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Hello, Spring!

Spring is a gentle reminder that fresh starts don't need grand gestures. Sometimes, it's enough to feel the sun hang a little longer in the sky, to breathe in the salty air, and to finally slow down. Around here, happiness isn't a finish line; it's something we build, moment by moment, in the everyday beauty of coastal life.

That's exactly the spirit that runs through this issue of Beach Happy.

Our cover story features Jessie James and Eric Decker, a couple who've lived big, public lives but found their greatest joy in the quiet moments: raising four kids, building brands from the ground up, and finding peace and play along the beaches of 30A. Their story is grounded, joyful, and deeply real—a reminder that love, when built with intention, becomes the foundation for everything else.

This season, we're also drawn to the stories of those who have stepped off the expected path and into something far more meaningful.

Josh Jorgensen, the creative force behind BlacktipH, turned a boyhood love of fishing into a global brand. But it was his fight with cancer that shifted his perspective and steered him away from the pressure of performance and into something deeper: faith, stillness, and clarity. His story is about more than the thrill of the catch; it's about discovering what truly matters.

We're also inspired by Laura Rutledge, whose unexpected path—from ballet to ESPN—was shaped by tenacity, humility, and a genuine love for storytelling. She's built a career at the top of sports media while juggling motherhood, self-doubt, and the messy, beautiful reality of working hard for what you love.

There's a quiet power in stories like theirs. And it's echoed in the ocean and its ability to move us, steady us, and humble us. We see that duality in our feature on the iconic wave at Pipeline, and in the work of Ray Collins, whose evocative ocean photography captures water not just as a force but as a muse. Both remind us that some of the most breathtaking

things in life also ask us to slow down and pay attention.

That spirit of beauty and ease flows into our stories on style and self-expression. This spring, 30A Gear debuts a fresh collection of soft pastels and coastal staples, and celebrates a new chapter with the opening of a retail store in Blue Mountain Beach. It's a season of growth for the brand, with elevated designs, sun-protective fabrics, and sustainable pieces that reflect the heart of coastal living. Proof that style can evolve with the seasons and still stay true to its roots.

Stylist and creative force Mary Glenn McElveen, known for her work under Styled by MG, brings that same ethos to life. With a background in personal styling and a heart for helping women feel confident in their own skin, MG reminds us that true style doesn't shout—it shines. Now navigating motherhood and fashion with equal grace, she shows us that what we wear can be a celebration of who we are and where we're going.

And then there are the smaller moments with big meaning. The specialty 30A license plate, created in partnership with Scenic Walton, is funding real change throughout Walton County. From beautification projects to safer roads and greener spaces, it's a simple way to make a lasting impact. A culinary road trip through Rhode Island led by a

Michelin Green Star chef. A photo-driven escape to Cannon Beach, where stormy skies meet timeless stillness.

At its core, this issue is about building a life you love. Not just chasing sunsets, but sitting still long enough to watch them sink into the Gulf. Not just rushing through, but soaking in the beauty along the coast.

Wherever spring takes you, I hope these pages nudge you to pause, breathe deep, and remember: that happiness is right here. Right now.

Beach happy, my friends.

Mike Ragydale
Founder, The 30A Company



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BEACH HAPPY Team



Gary John is the CEO & Partner at The 30A Company. Gary and his family relocated to 30A from California in 2020, after first discovering it on social media in 2018. Upon their first visit in 2019, Gary and his family fell in love with the community, the beautiful landscape, and everything 30A has to offer. Gary's background spans product and venture development, branding, social media, and consumer product launches. He leads the 30A team across the board, working with the sales, marketing, and editorial teams to ensure the 30A company continues to deliver beach happiness through media, content, editorials, and products. You can reach Gary at CEO@30A.com.

Gary John
CEO & Partner



For over 13 years at The 30A Company, I've had the privilege of crafting stories that capture the essence of beach life while celebrating the spirit of those who embrace it. My journey—from Mumbai's bustling coastline to the tranquil beaches of Goa, and now to Vietnam's vibrant shores—has deepened my love for life by the water. My greatest joy comes from weaving together narratives, visuals, and layouts, adding a touch of beauty to the world through each issue of *Beach Happy*. Whether you're landlocked or have your toes in the sand, I hope these stories bring a bit of sunshine to your day and inspire your own sunny moments by the shore.

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. Hailing from Fort Walton Beach, I am a lifelong 30A local. As a proud 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 on-air local radio and television, and advertising sales. Now, as I celebrate over a decade with The 30A Company as Director of Advertising, it continues to be an absolute delight to collaborate with both local and national clients in the idyllic paradise we call 30A.

Cory Davis
Sales Director

4. Based on 30A, I manage marketing initiatives for the 30A and Beach Happy lifestyle brands. My responsibilities encompass content creation, social media marketing, influencer collaboration, editorial strategy, and digital media, all aimed at spreading the Beach Happy lifestyle. From dreaming up exciting features for *Beach Happy* magazine to curating captivating social media content, my day to day is a dance between strategic vision and creativity. Put simply, my job is to bring our audience bits of beach happiness each day with hopes of inspiring them to embrace the joy and vibrancy of coastal living from wherever they are!

Logan Burgess
Marketing Manager

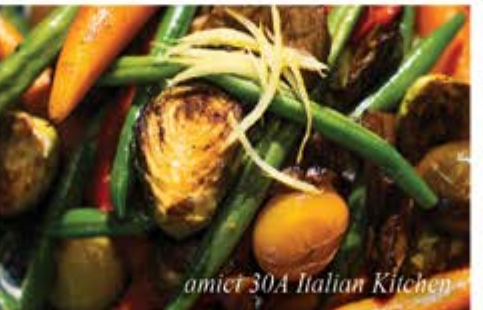


3. My role is full of purpose, balance, and fulfillment while promoting all that we have to offer. You'll find me around town with a drone in my hand, slinging our ever-popular 30A stickers, *Beach Happy* magazine, and everything in between. There's a spark within me that is ignited each and every day 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. I grew up vacationing on 30A and fell in love with the beauty and charm of this area at a young age. As the Marketing Coordinator, I wear many hats—from curating content on social media to assisting with features for *Beach Happy* magazine. My focus is creating content that captures the Beach Happy lifestyle and highlights the natural beauty of this special place. It's incredibly rewarding to share a location that means so much to me with others and show them why 30A is truly a one-of-a-kind destination!

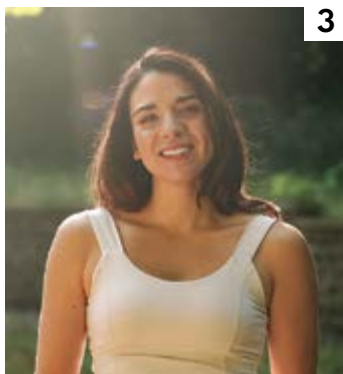
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is a Florida-based freelance writer who is not sure where she will land next, but it will involve messy eating, a spicy Tempranillo and finding the local dive bar. Her work has been featured in Wine Enthusiast, Bon Appétit, and others. You can find her on Twitter and Instagram (@writeonhonaker).
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is a journalist and copywriter focused on making the world a better place through compelling copy. His writing often covers the intersection of business and culture with a focus on environmental and social issues. He was inspired to contribute to *Beach Happy* following a summer 2024 drive down 30A, exploring each of the towns along the way. You can check out more of his work at geoffnuelman.com.
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EMILIANO NERI
is a design contributor with deep roots in Italy's family advertising legacy. He ventured to New York City in the early 1990s, immersing himself in the prestigious world of fashion publishing. Over the past three decades, he has distinguished himself as a Creative Director, with contributions to iconic titles such as Harper's Bazaar and Glamour. His aesthetic blends Old World refinement with New World innovation, shaped by collaborations with industry leaders and driven by an enduring commitment to creative excellence.

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FAMILY, FAITH & BUILDING A LIFE THEY LOVE

A Country Star, an NFL Great, and
Their Shared Dream of Happiness
Beyond the Spotlight

By Carmen Schober



PHOTO: GRACE PHOTOGRAPHY

For the Deckers, happiness isn't something they chase—it's something they cultivate every day. Through their careers, adventures, and a deep, shared love for family, they've learned to find joy in the big moments and, more importantly, in the small ones.

Whether they're building businesses, raising four kids, or savoring a rare slow morning together, Jessie and Eric make every season of life count. And when they need a reset, they escape to Scenic Highway 30A in Walton County, Florida—a place that feels like a second home and, as Jessie puts it, her “literal happy place.”

“Nashville is home,” Jessie said with a smile, “but 30A is where we really slow down, breathe, and enjoy each other. It's our happy place.”

Their sweet love story is well-documented—from their reality show *Eric & Jessie* to their funny social media posts—but at the heart of it is a real, unshakable bond.

“We met through a mutual friend almost 14 years ago,” Jessie recalled. “We talked on the phone for weeks before we met in person. Eric flew to Nashville for the weekend, and after that, we were never apart again.”

“As soon as he met my family, I just knew,” she said. “I remember having dreams that we broke up, and I'd wake up crying because I couldn't imagine life without him.”

For Eric, it was just as instant. “We had this deep connection early on. It wasn't just about attraction—it was deeper than that. We had the same values, the same vision for life,” he said.

From Touchdowns to Chart-Topping Hits: A Journey of Passion and Perseverance

Both Jessie and Eric have built impressive careers in their respective fields, excelling in music, sports, fashion, and business. While their paths have been different, both have found success through hard work, passion, and an unshakable belief in themselves.

For Jessie, music was her first love. She began performing as a child and signed her first record deal at just 19 years old. “I had been singing for as long as I could remember,” she said. “My earliest memories were



performing in front of my big Sicilian family and just loving the way music made me feel.”

Her career took off with hits like "Wanted," and she has since released multiple albums, blending country and pop influences. One of her biggest career highlights was performing at the Grand Ole Opry.

“That was a dream come true,” she recalled. “Every country artist hopes to stand on that stage one day, and when I finally did, I just felt like, ‘Okay, I’ve made it.’”

Another unforgettable moment? Recording a duet with country music legend Dolly Parton. “That was one of those ‘pinch me’ moments,” Jessie said. “Not only was she everything I dreamed she'd be—she was even better.”

While music remains at the heart of her career, Jessie has also expanded into business. Her fashion brand, Kittenish, has become a massive success, with two brick-and-mortar stores in Nashville and Tampa and a recent expansion into Kohl's. The brand wasn't born out of a business strategy—it was inspired by a real-life moment that made her realize how much her style resonated with women.

“It was after we did our reality show,” she recalled. “They invited me to do a meet-and-greet at a mall in Boston.”

At first, she wasn't expecting a big turnout. “I remember driving up with my mom, and we saw this line wrapped around the entire mall—out the door, up the escalators, all the way to the top floor,” she said.

But what struck her the most wasn't just the crowd—it was what they were wearing. “I looked around, and I saw all these girls dressed just like me. Flannel shirts, cutoff jeans, bandanas in their hair, cowboy boots... it was wild,” she said.

That was the moment she knew. “I thought to myself, ‘If they already want to dress like me, why not create a brand where they can buy the actual pieces I love?’” she said. “I wanted it to be stylish but accessible. Fun, flirty, and easy to wear.” And the seed for Kittenish was planted.

Eric's career, on the other hand, started on the football field. A standout wide receiver, he made a name for himself in the NFL playing for the Denver Broncos, New York Jets, and Tennessee Titans.



“At the end of the day, we just want to do what we love while being there for the people we love. And that, to me, is success.”



“Football was my life for so long,” Eric said. “The discipline, the teamwork, the grind—it shaped who I am.”

His career was full of high points, from playing in the Super Bowl to setting multiple records. One of his most memorable games was against the Kansas City Chiefs, where he scored four touchdowns—an achievement that still stands as a franchise record.

“That was one of those nights where everything just clicked,” he said.

Another unforgettable moment was winning the AFC Championship with the Denver Broncos to advance to the Super Bowl. “The confetti, the energy, the feeling of knowing we were going to the biggest game in the world—it was unreal,” Eric recalled.

Since retiring from football, Eric has embraced a new chapter—focusing on his family, real estate ventures, and supporting Jessie’s growing empire. “I loved being able to take a step back and just be there for our kids,” he said. “Coaching their sports teams, doing school drop-offs—these were the moments I wouldn’t get back, and I was grateful for every one of them.

Through all of life’s changes, Jessie and Eric have kept up their momentum. They continue to build, create, and explore new opportunities, all while making sure their family stays at the center of it all.

“At the end of the day, we just want to do what we love while being there for the people we love,” Jessie said. “And that, to me, is success.”

Cooking up Love: How Food Brings Them Together

Their bond isn’t just built on love and laughter—it’s also strengthened in the kitchen. “We’ve always been best friends first,” Jessie said. “We just loved being around each other, whether it was doing something exciting or just sitting on the porch watching the sunset.”

One of Jessie’s greatest passions outside of music and fashion is cooking—a love that began when she and Eric first moved in together.

“Eric was always hungry,” she laughed. “I was like, ‘Okay, I need to get in the kitchen because I don’t want him eating fast food every day.’”

She started with simple dishes—her signature jambalaya was an early favorite—and soon discovered

how much she loved the creative process of cooking. What started as sharing recipes on Instagram quickly evolved into a bestselling cookbook series, and now she’s working on her latest cookbook, coming soon.

“This one is extra special because I’m collaborating with some incredible people,” she teased. “I can’t say too much yet, but there are some exciting things in the works.”

Her love for food has also led to a cookware line at Walmart, bringing stylish and functional kitchen essentials to her fans.

“I wanted cooking to feel fun and accessible for everyone,” she said. “Food is meant to bring people together, and that’s what I love most about it.”

Balancing Love, Hustle, and Home Life

Between Jessie’s music, fashion brand, cookbooks, and Eric’s post-retirement ventures, life is full. But instead of letting their careers pull them in different directions, they’ve learned to work together.

“I couldn’t do this without Eric,” Jessie said. “He’s my rock. He supports me, he keeps our family grounded, and he’s the structure when I’m all over the place.”

Their parenting styles reflect their balanced dynamic.

“She’s the energy in our house,” Eric said. “She’s creative, spontaneous, and fun, and the kids feed off that. Without her, our house would be way too structured.”

But despite their different approaches, ultimately, they see parenting as a team effort.

“We want our kids to know they are so loved and that they can do anything,” Jessie said. “If our daughter wants to be

an Olympian gymnast, or if our son wants to be an NFL player or a pop star, we’re behind them 100%.”

Eric agreed. “It’s about giving them confidence—not just for their dreams, but for life. No matter what happens, they’ll always have a strong foundation in family.”

“More than anything, we want them to understand that success isn’t just about achievements,” Jessie added. “It’s about kindness, hard work, and surrounding yourself with love and support.”

Faith, Family, and the Foundation of Their Happiness

At the core of their happiness is family. “No matter what’s going on, I always feel happiest when we’re together,” Jessie said. Whether it’s a fun trip to 30A or simply curling up on the couch after a long day, their greatest joy comes from spending time with their children and each other.

Their faith also plays a central role in keeping them grounded. “We’ve gotten away from faith as a culture, but it’s something we need,” Eric said. “It brings clarity, peace, and purpose.” For them, happiness isn’t just about feeling good in the moment—it’s about having a strong foundation built on gratitude and trust in God.

Jessie also believes that true happiness comes from appreciating life as it happens, rather than constantly looking ahead to the next big thing. “Even on the tough days, I remind myself of how blessed we are,” she said. “It’s easy to get caught up in the ‘I’ll be happy when...’ mindset, but I try to focus on being present and grateful for what we have right now.”

Eric echoed that sentiment, acknowledging how easy it is to get caught up in the world’s expectations. “We live in a culture where it’s always about ‘what’s next,’ but real happiness comes from slowing down and enjoying the moment you’re in.”

Finding Peace, Play & Paradise on 30A

While balancing careers and parenthood, the Deckers have found that 30A is where they can truly slow down and be present.

“I grew up going to Destin,” said Jessie. “It was the place for my family. My dad had a boat, and we’d spend summers at Crab Island. I remember thinking, ‘One day, I want to have a house here with my own family.’”

Eric first experienced 30A through Jessie, and it was love at first sight, both with the area and the laid-back lifestyle.



PHOTO: GRACE PHOTOGRAPHY



“The first time I saw the beaches, I was blown away,” he recalled. “The white sand, the aqua-blue water—it was like the Caribbean. It was exactly what I pictured paradise to be.”

Since 2015, 30A has been their second home, a place where they can escape from the demands of their busy lives and just be. Ask them what a perfect day on 30A looks like, and you’ll get two very different answers.

Jessie: “A chair on the beach, doing absolutely nothing but soaking up the sun.”

Eric: “I love the beach, but then I want to go for a bike ride, play pickleball, grab some good food. I can’t just sit still.”

One thing they both agree on? The food.

“There’s this burger place I went to every single day last summer,” Eric said. “And obviously, fresh seafood. You can’t go wrong.”

“The kids get so excited every time we go,” Jessie said. “Last summer, we spent almost the whole season down there, and it was amazing.”

When asked to describe 30A in three words, their answers come easily.

“Happy, fun, and family,” Jessie said.

“Family, sunshine, and peace,” Eric added.

30A has also been a source of inspiration for Jessie’s career.

“A few years ago, we designed a swimwear line that was totally inspired by 30A,” she said. “The colors—the aqua blue, pastel purples, bubble gum pinks—were influenced by the Gulf and the neighborhoods there. It’s just such a beautiful place.”

“And I have a song coming out called ‘Stardust,’” she shared. “I’m actually shooting the music video on 30A.”

When asked about the vibe, she smiled and said, “Very breezy.”

Beyond beach days and bike rides, their children have also inherited some of their parents’ favorite 30A traditions—especially when it comes to food. “The Donut Hole is a must,” Jessie said. “Eric is up early every morning, grabbing a whole box for the family.”

Eric laughed, confirming his devotion to the local spot. “It’s a staple. I don’t care how early I have to wake up—I’m getting those donuts.”

Still Building, Still Dreaming: What’s Next for the Deckers?

At the end of the day, what truly matters to Jessie and Eric isn’t their careers, their success, or even their beautiful beach house—it’s their love for each other and their family.

“The biggest lesson about the journey to happiness I’ve learned is to be present,” Eric said. “Life moves fast, but when you slow down, you realize happiness isn’t a destination—it’s right here.”

“It’s in the small moments, the everyday love, and just being together,” Jessie added. 🍷

Learn more about Jessie and Eric Decker at jessiejamesdecker.com and follow them on Instagram (@jessiejamesdecker and @ericdecker) for their latest updates.





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Breaking the **MOLD**

**From Ballet to Broadcast Booth:
How Laura Rutledge Became One of
Sports Media's Leading Voices**

By Lauren Sage Reinlie

When Laura Rutledge was nine years old, her parents made the bold decision to relocate their family from a comfortable four-bedroom home in Atlanta to a modest two-bedroom, one-bath cottage in the tiny haven of Blue Mountain Beach in Walton County, Florida. Today, the ESPN host and sports reporter recalls the move as a pivotal moment in her childhood.

"We were getting sick a lot and worn down, and it felt like it was time to make a change," Laura said about her parents' decision. "I admire them. Now that I'm a parent, I don't think I would have had the bravery to do something like that."



Laura slept in the top bunk while her brothers, Dave, who was 14 months younger, and Alex, four years younger, shared the bottom one. Their mom homeschooled. The kids would race down the dirt path to the sand, swim around trying to find fish, and ride boogie boards until the sun went down. The beach was their backyard, their playground, and their science lab. “It really was the best time of my life,” Laura said.

After a couple of years, the kids began attending the Seaside Neighborhood School, in Seaside, Florida, which offered them opportunities to get involved in many activities. Laura dove into anything she could. She played percussion in the band, played the violin, started ballet, and was active in student government. One thing she wasn't into? Sports. “Nobody who knew me back then—including myself—thought I would end up doing this,” Laura said.

Now, the 36-year-old hosts *NFL Live*, a year-round, Emmy-nominated sports studio show that airs five days a week on ESPN, hosts a weekly college football show on the SEC Network, and covers Monday Night NFL games, which are watched by over 15 million people each week. “I can’t even



wrap my mind around that,” Laura said. “I haven't taken a lot of time to really be in the moment, so I haven't fully processed a lot of it. This was never in the realm of possibility for me in my own imagination, and I was always a big dreamer. I just had really different dreams.”

Sink or Swim

After living in Blue Mountain Beach, the family moved to Orlando, where Laura continued her artistic pursuits, especially with ballet. After high school, she was on her way to work as a professional ballet dancer when she made the eleventh-hour decision to take a different path and go to college at the University of Florida. “I was thankful my parents had sort of forced me to apply to some colleges,” she said.

That's when she decided to check out the college radio station. She thought she would be a news reporter, but the only opening the station had at the time was in sports. She took it.

“What stuck out to me early on was that I was bad at it, and I couldn't stand that,” Laura said. “I had to get better.” Having grown up without any background or even any interest in sports, she knew she was behind and had a lot of catching up to do. She not only had to learn the basic rules of the sport but also its entire history.

She threw herself in, getting as many on-air experiences as possible. She worked the morning show with a call time of 3:45 a.m. She covered college recruiting and, in between classes, traveled the state reporting and doing interviews, gaining credibility, making contacts, and building her knowledge base. “I realized this was something I could get good at if I just kept working on it. That was enticing to me.”

One of those early contacts landed her an entry-level position with Fox Sports, where she did pre- and post-game work for the Tampa Bay Rays broadcasts. One day, they offered her an on-air spot on TV. “I didn't want to do TV,” she recalled. “I loved that I could show up at the radio station in my sweatpants and nobody would ever see what I looked like, but this was too good an opportunity to pass up.”

She remembers the experience vividly. She was incredibly nervous. The pink satin shirt she chose for the occasion had visible sweat marks. She wasn't familiar with the broadcasting equipment or the terminology. “It was definitely a treading-water-type situation. I barely got through it.”

She thought she did well, maybe good enough to keep getting opportunities. And opportunities were what she needed. “There is no substitute for the red light coming on and you're live,” she said. “You can do taped pieces, and you can practice in front of a mirror and all that, but you really need to see how you will fare in those sink-or-swim moments.”

At the same time she was dipping her toes into television reporting, she was following another unexpected path. As a joke, her friends entered her into a Miss UF competition at school, and she came in as the first runner-up, earning her some scholarship money. She liked the opportunity to practice her interviewing skills (the interview process is rigorous) and

continued performing as a ballet dancer. The college money was a nice bonus. So she kept at it, eventually being named Miss Florida 2012 and performing her last public ballet dance on the stage in the Miss America competition the next year. “I once again put myself outside my comfort zone,” she said, laughing about her unexpected turn to pageantry. “It ended up being a way to continue to hone the broadcasting skills I was working on.”

At 24 years old, after her pageant run, Laura began pushing for more. She traveled to auditions across the country, paying her own way to meetings at ESPN, where executives told her they wouldn't hire her until she was at least 30. “They said I was too young,” she recalled. She took a job covering the San Diego Padres, which gave her experience as a fill-in host. “I thought, ‘Nobody else is going to give me that chance,’” she said. She went to California and ended up hosting her own original show. Things moved quickly from there.

In 2014, Laura was hired by ESPN, the company that had told her she was too young just the year before. In 2017, she was named host of her own national traveling show, *SEC Nation*. She was 28 years old.

The Mental Game

Today, Laura lives in Connecticut near the ESPN studios with her husband, former major league baseball player Josh Rutledge, and their two children, Reese and Jack.

In the midst of this nonstop balancing act, ESPN extended Laura's contract in early 2025, ensuring her journey with the network continues into a second decade.

Her work life, especially during football season, is fairly grueling. She is always prepping for her year-round five-days-a-week show, *NFL Live*, advancing whatever stories they are covering at the time. Prep for her Saturday SEC show is more in-depth, so she turns her attention to that on Wednesdays in pockets of time she has when the kids have gone to bed or when she has a break at the studio. For a Monday Night Football game, she needs to know the entire roster and what outcomes different scenarios might produce. She interviews players throughout the week, squeezing those sessions into any available time slot—usually before she goes to work on *NFL Live*. Then she travels to the location for the Saturday show and another one for Monday. “It all kind of melts together, and it feels like seven days of work,” she said. “Honestly, it's a constant mental obstacle course, trying to figure out how to juggle it all.”

That juggling act extends to family life as well. “The main key for me is when I'm home with the kids, trying to be as present as possible,” Laura said. She puts her phone away when she can, and just sits with them and spends quality time with them, even if it means sacrificing sleep or being a little frantic at work later. “I feel like I rarely nail it, but it's something I'm still working through every single day,” she said. “My biggest hope is that we'll look back on this time and say, ‘Okay, we all learned a lot from it, and we became closer as a result.’”

None of it would be possible without her husband and extended family, who all pitch in. “We just cobble it together,” she said. Her mom and dad visit from Atlanta to help, and her brother Dave now lives just down the street with his kids.

Tragically, Laura's brother, Alex, died in 2018 in a cave-diving accident, something the whole family continues to grapple with. “It





was the worst thing that ever happened to any of us,” she said. The grief is ever-present. “It changes, it evolves, but it’ll still hit you when you least expect it.”

For the Love of Sports

The balancing act is worth it, though. Laura loves the work.

She loves telling stories. She and the team document games but also try to find ways to make viewers care and feel connected to what’s happening.

For example, during the 2023 NFL playoffs, she and her team captured a story involving CJ Stroud, the rookie quarterback for the Texans. His mother was in the stands, and the entire time Stroud had the ball, she was visibly praying, moving her lips, saying God bless him and other prayers, Laura recalled. “She was barely even watching. As a mom, I think you could relate to that so much.” And then, after one particularly nice play, Stroud came off the field and looked up directly to where his mother was sitting. They had a moment of seeing each other, and the team was able to catch it on video. “It still gives me chills to talk about it,” Laura said. “These NFL players, they are icons. They are the best in the world at their sport. But at the end of the day, they are still human and still want to see their moms in the stands.”

Laura now knows sports inside and out, with countless hours of live broadcasting under her belt. She’s mastered the art of thinking on her feet in front of millions of viewers. Yet, she admits, she still feels the need to over-research, over-prepare—and yes, she still gets anxious before the red light flicks on. “I’m panic-googling things before the game. I’m sure some people watch and think, ‘She has it all figured out,’ and it’s like, no, you have no idea I was so worried and nervous I couldn’t sleep last night. I was thinking of all the ways I could mess this up. That’s only human.”

As a host, she enjoys making the people on the show with her shine and forging positivity with her team and her

viewers. “There’s enough bad stuff going on in the world. Sports can be a bit of an escape for people,” she said.

She has also been surprised to find that she has inspired others to try to follow in her footsteps. People often approach her to say they want to do what she does because of her. “I never would have thought that people would say that about me,” she said. “I don’t take for granted any of these young women or men who I can help pull along. It’s a real gift to be in a position like that.”

Her advice to up-and-comers: be comfortable with making mistakes. Take as many opportunities as possible to get on live TV, and know you will make mistakes. “I’m a person who is not very good at making mistakes,” she said. “I’m a perfectionist.” It was hard to accept that messing up on live television was part of the job. Everyone does it. She just had to learn how to get past it. “In some ways, though, it still bugs me like crazy when I make mistakes. Finding ways to move past that was a turning point in my career.”

Laura also advises young people not to think the best way to get ahead is to do something attention-grabbing; anything to get noticed. “Ultimately, staying power comes in credibility and class and being kind and all those things that seem like maybe they wouldn’t get you ahead, but I can tell you that they will. It’s just about the patience to get there.”

Despite her workload, Laura still makes it to the beach every year. Her husband’s family owns a house in Destin, Florida, near where she grew up. “That beach is where so many of my most special memories are with my family, with my brothers,” she said. “Walking on that white sand, seeing that beautiful water—it still feels just like it did more than 20 years ago when we were all there together.” 🌊

Follow Laura on Facebook and Instagram (@LauraMRutledge) for updates, insights, and a glimpse into her life on and off the field.



“There is no substitute for the red light coming on and you’re live.”

30A Gear Opens New Store in Blue Mountain Beach

New Spring Collection, Same Iconic Beach Happy Spirit

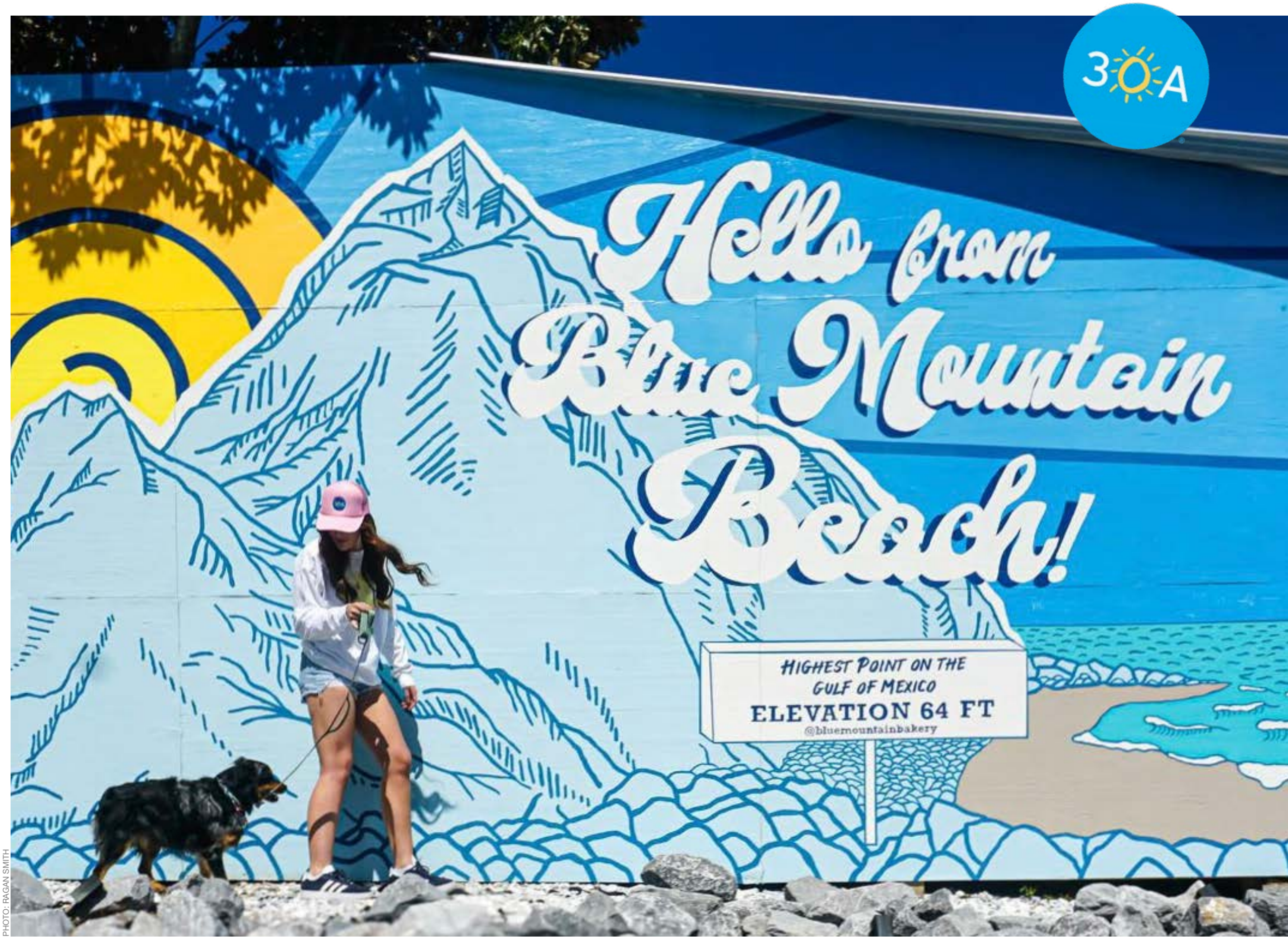
This spring brings a fresh wave of coastal style on Florida's Scenic Highway 30A, with 30A Gear's fourth outpost now open in Blue Mountain Beach. Located inside the popular health food store and juice bar For the Health of It, the new retail space makes it easier than ever to shop 30A's signature coastal apparel.

Nestled between the funky vibe of Grayton Beach and the artsy buzz of Gulf Place, this scenic stretch is home to rare coastal dune lakes, lush nature trails, and the highest elevation along the Gulf of Mexico, making it a serene paradise for beach lovers. With its laid-back energy, outdoor adventures, and vibrant local scene, Blue Mountain Beach is the perfect setting for 30A's newest retail location.

At For the Health of It, visitors can grab a refreshing smoothie while browsing their favorite 30A Gear staples along with specialty pieces inspired by Blue Mountain Beach's unique charm. Designed for effortless coastal living, the new location embodies everything the brand stands for: easygoing style, comfort, and that signature Beach Happy state of mind.

More Than Just Gear—A Lifestyle for Beach Lovers

A true embodiment of coastal living, the 30A brand reflects the carefree spirit and natural beauty of Northwest Florida's sugar-



white beaches and emerald waters in everything it creates.

As the go-to resource for all things Scenic Highway 30A, 30A.com connects beach lovers to a world of coastal lifestyle essentials. From apparel and *Beach Happy Magazine* to Beach Happy Cafe, 30A Real Estate, and fan favorites like 30A Beach Blonde Ale and Premium Wines, every offering is designed to bring a slice of paradise wherever you are.

“30A is more than a destination; it’s a community and a mindset,” said Gary John, CEO of The 30A Company. “It’s where people come to slow down, soak in the beauty, and embrace the beach life. Our goal is to make that feeling accessible to everyone, whether you’re here on the Gulf Coast or miles away. Our new Blue Mountain Beach outpost is another way to bring that connection to life.”

Coastal Essentials, Made for the Gulf (and Beyond)

30A Gear has evolved in recent years, elevating its designs and product quality while still embracing its laid-back roots. Fans can snag classic logo tees on the bestselling Comfort Colors t-shirt, but now the collection also includes higher-end garments like Free Fly’s bamboo sun-protective gear, offering a stylish blend of performance and comfort.

With a focus on timeless, effortlessly cool styles, every piece reflects modern trends while staying classic enough to wear year after year. The brand’s commitment to sustainability is also woven into its bestsellers, such as the 30A Block Logo Applique Recycled Sweatshirt, made from repurposed materials in appreciation of Florida’s stunning coastline.

From Stickers to Style

If you’ve spotted those iconic blue 30A stickers on cars, coolers, or even across the globe, you’ve witnessed the brand’s far-reaching influence. With over 5.8 million stickers out in the world, what started as a small coastal symbol has grown into a global lifestyle movement, dressing up beach lovers in ultra-soft tees, sweatshirts, and accessories that radiate coastal charm. But it doesn’t stop at clothing. Expanding into effortless everyday must-haves, 30A now

offers everything from Beach Happy Cafe’s delicious bites and Saltie by 30A Haircare (for that perfectly tousled, salty-hair look) to its beloved 30A Beach Blonde Ale—an ice-cold essential for toasting golden hour views.

“30A isn’t just a brand—it’s a way of life,” said JoAnn Ribaud, 30A’s Chief Revenue Officer. “Our apparel represents the laid-back, coastal spirit that has drawn people to this special stretch of Florida for generations. What started as a simple idea to celebrate the beauty of 30A has grown into a beloved lifestyle brand, with our iconic designs bringing a sense of nostalgia, happiness, and relaxation to anyone who wears them. Whether it’s a soft, sun-faded tee or a cozy hoodie, each piece connects people to their favorite beach memories and the feeling of being on ‘beach time,’ no matter where they are.”

With the new Blue Mountain Beach outpost, it’s easier than ever to bring a piece of 30A’s laid-back luxury into your life.

Spring’s Trendiest Beach Staples

As the season shifts, it’s the perfect time to refresh your coastal wardrobe. This spring, 30A Gear is expanding its line of classics while introducing limited-edition pieces and fresh colors. Expect soft pastel sweatshirts, fresh hues of basic tees, and a palette of light blues, warm yellows, and deep navy—perfect for effortless beach days.

For those looking for an instant fan favorite, the Thirty-A Script Hat has quickly become a must-have, available in classic coastal tones and SEC collegiate colors. And for the eco-conscious, the 30A Block Logo Applique Recycled Sweatshirt remains a top pick, blending comfort with sustainability.

A Little Extra Coastal Cheer

With a vibrant community and over 1.7 million social media fans, 30A has made a lasting impact. Having raised over \$3.4 million for coastal charities, the company remains dedicated to protecting the environment that inspires it all.

What’s Next: More Ways to Shop & Collaborate

As 30A Gear continues to grow, the brand is expanding its reach beyond its flagship stores. More local partnerships and collaborations with business owners, creators, and events will make 30A Gear even more accessible throughout the community.

A major highlight is the growing 30A Gear wholesale program. Fans will soon find 30A products inside top local shops and restaurants, making it easier than ever to shop the brand while exploring the Gulf Coast. Interested in carrying 30A merchandise in your store? Learn more

about becoming an authorized 30A brand retailer at 30A.com/wholesale.

Swing by This Spring

The new Blue Mountain Beach outpost is officially open, making it a breeze to shop your favorite 30A tees, hats, drinkware, and more. Here’s to sunshine, salt air, and effortless 30A style in Blue Mountain Beach.

Not on 30A? No worries! Shop the full collection online at 30Agear.com and stay Beach Happy wherever you are.

This spring, 30A Gear is expanding its line of classics with soft pastel sweatshirts, breezy hues of basic tees, and timeless coastal staples.



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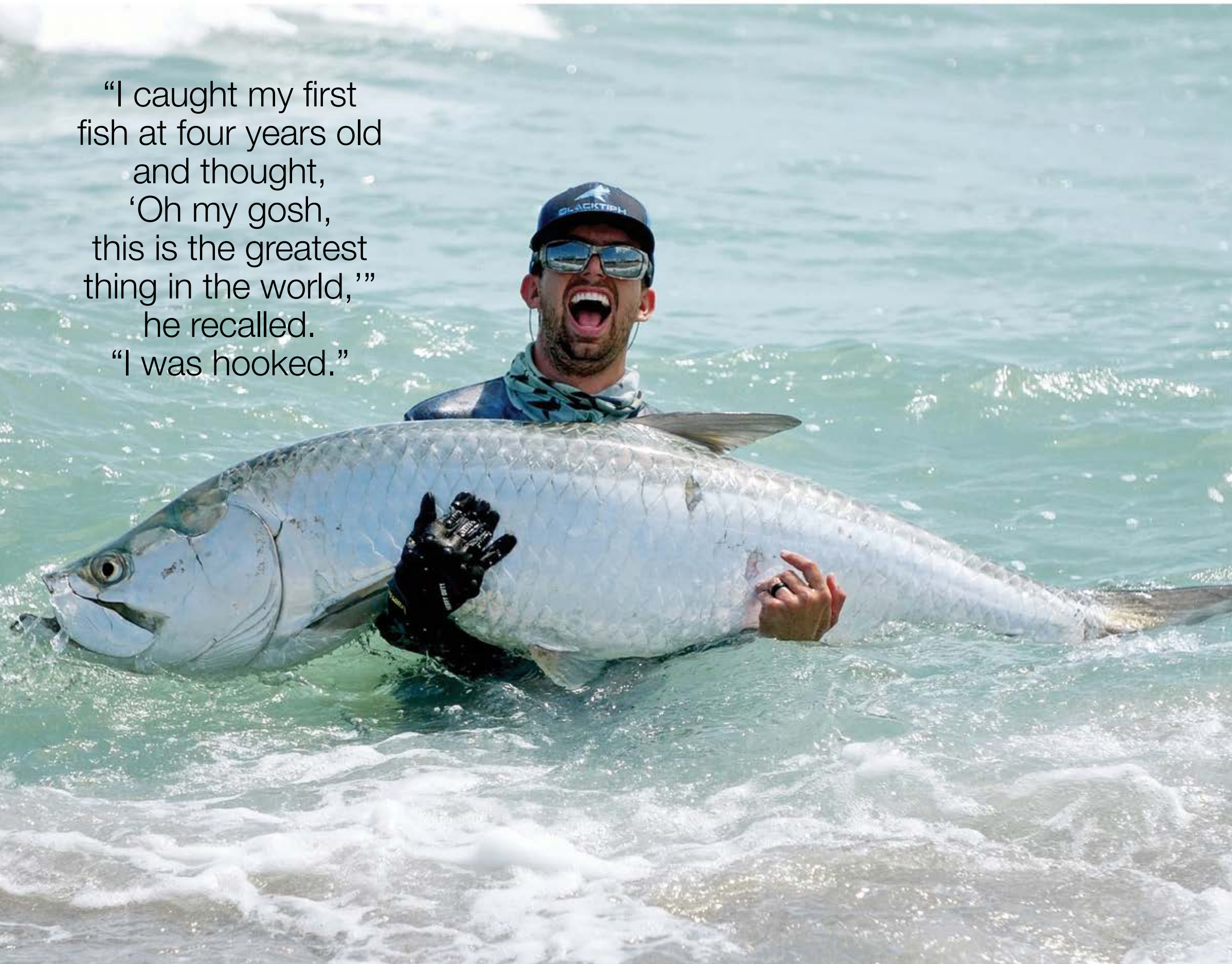
PURPOSE

From Viral Fame to Life's Toughest Battles,
Joshua Jorgensen Finds His True Calling

By Logan Burgess
Photos courtesy of BlacktipH



“I caught my first fish at four years old and thought, ‘Oh my gosh, this is the greatest thing in the world,’” he recalled. “I was hooked.”



For many, fishing is a pastime that offers a peaceful escape, a cherished ritual, and a way to connect with nature. But for Josh Jorgensen, it has always been more than that. From the moment he felt his first tug on the line at four years old, fishing wasn’t just a hobby; it was a calling. Everything about it—the salt air, the adrenaline of the fight, the mystery of what lurked beneath—became an obsession that shaped his life.

Today, Josh is the founder and face of BlacktipH, the world’s most-watched fishing show and a global brand, turning his passion into an empire. With millions of subscribers, viral videos, and partnerships that have taken him across the globe, he’s built something far surpassing anything he once thought possible. Yet, beyond the jaw-dropping catches and viral success lies a deeper story of grit, transformation, and the pursuit of true happiness.

Born to Fish: A Lifelong Connection to the Ocean

Josh’s love for fishing started early in his hometown of Windsor, Ontario, where he grew up casting lines in the Great Lakes for bass, muskie, and pike—well before most kids even learned to ride a bike. “I caught my first fish at four years old and thought, ‘Oh my gosh, this is the greatest thing in the world,’” he recalled. “I was hooked.”

In 2003, his passion took a new turn when he was introduced to saltwater fishing during a visit to Florida. The thrill of battling powerful ocean species was unlike anything he had experienced, and from that moment on, Florida felt like home. Even while studying physics at Wayne State University and working in research, his mind was always on the water. “Every time I left Florida, all I wanted was to come back,” he said.

In 2011, he finally made that dream a reality, moving to Florida to study web design and development at Full Sail University. But for Josh, fishing wasn’t just about enjoyment—it was about pushing limits and defying expectations. “They told me, ‘You can’t catch big fish from the beach.’ No way was I going to accept that—I was determined to prove them wrong.”

So, he set out to prove them wrong—and captured it all on film.

“My faith saved me. I became a Christian at 18, and God has been my rock ever since.”

What began as a personal test of skill soon evolved into a groundbreaking event. Josh launched the Blacktip Challenge, a land-based fishing tournament that rapidly gained attention. Within eight years, it grew into Florida’s largest land-based fishing tournament. But while Josh thrived on competition, he realized his ambitions reached far beyond the beach.

He wasn’t just a fisherman; he was a storyteller, a content creator, and an entrepreneur redefining the sport. That vision led to BlacktipH, named after the blacktip shark, a fast and relentless predator that mirrored Josh’s high-energy approach to fishing.

Hook, Line, and Legacy: How BlacktipH Captivated the Fishing World

Turning BlacktipH into a global phenomenon didn’t happen overnight. “I started filming with a GoPro and quickly became obsessed,” Josh said. What started as simple, unfiltered fishing clips transformed into high-energy, cinematic storytelling, setting BlacktipH apart in the world of outdoor content.

Though fishing was his true passion, Josh’s academic path was anything but conventional. “I studied programming, physics, engineering, and geology before earning my design development degree in Orlando,” he said. At first glance, those fields seem unrelated, but they ultimately shaped his approach to content creation. “Looking back, everything I studied plays a role in what I do today.”

A turning point came with his viral video, *Strongest Man vs. Strongest Fish*. At the time, it was YouTube’s top video, racking up 40 million views in just one week. “The response was unreal,” he said. “That video introduced us to so many people—it took us to the next level.” With each viral hit, new doors opened. “Next week, I’m heading to New Zealand for a 15-day expedition. These days, our trips are on a whole new scale as we chase legendary catches, like the elusive giant squid,” he said.

BlacktipH isn’t just about fishing; it’s about pursuing the extraordinary. That relentless drive keeps the brand at the forefront of the sport.

Stronger Than the Tide: Overcoming Cancer and Redefining Success

As BlacktipH soared to new heights, Josh faced a life-altering challenge. “Then, I got cancer,” he said. “In just nine months, I went through 16 surgeries. It was brutal. But that experience completely changed my perspective and made me appreciate what matters most.”

For someone always chasing the next challenge, the diagnosis forced him to slow down. He had to step back from the relentless grind of content creation, business expansion, and the expectations that came with success. But in that stillness, he found clarity.

“My faith saved me,” Josh shared. “I became a Christian at 18, and God has been my rock ever since. Before that, I was lost, selfish, and focused on the wrong things. But now, I have peace in my heart, and I know that no matter what happens, I have Him.”

The struggle tested him in ways he never imagined, ultimately shifting his entire perspective. “Before cancer, I was always stressed about something, whether it was business, emails, or the next project. But during that time off, I didn’t even check my emails because I simply didn’t care. Instead, I used that time to truly study God’s word. I had read the Bible before, but this time, I dove into its teachings, especially the story of creation.”

Freed from the pressure of chasing the next big thing, he found fulfillment in living with purpose and making a difference in others’ lives.

Deeper Waters: Finding Faith, Purpose, and True Fulfillment

Josh’s battle with cancer gave him something far more





valuable than fame or fortune: true clarity on what success really means. “A lot of people make a lot of money, but they don’t love their life. I genuinely love what I do,” he said.

That passion shines through in Josh's videos, his travels, and every interaction. “Authenticity is everything. I’m a terrible actor, so what you see is my real reaction, whether the camera is rolling or not. That honesty is what makes the connection real.”

The Next Chapter: Pushing Limits, Chasing the Extraordinary

Despite everything he has achieved, Josh isn’t slowing down. BlacktipH continues to evolve, pushing the limits of what a fishing show can be. “We always aim to be leaders, not followers. This past summer, we traveled to Italy to try swordfish fishing, and it was insane. We are always looking for the next big challenge,” he said.

That relentless drive for innovation and adventure is what keeps BlacktipH ahead of the game. “Local videos are easier, but the big trips require intense planning,” he admitted.

“That’s exactly what makes them so special.”

As for the future, Josh hints that he may share more about his personal journey, faith, and the lessons he’s learned along the way. “I know the right time will come. Every challenge and every experience has led me to the life I’m living now.”

When asked about the most rewarding part of his journey, he didn’t hesitate: “I get to do what I love every single day.”

More Than a Career: Finding Purpose Beyond the Catch

Josh Jorgensen’s journey is defined by resilience, faith, and an unshakable love for the ocean. From a young boy with a fishing rod to the CEO of a global brand, he has built a life doing what he loves.

But beyond the viral videos, business deals, and record-breaking catches, he’s discovered something far more meaningful: a deep sense of peace, purpose, and happiness that even life’s toughest battles, including cancer, couldn’t take away.

Through it all, the ocean remains his sanctuary, the place where his journey began and the place he will always return to.

For Josh, the journey is far from over. And if there’s one thing he knows for sure, it’s that the greatest catches are still out there, waiting to be reeled in. 🐟

Follow Josh's journey on Instagram (@joshua_jorgensen) and dive into the world of BlacktipH at blacktiph.com. Explore epic fishing adventures, shop gear, and join the community (@BlacktipH).



By Geoff Nudelman

Spring's expanded daylight doesn't arrive all at once; it's a gradual process that surprises and delights over the course of a few months until you realize it's 7 p.m. and you're still on the beach. It's also an opportunity to put away some of winter's heavier products in favor of lighter and breezier gear. Check out some of our favorites to enjoy as the potential of spring washes over the shore.



1

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2

ALCO CHASING SUNSET NECKLACE

This 18K gold-plated necklace is the perfect accessory to round out any springtime outfit, and it can stay on all day since Alco's entire line is water-resistant. This particular piece comes in two distinctive finishes and shimmers in the dusk light thanks to its specific pattern. No need to change out jewelry after a day at the beach, just change into a new outfit and go.

alcojewelry.com
\$38

3

SUNNYLIFE PADDLE SET

Paddle sports are having a resurgence while getting more creative with items such as this paddle set. Available in three fun patterns, you can play pickleball or beach ping pong in style with a pack that includes two paddles, two balls, and a convenient carrying case.

sunnylife.com
\$28



4

30A SILICONE LOGO HAT

Our new silicone hat stands up to all the beach elements and is easily rinseable once the day's activities are done. The unisex fit comes in five different colors and features a large version of the classic 30A logo on the front.

30Agear.com
\$40



5

VACATION CLASSIC WHIP SUNSCREEN

It is more important than ever to use sunscreen that's gentler on marine environments. Sunscreen tech is getting better, so you no longer have to settle for an all-day white cast from more traditional zinc products, while still getting the full benefits of quality sun protection. Just as it looks, Classic Whip applies like a whipped lotion and doesn't leave a sticky, greasy residue. It's also free from a range of additives and meets reef-compliant requirements.

vacation.inc
\$22



8

FUNBOY MESH CHAIR FLOAT

Effortlessly float into spring with this inflatable lounge chair that's equally at home in the pool or on the shoreline. With the help of a hair dryer or electric pump, this chair and hammock combo inflates in about a minute and gives you a range of new seating choices in no time. The integrated cup holder means once seated, you can let the hours drift by while enjoying your favorite beverage.

funboy.com
\$39

9

SALTIE BY 30A SEA SALT TEXTURIZING SPRAY

Using ocean-derived products like seaweed, algae, and kelp, this hair spray builds texture and volume without the hours spent at the beach. It's free from parabens, dyes, and more to ensure only the good stuff is making it onto your mane. The spray is part of the full lineup of Saltie Beauty hair products inspired by the beach and designed to bring a breezy, beachy finish to your look — no sand required.

saltiebeauty.com
\$20



6

TANNING CLUB SPF 30 COCONUT LIP BALM

The strong coastal sun can do a number on lips—not just potential burning, but also dehydration from the longer days and salt water. Tanning Club's Coconut Lip Balm includes a good dose of aloe vera extract to help keep things hydrated. The higher SPF rating also comes in handy with a slightly stronger sun through the spring.

tanningclub.com
\$6



7

30A BEACH HAPPY MINIMALISTIC BOAT TOTE

The quintessential beach tote is an essential part of a great day in the sand. This sturdy, 100% cotton version has plenty of space to store everything you'll need. It comes in two easy-to-clean color options with fun printed logowork on each side.

30Agear.com
\$42



10

IGLOO TAG ALONG TOO 11 QT. COOLER

If you're heading to the beach solo or with a friend, there's no need to lug around a massive cooler. Something in the 10-15 qt. range is perfect for a handful of drinks and snacks. With the Tag Along Too, you get Igloo's trusted quality, including a leakproof lid and easy-carry strap. Plus, this particular model comes in a range of beach-ready and quirky colors.

igloocoolers.com
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**Unforgiving Yet Irresistible—Pipeline Remains
Surfing’s Ultimate Challenge**

By Geoff Nudelman

Photos and Captions by Christa Funk

In surfing lore, Pipeline is considered an all-time wave. The stretch of water along ‘Ehukai Beach Park on O’ahu’s North Shore in Hawaii has long been part of Native Hawaiian wave-riding traditions and remains an essential location in the sport. While Hawaiian surfers may have been navigating its waves for generations, Pipeline captivated the global surfing community when Phil Edwards rode it into modern surfing history in December 1961.

“Pipeline means an awful, awful lot to me,” said legendary bodysurfer Mark Cunningham, who lived on the North Shore for 20 years and had a long stint as a lifeguard in the area. Among surfers of all kinds, Cunningham, who turns 70 this year, is regarded as one of the greatest, and that’s in no small part due to the amount of time he has spent being challenged by this ultimate wave.

Understanding the significance of Pipeline requires an

understanding of the geography of the land. There’s no better person to illustrate that than another former professional surfer-turned-lifeguard Dave Wassel, who came in as a first responder after Cunningham retired.

“When I come to work, I have a thousand people I’m looking after, so the responsibility level goes through the roof,” Wassel, 51, said.

What makes Pipeline special—and especially dangerous—is its unique mix of sand, rocks, and coral reef, which not only creates the waves but also forms nooks and crannies that surfers could hit at any time. An average strong winter wave at Pipeline peaks at around nine feet, but swells have been known to reach 20 feet. In the summer, waves are much calmer but still dangerous. Cunningham describes the phenomenon as a “parking lot” because Pipeline floor is relatively flat.

Wassel laughed at that and added his own perspective.

“A lot of people will tell you that the most dangerous thing at Pipeline is the reef, but it’s actually the crowd of surfers as you’re jockeying for position,” he said.

There can be as many as 80 surfers at any given time waiting their turn for a wave, and that means each surfer must be aware of not just the wave but 79 other people as potential obstacles in addition to what Mother Nature has already laid bare.

It’s a lot of hydroenergy packed into a 300-yard stretch, making for breathtaking viewing on the beach or on the internet.

“There are bigger waves in the world, maybe faster waves, but it’s Broadway,” Cunningham said. “If you can make it there, you can make it anywhere.”

The challenge of Pipeline continues to draw the world’s best surfers, both for the sport’s top competitions and for regular days when conditions are prime. The wave is as much a spectacle as it is a connecting point for members of the broader surf community who have all found their way there at one time or another.

Photographer Christa Funk, 34, was stationed in Hawaii during her service in the Coast Guard and tried to find a role that could combine her love of the water with her second love: photography. After five years of post-academy active duty, the native Coloradan started shooting smaller waves and gradually became part of a regular crew that shoots and films Pipeline. She lives on the North Shore, about a 15-minute drive from the beach.

“It can be a very intimidating environment, but with a respectful attitude, you can find your way into the lineup [of photographers and filmers],” she said.

Funk’s photography illustrates the different personalities of Pipeline. At times, the wave is sharp, crisp, and cascading. Others are a bit less uniform. Both stages underscore the danger of the wave, even if it is breathtaking to watch the barrel come to life in a still frame. Even Funk herself understands the risk—she’s only bodysurfed Pipeline and thinks she’ll never traditionally surf it due to its complexity.

“That’s not on my radar,” she said.

Like any iconic part of nature, several supporting features around Pipeline contribute to its famous waves. A portion to the right is known as the “Backdoor,” breaking over a very shallow and sharp point that leaves little to no room for error when exiting. “Off the Wall” breaks to the west in front of the only manmade retaining wall on that stretch of beach (which is no longer used, as it was proven to cause beach erosion). “2nd Reef” refers to the second reef formation, which typically produces big, picturesque breaks on winter days.

“There are bigger waves in the world, maybe faster waves, but it’s Broadway.”

About as perfect as a wave can get.





“A lot of people will tell you that the most dangerous thing at Pipeline is the reef, but it’s actually the crowd of surfers as you’re jockeying for position.”

Swimming behind a beautiful barrel early one morning.

Wassel’s perspective—from pro surfer to active lifeguard—affords him a view of how surfers are tackling Pipeline differently than they have in the past. There’s a common thread of everyone knowing someone who has either died or been seriously hurt riding Pipeline.

“Surfers are pushing the envelope, but the big thing now is that most of them will have flotation jackets, and 80 percent of them wear helmets,” he said, noting that broken bones are something of a fact of life when surfing this area. Surfing helmets look more like a rubberized dome and are less bulky compared to their skiing or biking counterparts.

Pipeline is somewhat unique in that there’s no continental shelf absorbing some of the pressure of the waves when they move to hit land. The waves hit the reef no more than 100 yards offshore, which makes for those intense breaks and a significantly more dangerous and unpredictable surfing experience.

According to Wassel, there’s an increased interest from pro surfers and junior surfers to learn first-response basics such as CPR and how to pull someone out of a break, and that’s something he and his team teach each winter when the major brands rent houses nearby and host the best surfers in the world as they aim to surf the famous swells

during those months.

The winter rush is a stark contrast to summer when the waves mellow out, and bodysurfers like Cunningham enjoy Pipeline’s much calmer side.

“Most surfers are thinking about those perfect waves, but there are plenty of days when they’re one to two feet,” he said. “You’ll occasionally see a stand-up paddleboarder out there, but it is predominantly a shortboard, high-performance wave.”

For all the folklore and fame, Cunningham loves to remind people that ‘Ehukai is “kind of a podunk beach park” that sits across from an elementary school. After all, Pipeline got its name from the late surfboard shaper Mike Diffenderfer, who stood with surfer Phil Edwards following Edwards’ groundbreaking ride in 1961 and pointed to a construction sign that read “pipeline” as the area was getting new water service. It’s a simple and unassuming tourist destination of sorts, planted in the middle of a neighborhood. Pipeline remains one of the most thrilling yet treacherous surf spots on Earth, commanding respect from all who dare to ride its waves.

“It is an attraction, but it’s also people’s backyards. Tread lightly,” he said.



Keala Kennelly, a trailblazing big-wave surfer and former world tour competitor, takes a moment to admire the surf.



Pro Surfer Anthony Walsh riding a backless mutant of a wave.

PIPELINE FAST FACTS

Surfing is an important part of native Hawaiian history, and the area above the beach is said to have significant cultural importance to the native community.

‘Ehukai Beach Park is less than an hour’s drive from Honolulu.

There is a “third reef” wave that occurs about 300 yards offshore, but it only appears under specific conditions.

The Pipeline Masters is an annual elite competition that’s been held at the park since 1971. If you’re considering making the trip to watch any of the major competitions that happen in the area, be sure to have flexibility since these events are quite literally at the whim of oceanic conditions.

Pipeline has been featured in several films, including *The Endless Summer* (1966), *Blue Crush* (2002), and *Riding Giants* (2004).

Real estate overlooking Pipeline is highly competitive and expensive. Homes start around \$1.5 million and can easily eclipse \$6 million.



The skill required to make this wave is second only to the will to overcome the terror he’s feeling.

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Styled for Success

MARY GLENN MCELVEEN (AKA MG) ON STYLE, INFLUENCE, AND MOTHERHOOD

By Emma Miner
Photos: Bailey Hart

Mary Glenn McElveen has built a career around confidence, creativity, and, of course, great style. As the fashion stylist and influencer behind *Styled by MG*, she shares outfit inspiration, expert styling tips, and a fresh take on trends while keeping fashion fun and approachable. Beyond the perfectly curated looks, MG's journey is rooted in passion and purpose—starting with childhood dreams of working in fashion and evolving into a career that empowers others through personal style.

With deep ties to Florida's Scenic Highway 30A—where she vacationed as a child, got married, and even shot her collection with the department store Dillard's—MG has made this slice of the Gulf Coast part of her story. Now, as she embraces motherhood and this exciting new chapter, she reflects on her journey, her love for fashion, and the moments that bring her joy.

We caught up with MG to talk style, spring trends, and the exciting next chapter for *Styled by MG*.

What first sparked your passion for styling, and how did that evolve into your career as both a stylist and influencer?

I've had a passion for styling for as long as I can remember. As a child, I loved putting together dress-up looks with





“I truly believe
that feeling
polished when
you get dressed
can set the tone
for your day
and boost your
confidence!”



accessories, and as I got older, I naturally started styling my friends. Now, I'm fortunate enough to do it professionally! Taking the leap five years ago into full-time styling confirmed this is exactly where I'm meant to be. At first, Instagram was simply a place for me to promote my styling business, but over time, it organically grew into a whole different revenue stream, essentially becoming a second job. From sharing my fashion finds to discussing style tips and trends to curating collages, Instagram definitely keeps me busy.

I always try to remind myself of where I started and what my goals are in the content I put out there. In other words, I remind myself not to get too wrapped up in the "influencer" role. Yes, I do influence others, but my goal is to inspire and to be a go-to source for all things fashion. I'm grateful every day for my clients and for everyone who has digitally followed along on my journey as a stylist.



MG's childhood vacations in Seaside—where her love for the Gulf Coast began



Above: A stunning moment from MG's wedding ceremony at The Seaside Chapel in Seaside
Right: The newlyweds celebrating in the timeless beauty of Alys Beach

Photos: Paul Johnson



What's the most rewarding part of balancing both roles—stylist and influencer?

Goodness, where do I begin? These roles may be different, but they truly go hand in hand.

For example, during my workweek, I focus on clients—whether that means visiting a client's home, meeting virtually, or sending out shopping links. Along the way, I gather valuable insights to share on Instagram. This could mean discovering a new brand while working in a client's closet, learning how different styles fit various body shapes, or finding exciting pieces to share with my followers while sourcing shopping links.

Balancing both roles can be challenging—mainly because of the time commitment—but it's also incredibly rewarding. I love that I can use my styling expertise to help women both near and far.

What aspect of your work brings you the most joy or fulfillment?

There's something deeply rewarding about stepping into someone's closet and knowing I've made a difference—whether it's helping them feel more confident in their style or encouraging them to think creatively about pieces they already own. In other words, teaching them to “shop their own closet.”

Though I am primarily based in Birmingham, Alabama, where most of my in-person business is, I also work virtually with clients across the country. I occasionally travel to Atlanta and Dallas, but the most fulfilling part of my work is connecting with women of all ages, styles, and budgets, no matter where they are.

Above all, I cherish the personal connections I build with my clients.



"There's something deeply rewarding about stepping into someone's closet and knowing I've made a difference—whether it's helping them feel more confident in their style or encouraging them to think creatively about pieces they already own."

Getting to know them beyond a phone screen brings me immense joy and fuels my passion for what I do.

What's a trend you predict will take off this spring, and what's one item you're personally loving right now?

Prints are making a big comeback. Neutral prints are a favorite of mine, but spring always brings fresh pops of color with subtle floral patterns.

What's one styling tip you wish more people knew or would apply in their own wardrobe?

I always emphasize the power of a third piece in any outfit. Whether it's a belt, scarf, or a statement accessory, that extra element helps tie the look together and instantly elevates your style. I truly believe that feeling polished when you get dressed can set the tone for your day and boost your confidence.

Where's your go-to beach getaway, and what makes it special to you?

I grew up vacationing in Seaside and WaterColor (back when it was only one street!). In college, I spent a summer working at Willow, and I've continued visiting as an adult. Alys Beach will always hold a special place in my heart, though. It's where my husband and I got married and where I shot the collection I helped design for Dillard's.

I've created so many amazing memories along 30A throughout my life, and that deep connection to the area makes it my ultimate beach getaway.

What's one thing currently bringing you happiness?

We recently welcomed our first baby—a boy!—in March, and this new season of life has been incredibly special. I'm soaking in these precious moments with my husband and our little one while embracing the exciting journey of parenthood. It's bringing me so much joy!

Stay stylish with MG! Follow her fashion journey on Instagram (@m.g._style) and explore more trends at [StyledByMG.com](https://www.styledbymg.com).

WHAT TO WEAR ON 30A

morning walk



For the perfect layered look on a chilly yet warm morning walk, start with a breathable, moisture-wicking base layer like a fitted tank to keep you comfortable. Add a cozy, lightweight cardigan for that early morning chill, easily removable as the day warms up. Complete the look with a baseball hat and chic sunglasses—ideal for a sunny stroll down 30A.

shop the full look here!



coffee date



Perfectly polished for a coffee date, yet effortlessly stylish for a stroll around town afterward. The skort, from my collection with Dillard's, is both casual and incredibly comfortable—making it the ideal choice for a laid-back day out on 30A. Add texture to the look with a raffia bag and hat, elevating the outfit with a touch of coastal charm and effortless flair.

shop the full look here!



WHAT TO WEAR ON 30A

Styled and curated by MG (@m.g._style)

post beach lunch



I love this color combo for a post-beach lunch and a glass of wine! Dress up this fun one-piece by adding accessories and a pair of stylish pants to elevate the look for a chic lunch after the beach. The tote and sandals, both from my Dillard's collection, are the perfect complement to 30A's laid-back vibe, making this outfit both stylish and practical for a day by the coast.

shop the full look here!



girls night out



The perfect balance of elevated, on-theme, and casual chic for a girl's night out. Pair this fun patterned dress with simple accessories and a stylish pair of heels for a look that's effortlessly glamorous. This dress is from my most recent collection with Dillard's!

shop the full look here!



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Fearless Fish Market makes sustainable seafood accessible from the moment you step inside. Photo credit: Fearless Fish Market



Steamed Littlenecks at Dune Brothers

Hooked

on Rhode Island

A Michelin Green Star Chef’s Culinary Tour of the Ocean State

By Carrie Honaker



Chefs Nick Gillespie (left) and Michael Cimarusti proudly display their striped bass catch. Photo credit: Carrie Honaker

As we motor out into the open ocean, goldenrod-blanketed meadows and rocky shorelines fade from view. At the helm of this journey is Chef Michael Cimarusti, leading us on a culinary exploration of Rhode Island’s rich waters. He fished these very waters as a child with his grandfather, Ted, and today, he’s back—this time, to showcase the local seafood traditions that inspire his craft. His line tugs, and the battle begins as he reels in a 29-inch striped bass—dinner secured.

“Some of the best fish in the world, in my opinion, come from New England, and a lot of it right here in the Ocean State,” he said.

Cimarusti, a champion of sustainable seafood and owner of Providence in Los Angeles—a Michelin Green Star-awarded restaurant for its commitment to sustainable gastronomy—has returned to the region for a culinary tour showcasing restaurants that prioritize environmentally friendly sourcing. In Kyoto, Japan, he learned the secret of delicious, perfectly preserved fish.



Crawford Street Bridge over the Providence River, with the “Still Here” mural featuring Indigenous artist Lynsea Montanari and activist Princess Red Wing.



The technique is *ikejime*, the ancient Japanese art of humanely slaughtering fish on the boat at catch. The fish does not undergo the stress of death and all the repercussions to the flesh that it causes. Chefs are wildly passionate about how it is changing their kitchens.

“Seafood inspired me in a personal way from the very start,” Cimarusti said. “It is my duty to staunchly support its conservation and best practices, and it’s my privilege to have the opportunity to showcase it on a nightly basis.”

Chef Nick Gillespie, fishing alongside Chef Cimarusti, is working toward his *ikejime* certification, a practice that helps generate better revenue for local fishing communities. He has also launched an educational outreach program, bringing workshops to local schools to introduce the next generation to lesser-known fish—like ling, which is abundant in Rhode Island waters—and how it can be prepared into delicious dishes.

Follow along with my Ocean State Seafood Adventure as the chefs and I sample everything from fried seafood baskets to paper-thin crudos to oyster shooters.



Oberlin. Photo credit: GoProvidence



Whole roasted fish at Dune Brothers

Day One: Seafood Shacks, Culinary Museum, and a Seafood Festival

The drive to celebrate authentic Rhode Island food starts when we get off the boat and head to Dune Brothers Seafood in Warwick. The long red shack sits adjacent to a working carousel, and classic cars dot the park for a weekend event. Crowding the brightly colored picnic tables, platters of fish and chips made with local ling, meaty clam cakes, cold calamari salad that tastes like a sea-inspired antipasto, whole skate roasted over local broccoli and bathed in harissa, and steaming bowls of clear Rhode Island seafood chowder sit aside local clams swimming in a Portuguese sausage broth. Baskets of fresh-baked brown bread wait to sop up all the goodies. It is a true New England feast.

After lunch, we head to the Johnson & Wales Campus, where Chef Cimarusti

talks to the next generation of chefs about the importance of sustainable seafood sourcing. We then tour the Culinary Arts Museum on campus and explore the thousands of historic hospitality artifacts, including a fully restored diner interior, an antique copper chocolate press, visual histories of clam cakes and chowder, and more.

After checking into The Beatrice Hotel, we make our way down the street to the annual Rhode Island Seafood Festival. Every September, tents fill with local craft beers and tables strewn with clams, oysters, and all manner of New England seafood dishes, and Rhode Island-famous Del’s Lemonade machines crank out the tart treat beloved by all residents. Live music fills the air as we roam around India Point Park’s waterfront, snacking on monster-sized lobster rolls chock-full of sweet meat.



Providence Marina with the city skyline, viewed from a waterfront bar along the Providence River. Photo credit: GoProvidence



Fearless Fish Market



Owner Stu Meltzer

Day Two: Riverboating, Ocean-inspired Spirits, and Fish Markets

After a quick coffee and pastry at Hope & Main, a culinary incubator for refugees, we make our way to the waterfront to meet our boat to experience Providence from the water and enjoy ocean-inspired spirits from the Industrious Spirits Company or ISCO. As our guide maneuvers us around the bridges, Many Rubenstein, CEO and co-founder, cracks open the cooler and pulls out Ostreida Oyster Vodka, distilled with fresh local oysters and corn, and Seaflow Ocean Gin, made with New England seaweed. They were the first distillery in Rhode Island after Prohibition and craft everything by hand utilizing sustainably grown grains in a 150-year-old former industrial mill complex near Downtown Providence. Rubenstein mixed batches of briny martinis to enjoy as we motored by stunning architecture, large public art

installations, the Providence Industrial Harbor, and more, learning about the deep nautical history from our Providence River Boat guide.

A day in Providence would not be complete without a stop at Fearless Fish Market. Inside refrigerated cases are chock-full of fresh John Dory, Golden Tilefish, Black Sea Bass, Littleneck Clams, and Monkfish, all pulled from local waters. A salad of scallops and squid in lemon vinaigrette is today's special, while people line up for tubs of the bluefish pâté, housemade fishcakes, and the Rhode Island specialty: clear fish chowder. Owner Stu Meltzer opened the market in 2019. Since then, he has been serving up a variety of local catch (whole and filleted), hot and smoked fish, tuna bolognese, and other house specialties, dips, and salads, all served with a side of sustainability information.



Bellini. Photo credit: The Beatrice



Oberlin. Photo credit: GoProvidence

Day Three: Mole, Crudos, and Oyster Shooters

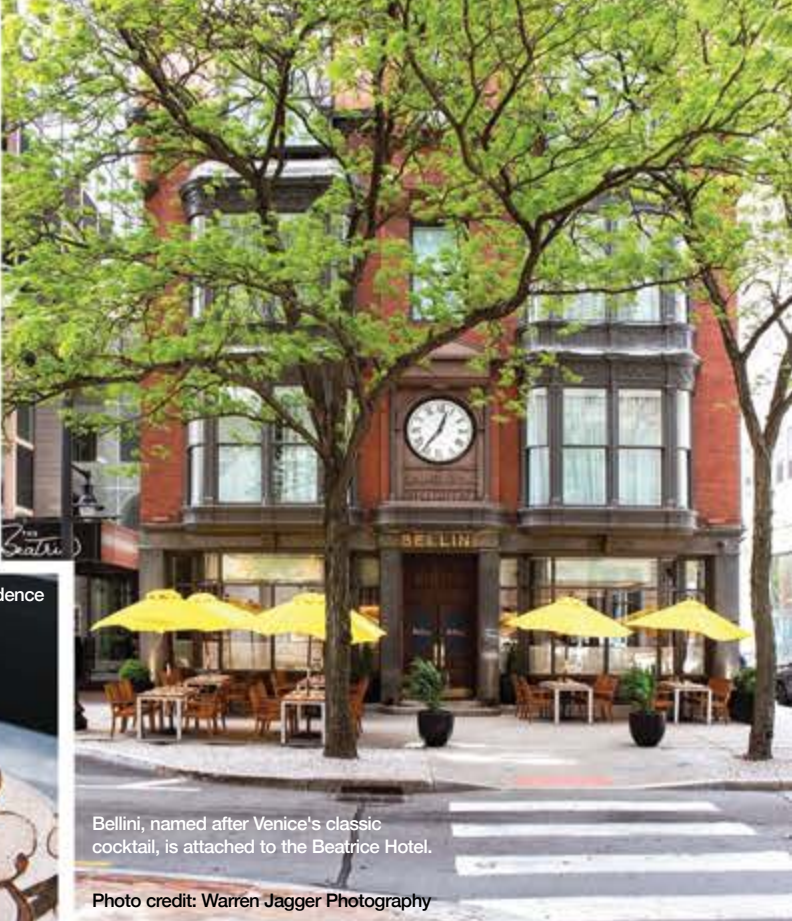
Just off the hotel lobby, Bellini offers an Italian-leaning menu stocked with classics like pappardelle with Pomodoro sauce and spaghetti alle vongole. We opt for a crudo of shrimp, branzino, salmon, and scallops topped with delicate drizzles of olive oil, cracked spices, and slivers of pickled vegetables. We raise our glasses of the restaurant's signature Bellini cocktails, a mix of sparkling prosecco and fresh white peach puree, and toast our last night in Providence.

Dolores, an art-filled eatery across the street, serves contemporary and regional Mexican cuisine from the Mixteca region of Puebla and Oaxaca in a homely atmosphere. They specialize in moles and handcrafted nixtamalized tortillas made with native heirloom maize. Family-run, James Beard Award finalist chef María Meza mans

the restaurant with her two sons, general manager Joaquin and bar manager Marco. Marco starts us off with a sampling of agave spirit-based cocktails. Joaquin delivers platters of mole negro with plantain, mole poblano with Baffoni farm chicken, and mole pistachio with live fire-cooked octopus to get our appetites going for the next stop.

Gift Horse and Oberlin

Just a short walk down the street sits the raw bar Gift Horse. We're greeted by a cornucopia of fresh oysters, clams, whole fish, caviar, kelp salad mounds, and other raw delicacies as we make our way around the cozy horseshoe-shaped bar to grab a couple of stools and their house specialty: the Shucker Punch, a Rhode Island oyster in kimchi brine with your choice of spirit. Towers stocked high with crab



Bellini, named after Venice's classic cocktail, is attached to the Beatrice Hotel.

Photo credit: Warren Jagger Photography



Gift Horse. Photo credit: GoProvidence

claws, mussels, crudos, half lobsters, clams, and oysters alongside platters brimming with caviar and doughboys, a fried yeast dough Rhode Island specialty, circulate around the tables as we move to their sister restaurant next door, Oberlin. A platter of whole wood roasted striped bass, prepared by chef Benjamin Suple, is passed around the table family-style while spaghetti studded with Rhode Island shellfish, Wapsie Valley polenta, and more fill our plates for our last taste of Providence. 🍷

Hooked

on Rhode Island

Where to Stay

The Beatrice
90 Westminster Street
Providence, RI
thebeatrice.com

Where to Eat

Dune Brothers Seafood
239 Dyer Street
Providence, RI
dunebrothers.com

Dolores
100 Hope St
Providence, RI
dolorespvd.com

Hope & Main
100 Westminster Street
Providence, RI
hopeandmainpvd.org

Gift Horse
272 Westminster St
Providence, RI
gifthorsepvd.com

Oberlin
266 Westminster St
Providence, RI
oberlinrestaurant.com

What to Do
Rhode Island Seafood Festival
riseafoodfest.com

Fearless Fish Market
fearless-fish.com

The Culinary Museum
jwu.edu/culinarymuseum

Providence River Boat Tours
providenceriverboat.com

Industrious Spirit Company
iscospirits.com



The Beatrice. Photo credit: Warren Jagger Photography



The Culinary Museum.
Photo credit: Johnson & Wales University



The Culinary Museum



Rhode Island Seafood Festival.
Photo credit: GoProvidence



Providence River Bridge with the city skyline in the background. Photo credit: GoProvidence



Dune Brothers Seafood



Providence River Boat Cruise.
Photo credit: GoProvidence

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THROUGH THE LENS OF THE SEA

PHOTOGRAPHER RAY COLLINS ON

WAVES, ART, AND CHANGE

BY GEOFF NUDELMAN

PHOTOS: RAY COLLINS



Ray Collins, camera in hand, ready to capture the ocean's power at its peak.

Even over the phone, Australian photographer

Ray Collins exudes an approachability that belies his status as one of the most influential marine photographers of the last 20 years.

Collins, 42, grew up in Wollongong, New South Wales, about an hour south of Sydney right along Australia's southeast coast. He retains the spirit of a 20-year-old—an unsurprising trait given his candor, but all the more remarkable considering the career-altering knee injury he suffered during a mining shift in 2007.

He describes the ocean as a constant in his life, especially through a “tumultuous” childhood, so it was the natural space to turn to, picking up a camera to begin shooting waves and surfers not long after the accident.

“The ocean has always grounded me,” he said. “I spent my whole life swimming and surfing around it.”

Whether it was this lifelong connection to the water or something that came from his forced shift into a new professional path, it's clear Collins has a gift for finding extraordinary viewpoints of waves in action. Much of his photography captures waves at their apex—a singular moment that reveals both the power and fragility of the ocean's natural flow.

Matter – Swimming with longer lenses has opened up new perspectives. Captured on a Hawaiian island one February afternoon with a 300mm lens, this shot required precision—a narrow field of view meant more misses than makes.



Rumble – Shot from a Robinson 44 helicopter with the doors off, this moment was as intense as it looks. I could feel the pressure shift with each passing wave, lifting the helicopter slightly, in the updraft – an unforgettable experience.

Convergence – Let the lines pull you in. My goal is to make the viewer feel something, to be drawn into the motion. I love the aerial perspective, especially experiencing it firsthand rather than through a drone.



Sea Monster – The more you look, the more you see. Every time I revisit this image, new details emerge—shapes, textures, and movement that weren't obvious at first glance.



Oil – One of my most recognized images, Oil introduced my work to a wider audience. Viewers have likened it to a bird's beak breaking through the wave or even a scaled creature rising from the depths. A memorable swim in every sense.



Aberrant – On this island chain in the middle of the Pacific, waves crash with relentless force—no continental shelf to slow them down. Their speed creates a sculptural effect, perfectly frozen at 1/1000th of a second.



Sunburst – A tribute to the legendary Hokusai and his Great Wave off Kanagawa. I nearly deleted this shot while sorting through my memory card—one of the happiest accidents I've ever avoided.

"Each wave I capture has its own characteristics. Ultimately, I'm surprised by the unique moments that unfold when I'm out shooting."

As he approaches 20 years in the trade, Collins has a long roster of past and present corporate partners, and he is starting work on his third book (which will be the first he hasn't self-published). He talks about this kind of success with a childlike excitement, never tiring of getting back out on the water to find that next great shot.

We spoke with Collins about adapting to larger corporate collaborations and capturing the singular essence of every wave.

How do you describe your style of photography?

My photography is emotive—I'm looking for and trying to convey a feeling. I do this by showing up and observing. I'm not trying to

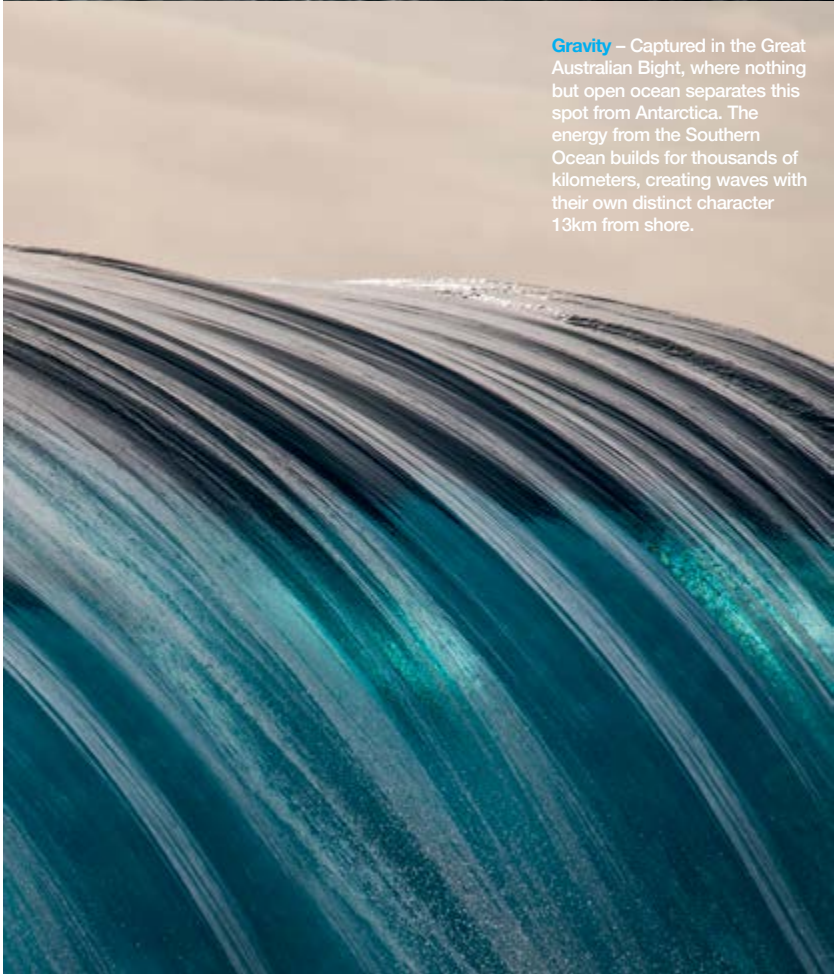
force something, but rather let whatever is there present itself. I try to increase my odds [of capturing something great] with maps, swells, winds, etc. because that's when I've found the moments to happen.

Much of your most lauded photography focuses on the unique structure of waves. Do you find the waves change depending on where you are?

Each wave I capture has its own characteristics. Ultimately, I'm surprised by the unique moments that unfold when I'm out shooting. Each location in the world has its unique signature. For example, Hawaii doesn't have a continental shelf, so those waves act differently compared to Australia, which has a shelf that slows things down. In California, the waves



Graphel – A grapnel is a small anchor or hook, and that's exactly what this wave reminded me of the moment I captured it—a giant, oceanic hook suspended in time.



Gravity – Captured in the Great Australian Bight, where nothing but open ocean separates this spot from Antarctica. The energy from the Southern Ocean builds for thousands of kilometers, creating waves with their own distinct character 13km from shore.

are much more drawn out, almost like a ruler's edge. When I see a wave, I can usually tell which part of the world it's from.

You work with some fairly large corporate partners. How do you help those companies understand what they have to do to make a meaningful difference in ocean conservation?

I'm trying to make art, and the beautiful thing about art is that it's open to interpretation. If I leave little narration behind the images, I feel like a company, an agency, or an environmental cause can utilize that visual impact and insert their own narrative. I'm not thinking about that as much but rather capturing the most beautiful image that I can.

As you start on your third book, what have you learned about that process, and what will make this iteration different?

My first two books were self-published. We actually put our whole house deposit into the first book, *Found at Sea*, and when that showed some success, it showed me I was on the right path. [Legendary surfer] Kelly Slater wrote the intro, and that was really important as well.

For this third book, I'm working with a very well-known brand. The book is out of my control in a lot of ways, but the brand has a long track record of making awesome books. I think I'm going to gain a lot [through this process] but also give up some things in terms of creative control. I'm also putting my faith in their designers, which I don't have a problem with.

Have you found your own relationship with shooting waves to change over your career?

The ocean is timeless—it doesn't date, age, or change. A wave captured today holds the same beauty and energy as one from five years ago. When I think about what I might feature in the book, I'm looking back, but I'm also super motivated to add fresh and new things into the mix. It forces me to grow and show different things and to try and reset each time.

Discover more of Ray Collins' work at raycollinsphoto.com and follow his latest projects on Instagram (@raycollinsphoto).



Half Dome – Shot in New South Wales, Australia, this wave mirrors the iconic Half Dome in Yosemite. I've always loved portraying liquid as a solid, revealing the sculptural nature of water in motion.



PHOTO: GUILLAUME LECHAT



DRIVING CHANGE

HOW 30A'S SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATE FUNDS WALTON COUNTY'S FUTURE

A License Plate with a Purpose

Walton County residents and beach lovers have a very unique way to invest in the community – right on their bumper. The State of Florida's official Scenic Walton/30A specialty license plate debuted in 2022, featuring the iconic blue 30A sunshine logo set against the silhouette of Western Lake, one of the region's most picturesque coastal dune lakes. But beyond showing local pride, this tag serves a greater purpose: 100% of its proceeds go to Scenic Walton, a nonprofit dedicated to making Walton County more beautiful, safe, and resilient. These funds support beautification and safety projects throughout Walton County, not just along the beach. From the sandy shoreline to inland towns, the Scenic Walton license plate program fuels projects that enhance quality of life for everyone.

How Does Scenic Walton Use the Funds?

Scenic Walton has been working for years on initiatives like landscaping roadway medians, advocating for the burial of overhead power lines, and expanding sidewalks, bike paths, and other infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. "These improvements not only create a more pleasant environment but also improve safety and ease congestion as the region inevitably grows," said Leigh Moore, executive director of Scenic Walton. "And because the funding comes steadily each year through tag renewals, it provides a sustainable resource for ongoing improvements."

Beyond the Plate: Multiplying the Impact

On its face, the approximately \$100,000 expected from the license plate program is a fantastic boost for local projects. But the real power of these funds is how they can multiply. Scenic Walton uses plate revenue as seed money to pursue

major civic improvement grants and partnerships that turn initial local funding into a much larger investment in the community. In this way, every dollar raised from specialty plates can help unlock several more dollars from outside funding sources. A modest \$25 contribution from a single tag might be the critical piece that helps secure a \$250,000 transportation grant or a \$1 million beautification project award in the future.

Scenic Walton has a track record of turning small contributions into big wins for Walton County. For example, the organization was instrumental in helping fund and plan the new Inlet Beach underpass, a pedestrian and cyclist tunnel under the busy U.S. Highway 98/County Road 30A intersection. That project totaled about \$5.6 million, yet it was the advocacy and support from Scenic Walton that helped secure state and county funding to make it a reality. Future improvements could include state grants to build miles of new bike trails and federal infrastructure programs to improve evacuation routes and bury utility lines for storm protection. A small investment by locals, multiplied by grant funding, results in major infrastructure upgrades that the community might otherwise not have access to.

Why It Matters: Enhancing Quality of Life & Property Values

All these improvements add up to a huge win for Walton County's residents, businesses, and visitors. By creating safer walkways and bike routes, families can enjoy the outdoors without fear of traffic, and kids can walk or cycle to school on secure paths. By landscaping medians and protecting scenic views, the community preserves





the natural charm that defines this part of Florida—from the emerald Gulf waters to Walton County’s expansive forests, bays, rivers, and crystal water springs.

This effort also brings a clear economic incentive. Beautiful, well-planned communities tend to have higher property values and attract more investment. Scenic Walton’s mission explicitly includes increasing property values and fostering a thriving business environment by enhancing the beauty of local roadways. A street lined with trees and free of unsightly utility poles is simply more appealing to homebuyers, entrepreneurs, and customers alike. By funding clean-ups, greenery, and aesthetic upgrades, the license plate program helps safeguard the premium brand that Walton County has developed over the years.

And of course, tourism—the lifeblood of Walton County’s economy—also benefits from these civic improvements. Millions of visitors flock to our sugar-white beaches and charming towns annually, contributing to restaurants, shops, and rental homes. Their experience doesn’t begin and end at the beach; it includes the drives along 30A and Scenic Gulf Drive, the town centers, the parks, and the trails. By making those experiences safer, more scenic, and more enjoyable, we encourage visitors to stay longer, explore further, and keep coming back.

Get the 30A Specialty Plate and Support the Cause!

The Scenic Walton/30A license plate is more than a vanity tag—it’s your ticket to drive positive change in our community. Florida residents—whether full-time or part-time—can be part of this mission by ordering the “Scenic Walton” specialty plate at their local Florida Tax Collector’s Office. Plates are available for cars, RVs, golf carts/LSVs, and trailers. While many locals have already made the switch, we need your help to keep the program going and growing. 🙌

Visit www.scenic.org/order-walton-tags or scan the QR code to order your tag today and help keep Walton County scenic!



Scan to Support Scenic Walton

How Grants Create Change: From Bike Paths to Beautification

Scenic Walton and other local partners use plate revenue as matching funds or seed money when applying for grants, turning plans on paper into shovels in the ground. Here are a few examples of what a relatively small local fund, boosted by grant money, can achieve in Walton County:

- **New Bike Paths and Trails:** Expanding safe bicycle and pedestrian pathways that connect neighborhoods and towns. Grants can fund multi-use trails that link schools, parks, and beaches, encouraging eco-friendly transportation and recreation. These projects improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians while easing road congestion.
- **Underground Utilities:** Relocating overhead power lines underground along scenic corridors and in neighborhoods to both improve the view and protect the power supply during storms. Although costly, burying utility lines becomes feasible with grant assistance. Scenic Walton, in partnership with local governments, aims to implement this countywide. The result is a cleaner skyline and a more resilient grid when hurricanes strike.
- **Pedestrian Safety Improvements:** Installing crosswalks, sidewalks, lighting, and even pedestrian underpasses and overpasses at high-risk intersections. These enhancements save lives and make it easier to get around without a car.
- **Median and Roadside Landscaping:** Transforming barren or unattractive median strips into lush, welcoming green spaces. Grants fund the planting of native trees, flowers, and shrubs along major roads like U.S. 98 and Highway 331.

PHOTO: AERIAL 850 (@aerial.850)



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Home is where the heart is.

10 of Our Favorite Beach Homes on the Market Along Scenic Highway 30A

By Karina Caraballo



\$5,899,300

This stunning home in Seaside, Florida, just north of 30A, offers breathtaking Gulf views and modern luxury in a prime location. Built in 2019 and 2021, it features a spacious layout with a chef's kitchen, pool, hot tub, and a rare 800-square-foot carriage house. With its oversized lot, incredible views, and ample space for family gatherings, this property is a unique opportunity to own a legacy home in one of the most sought-after communities along the coast. **LISTED BY THE JABBOUR LUXURY GROUP**

35 Tupelo St
Santa Rosa Beach, FL
6 BED | 8 BATH | 3,850 SQ. FT.



\$4,900,000

Nestled on over a quarter-acre of lush greenery, this beach house sits just three homes back from one of the community's most pristine and exclusive private beach accesses available. Recently remodeled with around \$1M in upgrades, this luxurious home now features an elevator, a workout room off the owner's suite, and a wealth of modern enhancements including expanded parking, updated exterior kitchen, exterior gas fireplace, remodeled kitchen, home gym, and more. **LISTED BY DAHLER & CO.**

107 E Bermuda Drive
Santa Rosa Beach, FL

5 BED | 5/2 BATH | 4,896 SQ. FT.





\$4,245,000



44 Seven Wells Court
Alys Beach, FL

3 BED | 3.5 BATH | 2,436 SQ. FT.

An exquisite gem among the first 16 iconic homes crafted during the prestigious Alys Beach architectural design charette. Nestled along the enchanting Sea Garden Walk Pedestrian Path, this stunning 3-bedroom residence offers unparalleled access to the pristine beach and the owner exclusive Alys Beach Club, allowing you to indulge in leisurely strolls along the shoreline or unwind in luxurious surroundings, all just steps from your door. **LISTED BY ALYS BEACH SALES TEAM**



\$17,500,000

Welcome to your coastal sanctuary, a Gulf-front new construction masterpiece along 30A that redefines luxury living. This five bedroom beach retreat, designed by renowned architect Geoff Chick, exudes coastal elegance with a walled and gated entry, infinity pool blending into the Gulf as a background, outdoor kitchen, and so much more. **LISTED BY JUDY JONES**

505 Eastern Lake Road
Seagrove Beach, FL
5 BED | 5/2 BATH | 5,103 SQ. FT.



\$5,750,000



74 Nonesuch Way
Alys Beach, FL

4 BED | 4.5 BATH | 3,197 SQ. FT.

This elegant and family-friendly home designed by T.S. Adams Architects offers 4 bedrooms, one bunk room, and an open floorplan plus a two car garage. Recent updates include a new energy efficient HVAC system in 2024, complete painting and resurfacing of exterior doors and windows and new exterior paint. The spacious courtyard boasts a 42" Alfresco grill and hood, new fountain feature, tile, and irrigation. Control-4 automation is installed for HVAC as well as interior lighting. **LISTED BY ALYS BEACH SALES TEAM**



\$1,550,000

Offered turn-key and fully furnished, this stunning new construction home in Seagrove Beach is designed to offer the ultimate coastal lifestyle. Thoughtfully designed across three levels, this 4-bedroom + bunk room, 4-bathroom residence features dual primary suites, two spacious living areas, and a charming bunk room—perfect for family gatherings and entertaining. **LISTED BY NOAH ESCOBAR**

83 Sawgrass Lane
Seagrove Beach, FL
4 BED | 4.5 BATH | 2,628 SQ. FT.





\$20,980,000



107 Elysee Court
Inlet Beach, FL

6 BED | 6/2 BATH | 8,062 SQ. FT.

Perfectly positioned between Alys Beach and Rosemary Beach, this luxurious Mediterranean-style Gulf-front estate offers an extraordinary beachfront lifestyle within the prestigious, gated community of Santimo Beach. This residence with over 8,000 square feet of living space, an elevator, private pool and spa, and two-car garage combines elegance and privacy with breathtaking Gulf vistas, delivering an ideal setting for those who seek refined living in a truly distinctive setting. **LISTED BY ANNE WINICKI**



\$5,995,000



This stunning Gulf-front beach house offers luxurious living with breathtaking beach views, making it an ideal short-term rental, second home, or primary residence. Featuring a Mediterranean-inspired design, an elevator, and custom finishes throughout, this home includes a chef's kitchen, a private office, and expansive outdoor spaces, including a rooftop terrace with panoramic views. Located in an exclusive gated community with 50 feet of beach frontage, this maintained property offers security, a clubhouse, a pool, and beach chair service just steps from the sand. **LISTED BY COREY LEDBETTER AND CHRIS ABBOTT**

4726 Ocean Boulevard
Destin, FL

5 BED | ? BATH | 4,880 SQ. FT.



\$10,800,000



11 Dandelion Drive
Santa Rosa Beach, FL

6 BED | 8 BATH | 6,081 SQ. FT.

Nestled in the heart of WaterColor's highly coveted Cottage District, 11 Dandelion Drive is a luxurious six-bedroom, seven-and-a-half-bath coastal retreat designed by TS Adams, offering over 6,000 square feet of modern elegance. This stunning home backs up to Western Lake, featuring expansive outdoor living spaces, a private pool and spa, and a Carriage House with its own kitchen and living area, perfect for guests or extended family. With its prime location near Seaside, WaterColor's private beach club, and exceptional rental potential, this property presents a rare opportunity for both investment and coastal living at its finest. **LISTED BY REAL BROKERAGE**



\$4,650,000



This classic Alys Beach courtyard home design by Gary Justiss Architect is located on iconic N. Charles Street. This three bedroom, three and one half bath home offers a first floor primary suite, a generous courtyard with pool and summer kitchen, open loggias, and a rooftop terrace. Professional interior designs by Betsy Brown give the interiors a tasteful and contemporary feel. Interior details such as Venetian plaster walls and ceilings, Carrara marble throughout the kitchen and bathrooms and upgrades Wolf and Sub-Zero appliance elevate this beautiful home. **LISTED BY ALYS BEACH SALES TEAM**

J10-45 North Charles Street,
Alys Beach FL

3 BED | 3 BATH | 2,268 SQ. FT.



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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 \$3.4 million for coastal charities, has given away 5.8 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 Apparel by B-Unlimited
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30A Craft Beer by Grayton Beer
30A Wine by Superb Wines
30A Electric Bikes by YOLO Board + Bike
30A Coffee by Amavida
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By Geoff Nudelman

Cannon Beach

A Timeless Retreat on Oregon's Wild Coast

There's good reason why the locals don't go out of their way to advertise the Oregon Coast. The 362-mile coastline carries different personalities depending on the season (and the weather). It can be docile and serene in the summer glow, ferocious and turbulent in the winter, promising in the spring, and consistently carry a 20-degree difference from inland areas, regardless of the season.

Given its proximity to the state's largest city, Portland, the northern third of the Oregon Coast has long been a quick weekend getaway and has evolved along with the state. The small town of Cannon Beach was home to several Native American tribes before

beginning its transition with the arrival of the Lewis & Clark expedition in 1806.

Throughout the twentieth century, Cannon Beach—named after a shipwreck that scattered pieces of marine cannons onto its shores—became a symbol of Oregon's landmark 1967 "Beach Bill," which ensured public access to the coastline.

Like many Oregon coastal towns, the village is built along a thin strip that rises and falls with the rocky cliffs. Beyond the quaint main drag and perennially good eating, the stunning landscapes of Ecola State Park and the famous Haystack Rock continue to draw crowds.



WHY GO?

“Going to the beach” on the Oregon Coast can mean a hundred different things, primarily because the weather can be unpredictable. The beauty of Cannon Beach is that there’s always something to do, whether under sunny skies or a persistent coastal drizzle. If it’s the former, you’ll find a stroll down to Haystack Rock is in order. The 235-foot-tall basalt sentinel was formed 15 to 17 million years ago as a product of volcanic lava flows moving west down the Columbia River towards the Pacific Ocean. [There’s a similar, yet not-as-grand rock 90 minutes south in Pacific City.]

It’s possible to walk up to the rock at low tide, but climbing it is prohibited as it’s a protected marine environment. Haystack Rock is often the centerpiece of magical sunsets that drip off the coastal cliffsides.

Ecola State Park, slightly more hidden on the north side of town, features pockets of coastal forest that open to majestic ocean views. Within the park are multiple hiking trails and parking areas to observe a space that’s very much in constant natural flux.

If the weather shifts, a stroll through town shows an ever-changing lineup of shops and restaurants that cater to a more affluent crowd, and you might even spot the famous Cannon Beach elk, who often set up shop in a nearby park or open space.

Cannon Beach is also a great home base to explore other parts of the Oregon Coast. Astoria, Seaside, and the famous Tillamook Creamery are all within a day trip. The smaller villages of Manzanita and Gearhart are also worth your time. If you’re looking for outdoor adventures, Cape Lookout and Oswald West State Parks are absolute gems.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

Portland International Airport is the main gateway in and out of the state. There are non-stop flights available from most major cities and a small selection of international destinations. The airport is consistently ranked among the top in the country for quick security lines, great food options, and solid post-security shopping. In August 2024, the airport’s main terminal reopened after a multi-billion-dollar renovation.

Cannon Beach is an easy two-hour drive northwest, winding over the northern stretch of the Coast Range on Highway 26. The road is well-traveled and busiest on summer weekends. With an elevation reaching 1,500 feet, the highway can see snow and ice in winter, so checking conditions beforehand is advised.

You’ll meet Highway 101 at a junction a few miles before the first exit for Cannon Beach. There is no closer public airport to the coast, so driving is the only option.

WHERE SHOULD I EAT?

No visit to Cannon Beach is complete without a stop at one of two places. Mo’s Seafood and Chowder is synonymous with the Oregon Coast with a 75-year lineage serving clam chowder and fish and chips at several locations. The other is Pig ‘N Pancake, a reliable all-day diner that was a part of any Oregonian’s childhood when they visited the coast.

The core of Cannon Beach dining is dominated by pubs serving gourmet pizzas, burgers, and plenty of craft beverages. Driftwood Inn is another great stop along North Hemlock Street, and from there, you can wander to Bill’s Tavern across the street for a post-dinner beer.

The south side of town is too far to walk to but has its own vibe worth checking out. A must-visit is Cannon Beach Hardware and Public House, which uniquely serves as a hardware store, pub, and sandwich shop all rolled into one.

WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

For being such a small town, there is no shortage of hotels on both sides of Cannon Beach. Surfsand Resort and Land’s End at Cannon Beach are solid mid-range options, with additional vacation rentals available on major booking sites.

Summer weekends book out months in advance, but there’s a good chance of finding weekday availability away from holiday times. Even though it’s quieter and potentially stormier, winter is a great time to visit Cannon Beach. There are fewer people, and it can feel like you have parts of town all to yourself. Because the town is largely driven by tourism, be sure to check operating hours as many local establishments only open a few days a week during slower periods.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

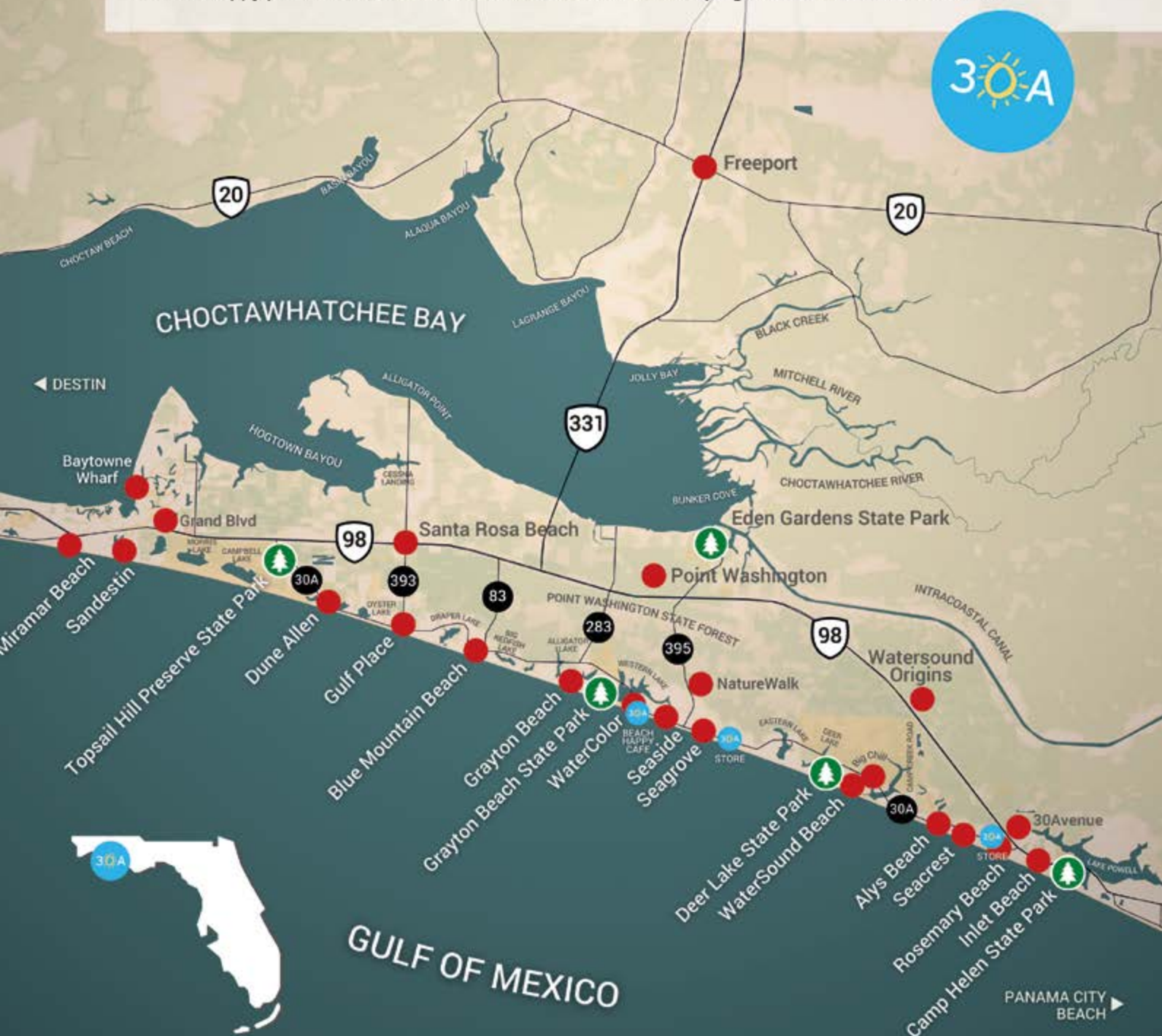
Flights to and from Portland are generally affordable, with Alaska Airlines offering the most options as PDX is its second-largest hub.

You’ll need to budget for a car rental as it’s not practical to use a rideshare service to get to Cannon Beach. Public transportation is available, but coverage is limited, and bus service can be unreliable.

In high season, accommodations can run in excess of \$300 per night, but there are cheaper camping options nearby if that’s your desired experience. Vacation rentals typically cost more, especially around holidays and peak periods. Again, winter is a great time to take advantage of cheaper rates and more selection. ☺

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



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DOUBLE RED FLAGS
WATER CLOSED TO PUBLIC*



RED FLAG- HIGH HAZARD
High Surf and/or Strong Currents



YELLOW FLAG- MEDIUM HAZARD
Moderate Surf and/or Currents



GREEN FLAG- LOW HAZARD
Calm Conditions, Exercise Caution



PURPLE FLAG- STINGING MARINE LIFE
Man O' War, Jellyfish, Stingrays

For a complete guide on beach rules, visit BeachSafety.com.

**Entering the Gulf during double red flag conditions can result in a \$500 fine and criminal charges. Absence of flags does not assure safe waters. Swim at your own risk. For emergencies call or text 911.*



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FLORIDA

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