home and a two-bedroom guest house encompass nearly 6,200 square feet of impeccably designed interior spaces while a spacious outdoor courtyard offers a private pool, spa, and lounge area with firepit.



\$3,975,000

The lifestyle you've dreamed of is now a reality in exclusive Watersound Camp Creek! Exquisite finishes complement a masterful floor plan with highlights including a first-floor owners' suite, screened porch with both summer kitchen and fireplace overlooking the private pool and spa, oversized three car garage.

184 Norman Court
WaterSound Camp Creek, FL
4 BED | 3.5 BATH | 3,516 SF



\$7,300,000

This gulf-side estate, offers a five-bedroom main home, one-bedroom carriage home, elevator, and a courtyard with a private pool just steps from the Gulf of Mexico and Rosemary Beach. Featuring expert construction, exquisite interiors, a covered outdoor living space, saltwater pool, and a unique tower with panoramic gulf views, this fully furnished residence provides an unrivaled coastal living experience in a prime location near Rosemary Beach and Inlet Beach amenities.

10780 E. Co. Hwy 30A
Rosemary Beach, FL
6 BED | 6/2 BATH | 5,936 SF





\$6,499,000



8 Shingle Lane
WaterSound Beach, FL
6 BED | 6.5 BATH | 5,858 SF

This luxury residence in WaterSound Beach impresses with its regal presence, covered lookout tower, multiple porches, and a courtyard with a heated pool. Meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail are evident throughout the nearly 5,900 square feet, featuring dual master suites, two additional guest suites, a bunk room, bonus room, and a carriage house, providing a perfect blend of sophistication and comfort.

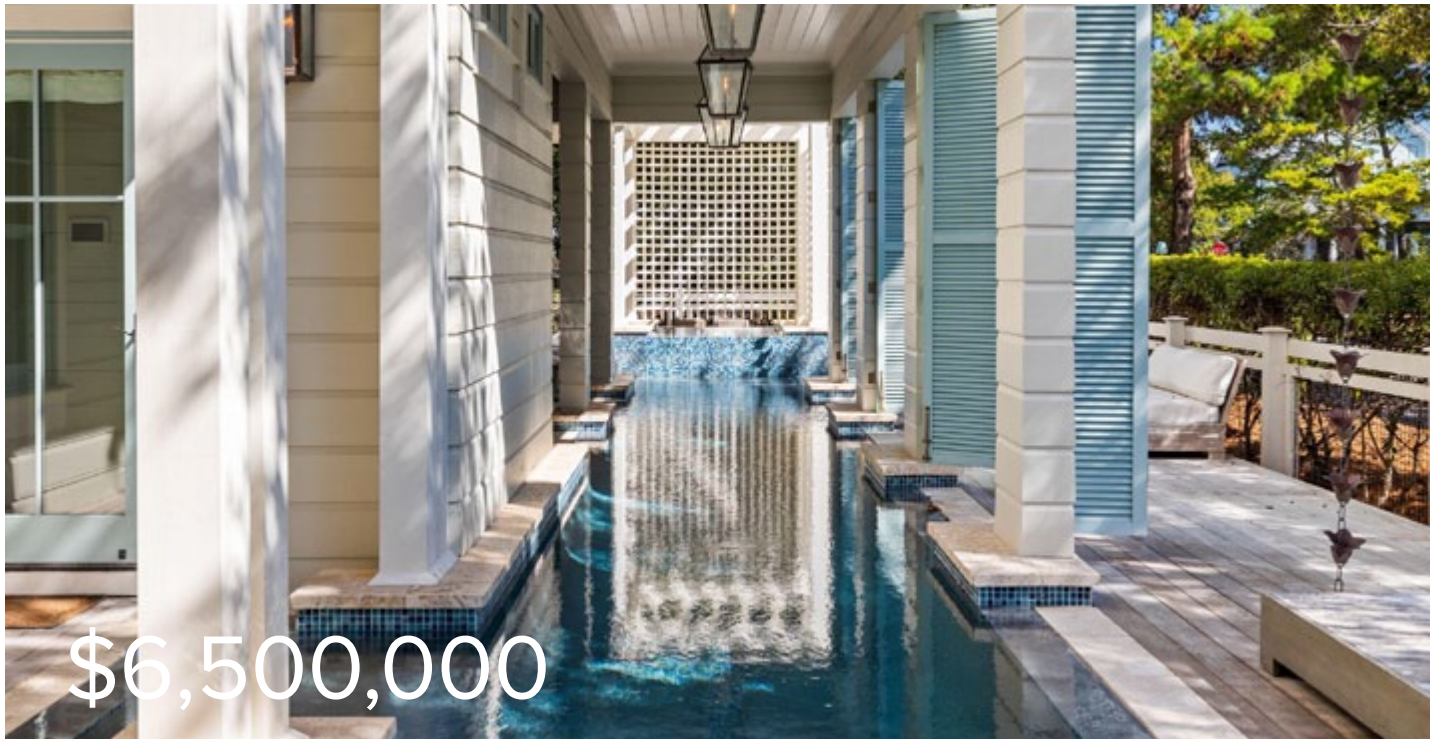


\$1,750,000



72 Summit Drive
Santa Rosa Beach, FL
4 BED | 3.5 BATH | 2,560 SF

This beautifully renovated 4-bedroom home in the gated community of Summer Ridge offers a rare opportunity with a heated pool, carriage house, and private courtyard. The open floor plan, vaulted wood beamed ceiling, and proximity to beach accesses make it a tranquil and inviting retreat, with short-term rentals restricted in the community.



\$6,500,000



10 Flatwood Street
WaterColor, FL
6 BED | 6.5 BATH | 5,249 SF

Tranquility is personified throughout this thoughtfully updated and professionally curated beach house in WaterColor's Lake District. From the moment you step inside, you'll be enveloped by the calming ambiance of this serene retreat. The home boasts a heated pool, spacious great room with a gas fireplace, a master suite with a luxurious bathroom, additional guest bedrooms, a media room, and a tower offering breathtaking sunset views.

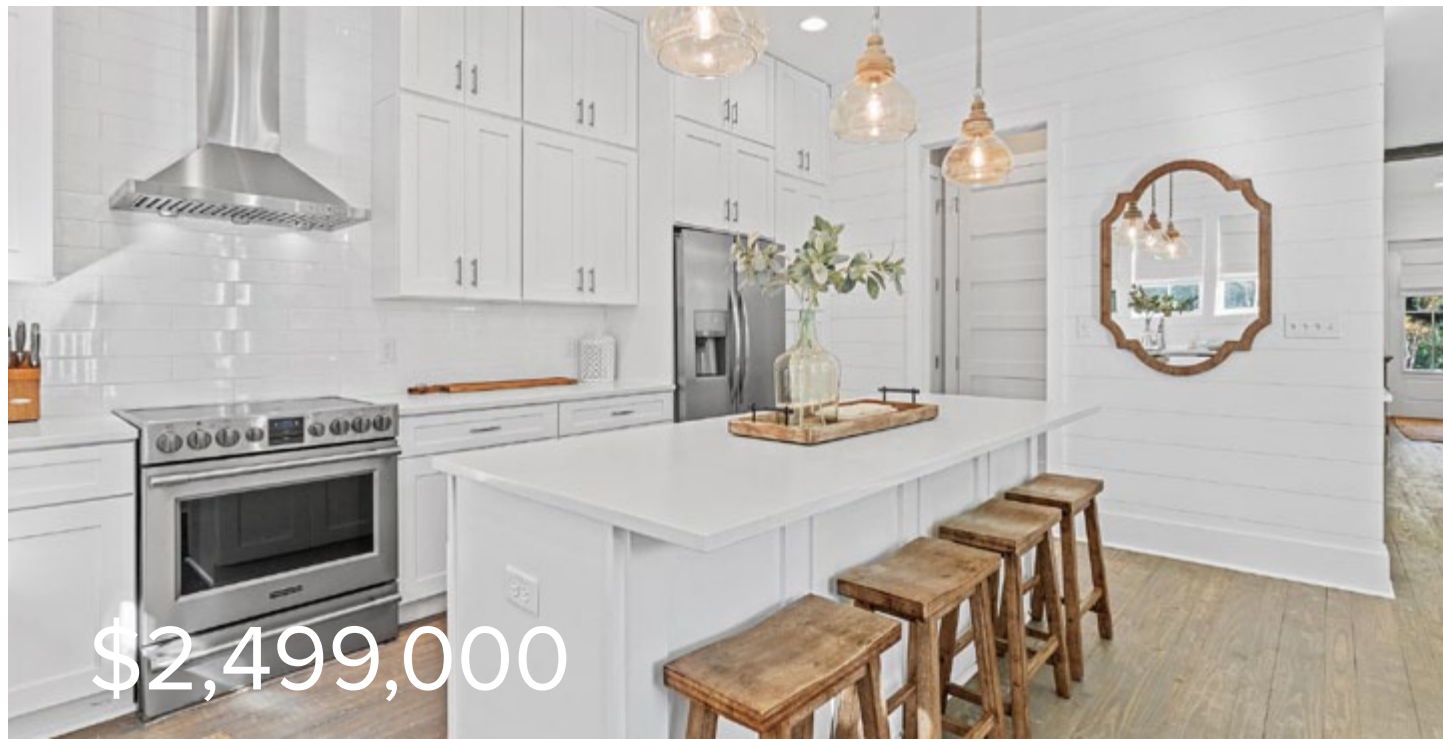


\$1,800,000



16 Spanish Moss Lane
Seagrave Beach, FL
4 BED | 3.5 BATH | 1,986 SF

This Hammocks at Seagrave Beach home is situated just 0.4 miles from a dedicated beach access. With four bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, and an open-concept design, the property features a ground-floor primary suite and a second floor en-suite option, offering a blend of comfort and rental potential.



\$2,499,000



17 Pompano Court
Inlet Beach, FL
4 BED | 3.5 BATH | 3,059 SF

This stunning 4-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom home in Inlet Beach offers coastal elegance and designer features. With an entertainer's dream ground floor, three bedrooms on the second floor, and a luxurious master suite on the third floor, the property also includes a fenced yard and access to a community pool.



\$900,000

This Seagrove Beach gem at 30A Townhomes offers beachside living with 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, and a 1-car garage. Boasting stylish upgrades, coastal decor, and proximity to beach accesses and amenities, it's an ideal vacation home or primary residence, blending modern convenience with the charm of Old Florida.

4923 E Co Hwy 30A F101
Seagrove Beach, FL
3 BED | 2.5 BATH | 1,522 SF



\$1,250,000



205 Mallard Lane
Santa Rosa Beach, FL
4 BED | 2.5 BATH | 2,538 SF

Discover the pinnacle of coastal living in this custom-designed home within the gated Cessna Landing community, boasting private bay access, a pool, and a kayak/paddleboard launch. With luxurious features, including a chef's dream kitchen, a wood-burning fireplace, and an expansive screened-in porch with bay views, this residence offers a perfect blend of elegance and comfort.



\$1,925,000

This fully furnished and rental-ready residence in Prominence South offers an ideal location within the community, close to amenities like The Big Chill and an expansive community pool. With an inviting front porch, open floor plan, spacious master suite on the first floor, and three additional bedrooms on the second floor, this home combines comfort, convenience, and a strong rental history for a perfect beachside retreat.

85 Clipper Street
Inlet Beach, FL
4 BED | 4.5 BATH | 2,870 SF



Properties represented by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida. A member of the franchise system of BHH Affiliates, LLC.
*Market Data as of 2/15/24. Information reported is deemed reliable but is not guaranteed. ©2024 MLS and FBS.

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WHAT'S 30A?

30A® is the #1 Guide to Florida's Scenic Highway 30A. Every day, 30A shares Beach Happy® stories and eco-conscious products with 30A's 1.7 million followers on Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, and TikTok. 30A has raised \$3.2 million for coastal charities, has given away 4.5 million of its famous blue 30A stickers, and has prevented 6.5 million plastic bottles from going into our oceans and landfills through 30A's line of recycled apparel.

30A LICENSING PARTNERS

Beach Happy Cafe in WaterColor, Florida
30A Real Estate by Berkshire Hathaway
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30A Retail Stores by B-Unlimited
30A Craft Beer by Grayton Beer
30A Wine by Superb Wines
30A Electric Bikes by YOLO Board + Bike
30A Sun Care by Shine On Living
30A Coffee by Amavida
30A Artisan Hard Seltzers
SALTIE by 30A Premium Haircare

30A MEDIA

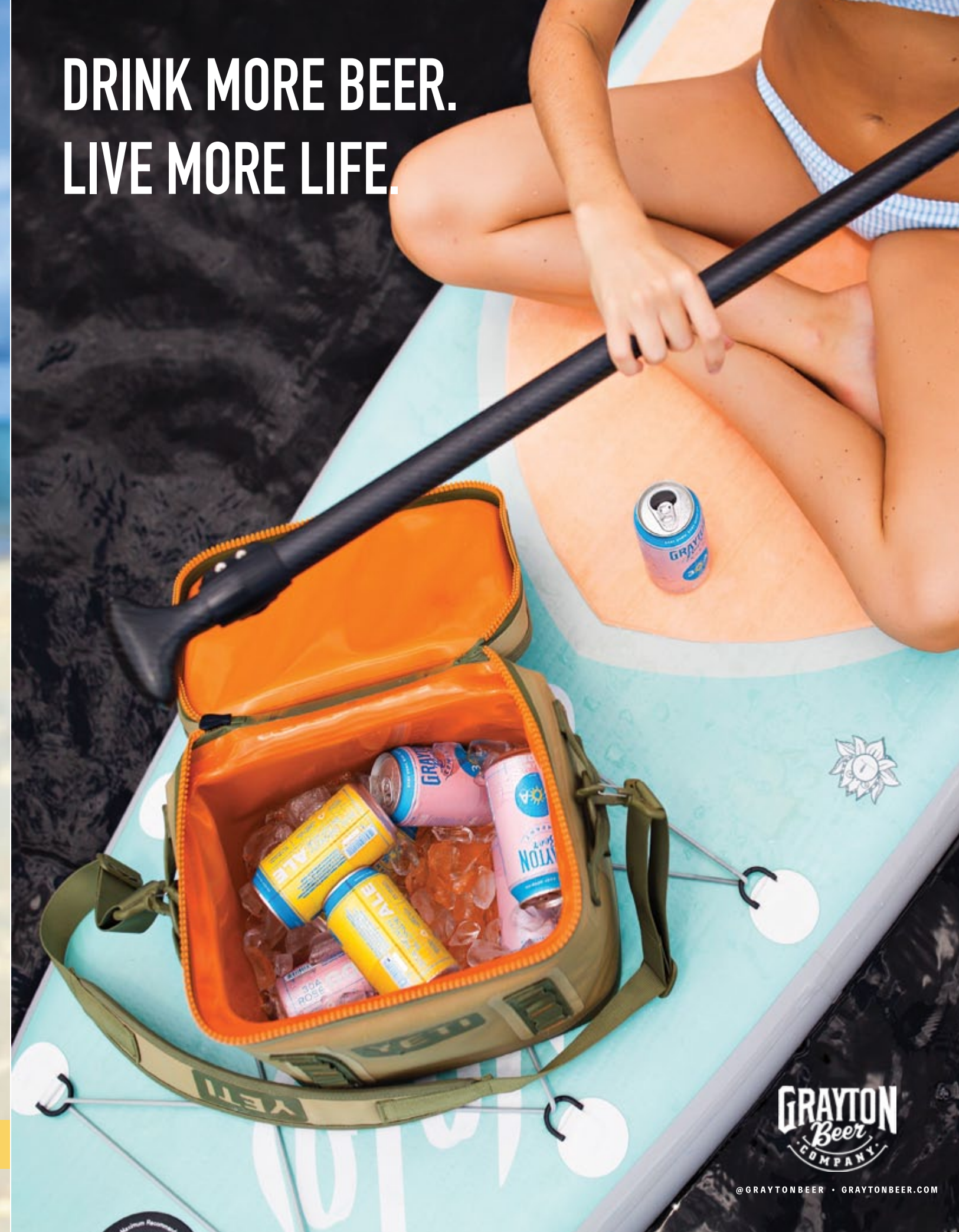
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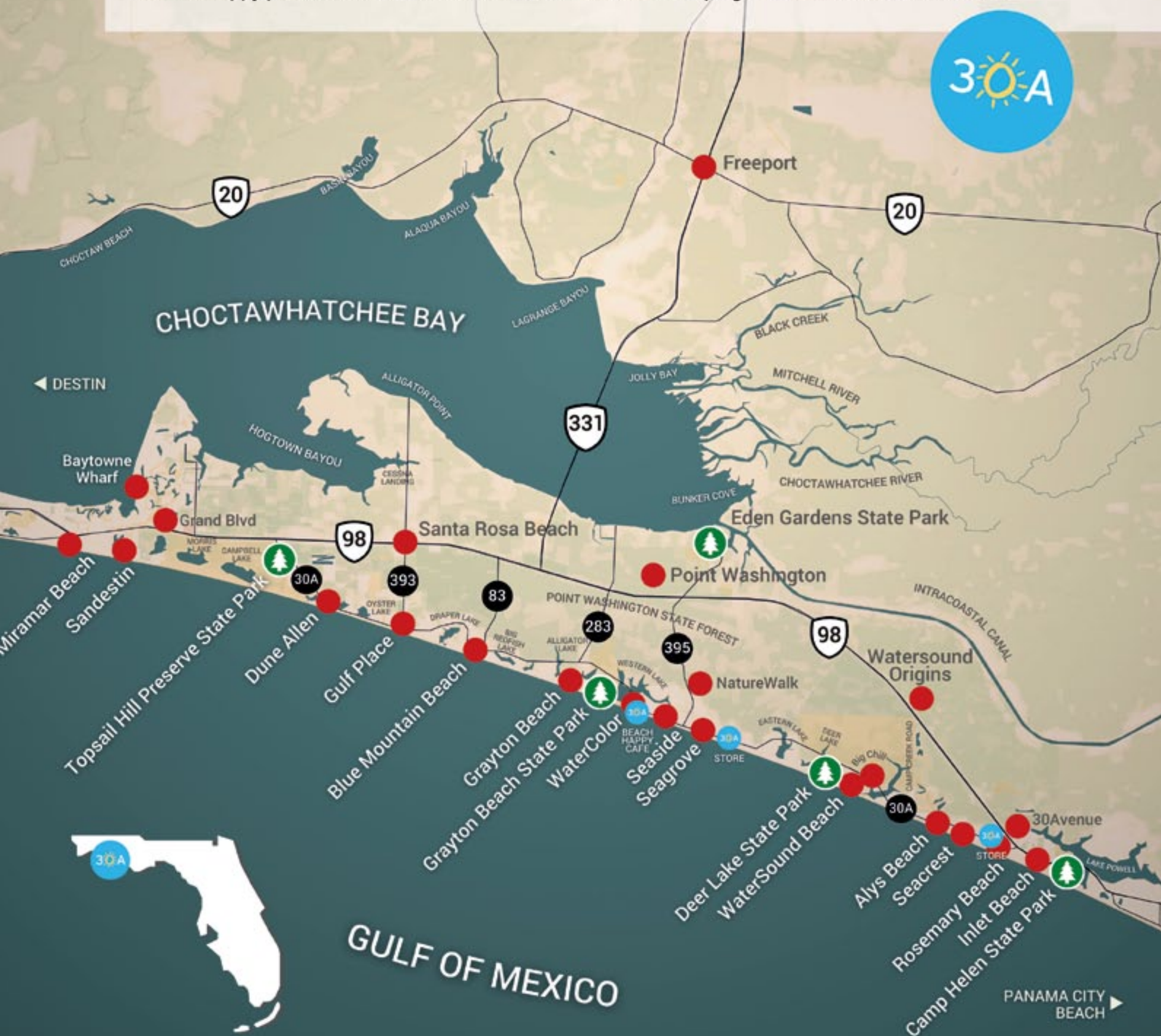


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THE BEACH TOWNS OF 30A

This is a map of our little beach community. Old Florida "State Road 30" once started at the Alabama state line and meandered 283 miles east across the panhandle. Several "alternate routes" (hence the "A" in 30A) offered drivers a slower scenic option, usually along the beach. But we don't think of 30A as disjointed miles of soulless asphalt. 30A® is a celebration of small town beach life – the kind that's been enjoyed by families for decades all along the Gulf Coast. 30A isn't just a line on the map. It's a lifestyle; an attitude. It's that happy place we all dream of when we need to unwind, unplug and celebrate life. – 30A.com



TOPEKA AT SEASCAPE RESORT

MOON CRUSH
PINK MOON
APRIL 18-21, 2024
MIRAMAR BEACH, FL



NOAH KAHAN · LAKE STREET DIVE
THE REVIVALISTS · MARCUS KING
CHARLEY CROCKETT · TROMBONE SHORTY
DAWES · THE HEAD AND THE HEART
LARKIN POE · DREW HOLCOMB AND THE NEIGHBORS
THE WOOD BROTHERS · RED CLAY STRAYS
MEG MCCREE · THE WANDERING HEARTS
CASSANDRA LEWIS · TENILLE TOWNES

LAUREN DAIGIE'S
KALEIDOSCOPE
BEACH WEEKEND
APRIL 25-27, 2024
MIRAMAR BEACH, FL

3 EVENINGS WITH
LAUREN DAIGIE

THURSDAY Kari Jobe Cody Carnes	FRIDAY Natalie Hemby Ellie Holcomb Jason Ingram	SATURDAY Jon Batiste Gable Price & Friends
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BRANDI CARLILE'S
MOTHERSHIP
WEEKEND
MAY 10-12, 2024
MIRAMAR BEACH, FL

FRIDAY, MAY 10
BRANDI CARLILE
BLACK PUMAS
THE HANSETH TWINS

SATURDAY, MAY 11
SARA BAREILLES
NICKEL CREEK
DEVON GILFILLIAN

SUNDAY, MAY 12
BONNIE RAITT
BRANDI CARLILE
S.G. GOODMAN

TOPEKA PRESENTS

TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND
PRESENTS
SUN SAND AND SOUL
MAY 2-4, 2024
MIRAMAR BEACH, FL

FRIDAY, MAY 3
TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND
THE TESKEY BROTHERS
KARINA RYKMAN

SATURDAY, MAY 4
JJ GREY & MOFO
ST. PAUL & BROKEN BONES
MAGGIE ROSE

SUNDAY, MAY 5
TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND
BLACKBERRY SMOKE
DUANE BETTS & PALMETTO MOTEL

MOON CRUSH
AN
Avett Moon

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8
GREENSKY BLUEGRASS
SHAKEY GRAVES
HAILEY WHITTERS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9
THE AVETT BROTHERS
GRACE POTTER
JAMESTOWN REVIVAL

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10
THE AVETT BROTHERS
BAND OF HORSES
THE BROOK + BLUFF

NOVEMBER 8-10

VISIT [TOPEKA.LIVE](https://topeka.live) FOR WEEKEND AND SINGLE DAY PASSES

THE ULTIMATE LUXURY IS PEACE OF MIND.



Introducing Scout Home Watch by Keith Batson, owner of LUXE 30A. Scout Home Watch is tailored to the needs of non-rental homeowners in the beautiful beach communities of Destin and 30A. We go above and beyond to ensure that your private luxury home is cared for, even when you're away. From regular inspections and maintenance checks to security monitoring and emergency response, we've got you covered. Don't let your non-rental home go unattended. Contact Scout Home Watch today and let us take care of your property while you focus on enjoying the finer things in life.

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