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local life

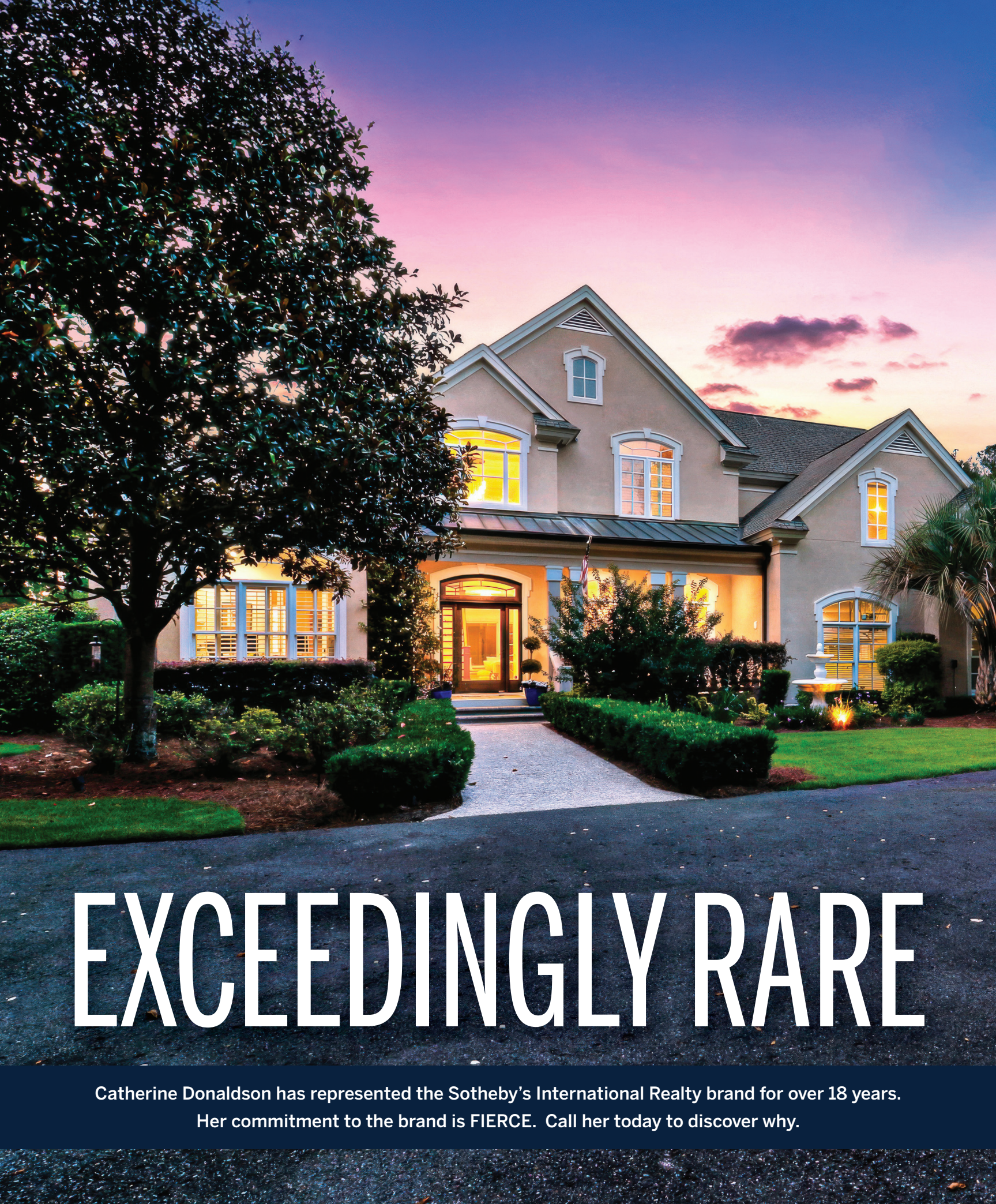
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Which celebrity do you think would make the ultimate best friend?

"Ina Garten"
- LORI



"Cruising in the red Camaro with Guy Fieri to all of the diners, drive-ins and dives."
- LANCE



"Adam Sandler"
- JEREMY



"Let's start with David Spade."
- CHARLES



"Jennifer Aniston"
- ASHLAN



"Clifford the Big Red Dog. Unparalleled loyalty."
- BAILEY



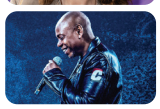
"Glo, a food content creator on TikTok. I can bet her friends are well fed."
- ALEA



"Tina Fey"
- REBECCA



"Dave Chappelle. He's hilarious and seems like he'd have great stories."
- KENNY



"Cher. She's been cool for decades."
- LISA



"Ina Garten"
- LEAH



"Larry David"
- BRUCE



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Aug features



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Best Friends

From lifelong companions and remarkable pets, to creative partnerships, inspiring collaborations and unforgettable adventures, this issue celebrates the connections that make life richer. Meet the people who found family in unexpected places. Discover stories of loyalty, laughter and belonging, and explore the friendships that remind us that life's greatest moments are rarely experienced alone. They're made even better when shared.

GAME, SET, FRIENDSHIP Great friendships often begin with a great partner. The Palmetto Dunes Pickleball Center is the ultimate place to play together, featuring 24 lighted courts and one of the nation's premier pickleball facilities. Find more ways to make memories with your favorite people in our Bestie Bucket List on **page 66.**

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Mark Kelvin Horton *Water's Edge* 36" x 48" Oil

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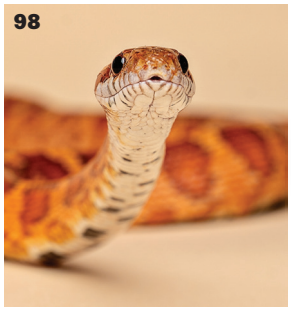
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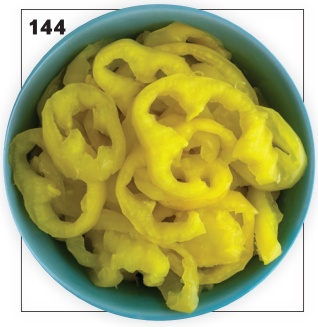
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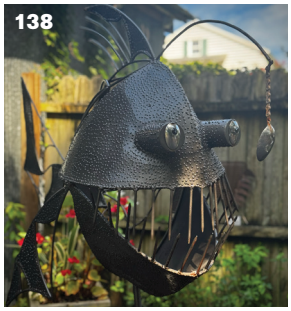


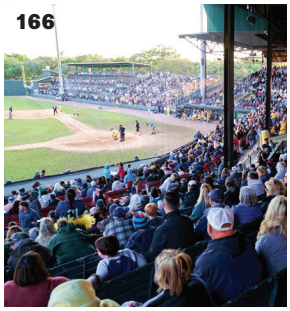
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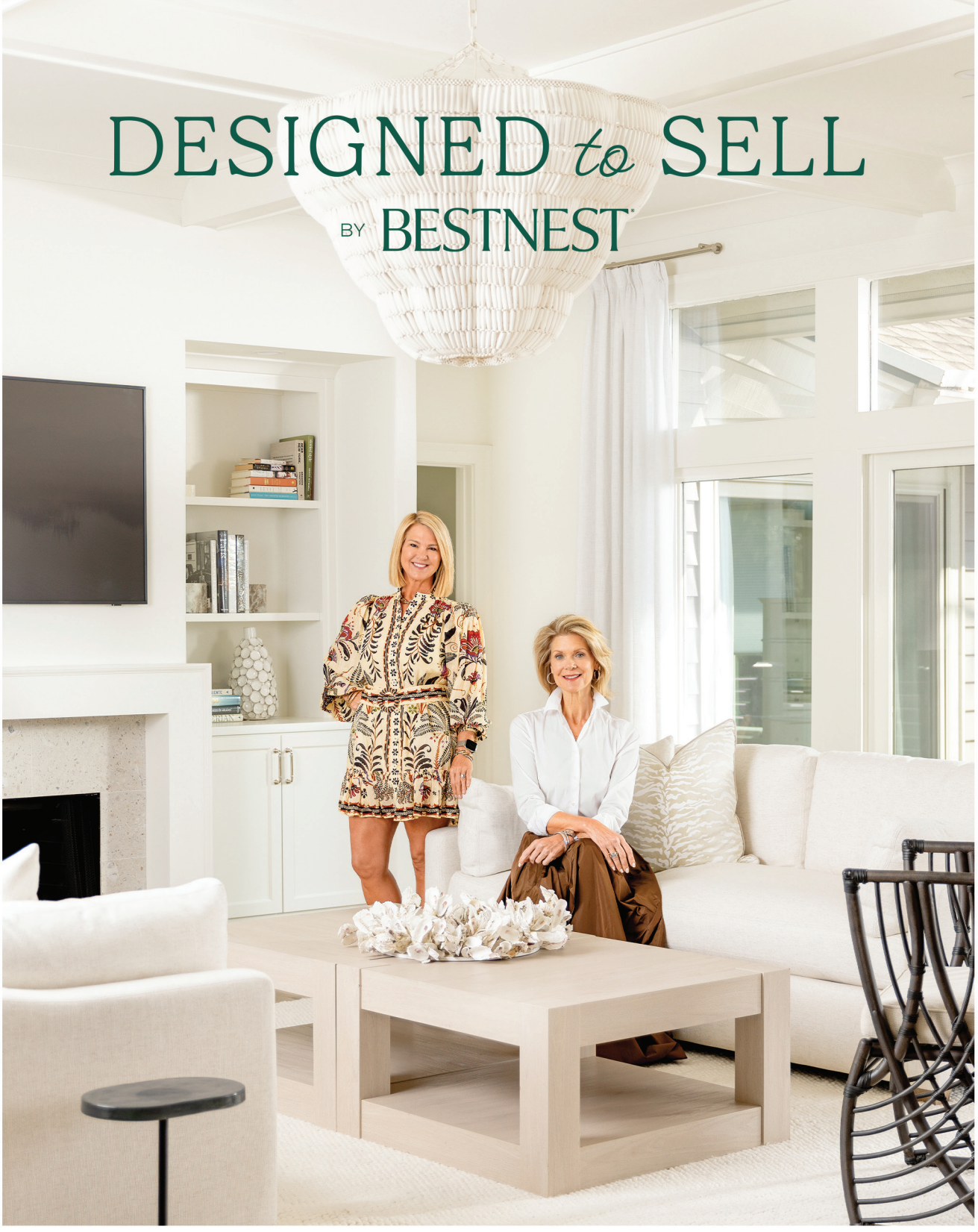
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Paradise is better shared

The most meaningful moments often come from the company we keep



FIELD-TESTED, COUCH APPROVED
LOCAL Life publisher Lori Goodridge-Cribb is pictured with Camo, her Boykin Spaniel and best friend. Though bred to hunt wild game, Camo is far more interested in tracking down snacks, squeaky toys and the coziest spots in the house.

One of the remarkable things about living in the Lowcountry is how many of us came here from somewhere else. While this place quickly feels like home, many of us had to leave lifelong friends behind when we made the move.

Thankfully, one of the wonderful surprises of living here is how quickly new friendships begin to take root.

They form on golf courses, pickleball courts and tennis courts. Around mahjong tables, in yoga and Pilates classes, at the gym, at the dog park, on the water and in lounge chairs at the community pool. They grow among coworkers, neighbors, fellow volunteers, church groups and happy-hour regulars. Sometimes the people who begin as casual acquaintances end up becoming the family we never expected to find.

The Lowcountry has a way of bringing people together through shared experiences, and those connections often become one of the greatest gifts of living here.

Many of us have also found our closest companions on four legs.

Whether you're an empty nester, a transplant settling into a new community or simply someone looking for companionship, pets have an incredible way of becoming our best friends. Those relationships grow through the little things: morning walks, games of fetch or simply sharing a quiet moment.

I'd forgotten just how special that bond could be. After several years without a dog, bringing Camo into my life has been a wonderful reminder of how quickly a pet becomes family. He may have started as "the family dog," but somewhere along the way he became one of my very best friends.

That's what this issue is all about.

Inside you'll meet remarkable friendships of every kind, from lifelong companions and neighbors who found each other here, to the incredible bonds between people and their pets. You'll discover road trips perfect for sharing with your favorite travel partner, learn how technology can help you find your people and explore stories that celebrate the connections that make life richer.

Because while the Lowcountry offers beautiful beaches, winding waterways and unforgettable sunsets, it's the people — and sometimes the pets — we experience them with that truly make this place feel like paradise.

Here's to old friends, new friends and the companions who make every day a little brighter.



LORI GOODRIDGE-CRIBB
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"Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light."

- HELEN KELLER



OPENING DOORS
Have you spotted the LOCAL Life Jeep around town? This month, we pulled up beside ***Chris Williams***, branch manager at Gateway Supply, just off U.S. 170 in Ridgeland. Whether you're planning a renovation, building a new home or simply gathering ideas, stop by the showroom for inspiration and expert guidance to help bring your vision to life.

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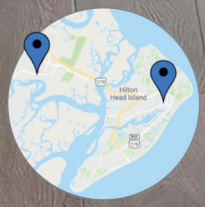
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MEET LOCAL CREATIVES BEHIND THE SCENES



Pearl Mintzer *Artist*

OTHER CREDS: Award-winning artist, former owner of a New York City incentive marketing company to cosmetics, fine arts BA and MA graduate of Brooklyn College, former board member of the Philadelphia Sketch Club, longtime arts fundraiser and donor who has organized more than 20 fundraising art exhibitions benefiting the arts and local nonprofits. **FOR THIS ISSUE:** Mixed media art, *Dandelions In the Way* **HOMETOWN:** New York, New York **CURRENT HOME:** Hilton Head Island **LOCAL SINCE:** 2025 **HOBBIES:** Swimming every morning, photography, traveling, reading and spending time with my two cats, Bailey and Hailey. **CURRENT PROJECT:** Creating a new collection of mixed-media paintings inspired by the Lowcountry using my original photography combined with acrylic paint. I'm also exploring how today's technology can enhance creativity while preserving the artist's personal vision. **WHAT ARE YOU EATING?** Fresh seafood and locally grown produce. I also practice intermittent fasting, which keeps me feeling energized. **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT AUGUST?** August is when the Lowcountry feels most alive. The marsh grasses are lush, gardens are full of color, afternoon storms create dramatic skies, and dandelions remind me that beauty and resilience can flourish anywhere. It's a season that inspires me to paint.



Evelyn Berry *Poet & novelist*

OTHER CREDS: Author of *T4T* (2026), *Grief Slut* (2024), *Buggery* (2020); winner of a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship and multiple South Carolina literary awards. **FOR THIS ISSUE:** Poem, *summer of the push mower* **HOMETOWN:** Aiken **CURRENT HOME:** Columbia **LOCAL SINCE:** South Carolinian since 1993 **HOBBIES:** Swimming, video games, reading **CURRENT PROJECT:** Dang: A Novella **WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?** I've been watching *The Sopranos* for the first time. I'm obsessed and keep quoting the characters. **WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO?** Noah Kahan's latest album, *The Great Divide*. **WHAT ARE YOU READING?** *Again, Harder* by Alice Stoehr and *Bloodroom* by Kay E. Bancroft **WHAT ARE YOU DRINKING**? I've been obsessed with cold brew this summer, particularly the Magpie Coldbrew from Godspeed Coffee in Columbia. **WHAT ARE YOU EATING?** My family has been making burgers on the grill at least once a week while taking an evening swim. A smoky patty with provolone hits perfect in the summer heat. **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT AUGUST?** Around this time of year, the lightning bugs come out to illuminate the back yard every evening. We sit on the porch, read and enjoy our own personal light show.



Madison McBride *Writer*

OTHER CREDS: Clemson University student pursuing a degree in graphic communications with a minor in business administration. **FOR THIS ISSUE:** Bestie Bucket List, Chaplin Best Friends Dog Park **HOMETOWN:** Bluffton. I've lived here my whole life. **HOBBIES:** Playing golf, watercolor painting, reading, baking and taking sunset walks. **FAVORITE LOCAL PLACES:** Watusi Café for breakfast, The Bluffs Med Spa for a relaxing facial or head spa and Burkes Beach for sunrise walks. **WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?** Desperate Housewives **WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO?** Country music is my go-to, especially in the summer. *The Painter* by Cody Johnson and *Nothin Crazy* by Megan Moroney are two of my favorites. **WHAT ARE YOU READING?** *If He Had Been With Me* by Laura Nowlin **WHAT ARE YOU DRINKING?** A Starbucks Dragon Drink or an iced vanilla latte. **WHAT ARE YOU EATING?** A chicken caesar wrap and chocolate ice cream with rainbow sprinkles. **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT AUGUST?** It feels like the perfect mix of soaking up summer and getting excited for a new semester at Clemson.

Other local friends behind this issue ...

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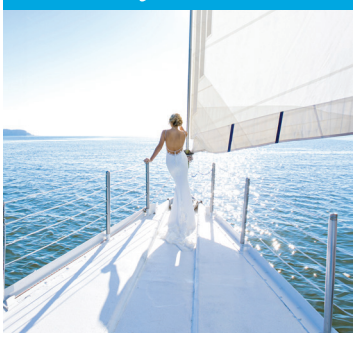
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2. Teufelhunden Tavern: Step inside a secret Hilton Head speakeasy 
3. The salty story behind the South's favorite roadside snack 

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About the cover

Some friendships have a way of changing two lives at once. Captured beneath the moss-draped oaks of Sea Pines, this month's cover features ***Lilly and Poppy Beeler****, two golden retrievers whose friendship transformed them both. Lilly found the constant companion she had been missing, while rescue dog Poppy discovered confidence, joy and the courage to embrace the world around her. Read their story, "Found in Friendship," on page 106. The cover was photographed by Michael Hrizuk, the art director and photographer behind* ***Hrizuk Studio****. See more of his work at hrizukphoto.com.*



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Don't let extra peppers from your summer harvest go to waste. Transform them into a ***homemade chili seasoning*** that delivers bold heat all year long. LOCAL Life publisher and *From Scratch* host Lori Goodridge-Cribb strings her leftover cayenne peppers to air dry until they're completely shriveled, then grinds them with a mortar and pestle into a flavorful spice. Sprinkle it over roasted vegetables, rub it onto meats, stir it into soups and stews, or add a pinch to any dish that could use a fiery kick. Watch Lori's step-by-step process on LOCAL Life's YouTube channel (@LocalLifeSC).



Cruise into happy hour

Raise a glass to summer aboard Outside Hilton Head's ***new Happy Hour Cruise***. Departing from Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina, this relaxing evening cruise pairs handcrafted charcuterie with a selection of beer and wine, as guests soak in panoramic Lowcountry sunsets and waterfront views. Offered twice a week through Aug. 16, it's an ideal outing for date night, a girls' night out or a memorable way to celebrate the season. Get a sneak peek of the experience on LOCAL Life's Instagram and Facebook pages.

Shop local, live local



Visit the ***LOCAL Life Store*** to browse a collection of merchandise inspired by the Lowcountry lifestyle. From the LOCAL Flavor Cookbook and signature rope tote, to mugs, greeting cards and other LOCAL Life favorites, it's an easy way to bring a little extra Lowcountry spirit into your home, or pick up a gift for a fellow reader. Explore the collection at ***LocalLifeSC.com***.

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One last adventure

Five unforgettable road trips for friends determined to make summer last

STORY BY LANCE HANLIN

Summer never seems to fade gradually. One minute the days feel endless, then before you know it, routines return, calendars fill, and summer is suddenly gone. August offers one final excuse to grab your favorite travel companion and sneak in one last adventure before life shifts gears again. While solo trips certainly have their place, some experiences simply feel better when shared. Whether your friendship thrives on competition, live music, nonstop laughter or the kind of spontaneous plans that somehow become your favorite memories, ***these five road trips prove there is no better way to send off summer than with your favorite partner in crime riding shotgun.***



©EMERALD PRINCESS II CASINO

BET ON FUN **Casino cruise adventure in Brunswick**

Some friendships are built on playing it safe. Others thrive on chasing excitement, taking chances and seeing where the night leads. If you and your best friend fall into the second category, a cruise aboard the Emerald Princess II Casino offers a great way to close out summer. The adventure starts the moment the ship leaves the dock. As the Georgia coastline slowly disappears behind you, anticipation builds for the main event. Once the vessel crosses into international waters, the casino officially opens, slot machines begin flashing, cards hit the tables, and the night quickly shifts into party mode. Cruises run Thursday through Sunday, with tickets at $25. Stretch the getaway by spending time on Jekyll Island or St. Simons Island, where waterfront bars and fresh seafood give you every excuse to keep the celebration going after the ship returns to shore.

Drive there: *1 Emerald Princess Drive, Brunswick; 2 hours (117 miles) from Hilton Head Island*





©NORTH CHARLESTON COLISEUM & PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

LAUGH IT OFF **Comedy getaway to North Charleston**

Some friendships survive entirely on sarcasm, inside jokes and the belief that almost nothing in life should ever be taken too seriously. If your friendship runs on laughter, an August getaway to North Charleston is exactly what summer ordered. On Aug. 22-23, comedian Nikki Glaser brings The Stunning Tour to the North Charleston Performing Arts Center, with tickets starting at $53. It is the perfect excuse for a night spent laughing until your stomach hurts, alongside the friend who somehow finds humor in absolutely everything. Keep the good vibes rolling after the show with a trip to Park Circle, the city's trendiest neighborhood, where craft breweries, lively bars and late-night eats make the perfect encore to a comedy-filled night.

Drive there: *North Charleston Performing Arts Center; 2 hours, 10 minutes (103 miles) from Hilton Head Island*





GAME ON **Football getaway to Jacksonville**

Some friendships revolve entirely around game day. They are built on fantasy football trash talk, endless debates over rankings, screaming at questionable referee calls and somehow turning every conversation back to football. If that sounds familiar, an August road trip to Jacksonville is the perfect late-summer pilgrimage. On Aug. 21 the Carolina Panthers take on the Jacksonville Jaguars in a preseason match-up at EverBank Stadium, with tickets starting at $30. Sure, most of the biggest stars will likely see limited snaps, but that almost misses the point. This is football season's unofficial kickoff, the perfect excuse to soak in the tailgate atmosphere, hear the roar of the crowd and whet your appetite for all of the Saturdays and Sundays ahead. Turn it into a full weekend by unwinding at Jacksonville Beach, bar hopping through Five Points or grabbing dinner in San Marco while debating fantasy football sleepers and convincing each other this is finally the year your team gets it right.

Drive there: *EverBank Stadium, Jacksonville; 2 hours, 40 minutes (173 miles) from Hilton Head Island*



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TEE TIME **Golf getaway to Atlanta**

In the Lowcountry plenty of lifelong bonds have been built the same way: early tee times, friendly wagers and just enough trash talk to make every round interesting. If the golf course has always been part of your story together, an August getaway to Atlanta is a perfect excuse for one final summer road trip. From Aug. 27-30, the TOUR Championship brings the PGA Tour season to its dramatic conclusion at East Lake Golf Club, where the PGA Tour's top 30 players battle for the coveted FedExCup title. With tickets starting at $94, it is a bucket-list event for friends who can spend hours debating swing mechanics, second guessing club selection and arguing over the best public course rankings. Keep the competition alive by booking your own round at standout courses like Echelon Golf Club, Bobby Jones Golf Course or Bear's Best Atlanta, and settle once and for all who deserves bragging rights.

Drive there: *East Lake Golf Club, Atlanta; 4 hours, 18 minutes (280 miles) from Hilton Head Island*



©ROCK THE COUNTRY

TURN IT UP **Music festival getaway to Ocala**

Some friendships come with their own soundtrack, fueled by road-trip playlists, shared concert memories, singing every word a little too loudly and always being the first to send each other a new favorite song. If music has always been part of your friendship, August offers a great excuse to hit the road and close out summer at full volume. Held Aug. 28-29 at Florida Horse Park, the Rock The Country festival brings a massive weekend of live music featuring Brooks & Dunn, Miranda Lambert, Blake Shelton, Jon Pardi and other top acts. With weekend passes starting at $149, it is one of the best festival bargains of the summer. Go all in by camping onsite for the full festival experience, or extend the getaway by swimming in Ocala's famous crystal-clear springs and turning the weekend into one final summer adventure before real life returns.

Drive there: *Florida Horse Park, Ocala; 4 hours, 34 minutes (279 miles) from Hilton Head Island*

Not your vibe? Try these instead

Maybe none of those trips match your friendship style. No problem. Here are even more fun ways to make the most of summer's final stretch.

For the smack talkers: *Catch the WWE Summer Tour on Aug. 29 at Enmarket Arena in Savannah. (45 minutes)*

For the Banana believers: *If you can score tickets, catch the wildly entertaining Savannah Bananas in person. (50 minutes)*

For the sand seekers: *Camp under the stars at Hunting Island State Park, and spend the weekend by the ocean. (1 hour)*

For the taste testers: *Eat and drink your way through the restaurants, rooftops and cocktail bars of downtown Charleston. (2 hours)*

For the '90s kids: *Catch the Gin Blossoms live in concert on Aug. 31 at Charleston Music Hall. (2 hours)*

For the time travelers: *Explore the centuries-old streets, forts and famous tours of St. Augustine, Florida. (3 hours)*

For the wild ones: *Hop a ferry to Cumberland Island National Seashore in Georgia to spot wild horses and explore untouched beaches. (3 hours)*

For the speed demons: *Experience Labor Day weekend at Darlington Raceway during NASCAR's legendary Cook Out Southern 500. (3.5 hours)*

For the river rats: *Grab a tube and spend the day drifting through the crystal-clear waters of Florida's Ichetucknee Springs State Park. (4 hours)*

For the adrenaline addicts: *Take on whitewater rafting, climbing and zip lines at U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte. (4 hours)*

For the scream team: *Spend the day riding coasters at Carowinds in Charlotte. (4 hours)*

For the trail chasers: *Escape to the Upstate, and hike the waterfalls and scenic trails of Table Rock, Jones Gap and Caesars Head (4 hours)*

For the big spenders: *Plan a luxury shopping weekend at Lenox Square and Phipps Plaza in Atlanta. (4.5 hours)*

For the swirl seekers: *Explore vineyard tours, tastings and cozy wine bars in Asheville, Hendersonville and Tryon, North Carolina. (5 hours)*

For the rockers: *Get tickets for The Black Jacket Symphony's AC/DC Back in Black shows Aug. 28-29 at the Arts Center (HHI)*



The Manor on Broad Creek

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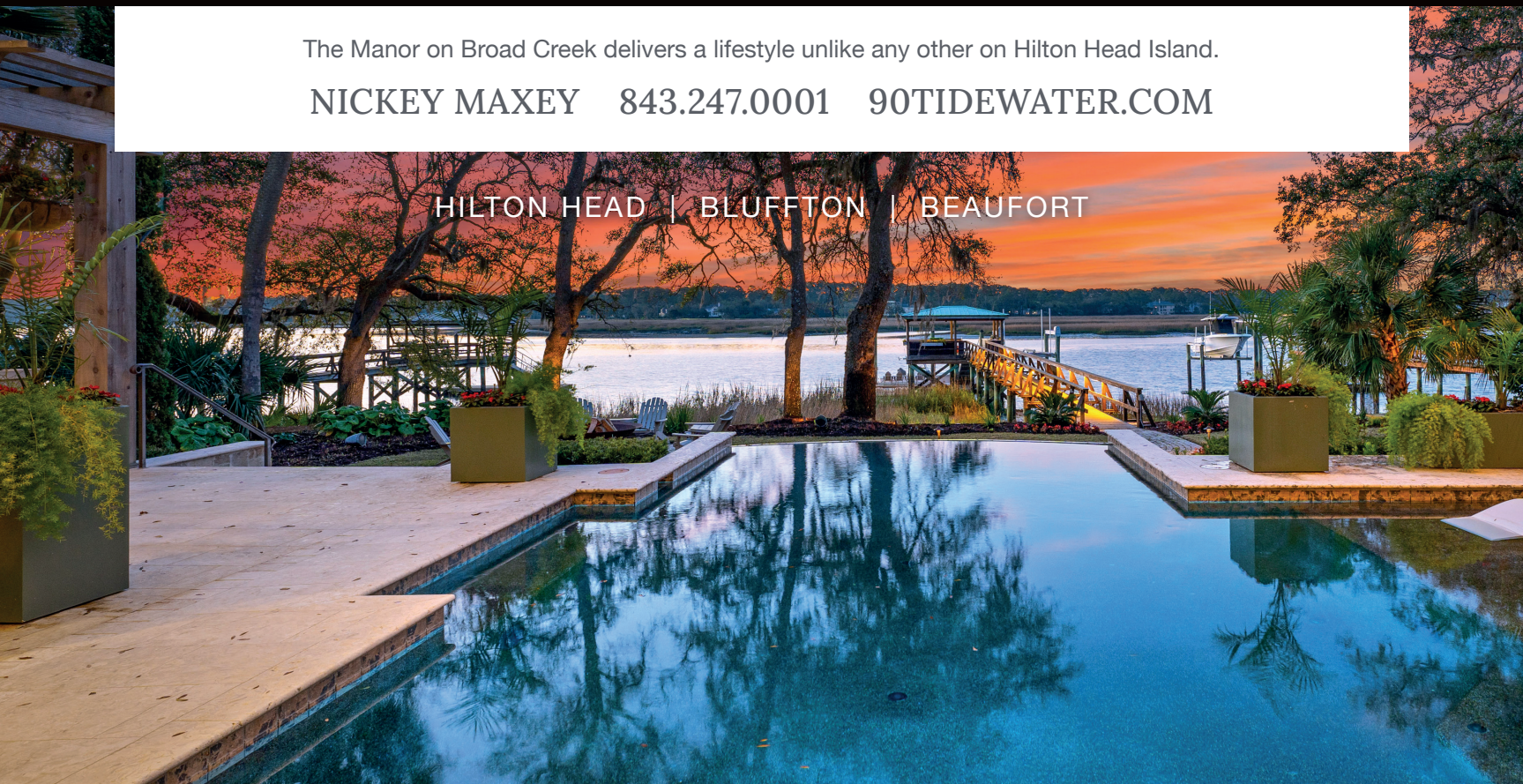
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Steal the show

Ikarao Break X1 Karaoke Machine

Every friend group has a star performer. This portable karaoke system includes wireless microphones and a built-in display, turning patios, parties and vacation rentals into instant concert venues. ***ikarao.com. $700***



Fairway friend

Blue Tees Player+ Golf Speaker

Every foursome deserves a fifth teammate. This portable speaker combines great sound with GPS distances, AI-powered caddie advice and automatic score tracking, letting everyone focus on the fun instead of the details. ***pgatoursuperstore.com. $200***



Gather around

TIKI Smokeless Fire Pit

Some of the best conversations happen around a fire. This smokeless fire pit keeps everyone warm without the cloud of smoke, creating the perfect centerpiece for cool evenings and unforgettable get-togethers. ***tikibrand.com. $350***



Game on

YoreBoard Standard Cornhole Board Set

Backyard bragging rights just got an upgrade. Built-in LED lighting and automatic scorekeeping keep the competition rolling long after sunset, so the only thing left to argue about is who won. ***yoreboard.com. $1,100***



Friendly rivalry

Kill-Shot Pro System

Whether you're battling it out on the pickleball court or sharpening your skills together, these smart paddle sensors provide real-time shot analysis and performance feedback to help every match get a little more competitive. ***killshotpro.com. $60***

Best in show

Wickedbone

Your four-legged best friend deserves to be in on the fun, too. Controlled through an app, this interactive smart toy keeps dogs entertained with responsive movement and multiple play modes for hours of tail-wagging excitement. ***cheerble.com $55***





Level up

Backbone Pro

Waiting at the airport, relaxing at the beach house or hanging out after dinner? This attachable controller transforms your smartphone into a handheld gaming system, making multiplayer fun easy wherever you are. ***backbone.com. $170***

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Friend request accepted

The smartest apps, hidden features and digital tools for meeting new friends and building stronger connections

STORY BY LANCE HANLIN

Making friends used to happen naturally. School, work, neighborhoods and mutual connections naturally provided opportunities to meet people without much effort. As adults, however, building new friendships often requires far more intention. Busy schedules, family obligations and established routines can make expanding your social circle surprisingly difficult. Fortunately, technology has become one of the most effective modern tools for creating a meaningful real-world connection. Whether you recently moved to Hilton Head, want to meet fellow pickleball players in Bluffton or simply hope to expand your social circle, the right digital tools can make building friendships feel far less intimidating.



LOCAL FACEBOOK GROUPS WORTH JOINING

Sometimes finding new connections starts by joining conversations already happening around you. These popular Facebook groups have become some of the biggest online gathering places for local news, recommendations, events and community.

- *We ❤ Hilton Head Island (228K members)*
- *Hilton Head Island, Vacation Fun (74K members)*
- *Hilton Head Things to Do (45K members)*
- *Bluffton/Hilton Head Ask and Answer (43.6K members)*
- *Hilton Head Island, SC (42K members)*
- *What's Happening In Bluffton? (27.5K members)*
- *We ❤ Bluffton SC! (27K members)*
- *Hilton Head Island Locals (20K members)*

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS ON NEXTDOOR

While Facebook connects broad communities, Nextdoor focuses on the people living closest to home. Organized by neighborhood, it helps residents share recommendations, local updates, events, lost pets and everyday advice. For newcomers it can be one of the easiest ways to quickly connect with neighbors. Its biggest strength is simple: neighbors helping neighbors. Of course, local drama often comes with the territory, and enough scrolling will quickly uncover complaints, frustrations and plenty of unfiltered opinions.

Start with shared interests. The strongest friendships often begin with common ground. Platforms like ***Meetup*** make it easy to discover local communities built around pickleball, photography, boating, hiking groups, book clubs, volunteer opportunities and countless other interests. Instead of focusing on finding friends directly, focus on showing up in spaces where connection happens naturally. Shared interests often do most of the hard work for you.

Let technology make introductions. A growing category of social apps now focuses entirely on friendship rather than dating. Apps like ***Bumble For Friends*** and Friender help adults build platonic relationships by matching users based on interests, personality traits and lifestyle preferences. They remove much of the awkwardness that often comes with introducing yourself to strangers and create a far easier path toward meaningful connection.

Discover events happening nearby. Most communities offer far more social opportunities than people realize. Platforms such as ***Eventbrite*** make it easy to discover trivia nights, networking mixers, live music, brewery gatherings, art walks and community festivals happening nearby. Instead of waiting for someone else to invite you somewhere, let your phone uncover opportunities already happening around town.

Build friendships through shared experiences. Friendships often grow stronger through shared experiences, and digital tools make group plans far easier. Features like Apple's Find My and ***Google Maps*** location sharing simplify beach days, road trips, boat outings and spontaneous meetups without endless back-and-forth texting. The less time spent coordinating logistics, the more time everyone spends actually enjoying each other's company.

Turn competition into connection. Sometimes competition creates the strongest bonds. Fitness-focused platforms like ***Strava*** allow friends to compare running routes, cycling stats and workout progress while encouraging one another to stay active. A little friendly competition often becomes the perfect excuse to spend more time together offline.

Keep the connection going between hangouts. Some of the strongest connections are built between the moments spent together. Collaborative ***Spotify*** playlists let friends build the perfect soundtrack for road trips, parties and beach days, while cloud-sharing platforms like Google Photos automatically collect everyone's favorite vacation memories in one shared place. Technology helps preserve the connection long after the weekend ends.

Join niche communities online. Not every friendship starts face to face. Community-driven platforms like ***Discord*** and Geneva allow people to connect around highly specific interests ranging from gaming and sports to creative hobbies, local clubs and shared passions. Sometimes the easiest way to find your people is simply finding the right online community first.

Keep group plans organized. The larger the friend group, the harder it becomes to keep everyone on the same page. Platforms like ***Partiful*** simplify invitations, RSVPs and event updates for dinners, birthdays, beach gatherings and house parties. When travel is involved, digital planning tools help eliminate the small logistical headaches that often complicate group outings and make coordinating far more enjoyable.



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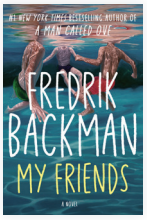
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Shelf companions

Five unforgettable books that explore the many forms friendship can take

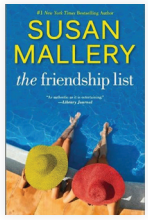
***Denise Friday**, a social worker and mother of twins, finds both escape and reflection in a good book. Her August recommendations celebrate unforgettable stories of friendship, loyalty and the connections that define us.*



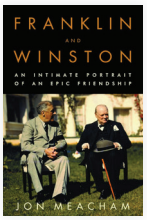
MY FRIENDS *BY FREDRIK BACKMAN*

Louisa, a 17-year-old raised in foster care, creates a diversion at an art museum to see a painting she has connected with through a postcard. She is hiding behind the building from the police when she encounters what appears to be a homeless man who is, in fact, the famous artist behind the painting. So begins her journey with the artist's best friend as they travel together to the location where the painting was created, a place that captured him, the artist and their own best friends when they were 15. Readers tend to either grasp Backman's brilliant writing, or they don't. If you do, you will find a powerful story of friendship and loyalty.

THE FRIENDSHIP LIST *BY SUSAN MALLERY*



Ellen is a single mom whose son is about to leave for college. She hasn't dated since having him when she was a teen and has never wanted more than to be his mom. Her best friend, Unity, lost her husband three years ago and has fallen into a rut. When they both realize there is more to life than the sheltered worlds they have created, they form a Friendship List, a series of challenges designed to push them to live more fully and seek out new experiences for themselves and with others. What starts as a joke helps them rediscover joy and to live with abandon. A sweet story of friendship, challenges and romance.



FRANKLIN AND WINSTON: A PORTRAIT OF A FRIENDSHIP *BY JON MEACHAM*

Using memoirs, letters, papers and interviews, Meacham has crafted a fascinating account of the unlikely friendship between President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Often hailed as two of the greatest leaders of the Greatest Generation, these men spent a great deal of time together, often in secret, helping propel the free world to victory during World War II. This is more a study of the men themselves than a history of the war. Both had their flaws, challenges and very different temperaments, but together they pushed each other to remain steadfast leaders while the world fought for freedom against Nazi Germany and Japan.

BEST FRIENDS FOREVER *BY MARGOT HUNT*



Best friends Kat and Alice are each other's confidants. Kat is well-off, social and married to financial guru, Howard. Alice is married with two kids but struggles financially. They lean on each other and share every secret until Howard is found dead after a second-story fall. What initially appears to be a tragic accident suddenly has police calling it murder. Alice fears investigators will accuse her best friend, until suspicion begins shifting toward her instead. Will their friendship survive long enough to uncover the truth? Do you ever really know your friends? A thrilling debut you will not be able to put down.



PEOPLE WE MEET ON VACATION *BY EMILY HENRY*

Poppy and Alex meet on the first day of college orientation and quickly realize they are both from the same boring town in Ohio. They are complete opposites. Poppy is bold and dreams of seeing the world. Alex is reserved and perfectly happy returning to his hometown after college to teach. They become best friends and spend the next 10 years taking an annual vacation together, sometimes alongside significant others. An ill-fated trip to Croatia sends their friendship into silence for nearly two years, prompting Poppy to attempt one last trip with Alex to see if she can repair what was broken and possibly finally tell him what has been in her heart all along.



Chapter chat

*LOCAL Life's **Rebecca Kerns** reviews **Guess Again by Charlie Donlea**, a twist-filled psychological thriller packed with suspense, secrets and unexpected turns. Watch her review on LOCAL Life's YouTube channel: **youtube.com/@locallifesc***



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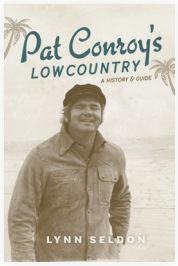
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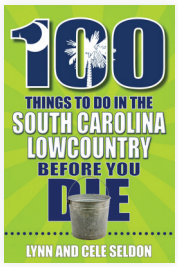
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For the literary enthusiast

PAT CONROY'S LOWCOUNTRY *BY LYNN SELDON*

Fans of Pat Conroy will want to reserve space on their bookshelf for this upcoming October release. The book explores the landscapes, communities and cultural landmarks that shaped the legendary author's life and writing. Equal parts travel guide, literary history and love letter to the Lowcountry, it's a must-read for anyone who believes great places inspire great stories.

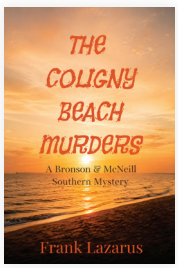


For the adventure seeker

100 THINGS TO DO IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA LOWCOUNTRY BEFORE YOU DIE

BY LYNN AND CELE SELDON

This book is a bucket list for anyone eager to discover more of the Lowcountry. Filled with beaches, historic landmarks, outdoor adventures, restaurants and cultural experiences, it encourages longtime locals and newcomers alike to see the region with fresh eyes. Even lifelong residents are likely to uncover a few hidden gems.

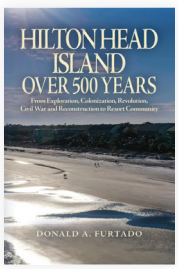


For the mystery lover

THE COLIGNY BEACH MURDERS

BY FRANK LAZARUS

Crime fiction fans will find plenty to love in this Hilton Head-set thriller. What begins as a relaxing beach vacation quickly unravels into a murder investigation involving corruption, political secrets and dangerous hidden agendas. Familiar island landmarks become the backdrop for a fast-moving mystery that keeps readers guessing.

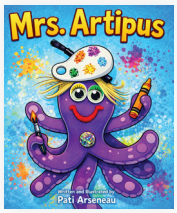


For the history buff

HILTON HEAD ISLAND OVER 500 YEARS

BY DONALD A. FURTADO

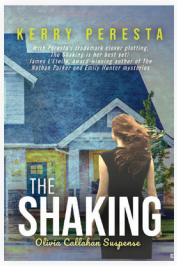
Hilton Head Island didn't become today's world-famous destination overnight. Furtado chronicles more than five centuries of the island's history, from early exploration and colonial plantations to the Civil War, Reconstruction and its transformation into a premier resort community. Along the way, he introduces the people and events that shaped the island.



For the creative dreamer

MRS. ARTIPUS *BY PATI ARSENEAU*

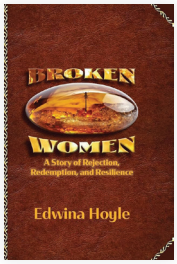
One funny classroom conversation inspired this delightful children's book. After students repeatedly asked longtime local art teacher Pati Arseneau for help all at once, she joked that she wished she could become an octopus — and they agreed. The result is a playful rhyming story celebrating creativity, imagination and the many possibilities an artistic life can offer. Young readers, parents and educators alike will appreciate its uplifting message.



For the suspense fan

THE SHAKING *BY KERRY PERESTA*

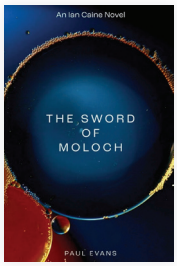
Psychological thriller fans won't want to miss Peresta's latest Olivia Callahan novel. As the private investigator uncovers a dangerous conspiracy while confronting her own past, the suspense builds with every chapter. Expect surprising twists, memorable characters and a story that's difficult to put down.



For the emotional reader

BROKEN WOMEN *BY EDWINA HOYLE*

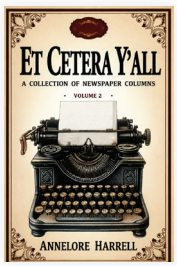
This sweeping multi-generational family saga follows women navigating trauma, survival, love and healing across generations. While exploring life's hardships with honesty, the novel also celebrates resilience, hope and the strength found in family. It's an excellent choice for readers who enjoy emotionally rich stories and unforgettable characters.



For the spy thriller fan

THE SWORD OF MOLOCH *BY PAUL EVANS*

Fast-paced espionage meets the Lowcountry in this action-packed thriller. Set partly in Beaufort, the novel follows mercenary and spy Ian Caine as international intelligence operations collide with life close to home. Packed with political intrigue, unexpected twists and high-stakes action, it's perfect for fans of classic spy adventures.

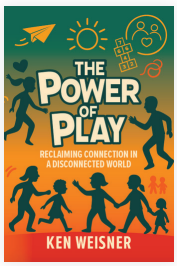


For the Southern soul

ET CETERA Y'ALL, VOLUME 2

BY ANNELORE HARRELL

Warm, witty and unmistakably Southern, this collection brings together award-winning newspaper columns celebrating everyday life with humor and heart. Vintage recipes sprinkled throughout add another layer of nostalgia, making it the perfect companion for a quiet afternoon on the porch.



For the lifelong learner

THE POWER OF PLAY *BY KEN WEISNER*

Play isn't just for children. Weisner explores how curiosity, fun and intentional play can strengthen relationships, improve communication and create healthier teams at home and in the workplace. Thought-provoking and practical, the book offers a fresh perspective on how embracing play can lead to more meaningful connections and personal growth.



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Local IQ
August crossword challenge for locals

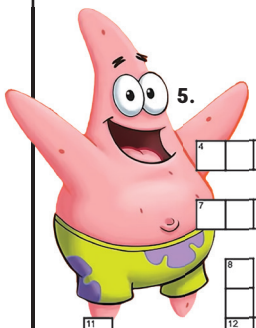
CLUES BY LANCE HANLIN + GRID BY JEREMY SWARTZ

ACROSS

4. Hilton Head's small waterpark that closed in 2008.
5. Pink starfish best friend of SpongeBob SquarePants.
7. Art who famously performed alongside Simon.
10. Astrological sign that begins during the second half of August.
12. What many students attend before a new school year begins.
14. Detective Sherlock Holmes' trusted right-hand man.
15. Coligny Plaza seafood restaurant known for live music.
16. Restaurant group behind many of Hilton Head's most recognizable dining spots.
17. Loyal companion who sticks with the hero.
18. Show famously described as being about "nothing," centered on a tight-knit friend group.
19. Friend who helps improve your chances socially.

DOWN

1. Supermarket chain opening near Coligny Beach at Circle Center.
2. Busy Bluffton parkway known for shopping centers, restaurants and Cinemark Bluffton.
3. Baseball film built around summer adventures and childhood friendship.
6. Bright green gemstone known as August's birthstone.
8. Legendary music festival forever linked to August 1969.
9. The sitcom where six pals proved coffee shops make perfect hangouts.
11. The reason August can feel much hotter than the thermometer suggests.
13. Restaurant in Sea Pines famous for its chicken pot pie.
18. Massive annual motorcycle rally held every August in South Dakota.



7.

Answer key

ACROSS: ***4.*** *WATERFUN* ***5.*** *PATRICK* ***7.*** *GARFUNKEL* ***10.*** *VIRGO* ***12.*** *ORIENTATION* ***14.*** *WATSON* ***15.*** *FISH* ***16.*** *SERG* ***17.*** *SIDEKICK* ***18.*** *SEINFELD* ***19.*** *WINGMAN*
DOWN: ***1.*** *PUBLIX* ***2.*** *BUCKWALTER* ***3.*** *SANDLOT* ***6.*** *PERIDOT* ***8.*** *WOODSTOCK* ***9.*** *FRIENDS* ***11.*** *HUMIDITY* ***13.*** *TRUFFLES* ***18.*** *STURGIS*

Official Mensa® Challenge



BREAK A MENTAL SWEAT

Flex some knowledge and crush this Mensa quiz!

1. There's a cat here somewhere. Each definition below refers to a word with "cat" in it.

1) A fragile cat 2) A complicated cat 3) A yachting cat 4) A list of cats

2. What two words, formed from different arrangements of the same six letters, can be used to complete the sentence below?

Because of the extremely heavy fog,
two large _____ _____ the guardrail.

3. Jack is three times as old as Jill was two years ago. In two more years, Jill will be as old as Jack is now. In six years, Jill will be five-sixths of Jack's age. Neither one is a teenager.

How old are Jack and Jill now?

4. The 21 letters below can be anagrammed into a six-word proverb urging you to aim high? What is the proverb?

A A A C G H H I N O O O R R S T T T U W Y

5. Charlotte is married. Her only brother's wife's only mother-in-law's only husband's only son-in-law bought her a new car. What relation is he to Charlotte?

ANSWER KEY

1. *delicate, intricate, catamaran, catalog* ***2.*** *trucks, struck* ***3.*** *Jack is six; Jill is four.* ***4.*** *HITCH YOUR WAGON TO A STAR.* ***5.*** *Her husband (Her brother's wife's mother-in-law is her mother, the husband is her father and the only son-in-law is her husband.)*

Mahjong mastery

Line 113579 on the 2026 Mahjong card often trips up players. It's one of the hands instructor ***Jennifer Kenwell*** of Pink Palmetto Mahjong gets asked about most. Study the tiles below and see if you can find the error.



Answer: The two kongs must match the pair of 5s

How did you do? *This hand is deceptively tricky. For a step-by-step explanation, watch Jennifer Kenwell's video at locallifesc.com or on the LOCAL Life YouTube channel (@locallifesc).*



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The hot list

What to watch, read and listen to in August

SELECTIONS BY DAISY DOW

STREAMING









PRIME VIDEO ***Sterling Point*** *(drama)* A teenager inherits a remote Canadian island and expects a fresh start but, instead, uncovers long-buried family secrets that reshape everything she thought she knew about her past. With mystery, coming-of-age drama and stunning coastal scenery, Sterling Point looks poised to become one of late summer's breakout series. **Release date: Aug. 5**

NETFLIX ***Alley Cats*** *(comedy)* Imagine if every neighborhood cat said exactly what it was thinking. This animated comedy follows a group of streetwise felines whose conversations swing from ridiculous to surprisingly philosophical, turning ordinary cat behavior into laugh-out-loud social commentary. **Release date: Aug. 7**

HBO MAX ***Lanterns*** *(superhero drama)* Veteran Green Lantern Hal Jordan (Kyle Chandler) teams up with rookie John Stewart (Aaron Pierre) to investigate a mysterious murder in small-town America. Combining superhero action with a gritty detective story, Lanterns is one of DC's most anticipated new series. **Release date: Aug. 16**

ESPN ***US Open*** *(tennis)* The year's final Grand Slam arrives with no shortage of story lines. Tennis fans will be watching the long-awaited return of Serena Williams, while the rivalry between Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner continues to shape the sport's next era. Add a revamped tournament schedule and the electric atmosphere of New York, and this year's US Open promises must-watch tennis from opening day through championship weekend. **First serve: Aug. 30**

MOVIE THEATERS



One Night Only *(romantic comedy)*
What if everyone searching for love only had one chance each year? This clever romantic comedy follows two hopeful New Yorkers whose paths keep crossing at exactly the wrong moments, creating a charming story about timing, fate and finding the right person.
In theaters: Aug. 7



The Rivals of Amziah King *(thriller)*
Matthew McConaughey stars as a beloved Oklahoma beekeeper whose thriving honey business attracts dangerous rivals. When his former foster daughter returns home, the pair fight to protect both their livelihood and the community they've built together.
In theaters: Aug. 14



Mutiny *(action adventure)*
Jason Statham delivers exactly what audiences expect: relentless action. After uncovering a human trafficking ring aboard a cargo ship, one man takes on an army of criminals with nowhere to run except the open sea.
In theaters: Aug. 21

BOOKS & NOVELS



Awake Awake *By Fiona Mozley (fiction)*
Returning to her hometown after her life unravels, Mary begins experiencing vivid memories that don't belong to her. Blending psychological mystery with literary fiction, Fiona Mozley delivers an unsettling story about memory, identity and community.
Release date: Aug. 4

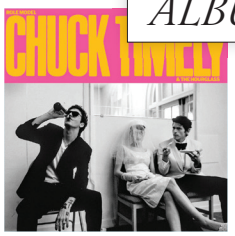


Don't Be Evil *By Claire Stapleton (memoir)*
Former Google employee Claire Stapleton recounts organizing one of Silicon Valley's largest worker protests, offering an insightful look at corporate culture, employee activism and the clash between innovation and personal values.
Release date: Aug. 18



Big Little Truths *By Liane Moriarty (fiction)*
Fans of *Big Little Lies* finally return to Monterey as Liane Moriarty revisits her unforgettable characters a decade later. With teenagers replacing elementary school drama, old secrets resurfacing and fresh mysteries unfolding, the novel delivers everything readers loved about the original while exploring how time changes families, friendships and the lies people tell themselves.
Release date: Aug. 25

ALBUMS



Chuck Timely & The Hourglass
By Role Model (alternative)
Release date: Aug. 7



Lost Weekend
By Phoebe Bridgers (indie)
Release date: Aug. 14



Weezer (The Gold Album)
By Weezer (rock)
Release date: Aug. 21

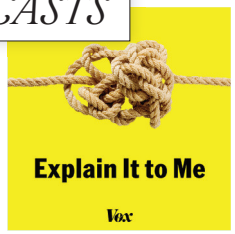


It's A Dying Art
By Little Big Town (country)
Release date: Aug. 28

PODCASTS



Broomgate: A Curling Scandal *Subject: Sports*



Explain It to Me
Subject: Science



SubwayTakes Uncut with Kreem Rahma
Subject: Interviews



Carolina Creepers Oddities Radio
Subject: Storytelling

TRAVEL



Helsinki, Finland
Experience Flow Festival (Aug. 14-16), where a former power plant transforms into one of Europe's premier music festivals.



Banff, Alberta, Canada
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Community in action

A best friend worth the wait

After years of waiting, two shelter dogs found friendship, a family and a forever home

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM



When Hyacinth arrived at the shelter in 2022, no one could have guessed she would spend the next 1,010 days waiting for someone to choose her. The young Mountain Cur mix had been found as a stray, frightened, painfully thin and suffering from Demodex, a noncontagious form of mange that had left much of her body without fur. She also needed treatment for an eyelid issue and lacked the confidence that comes from feeling safe and cared for.

Over the months that followed, staff at Hilton Head Humane Association helped nurse her back to health, slowly building trust as she grew into a playful, affectionate companion. But while hundreds of other dogs found families, Hyacinth stayed behind.

For nearly three years she watched kennel doors open as other dogs left for new homes. Days turned into months. Months turned into years. After 1,010 days in the shelter, Hyacinth had grown from a shy puppy into a 3-year-old dog still waiting for someone to choose her. Then everything changed when Legend arrived.

A GROWING FAMILY After giving Hyacinth and Legend, now known as Duke, a forever home, Laci and Chris rescued one more abandoned puppy named Minnie. Today the trio enjoys a home filled with friendship, playtime and the second chances every dog deserves.

Through thick and thin

Legend, a 5-year-old Boxer mix came to the shelter from Beaufort County Animal Services in July 2024 after testing positive for heartworm disease. Before adoption was even possible, he endured months of treatment and restricted activity.

By October, Legend had overcome the hardest part of his journey and was finally healthy enough for adoption. But like Hyacinth, he kept waiting while other dogs found homes all around him. Seven months passed, yet staff say he remained sweet, energetic and always ready to play.

When Laci, a former kennel technician at Hilton Head Humane, finally had a home of her own, she already knew exactly which dog she wanted.

"I grew to love Hyacinth," she says. "When I saw her again, I knew at that moment I needed her and she needed me."

As she and her boyfriend, Chris, talked with staff, another dog immediately caught Chris' attention.

"We saw Legend, and my boyfriend said, 'That's my dog,'" Laci recalls.

Before moving forward, shelter staff carefully introduced the two dogs. It did not take long for their similar energy, playful personalities and easy chemistry to turn strangers into inseparable companions. On February 23, 2025, after a combined 1,244 days in the shelter, Hyacinth and Legend finally walked out together.

Dog days

Today, Legend has a new name: Duke. He and Hyacinth now spend their days exactly as dogs should, napping together, playing with toys and enjoying peanut butter and duck treats. Hyacinth loves tossing toys into the air, while Duke's favorite pastime is tearing his apart.

Their happy ending soon inspired one more rescue. Seven months later, Laci and Chris discovered an abandoned puppy in the woods.

"We just couldn't let her live in a shelter," Laci says.

The puppy, named Minnie, fit right in. Together, Hyacinth, Duke and Minnie have created the family they had all been searching for.

"Let's just say our house is full of love," Laci says.

For Hyacinth and Duke, two dogs once overlooked for months and years, the long wait finally led exactly where it was meant to. Their story is a reminder that sometimes the best friendships, the deepest bonds and the happiest endings simply take time.



Take action

Every year, hundreds of dogs and cats across the Lowcountry rely on organizations like the Hilton Head Humane Association and Beaufort County Animal Services for rescue, medical care and a second chance at finding a forever home. Whether through adoption, fostering, volunteering or donations, community support helps make stories like Hyacinth and Duke's possible. Learn more at ***hhhumane.org*** and ***beaufortcountysc.gov/animal-services***. *LL*

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What makes them local



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Among his many accomplishments, Perry captained Team Papa Bear to the 2013 South Carolina Wahoo Series Championship, landing two tournament-winning wahoo totaling 112.6 pounds.

adjective. lo·cal | lō-kəl

1: *characterized by or relating to position in space: having a definite spatial form or location* ***2:*** *of, relating to, or characteristic of a particular place: not general or widespread: of, relating to, or applicable to part of a whole* ***3:*** *primarily serving the needs of a particular limited district of a public conveyance: making all the stops on a route*

Born for the tide

CAPTAIN MICHAEL "PAPA BEAR" PERRY FOUND PURPOSE, HEALING AND HOME ON THE WATERS OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

STORY BY BECCA EDWARDS



©LLOYD WAINSCOTT

CHARTING A NEW CHAPTER
Captain Michael "Papa Bear" Perry is a longtime Hilton Head Island fishing guide, best known for operating Papa Bear Charters out of Hilton Head Island. After surviving a life-threatening hunting accident in 2019 and enduring years of surgeries, 2025 marked the first year he didn't need another operation.

Michael "Papa Bear" Perry can describe his ideal day on the water in great detail.

"It would start before the sun rises. I would stop and get a cup of coffee before heading to the dock. On the walk down, I would hopefully see one of our local great blue herons feeding under one of the pier lights in ankle-deep water," begins Perry. "I would slip by him, trying not to disturb his fishing, and head down to the boat. It's low tide in August, the week before the full moon. I say hello to whoever is on the dock and enjoy some pregame banter as I finish my coffee."

Perry continues, "The light glow of the morning sunrise is starting to peek over the trees beneath a canopy of stars. I start grabbing the gear and loading everything onto the boat. I can hear the bait smacking the water's surface before I can see them. With a full well and a cooler that won't close, packed with fresh chum for the morning's adventure, I know it's going to be a great day with Sarah and the girls."

A local since 1996, Perry is a landlocked Tennessean turned seafaring South Carolinian with a salt-of-the-earth outlook on life you're sure to appreciate.

Q: How did you get the nickname Papa Bear?
A: My nickname came from a healthy dose of good times after a Widespread Panic concert. When Sarah and I found out she was expecting, my nickname quickly became Papa Bear. A few years later, our daughters Audrey and Olivia were born, and I started my charter business, Papa Bear Charters, in 2011.

Q: What makes this area and our waterways special to you? **A:** You really don't have a true understanding of what Hilton Head Island has to offer until you see it from a boat. I started my career in Harbour Town, so it will always have a special place in my heart. The crew at the marina and on the docks are truly special to me. Also, many of my fondest memories are with my fellow captains at the North End Charter Fleet. They are like family.

Q: How has being on the water shaped you as a person?
A: Being on the water has connected me to something bigger. I have a lot of fish stories, but it's truly coming home to my family and the people here that puts a smile on my face day after day. This community and this area are just different. It's hard to explain, but it brings out the best in me. Also, you can never truly have a bad day on the water. If you have salt in your veins, you can pretty much shake off anything bringing you down.

Q: You nearly lost your life several years ago in a hunting accident. Has living in the Lowcountry helped you heal?
A: My accident rocked us and everyone around me. With my family, friends and faith, I was able to shake the demons of a long recovery. It was a very humbling experience. I can't thank everyone enough who went out of their way to help us get through it. 2025 was the first year since 2019 that I didn't have a surgery. Without the serenity of my work environment, the outcome may have been different. I obviously fought to get back to my family, but getting back on the water was another huge part of my recovery.

Q: What is one fun fact people do not know about you?
A: I'm a closet birder. *LL*



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Local business buzz

What's new, what's next and what's making waves across the Lowcountry

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

As summer begins to wind down, the Lowcountry business scene continues to heat up with exciting openings, growing local brands and new projects set to bring even more reasons to shop, dine and explore close to home.



NOW OPEN

Crooked Creek Kayak Company

104 William Hilton Parkway, Hilton Head

Now offering guided tours and rentals through the quiet tidal waters of Jarvis Creek, this new outdoor adventure company located next to the Crazy Crab Jarvis Creek restaurant provides private and group excursions as well as self-guided kayak rentals. Guests can paddle one of Hilton Head's most peaceful waterways while spotting dolphins, birds and other native wildlife.



Bluffton Farm & Flea

172 Bluffton Road, Bluffton

The former Green Thumb nursery in Bluffton has been reimagined as an open-air market celebrating local makers, growers and small businesses. Open Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the market features rotating vendors selling handmade goods, vintage décor, flowers, herbs, local honey, food trucks and more, creating a fresh new gathering place in Old Town Bluffton.



Lawton Stables Small Animal Farm

190 Greenwood Drive, Sea Pines

The newly renovated Small Animal Farm at Lawton Stables now offers expanded habitats, improved shelters, interactive feeding areas, courtyard games and new seating. The upgraded experience gives families more opportunities to interact with goats, ponies, chickens and other friendly residents while directly supporting animal care.



Venue on Park Lane

4 Park Lane, Hilton Head

A beautifully restored new event venue has officially opened on Hilton Head Island. Blending classic Lowcountry charm with contemporary elegance, the space offers weddings and private events a sophisticated setting, complete with grand interiors, elegant finishes and experienced event-planning support.



The Revival Room *Tanger 2, Bluffton*

After building a loyal following through local pop-up events, this upscale consignment boutique has opened its first permanent storefront at Tanger 2. Specializing in curated pre-loved fashion and accessories, the shop focuses on intentional shopping while supporting local consignors and sustainable style.

Maxey Blackstream Christie's International Real Estate

Promenade, Old Town Bluffton

Maxey Blackstream Christie's International Real Estate has officially expanded into a newly renovated office in the Promenade, marking an exciting new chapter after outgrowing its original space. Just four years after opening its first Bluffton office, the locally established brokerage has tripled in size and purchased the neighboring building, formerly home to Dillard-Jones Construction and Tribus Interiors. The expanded office provides room for the firm's growing team while continuing to serve clients throughout the Lowcountry with personalized real-estate expertise from the heart of Old Town Bluffton.

COMING SOON







Big Air

A 35,000-square-foot indoor adventure park is coming to Bluffton in the former Big Lots space. The family-friendly attraction will feature trampolines, ninja courses, zip lines, climbing walls, dodge ball courts, toddler play areas and year-round active entertainment for all ages.

Hoof N Hound

This upcoming Old Town Bluffton boutique will offer gifts for both pets and their people, featuring specialty pet supplies, locally made treats, stylish accessories, bath products and coastal-inspired gifts designed for animal lovers.

Pet Wants Hilton Head

Expanding to Coligny Plaza, Pet Wants will focus on premium pet nutrition, offering fresh food, treats, toys and accessories alongside personalized nutritional guidance and convenient local delivery for pet owners.

NEWS & NOTES

Tidewater Windows and Doors *plans to relocate to the former Beaufort Gazette building on Salem Road.*

The Historic Bluffton Foundation *plans to sell the historic Cole-Heyward House to a private buyer.*

The ***Town of Hilton Head Island*** *has selected Bureau Veritas to complete a comprehensive ADA self-assessment and transition plan.*

Self-Help has opened the ***Hardeeville Education & Resource Center****, expanding educational and workforce development resources in Jasper County.*

FreeUp Storage *has opened a new storage facility in Beaufort.*

Bracken & Bone *has introduced the Fur-Baby Lounge, a new outdoor gathering space, featuring comfortable seating, a dog water station and room for pets and owners to relax together.*

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THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PETS IMPROVES HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING FOR BOTH

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

Few things offer comfort quite like the unconditional love of an animal. After a difficult day, a wagging tail at the door, a cat curling into your lap or even the cheerful sounds of a bird greeting you can instantly shift your mood. Animals have a remarkable ability to make us feel loved, needed and supported in ways few other bonds can match.

As it turns out, those feelings extend far beyond emotion. Researchers continue to find that sharing life with animals benefits both our mental and physical health. At the same time, pets receive the care, security and affection they need to thrive. "It's a mutually beneficial relationship," said Carla Genther, Hospital Manager and Veterinary Assistant at Carolina Veterinary Critical Care. "Owning a pet isn't just about having an animal in the house. It taps into many of the same emotional needs that shape our closest human relationships."

Pets quickly become family. They settle into our daily rhythms, comfort us through life's hardest moments and quietly — though some are far less quiet about it — remind us that we are never truly alone. That kind of bond may be difficult to measure, but its impact is undeniable.





LOVE WITHOUT LIMITS The relationship between people and their pets extends far beyond companionship. From reducing stress and easing loneliness to providing daily comfort and emotional support, the bond benefits both humans and animals in ways science continues to better understand.



Creatures of habit

Humans and pets both thrive on consistency, and the routines we build together often benefit everyone involved. "Pets often become part companion, part routine, part emotional support system," Genther said. "They offer steady affection and rely on us in ways that can give structure and meaning to a person's day."

Simple daily responsibilities, like feeding a pet, walking a dog or cleaning an enclosure, create habits that can anchor even the busiest or most stressful days while giving owners a greater sense of purpose and accomplishment. Even simply sharing space with an animal can help ease feelings of loneliness.

And for those who do not currently have pets of their own, spending time with a friend's or family member's animal can provide many of the same emotional benefits.

Puppy love

One of the most powerful benefits of pet ownership is its ability to help regulate stress. Genther explains that physical touch and close contact with animals can calm the nervous system and help pull people out of anxious states. "Pets offer unconditional acceptance," she said. "Their steady presence creates a sense of comfort and emotional security that can be incredibly grounding."

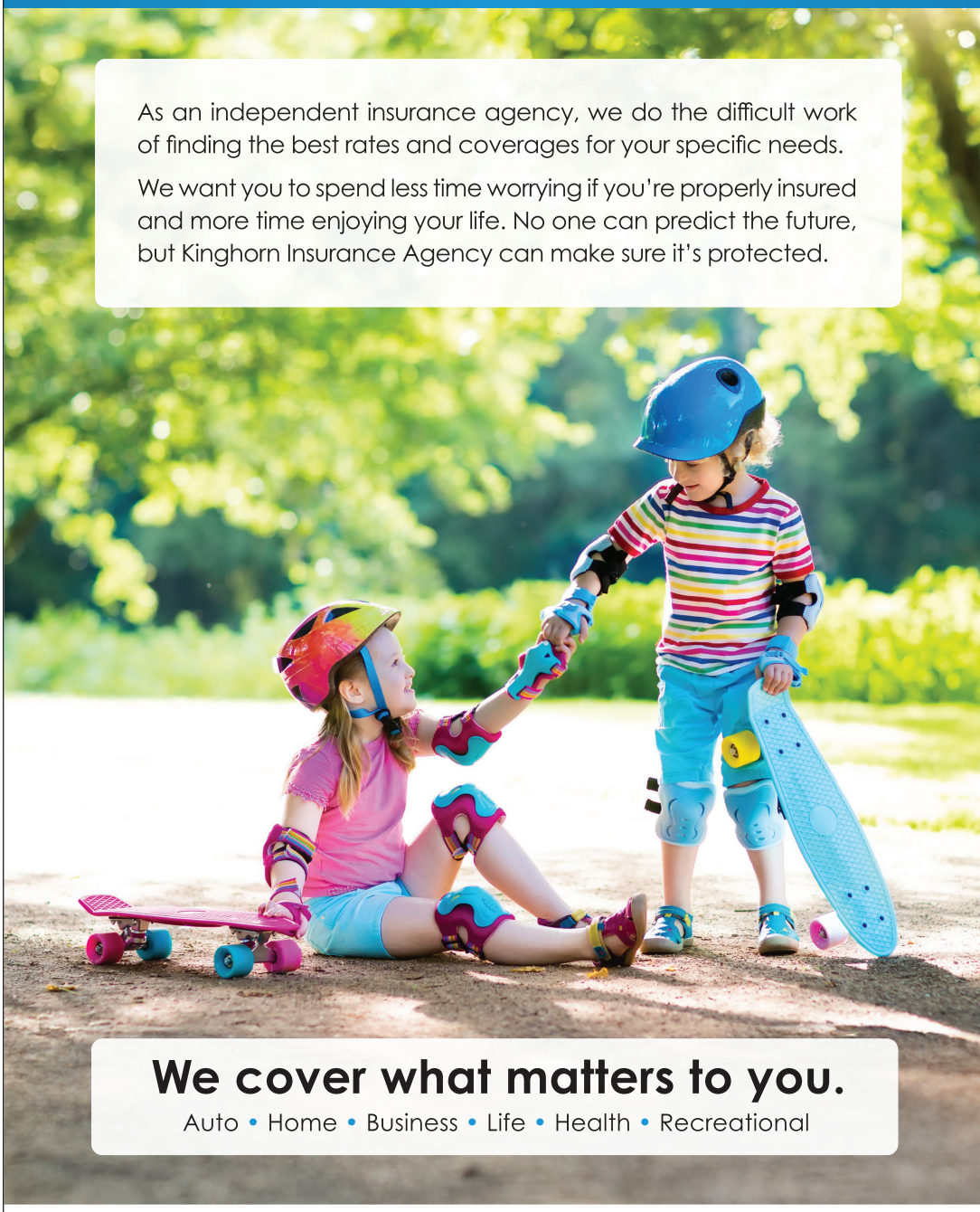
Science continues to support what pet owners have known for years. Studies show that interacting with animals lowers cortisol, the body's primary stress hormone, while increasing oxytocin, the chemical closely tied to bonding and emotional well-being. Even simple moments like petting, grooming or playing can improve mood, sharpen focus and reduce feelings of anxiety or mental fatigue.

Cat owners report many of the same benefits, often saying they feel happier, more relaxed and better able to focus after spending time with their feline companions — at least when those companions are not taking over the entire bed.



THE HEALING TOUCH Sometimes comfort is as simple as a hand on fur. Studies show that physical contact with animals can lower stress hormones, boost feelings of trust and help calm the nervous system, making even a few quiet moments together surprisingly powerful.

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HEALTH IN EVERY STEP Dogs have a way of keeping their owners moving. Daily walks, outdoor play and regular activity not only strengthen the bond between pets and people but also support heart health, improve fitness and create habits that benefit long-term well-being.

Going the extra mile

The emotional benefits of pet companionship often lead to physical ones as well. Dog owners are significantly more likely to meet healthy daily activity levels, thanks to regular walks, outdoor play and the simple reality that dogs rarely let their owners skip movement for long. That extra activity helps maintain a healthy weight, supports heart health and lowers the risk of chronic disease.

Pet owners also tend to have lower resting blood pressure than people without pets. Even a few quiet minutes of cuddling before work or after a stressful day may provide lasting cardiovascular benefits.

Not all benefits come through movement alone. Studies have shown that therapy dogs can help children with ADHD improve focus, cooperation and social skills, while interactions with animals often help children feel calmer and more comfortable in social settings.

Even quieter companions can provide their own calming benefits. Watching fish glide through an aquarium can promote relaxation, while caring for turtles, reptiles and other animals brings many of the same rewards that come with nurturing any living creature.

Growing together

The benefits of pet companionship often become even more valuable with age.

Older adults with pets frequently report less loneliness, lower stress levels and a better overall quality of life. Caring for an animal encourages regular movement, creates healthy routines and provides emotional support that can help reduce depression.

Emerging research also suggests pet ownership may support cognitive health. Some studies have found that pet owners, particularly dog owners, perform better on tests measuring memory, attention and processing speed than people without pets. Researchers believe the combination of physical activity, mental stimulation and social interaction may help protect the brain as we age.

Pets have even been shown to improve quality of life for people living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia by reducing distress and encouraging positive interaction.



GROWING OLDER, GROWING CLOSER For many older adults, pets offer far more than companionship. Daily care routines, emotional support and the comfort of a constant presence can help ease loneliness while supporting both mental and physical health over time.



LOVE GIVEN, LOVE RECEIVED The relationship between humans and animals works both ways. Through daily care, affection and shared trust, pets enrich our lives while finding the comfort, safety and a sense of belonging they need to thrive alongside us.

The bond goes both ways

While we often focus on what our pets do for us, the relationship is equally meaningful for them. Animals thrive when they have loving caregivers, predictable routines and opportunities for play, enrichment and affection. Positive interaction helps build confidence and reduce anxiety, just as it does for people.

Spending time together releases oxytocin in both humans and animals, strengthening trust and deepening attachment. "All of these things lead to a mutually beneficial relationship of care and affection," Genther said. "I meet the pet's needs, and the pet enriches my emotional and social well-being."

For thousands of years humans and animals have cared for one another in ways both simple and profound. We provide food, safety and affection. In return, they encourage us to slow down, stay present and appreciate the comfort found in simply being present with another living creature.

Science helps explain why animals improve our lives, but pet owners already know the truth: life simply feels better when shared with an animal who loves you unconditionally.

Some of life's most powerful healing comes from the companions who never say a word. LL



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More than a pet

Meet a few of the Lowcountry's most unusual four-legged residents, and the humans they call their own

STORY BY BARRY KAUFMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL HRIZUK

One of the most reductive ways to refer to a dog is as a pet. They are so much more than that. A dog can read your moods and act accordingly to bring you comfort. In their eagerness to please, they can be trained for a wealth of occupations, from sniffing out contraband to brightening a person's darkest days. Even without that training, they'll still be content simply being your companion through life.

The luckiest among us get to measure life in dogs, looking back at the furry friends who walked beside us through it all. They become woven into our family's story, faithful companions through every chapter.

Pets? Hardly. Dogs are so much more than that, and these local pooches (speaking to LOCAL Life through their people) more than prove it.

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Sarah and Toby (and Mikel Peeler)

These certified therapy dogs brighten hospitals, schools and hearts across the Lowcountry

There are few days so miserable that they can't immediately be improved by the presence of a dog. Even if you're not a "dog person" (nobody's perfect), the sight of a wagging tail, a lolling tongue and a snout pulled into what looks like a permanent smile can lift even the weariest spirit. And getting that reaction — that moment when you scratch behind an ear or under a collar and watch a dog melt into complete contentment — is the kind of salve that eases almost any stress.

It's something Mikel Peeler has witnessed time and time again while bringing his dogs to hospitals, nursing homes, schools and other locations throughout the Lowcountry. Whenever he arrives with Sarah, an alabaster-white Great Pyrenees, and Toby, a shaggy goldendoodle, he sees firsthand the difference they make.

"The dogs don't do a lot, other than show up. But showing up is a big deal," said Peeler. "We walk in, and everyone wants to come pet the dogs. When you see the look on people's faces, it's sort of my new ministry. I used to foster, and now I'm working with the dogs."

Every day brings a new adventure for Sarah and Toby. Some days they're visiting medical facilities, such as Hilton Head Medical Center, Coastal Carolina Hospital or Encompass Health, where they're as much a comfort to the staff as they are to the patients.

"A lot of times we stand in the center of the hallway, and everybody comes out — staff, nurses, doctors — and it all takes maybe 10 minutes, but it gives them a break from the stress of the job," he said.

Although Peeler primarily visits hospitals to support healthcare workers, patients often benefit just as much.





COMFORT ON FOUR PAWS Therapy dogs Sarah, a Great Pyrenees, and Toby, a goldendoodle, spend their days bringing comfort to patients, caregivers and healthcare workers across the Lowcountry. Guided by owner Mikel Peeler, the certified therapy dogs prove that sometimes the best medicine is simply showing up.

"Surprisingly, at the hospital the person who gets the most out of it is not the guy lying in the bed," he said. "It's the guy sitting in the chair across from the patient."

While both Sarah and Toby have been extensively trained for their roles as therapy dogs, they approach the job very differently.

"When that vest goes on, Sarah's personality changes," Peeler said. "She knows she's working, so she is totally stoic."

Toby's more exuberant personality — a trait that comes naturally from the golden retriever side of his pedigree — made certification a little more challenging.

"It took me until Toby was 4 to get him certified because he just wouldn't calm down," Peeler said with a laugh. "Even now, people will go in for hugs, which is a big no-no, but Toby gets excited about it."

Despite their very different personalities, both dogs bring extensive training and Alliance of Therapy Dogs certification to their work. But what they really offer can't be taught or certified. They bring the unconditional love that dogs seem incapable of withholding.

"Everyone knows and loves these dogs when we walk in," Peeler said. "I'm just the guy walking around on the other end of the leash."

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Think your dog has what it takes?

Mikel Peeler didn't simply walk into a hospital one day with his dogs and hope people would enjoy meeting them. Becoming a certified therapy dog is a structured process that builds trust between handler and dog while reinforcing calm, predictable behavior and discouraging natural impulses like jumping up or giving enthusiastic "kisses."

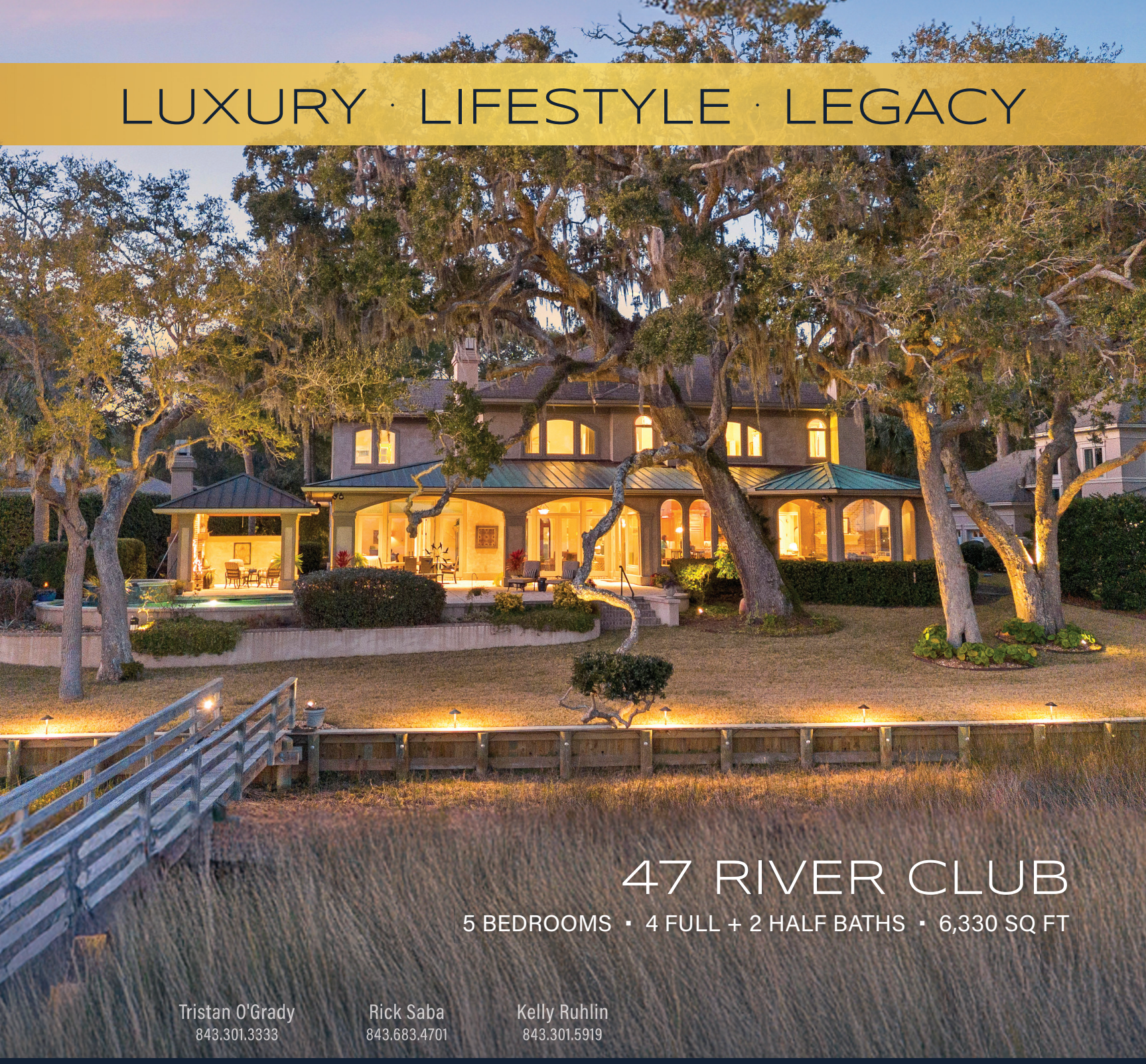
"They know that when that vest goes on, they have to be calm and can't jump on people," Peeler said. "They're also very well controlled because you have to be able to control the dog."

Peeler's interest in therapy work began years ago after learning that his English mastiff's aunt had served as a therapy dog at the Medical University of South Carolina.

"She was always in the paper from MUSC," he said. "It's something I always wanted to do, but the work schedule is hard. You just can't go somewhere during the day for two or three hours, so I had to wait until I retired to do this."

Think your dog might have what it takes? With patience, consistent training and the right temperament, your four-legged friend could brighten someone's day. Visit therapydogs.com to learn more about certification requirements and opportunities to volunteer.

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K-9 Niko (and Sgt. Sean Toomey)

Eight years of trust, training and teamwork made this K-9 team one of the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office's best



By the time you read this, the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office will have officially sent one of its most courageous officers into retirement. A seasoned veteran of eight years on the force, this particular hero plans to spend his retirement surrounded by his loving family, which includes a Doberman named Jedi, his longtime handler Sgt. Sean Toomey and Sean's wife and dog mom, Miranda.

"That's what I was told by the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team — you're just a glorified chauffeur because you could literally hand that dog off to anybody on the team, and it will listen to them," Toomey said.

He's joking, of course. The relationship between the two isn't built simply on mutual respect and treats, but on the countless hours of training it takes to transform an ordinary Dutch shepherd into an elite K-9 partner.

"This is the job I always wanted when I got into law enforcement. And having that partner with you — I know it's technically a dog in my car, but I'll call him my partner all day — that's what makes my job a whole lot better," Toomey said.

The pair came together in 2018 after each had completed extensive training — Toomey through the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office Bloodhound Tracking Team and Niko through the American Society of Canine Training International. But their real education began once they started working side by side.

"I had a staff sergeant who was in charge of our unit at the time tell me, 'Just because



PARTNERS IN EVERY SENSE For eight years, Sgt. Sean Toomey and K-9 Niko worked side by side, tracking suspects, recovering evidence and protecting Beaufort County. As Niko heads into a well-earned retirement, the decorated Dutch shepherd leaves behind an impressive legacy and a partnership built on unwavering trust.

you have the dog doesn't mean you're ready yet.' There was a six-month probation period that was just training, training, training, whether it was tracking people or sniffing out narcotics," Toomey said. "Through all of it, you and your dog become so bonded from working together that you can read him."

That bond produced remarkable results. Niko became one of the department's most accomplished tracking dogs, recording 79 career tracks and helping capture 35 suspects. One of their proudest moments came after four suspects fled from a crashed stolen vehicle on Hilton Head Island.

"We ended up tracking them throughout Wexford," Toomey said. "We were jumping a lot of fences, and they were all pretty tall. I'm not that tall, plus I was carrying an 85-pound dog over each fence."

Their relentless teamwork that night helped take four suspects into custody while recovering an AK-47 the group had discarded during the chase.

"Niko wound up getting a great reputation because, in the K-9 world, if your dog doesn't find anyone, no one knows them. But if they find a lot of people, other officers will make sure that dog is coming with them," Toomey said. "He definitely helped me build a great reputation too."

So how will this decorated K-9 spend his retirement? Toomey already has the first celebration planned.

"I plan on grilling him a nice steak and cutting it up for him," he said. "You have to. He's earned it."







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Training the next hero

With Niko turning in his K-9 badge and enjoying a well-earned retirement, he still has one important assignment ahead of him: sharing his home with his replacement.

"The hardest thing is going to be getting their attention because he's Niko, and my new dog is going to be Nikon," said Sgt. Sean Toomey, who worked alongside Niko for the past eight years. "It's an interesting transition because I know Niko so well, and now I have to hit the reset button. Talking to other K-9 handlers, they all told me you can't compare your old dog to your new one because they're not the same."

While Niko now enjoys his favorite spot on the couch, Nikon will begin his career much the way Niko did: living in the outdoor kennel until Toomey is confident he's ready to graduate to life inside the house.

"That's always the interesting dynamic — seeing how they'll interact through the kennel," Toomey said. "Niko and my Doberman, Jedi, butted heads for a while at first, so we'll just have to wait and see. They might not interact much at all because they're both alphas."

Still, if Niko's friendship with Jedi is any indication, the transition should go smoothly.

"Jedi used to greet me at the door. Now he greets Niko, and they run off and start doing their thing," Toomey said. "They're like four-legged kids, so you always have to watch what they're up to."



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Bear and Coco (and Drew Kaufman)

A lifelong fascination with canine behavior became a career built on trust, patience and understanding

Growing up around dogs can be one of the greatest educations we receive in understanding these remarkable animals. You learn how they react, how they view not only their relationship with you but also the world around them, and over time you begin to see things from their perspective.

For most of us, that's where the education ends. For Drew Kaufman, however, a childhood spent around dogs became the foundation for a career. Today through his company, A Walk in the Park, he helps train dogs and their owners throughout Beaufort County.

"Growing up, I had a Dalmatian named Macho who was incredibly energetic, affectionate and full of personality," Kaufman said. "Looking back, he taught me a lot about patience and how every dog is an individual with unique needs and temperament."

Long before he became a professional trainer, what struck Kaufman most was the remarkable loyalty dogs have toward their "pack." One dog owned by family friends left a lasting impression, remaining devoted to his family despite receiving little affection in return.

"That kind of unconditional loyalty amazed me and made me want to better understand how dogs think and why they form such strong bonds with people," he said. "Over time, that curiosity turned into a passion and, eventually, into a career."

Kaufman pursued that career wholeheartedly, earning a certification from California's Animal Behavior College, completing an externship at Jasper Animal Rescue Mission and taking nearly every canine training course offered through Leerburg Online University.

"Learning about dog behavior in a classroom is valuable, but actually training dogs is where the real education begins," he said. "You can read every book and earn every certification, but nothing replaces hands-on experience with hundreds of different dogs, each with their own





TEACHER'S PETS Professional dog trainer Drew Kaufman shares life with Bear and Coco, two very different dogs whose personalities continue to shape the way he approaches training. Joining them is his daughter, Katelyn Kaufman, whose close bond with the dogs reflects the patience, consistency and trust that Drew believes are lessons worth learning every day.

personality and challenges."

While the countless dogs he's trained over the years have continued his education, it's his own dogs, Bear and Coco, who have taught him some of the most valuable lessons.

"Dogs don't learn on our timeline — they learn through consistency, repetition and clear communication," he said. "They've taught me that staying calm and patient almost always produces better results than frustration. That lesson has helped me not only as a trainer but in everyday life as well."

Now, with 14 years of professional experience and two four-legged teachers at home, Kaufman continues to learn every day.

"Training has taught me to separate emotion from decision-making. I still love my dogs tremendously, but I don't let my emotions dictate how I communicate with them," he said. "Instead, I try to be clear, fair and consistent. Understanding how dogs actually learn allows me to build trust and respect without projecting human emotions onto their behavior."

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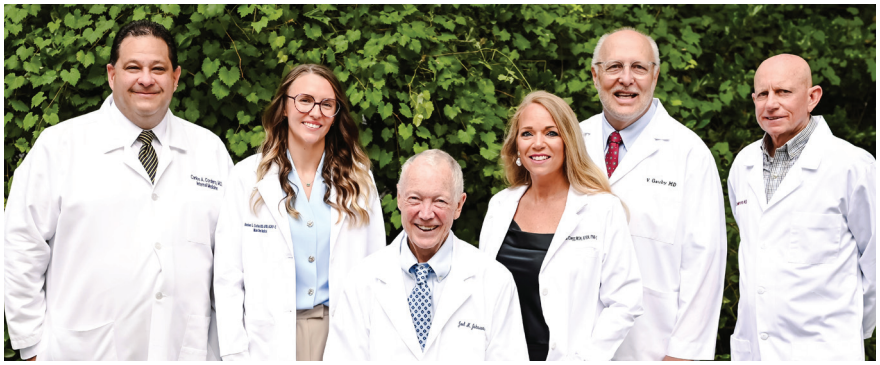
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At home with Bear and Coco

You might assume someone who has devoted his career to understanding canine behavior would have perfectly behaved dogs all the time. And yes, Bear and Coco are exceptionally well trained. But even the best-trained dogs know how to keep life interesting.

"I've had Bear since he was 8 weeks old, and Coco turned 4 this past January. Their personalities couldn't be more different," Drew Kaufman said. "Coco is definitely the troublemaker—she's energetic, mischievous and always finding new ways to keep life interesting. Bear is much more laid back and incredibly intuitive. He has an amazing ability to read people's emotions and seems to know exactly when someone needs comfort or reassurance. They're very different dogs, but they complement each other perfectly."

Even if Coco occasionally goes a little rogue, both dogs thrive as beloved members of the family. At home, Kaufman says, the relationship is much different than the one he has with his clients' dogs.

"It's very different at home. When I'm training clients' dogs, I have a specific goal and a structured plan," Kaufman said. "At home Bear and Coco are simply part of the family. Of course, training is always happening in some way because consistency matters, but I also get to enjoy them just as companions. They aren't 'working' all the time, and neither am I."



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The ultimate bestie bucket list

The Lowcountry is filled with unforgettable adventures. These are the ones worth sharing

STORY BY MADISON MCBRIDE, MARY BELL AND CHLOE KNIGHT

The best friendships aren't measured by how long you've known each other. They're measured by shared experiences: the spontaneous adventures, the traditions that become rituals and the stories that somehow get funnier every time they're retold. The Lowcountry was made for those moments. Whether you're chasing dolphins through winding tidal creeks, teeing off on one of America's most iconic golf courses or laughing until your sides hurt during a comedy show, every outing offers another opportunity to reconnect with the people who make life richer. ***So call your favorite people, clear your calendars, and start checking adventures off the ultimate Lowcountry bestie bucket list.***

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If there is one golf course every golfer should play with their favorite foursome, it's Harbour Town Golf Links. Home of the annual RBC Heritage, this legendary layout lets you follow in the footsteps of PGA Tour champions while enjoying one of the most beautiful courses in golf. Following a comprehensive restoration last year by Davis Love III and his team, the course reopened with rebuilt greens, restored bunkers and thoughtful updates that honor Pete Dye's original vision while elevating playing conditions. The result is a course that's in exceptional shape and more challenging than ever. Towering pines, centuries-old live oaks draped in Spanish moss and sweeping views of Calibogue Sound create a setting where the conversations between tee shots are every bit as memorable as the golf itself. Before heading home, stop at the iconic Harbour Town Lighthouse for the perfect group photo.
Know before you go: *Tee times book well in advance, especially during peak season, so reserve as early as possible. Morning rounds offer cooler temperatures and a faster pace of play. August greens fees range from $360-$414.*

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Trade your routine for fresh air, scenic landscapes and adventures that are even better when shared with friends.



TANDEM KAYAK ADVENTURE

The Lowcountry is best experienced from the water, and there's no better way to explore it than from a tandem kayak. Paddle through the winding tidal creeks of Broad Creek, where bottlenose dolphins surface nearby, snowy egrets stalk the shallows, and great blue herons glide effortlessly overhead. Guided tours with Outside Hilton Head offer fascinating insight into one of America's richest coastal ecosystems while giving friends the chance to unplug, slow down and enjoy the peaceful rhythm of the marsh. After your paddle, keep the day going at nearby Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina. Dockside restaurants and waterfront patios provide the perfect place to relive your favorite wildlife sightings over fresh seafood, cocktails or a leisurely lunch while watching boats come and go.
Know before you go: *Morning paddles typically offer calmer water and the best wildlife viewing. Tandem kayak rentals start at $45 for the first hour, with additional time available for $10 per hour.*



©JOYCE HARKINS

PARASAILING ADVENTURE

Ready to see the Lowcountry from an entirely new perspective? Strap in with your favorite adventure partner, and soar hundreds of feet above Hilton Head Island, where panoramic views stretch from the Atlantic Ocean across winding salt marshes, maritime forests and sparkling waterways. From high above you might spot bottlenose dolphins cruising the shoreline, rays gliding through the shallows and boats tracing their way across the island's tidal creeks. Whether you choose Sky Pirate Parasail, Island Water Sports or Island Head, each operator offers tandem flights, making this an unforgettable experience to share with a friend. The ride is surprisingly peaceful, with little more than the sound of the wind and breathtaking views in every direction. It's the kind of adventure you'll be talking about long after your feet are back on the boat.

Know before you go: *Tandem parasailing flights typically start at about $95 per person, with morning departures offering the calmest winds and clearest views. Reservations are recommended during the busy summer season. Wear clothing that can get wet, and bring a secure way to protect your phone or camera if you plan to capture the experience.*



©SHELTER COVE HARBOUR & MARINA

PONTOON BOAT ADVENTURE

Some of the best days on Hilton Head Island don't follow an itinerary. Rent a luxury pontoon boat from Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina, invite your favorite people aboard, and spend the day exploring Broad Creek and the surrounding waterways at your own pace. Cruise past waterfront homes, watch for bottlenose dolphins, sit at a quiet spot, or simply drift beneath blue skies with your favorite playlist setting the mood. Spacious enough for up to 12 passengers, premium Aloha pontoons are designed for a comfortable day on the water, featuring a 150-horsepower Yamaha outboard, Garmin GPS and depth finder, plus a large 9-foot Sunbrella Bimini top for shade. Pack a cooler, bring your favorite snacks, and enjoy the freedom to create your own perfect Lowcountry adventure. Before or after your cruise, stroll the marina and grab lunch, dinner or drinks at one of Shelter Cove Harbour's waterfront restaurants to make a full day of it.

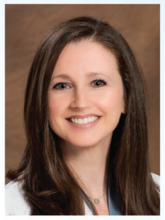
Know before you go: *Pontoon rentals start at $315 for two hours, with full-day rentals available for $1,000. Reserve well in advance for summer weekends, and don't forget sunscreen, plenty of water and a cooler for the day.*

MOHS SURGERY & DERMATOLOGY



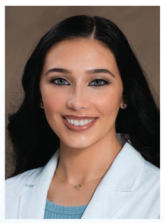
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OUTDOOR ADVENTURES



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HORSEBACK RIDING ADVENTURE

Experience Hilton Head Island at a slower pace, with a guided trail ride through the Sea Pines Forest Preserve from Lawton Stables. This one-hour, Western-style ride follows peaceful trails beneath towering pines and centuries-old live oaks draped in Spanish moss, passing inland lakes where alligators often bask and a variety of native birds make their home. Along the way, knowledgeable guides share stories about the island's wildlife, history and unique Lowcountry landscape, making the ride as educational as it is scenic. Gentle horses and a relaxed walking pace make the experience welcoming for first-time riders, while the preserve's natural beauty keeps even experienced equestrians captivated. It's a refreshing way to slow down, enjoy uninterrupted conversation and experience one of Hilton Head's most treasured natural areas together.
Know before you go: *One-hour guided trail rides are $100 per person during August and are open to riders ages 8 and older. Summer rides are offered Monday through Saturday, with early morning and evening departures providing the coolest temperatures. Reservations are required.*



©HILTON HEAD OUTFITTERS

TANDEM BIKE ADVENTURE

There's no better reminder that the journey matters as much as the destination than riding a tandem bike. It takes teamwork, communication and a willingness to laugh through the occasional wobbly start, making every mile part of the adventure. Rent a tandem bike from Hilton Head Outfitters, and cruise along Palmetto Dunes' miles of paved leisure trails beneath live oaks draped in Spanish moss, past sparkling lagoons and through one of the island's most scenic resort communities. From there, pedal through the nearby underpass for easy access to Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina and Shelter Cove Towne Centre, where waterfront restaurants, cafés and shops make perfect stops for lunch, drinks or a little browsing. Or pack a beach towel, and ride to the ocean for a relaxing afternoon by the shore before making your way back.
Know before you go: *Tandem bike rentals start at approximately $66 per day. Early mornings offer cooler temperatures and lighter trail traffic, making for the most enjoyable ride.*

CAMPING GETAWAY

Sometimes the best way to reconnect is to unplug. Trade busy schedules for salty air, towering palmettos and star-filled skies with a weekend at Hunting Island State Park, one of South Carolina's most spectacular coastal destinations. Spend the day exploring five miles of unspoiled Atlantic beach, climbing the Hunting Island Lighthouse for sweeping coastal views, kayaking through quiet marshes or hiking nature trails where deer, wading birds and other wildlife are frequent visitors. As the sun sets, gather around the campfire to roast marshmallows, share stories and enjoy the kind of uninterrupted conversations that only seem to happen outdoors. Wake up to the sound of waves crashing on the shore, brew a cup of coffee beneath the trees, and start another day of adventure together.
Know before you go: *Oceanfront campsites are among the most sought-after in South Carolina and often book months in advance. Campsites range from $35-$80 per night, depending on the site type and season, with additional reservation and park entrance fees. Pack bug spray, sunscreen, plenty of drinking water, and reserve your campsite as early as possible.*



FRIENDLY COMPETITION

Nothing brings people together quite like a little healthy rivalry. These experiences prove that winning is fun, but the memories you make along the way are even better.



©STATION 300

BOWLING & ARCADE NIGHT

Some nights never go out of style. Head to Station 300 for a classic bowling night, where every strike earns high-fives, every gutter ball becomes a punchline and every frame is another excuse for a little friendly competition. Whether you're chasing a personal best or simply enjoying the laughs, it's the kind of outing that brings everyone together. When the last pin falls, keep the fun going in the arcade with air hockey, basketball shootouts, racing simulators, claw machines and dozens of other games. Cash in your tickets for prizes, grab dinner or drinks without leaving the lanes, and let one of Station 300's robot servers deliver your food right to your table. It's an easy recipe for an unforgettable night with friends.
Know before you go: *Bowling starts at $13 per person for two hours Monday through Thursday and $19 per person on most weekends. Individual games start at $5, and shoe rental is $4. Check the Station 300 website for current specials and lane availability.*

ESCAPE ROOM CHALLENGE

Put your friendship to the test at Hilton Head Escape Room, where the clock is always working against you. Race to crack codes, solve intricate puzzles, and uncover hidden clues before time runs out, relying on communication, creativity and teamwork every step of the way. Whether you're investigating a mysterious medical experiment, unraveling a conspiracy or searching for a way out of a thrilling themed adventure, every room offers a different challenge that keeps everyone engaged until the final seconds. The best part comes afterward, when you'll replay every clue, celebrate your biggest breakthroughs and debate the puzzle that nearly stumped your team all the way home. It's the perfect activity for friends who love a good challenge and don't mind a little pressure.
Know before you go: *Each adventure lasts 60 minutes. Games start at $35 per person for groups of three or more and $48 per person for two players. Reservations are recommended, especially on weekends.*

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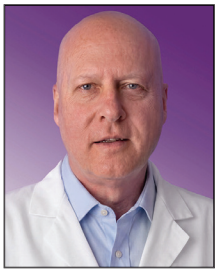
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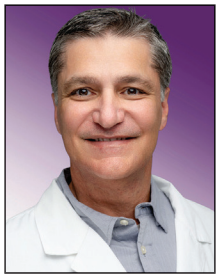
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FRIENDLY COMPETITION



©PALMETTO DUNES OCEANFRONT RESORT

PICKLEBALL DOUBLES IN PALMETTO DUNES

Easy to learn and impossible to play just once, pickleball has become one of the fastest-growing sports in the country and one of Hilton Head Island's favorite ways to spend time with friends. At Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort, 24 dedicated pickleball courts create a lively atmosphere where friendly competition quickly turns into hours of laughter. One game inevitably leads to another as long rallies, improbable shots and plenty of playful trash talk keep everyone coming back for more. Whether you're picking up a paddle for the first time or looking to sharpen your skills, Palmetto Dunes offers clinics, private lessons, round robins and open play for every experience level. Surrounded by swaying palms and coastal breezes, it's the kind of place where you'll celebrate perfectly placed winners, laugh off unforced errors and leave already planning your next match.

Know before you go: *Court rentals range from $20-$25 per hour, depending on the time of day, with walk-on rates as low as $15 per hour. Group clinics are $34 per person, while Round Robins are $20 per person. Private lessons are also available. Morning and late afternoon offer the most comfortable playing conditions, and reservations are recommended during the busy summer season.*



©THE ZONE BLUFFTON



©THE SEA PINES RESORT

TENNIS DOUBLES AT THE RACQUET CLUB

Unlike singles, doubles is all about teamwork. Every point depends on communication, trust and anticipation, making it one of the best sports to enjoy with a close friend. Celebrate perfectly placed volleys, encourage each other after missed shots, and discover why some of the best conversations happen during a changeover. At Sea Pines Racquet Club, you'll play on the same Har-Tru clay courts that have helped make the facility one of the nation's premier tennis destinations. Home to 23 clay courts, the club offers daily clinics, private lessons and court rentals for players of every skill level. Whether you're longtime doubles partners or picking up a racquet together for the first time, you'll leave with a stronger game, some friendly bragging rights and another great day spent together.

Know before you go: *Court rentals for non-resort guests are $50 per hour, with racquet rentals available for $5. Daily clinics, private lessons and special programs are offered throughout the year. Morning and evening provide the most comfortable playing conditions during August. Reservations are recommended.*



©INDY KARTING & AMUSEMENTS

ADRENALINE NIGHT

When friendly competition calls for a little more speed, head to Indy Karting & Amusements in Bluffton. Challenge your friends to a high-speed race on the state-of-the-art indoor electric kart track, where every corner is an opportunity to take the lead, and every lap fuels the rivalry. Once the checkered flag falls, keep the competition going with interactive axe throwing, duckpin bowling and a lively arcade packed with classic and modern games. Whether you're celebrating the fastest lap, landing your first bullseye or settling the score over one more round of duckpin bowling, Indy Karting delivers the perfect mix of adrenaline and laughter. With food, drinks and multiple attractions under one roof, it's an easy choice for a rainy day or an action-packed night out with friends.

Know before you go: *A single seven-minute kart race is $26, while 30 minutes of axe throwing is $15, and 60 minutes is $25. Duckpin bowling starts at $18 per lane on weekday afternoons. Closed-toed shoes are required for karting, and evening visits offer the liveliest atmosphere.*

LASER TAG BATTLE

The lights dim, the music cranks up, and the countdown begins. Inside The Zone's two-level black-light arena, you'll dodge around glowing obstacles, defend your base and work together to outsmart the competition. Quick reflexes and teamwork matter just as much as speed, making every match a fast-paced mix of strategy, friendly rivalry and nonstop excitement. Whether you're celebrating a last-second comeback or immediately calling for a rematch, laser tag has a way of bringing out everyone's competitive side. Afterward, keep the fun going with The Zone's arcade, mini golf, duckpin bowling or ninja course to turn one game into a full afternoon or evening of adventure.

Know before you go: *Laser tag is $13 per game, per person. If you're planning to enjoy multiple attractions, the $31 Zone Pass includes five activity tickets that can be used for laser tag and several other attractions. Reservations are recommended for larger groups and busy weekends.*

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FOOD & DRINK

Great friendships deserve great meals. These experiences bring friends together around the table to learn new skills, share unforgettable flavors and create recipes worth recreating.

COOKING CLASS

Skip the dinner reservation, and create the meal yourselves at Michael Anthony's Cooking School, one of Hilton Head Island's most popular culinary experiences. Working side by side with the chef, you'll prepare three recipes from scratch while learning professional techniques, knife skills and the secrets behind authentic Italian cooking. Once the cooking is finished, everyone gathers around the table to enjoy a family-style lunch paired with wine, making the experience feel as much like an Italian dinner party as a cooking class. Best of all, you'll head home with recipes, new skills and dishes you'll enjoy recreating together long after the class is over.

Know before you go: *Hands-on classes are $120 per person, begin at 11:30 a.m. and frequently sell out, so reservations are recommended well in advance.*


©MICHAEL ANTHONY'S CUCINA ITALIANA



SALAD DRESSING WORKSHOP

Sometimes the simplest recipes make the biggest impression. Grab your favorite foodie, and head to Hilton Head Olive Oils & Balsamics for the popular Salad Dressing 101 workshop, where you'll discover how just a few quality ingredients can transform everyday meals. During this interactive class, you'll learn the art of pairing premium extra virgin olive oils with aged balsamic vinegars to create fresh, flavorful dressings that go far beyond a basic vinaigrette. Along the way, you'll sample a variety of oils and balsamics, experiment with creative flavor combinations, gather expert cooking tips and receive a workbook filled with recipes to recreate at home. It's equal parts tasting, cooking lesson and fun afternoon with friends.

Know before you go: *Salad Dressing 101 is held Thursdays at 3 p.m. and costs $25 per person. Reservations are required, and each participant receives a recipe workbook. Arrive early to sample additional oils and balsamics before class begins.*

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

End the day with a little culture, plenty of laughter or a few ghost stories. These unforgettable evenings prove that some of the best memories are made after the sun goes down.



©ARTS CENTER OF COASTAL CAROLINA

THEATER NIGHT

There's something magical about experiencing a live performance together. As the lights dim and the curtain rises, you're swept into a story that sparks laughter, emotion and conversation long after the final bow. Whether you're enjoying a Broadway-caliber musical at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, an off-Broadway-style production at Lean Ensemble Theater or a community favorite at May River Theatre or Sea Glass Stage Company, every performance offers a memorable night out. Make an evening of it by enjoying dinner before the show, then follow up with dessert or drinks afterward as you relive your favorite scenes, unforgettable performances and surprise plot twists. It's a fun way to share an experience that simply can't be replicated from the couch.

Know before you go: *Tickets generally start at about $30 at May River Theatre, around $40 at Lean Ensemble Theater and about $50 at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, with prices varying by production and seating location. Purchase tickets in advance for popular performances, which often sell out.*



©HILTON HEAD COMEDY MAGIC CABARET

COMEDY + MAGIC NIGHT

Few things bring friends together faster than laughing until your cheeks hurt. At Hilton Head Comedy Magic Cabaret, nationally touring comedians and award-winning magicians combine stand-up comedy, mind-bending illusions and audience participation in an intimate, Vegas-style showroom where every seat feels close to the action. The venue's signature "Funny Not Filthy" performances make it an entertaining choice for couples, groups of friends and multi-generational outings alike. Catch traveling comedy magician James Brandon on Aug. 5-8, then make a full evening of it by enjoying dinner at a nearby restaurant to relive your favorite jokes, illusions and surprise moments.

Know before you go: *General admission tickets are $60, while VIP front-row seats and raised booths are $73. Seating is limited, so reservations are strongly recommended.*

SAVANNAH GHOST TOUR

As daylight fades, Savannah becomes a different city. Gas lamps cast a warm glow across cobblestone streets, Spanish moss sways beneath centuries-old live oaks, and every historic square seems to hold another story waiting to be told. It's the perfect setting for an evening of mystery with your favorite travel companion. On a walking tour with Ghost City Tours, you'll explore some of Savannah's most legendary locations, from the eerie gates of Colonial Park Cemetery to haunted mansions, hidden alleyways and historic squares where tales of restless spirits, infamous residents and unexplained encounters have been passed down for generations. Equal parts history lesson and ghost story, the tour is entertaining whether you're a true believer or simply along for the fun. Either way, you'll have plenty to debate on the drive back to Hilton Head.

Know before you go: *Walking tours start at $30 per person, with specialty and adults-only tours starting at $35. Tours are offered nightly, but reservations are recommended, especially on weekends. Wear comfortable walking shoes, and arrive early to find parking.*

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SMOKE SHOW Weighing more than a ton, the custom range hood dominates the kitchen. Its impressive size, accented by gold finishes repeated throughout the room, conveys a love of cooking, while open windows above the sink and a large island invite casual gatherings.





HOME SHOWCASE

Home at last

Longtime Palmetto Bluff vacationers finally put down roots in a custom home designed around everything they love

STORY BY ALEA WILKINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDDIE TUCKER

Jay and Julie Train didn't want to settle. After 15 years of vacationing in Palmetto Bluff, the Atlanta natives set out to create a Lowcountry home that would perfectly fit their lives, capturing all of their interests, personalities and wishes in one custom, three-story residence. The vision required a team of creatives to bring it to life.

"This home began as a true custom process — a blank sheet of paper and a collaborative vision," says Julie Callaway, director of design at ***Front Light Building Company***. Working with Tasha Moody of Atlanta-based firm Iris and Oak Interiors, Callaway and the crew made the Trains' dream a reality.

"Over 18 months of thoughtful curation and detail, we successfully brought their dream to life, creating an oasis for their family in one of their favorite places in the world," Moody says.

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Agree to disagree

Although the Trains share a love for the Lowcountry, their tastes in home design differ.

"Julie likes a dressier, feminine style, while Jay prefers a more casual feel, with touches of rustic," Moody says.

To represent both, the design team balanced elegance with rustic warmth. In the primary bathroom, regal ivory Dekton clads all four walls. Nearby, a sitting room with a brick fireplace offers a cozy counterpoint. The dining room features a glass chandelier suspended above 100-year-old Heart Pine flooring, blending his and her styles into a one-of-a-kind result.



RAISE A GLASS Dazzling above the dining room table, a glass chandelier satisfies both of the Trains' distinct tastes in home décor. Its sparkle feels feminine and glamorous, while its rustic rigging grounds the overall look.



Time and place

With strong ties to the South, the couple hoped to preserve the region's historic character as they embraced their new Bluffton home. Making the most of the property's stunning surroundings became a top priority.

Moody notes how the family room invites the outdoors in through expansive views, flowing seamlessly into the open-concept kitchen and dining room, with refined accents.

"There is something about this space that evokes a quiet luxury with a natural backdrop that makes your heart happy," she says.

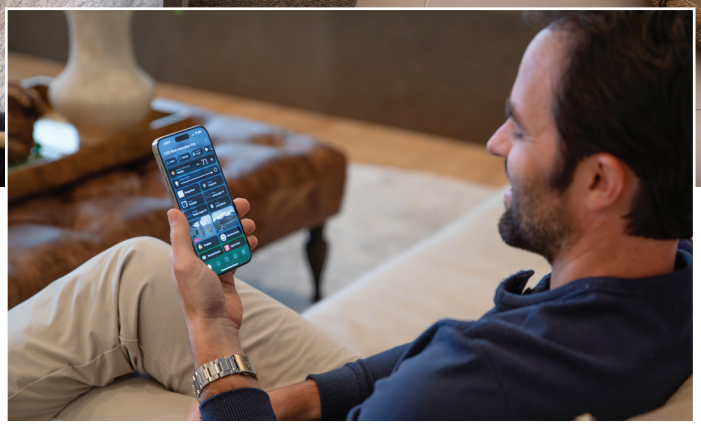
Blending classic architecture with modern comforts, the residence interprets the Lowcountry's traditions with creative liberty. Modern climate control allows the entrance's traditional double-tier gallery to be enjoyed year-round, while the old-fashioned porch swing is updated with plush coordinating cushions. The approach refuses to adhere to one specific era, creating a timeless combination of design and comfort.

"It feels incredibly intentional and unlike anything we've done before," Callaway says.



SERENE SCENE
As the Trains embraced their new surroundings, the design team opened the family room to reveal picturesque views of Palmetto Bluff. "The freshness of the family room, with all of the doors open and the breeze coming in off the water, is just incredible," Moody says.

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Dream team

Bringing together contrasting styles and different eras, Callaway stressed the importance of synergy among the entire team.

"It was important that the process felt collaborative at every level — not only between our team and the homeowners, but also alongside [Moody's] furniture design team to ensure the home and furnishings felt fully integrated," Callaway says.

That teamwork played a crucial role in the kitchen, where a custom range hood weighing more than a ton posed a hefty challenge.







"Coordinating the installation took significant planning, specialized rigging and an incredible team effort to safely hoist it into place," she says.

The finished space — an arresting display of culinary sophistication — proved well worth the extra effort.

Elsewhere, the primary bathroom's Dekton wall covering presented its own challenges.

"While beautiful, [Dekton] requires specialized tools, training and installation techniques for large-format applications," Callaway explains, sharing that each crew member had to play to their strengths to get the job done.

Although demanding, the combined effort resulted in a home even better than Callaway or Moody could have imagined.

"Through the collaboration between the homeowners, our team, the architect and [Moody], the home evolved in ways that made it even stronger," Callaway reflects

SIT A SPELL For the river room Moody and Callaway leaned into a cozy, nature-inspired aesthetic. Rich, coffee-colored shades draw down, as a plush sofa, Oushak rugs and an airy chandelier encourage guests to settle in and stay awhile.

Dream come true

Now complete, the home checks every item off the Trains' wish list. Classically Southern? Check. Blending both of their styles? Absolutely.

Moody particularly admires the Trains' bold vision.

"One reason this house turned out so special is because Jay and Julie did exactly what they wanted, not what they felt the style of the area or their friends might like," she says. "I'm a big believer that when a homeowner takes confidence in designing their home without concern for what others are doing, the finished product sings a little louder for it."

Callaway agrees. This home hits every mark.

"The end result feels cohesive, intentional and deeply reflective of the family who lives there — which is always the ultimate goal." *LL*





DOWN SOUTH A coastal palette, natural fibers and crane-patterned pillows recreate the Lowcountry's natural beauty in this guest bedroom. After vacationing in Palmetto Bluff for 15 years, the homeowners wanted their new home to reflect their love for the region.

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GET THE LOOK

Paper cranes

Inspired by the Lowcountry marsh, this ornate powder room transforms native wildlife into a work of art

STORY BY ALEA WILKINS + PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDDIE TUCKER



When designing their Palmetto Bluff home, first-time Lowcountry residents Jay and Julie Train sought to fully immerse themselves in their new surroundings. This powder room takes that idea to new heights. A mural wall covering depicts sandhill cranes standing in the marsh, their red-crested heads adding a pop of color among a sea of foggy whites, grays and blues. The sink's marble pattern mimics the organic ripples of the waves, while gold accents gleam on the hardware, light fixtures and floral chandelier overhead. An emerald-shaped mirror enhances the room's jewel box aesthetic, while generous counter space makes it as functional as it is beautiful. Designed by Julie Callaway of ***Front Light Building Company*** and Tasha Moody of Iris and Oak Interiors, this bathroom offers an elevated take on the area's distinctive coastal beauty.



PRINTED PLUMAGE Mural wallpaper decorates this jewel box powder room from floor to ceiling, recreating a distinctly Lowcountry scene of sandhill cranes, arching tree branches and floating lily pads. The cool-toned palette borders on stormy, but the sink's creamy marble countertop and gold accents add warmth and balance.





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Later, alligator

An unexpected encounter inspired the design of this Palmetto Bluff pool

STORY BY ALEA WILKINS + PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDDIE TUCKER



Evolution is natural when building a home. Revisions turn concept sketches into blueprints, and as a house takes shape, new ideas emerge. In this Palmetto Bluff backyard, the pool underwent a major transformation, thanks to a less evolved, more reptilian visitor.

Originally the homeowner had her heart set on a water feature with a glossy, dark floor. Complete with a trickling waterfall, a tile walkway and lawns meant for lounging, the design was dramatic and elegant. After installation, it set the mood for luxurious midday dips and serene sunset swims, made even more inviting by picturesque views of the waterways beyond. But when a neighbor recounted spotting an alligator in her own black-bottomed pool, the homeowner changed her mind. "We still joke about it to this day," says Julie Callaway, director of design at ***Front Light Building Company***.

To fix the scaly situation, Callaway and her team, including Tasha Moody of Iris and Oak Interiors, completely redid the pool, replacing the dark finish with a light blue that evokes the Caribbean more than a mysterious swamp. Despite the panic, Callaway believes the finished product surpasses their initial plans. "In the end, those collaborative adjustments resulted in a home that not only looked beautiful but felt right for how the family wanted to live in it," she says.





HOT SPOT
Although the homeowner got cold feet about her dark pool, these fire features add welcome warmth to the backyard. Each fire bowl ignites a flame within a ring of lava rocks, creating a soothing, luxurious focal point along the back wall. As the sun sets, the flames bathe the space in a gentle glow, evoking the serenity of a five-star resort.



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Out with the old, in with the view

Removing walls, replacing windows and rethinking the layout allowed this Port Royal Plantation home to finally celebrate its waterfront setting

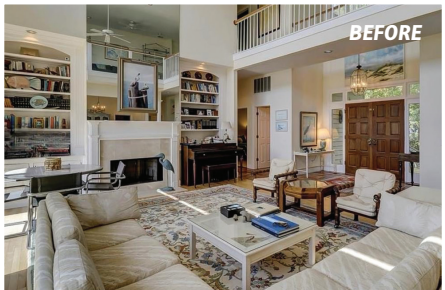
STORY BY ALEA WILKINS + PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOONLIGHT PRODUCTIONS

The Lowcountry revels in its slow pace. Our way of life is unhurried and gentle, following the rhythms of the landscape and the pull of the tides. Although the region is known for taking its time, a renovation by ***Southern Coastal Homes*** reveals the power of modernization, demonstrating how a home that refuses to move forward can eventually feel stuck in the past.

Originally constructed during Hilton Head Island's population boom of the late 20th century, this Port Royal Plantation residence epitomized the design characteristics of its time. "A lot of Hilton Head was developed in the '80s, so these homes have funky angles — different architecture than we're used to today," says Patrick Cosentino, vice president of the firm. But as the world carried on, the home failed to keep pace. Its grid-like layout, once all the rage, now felt cramped, and its interior columns looked less regal and more cumbersome.







To bring the home up to date, Cosentino and his team embraced an open floor plan, tearing down walls and replacing windows for a refreshed, contemporary feel. Each consecutive decision supported that vision, creating a home that no longer feels frozen in the past but instead is built for today.

Opening up

First the team cleared out the main level, replacing all of the windows and adding more along the northern edge. Indoors they removed walls to expand the kitchen, dining room and living room into one harmonious space. Since the home is situated in Planters Row, a prime perch overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, Cosentino wanted to open up the interior so its surroundings could shine. "No matter where you stand in that house, your eyes are drawn out to the beach," he says. Moving the kitchen to the back wall further improved the sight lines, granting everyone a front-row seat to the Lowcountry's best show. "Even if you're cooking or washing dishes, you can still look out and see the beach," he says.



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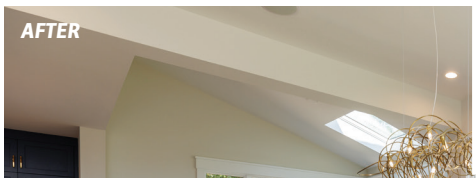
In the details

Despite its openness, the team didn't want the space to feel empty. "When you open things up, you still want some room definition without feeling closed in," Cosentino says. In lieu of obstructive walls, they found creative ways to distinguish each area without blocking the view. Between the kitchen and living room, a tongue-and-groove ceiling contrasts against the white surfaces. "It highlights that the area is different without creating any obstructions," Cosentino says. Because of this, each space feels distinct, but the overall flow is never interrupted.













Fresh start

Outside, the deck called for a complete makeover. Wind-driven rain had rotted the original wooden frame, rendering the space unsafe to use, so the crew took the opportunity to start over. A minimalist railing borders the outer edge, balancing safety with aesthetics while never disturbing the waterfront views. Its old furniture — an odd assortment of armchairs — made way for a collection of wicker seating, complete with matching blue cushions. "It was in pretty tough condition, but we were able to make it a cool spot," Cosentino says. The result is simple yet striking, an invitation to gather and take it all in.



Built to last

Before, the home felt like an artifact, confined to an earlier decade. Now, it can evolve. Its open floor plan grants greater flexibility than its previous boxed-in layout, and depending on the occasion or latest trend, the furniture can be rearranged again and again. Especially given its location, Cosentino knew the home had to live up to its outstanding view. "It looks like a house that deserves that property," he remarks. As the sunlight pours in, it no longer feels rooted in yesterday. Rather, it proudly faces tomorrow. *LL*

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Color outside the lines

Turn a bold painting into the inspiration for your entire room with a little help from AI

Buying artwork has always required a leap of faith. Will it fit the space? Will the colors work with your furniture? Artificial intelligence now makes those questions much easier to answer. Simply upload a photo of your room and the artwork you're considering, and AI can generate realistic mock-ups in seconds. You can also use images of rooms similar to yours if you'd rather not upload your own space. Experiment with placement, scale, wall colors and furnishings before making a purchase. To demonstrate the process, ***The Red Piano Art Gallery*** *shared two colorful Lowcountry paintings by Charleston artist* ***Betty Anglin Smith****, showing how the same artwork can transform very different rooms. "Smith's paintings have a very strong palette and bold brushwork," says Lyn Whiteside, co-owner of the gallery. "AI is a wonderful design tool for helping people visualize possibilities, but nothing beats seeing the art in your own space." That's why the gallery lets customers display artwork in their homes before making a final decision.*



Design with AI

Use these tips to make artwork the foundation of your design:

Start with the artwork. *Upload a photo of the painting and your room, then ask AI to build different design concepts around it.*

Use the correct dimensions. *Include the artwork's size so AI displays it at an accurate scale.*

Explore different moods. *Try different wall colors, lighting, furniture styles and décor to see how the same artwork changes the feel of a room.*

LIGHT, BRIGHT AND BALANCED

See it before you style it. Upload a photo of your room along with the item you're considering — such as *Yemassee*, a 36" × 48" oil by Betty Anglin Smith — then ask AI to create a light coastal interior with natural wood, woven textures and soft neutrals. It's an easy way to see how bold artwork can enliven a bright space while maintaining an airy feel.

Display it with confidence

Whiteside also offers a few design tips for showcasing bold artwork:

Skip the frame. *"These vibrant works are on gallery-wrapped canvases, and the paintings wrap around all sides," she says.*

Let it be the focal point. *Bold artwork adds energy and naturally draws the eye.*

Mix and match. *Pair a statement piece with complementary artwork or decorative objects to create a layered gallery wall.*



BOLD LOOKS BEAUTIFUL

A dark room doesn't have to mean dark artwork. Upload a photo of your space along with the piece you're considering — in this case, *New Spring*, a 48" × 48" oil by Betty Anglin Smith — and ask AI to display it at actual scale. Test different wall colors and lighting to see how bold color creates warmth, contrast and an unforgettable focal point.


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WHEN SEVERE WEATHER STRIKES, THESE EXPERT-APPROVED WINDOW TREATMENTS DELIVER DEPENDABLE STORM PROTECTION

STORY BY ALEA WILKINS

*Along the Lowcountry coast, hurricane season serves as an annual reminder that protecting your home begins long before the forecast turns threatening. While preparation often starts with emergency supplies and evacuation plans, one of the smartest long-term investments homeowners can make is strengthening the home itself. According to the experts at **Seaglass Windowscapes**, storm protection is never one-size-fits-all. The right solution depends on a home's architecture, exposure and individual needs. To help homeowners prepare before the next storm arrives, their team highlights four proven window protection systems designed to defend what matters most*



©EASTERN METAL SUPPLY

Powered to protect

When severe weather approaches unexpectedly, speed becomes everything. Motorized rolling hurricane shutters provide immediate protection at the push of a button, quickly sealing vulnerable windows before conditions worsen. Once the storm passes, homeowners can easily retract them just as fast. Combining convenience, premium security and rapid deployment, these shutters offer one of the most seamless storm-protection solutions available.

Defense in motion



©AMD

Recognizable by their folding, pleated design, accordion shutters offer a practical and cost-effective defense system without sacrificing reliability. While manually operated, deployment takes only minutes, allowing homeowners to quickly secure the property with a simple walk around the exterior. Because they fold compactly against the home when not in use, they work especially well for tighter spaces, irregular window layouts or homes where exterior space is limited.



©ATLANTIC SHUTTERS

Beachside barrier

For homeowners seeking protection without compromising aesthetics, Bahama shutters offer the perfect balance of form and function. A longtime Lowcountry favorite, their signature island-inspired design adds instant coastal character while providing dependable storm defense when conditions turn dangerous. On calm days, adjustable support arms allow natural light to filter inside, while storm preparation simply requires securing them firmly into place.

Boarded up



©ARMOR SCREEN

For reliable storm protection at a more affordable price point, hurricane screens offer a modern upgrade to traditional boarding methods. Systems like Armor Screen combine lightweight yet exceptionally durable high-strength fabrics engineered to withstand powerful wind and flying debris. Unlike permanent shutter systems, these screens require manual installation and removal, often by trained professionals, but when properly secured, they provide impressive protection during even the harshest coastal storms. LL









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COLORS OF THE MONTH

Cue the fun

A winning palette perfect for entertaining, friendship and unforgettable nights

STORY BY LANCE HANLIN

Some rooms are nice to look at. Others become the place where everyone wants to gather. A great game room should feel exactly like that: the kind of space where friends come together, competition gets serious, and guests stay longer than planned. When painting a room built for entertaining, avoid loud colors, passing trends or anything that feels overly designed. The best spaces feel comfortable, inviting and polished enough to make every night feel like an occasion. This month's palette does exactly that, creating a space that feels equal parts relaxed, refined and ready for someone to say, "Rack 'em up." Soft walls keep the room bright and welcoming, crisp trim creates sharp architectural contrast, and the dramatic dark-painted ceiling coffers add the depth and personality that immediately give the room presence.



Get the look

What makes this room feel so inviting is how every design choice works together to create a space built for entertaining. Here are a few ways to bring the same look into your own home.

Let the ceiling steal the show. *Dark-painted ceiling coffers instantly add architectural drama and create the custom look that elevates the entire room.*

Build the space around one focal point. *Here, the sleek 8-foot pool table immediately sets the tone, turning the room into a destination built for gathering, competition and fun.*

Design for more than one way to gather. *A spacious sectional, built-in window seating and intimate bistro table seating allow guests to spread out, relax and stay connected even when they are not playing.*

Mix bold finishes with inviting comfort. *The dramatic dark-wood elements bring sophistication, while the oversized sofa softens the room and keeps the atmosphere relaxed.*

Choose flooring that can handle a crowd. *Large-format porcelain tile stands up to heavy foot traffic while giving the room a clean, modern foundation.*

Layer lighting for every occasion. *Recessed ceiling lights paired with warm accent lighting help the room feel just as inviting for afternoon gatherings as late-night pool games.*

Keep window treatments understated. *Simple woven Roman shades soften the room without competing with the architecture or blocking natural light.*

WALLS

Sherwin-Williams Alabaster (SW 7008)

Alabaster creates the warm, welcoming backdrop that keeps the room feeling bright. Its soft creamy undertones help natural light fill the room while balancing the darker design elements overhead. An eggshell finish delivers a smooth, refined look.

CEILING COFFERS

Benjamin Moore Wrought Iron (2124-10)

Wrought Iron adds the bold contrast that gives the room its personality. This relatively soft, malleable black transforms the tongue-and-groove ceiling into a dramatic focal point while visually connecting darker features like the pool table and fireplace. A satin finish works best to highlight the wood detail.

TRIM & MILLWORK

Sherwin-Williams Pure White (SW 7005)

Pure White sharpens every architectural detail throughout the room, creating crisp contrast against the softer Alabaster walls. Used on trim, molding and window casings, it keeps the space feeling polished and clean. A semi-gloss finish provides the durability and subtle sheen needed for this look.



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Ground rules

SIMPLE LAWN CARE STRATEGIES TO GROW AND MAINTAIN BEAUTIFUL BACKYARDS

STORY BY ALEA WILKINS

*If your lawn struggles in August, you're not alone. The Lowcountry's combination of intense heat, high humidity and frequent afternoon storms creates one of the toughest growing environments of the year. Choosing the right grass, watering wisely and mowing properly can make all the difference. Israel Guerrero, co-founder and field director of **The Greencoast Landscape & Hardscape**, shares the strategies he recommends for keeping lawns healthy all season long.*



Know before you hoe

Before picking up a shovel, develop a keen understanding of your lawn's unique characteristics and conditions. "Factors such as sunlight, soil type, drainage and irrigation all affect which grass will thrive," Guerrero says. In general, Bermuda grass performs well in the Lowcountry's intense heat and sunshine, but for shaded spaces he recommends Zoysia or Palmetto St. Augustine. It may seem like a minor difference, but choosing the right grass variety is one of the most important decisions you'll make. "Choosing the right variety from the start leads to a healthier lawn and reduces long-term maintenance," Guerrero says. Plant with intention, and skip the headache later.

BUILT FOR THE LOWCOUNTRY
Bermuda grass thrives in the Lowcountry's abundant sunshine and summer heat, making it a favorite for open, sun-drenched lawns.



WATER SMARTER
Rain sensors and smart irrigation controllers take the guesswork out of lawn care by adjusting watering schedules based on local weather conditions.

Smart hydration

Up against sweltering temperatures and intense sunlight, Lowcountry lawns rely on irrigation systems to survive. To ensure proper watering, Guerrero recommends checking sprinkler heads and backyard drainage before adding new sod. This allows homeowners to see how water is being distributed and identify overly dry or wet areas. Because afternoon thunderstorms are common during the summer — especially during hurricane season — rain sensors or smart irrigation controllers are a worthwhile upgrade. "They help prevent overwatering by automatically adjusting their watering schedules based on the weather," Guerrero says. Once installed, routine system inspections will help keep your backyard lush year-round.



CUT WITH CARE Avoid scalping the grass during hot weather. Mow with sharp blades, and change directions regularly to create stronger, healthier turf.

Mow to grow

After installing the sod, don't be too hasty to hang up the trowel. Regular maintenance is what ultimately determines your lawn's long-term health. For newly sodded yards, Guerrero suggests watering daily for 25 minutes over the first two weeks, adjusting for soil type and property location. After that, water two to three times per week in the early morning for best results. When mowing, Guerrero cautions homeowners against cutting grass too short during the summer and recommends alternating mowing directions. "Cross-cutting encourages healthy growth and reduces stress on the turf," he says. A beautiful lawn isn't created in a weekend. With the right grass, smart watering and consistent maintenance, homeowners can enjoy a landscape that's healthier, easier to maintain and ready for everything from backyard cookouts to quiet evenings under the oaks. *LL*



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Masters of disguise

The northern and Louisiana waterthrush look almost identical, which is exactly how they like it

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM



©MARY ALICE TARTLER

LISTEN UP
Scan this QR code *to hear the call of the northern waterthrush.*

THE REGULAR The northern waterthrush is the more familiar face in the Lowcountry, arriving in late spring and returning in late summer through October. If you spot one in the fall, chances are it's this frequent flyer.

The northern and Louisiana waterthrush have one thing in common: They make even experienced birdwatchers question their eyesight. At first glance, both seem wildly out of place among North America's songbirds. They belong to the warbler family, which feels suspicious from the start. Warblers are supposed to be colorful little birds flitting through treetops. Waterthrushes, meanwhile, spend their days skulking along muddy stream banks and look more like oversized sparrows. Whoever decided these birds belong in the same family clearly had access to information the rest of us missed.

Both species visit the Lowcountry during spring and fall migration. Unfortunately for birders, telling them apart can test even the sharpest eyes. If you manage to get a decent look, Louisiana waterthrushes sport a brighter, thicker white eyebrow that stretches cleanly across the head. Northern waterthrushes usually have a thinner eyebrow, heavier throat streaking and sometimes a faint yellow wash underneath. In reality, both spend most of their time creeping through dense vegetation while making absolutely sure nobody gets a decent look at them.

Both birds hunt along the water's edge, constantly bobbing their entire rear ends while searching for insects. Louisiana waterthrushes are slightly larger and occasionally tackle bigger prey like minnows, salamanders and frogs. Northern waterthrushes, which are more common here, are far more adaptable, happily wandering through swamps, marshes and muddy wetlands. Louisiana waterthrushes prefer clear, flowing streams and behave more like tiny stream managers, patrolling the water with surprising precision.

For birders exploring the marsh edges of Hilton Head, wooded wetlands in Bluffton or hidden freshwater creeks throughout the Lowcountry, spotting one often turns into an exercise in patience.

Birders often turn to song for help. After all, these birds rarely make identification easy. Northern waterthrushes deliver loud, ringing notes that stay relatively level before shifting pitch. Louisiana waterthrushes sing a sweeter song that dips downward before rising again. Conveniently, their songs mirror their habitats: Louisiana's song descends like the steep stream valleys it prefers, while northerns stay level like the flatter wetlands they call home. Whether nature designed this convenient trick or birders invented it out of sheer desperation remains unclear.

Perhaps most fascinating is how completely unbothered these birds are by our confusion. Despite looking remarkably similar, the two rarely compete. Northern waterthrushes aggressively defend territory against their own kind but largely ignore Louisiana waterthrushes. Researchers believe this peaceful coexistence works because each occupies its own ecological niche, relying on different habitats, prey and nesting strategies.

Somewhere deep in the wetlands, the two waterthrushes seem perfectly content knowing humans still can't tell them apart. LL

Where to find them

"Neither species regularly visits traditional feeders, but properties with wooded streams, drainage ditches or damp shady corners can provide ideal habitat. A birdbath near cover or a small recirculating dripper that mimics moving water may help attract them for a quick drink or bath."

– Mary Alice Tartler, Audubon master birder



THE ELUSIVE ONE The Louisiana waterthrush makes a shorter stop in the Lowcountry, appearing mostly from March through early May, with only occasional fall sightings. Rarely seen here, spotting one feels a bit like winning the birdwatching lottery.

Essentials

Create a bird-friendly backyard and stock up on everything you need at ***Wild Birds Unlimited***.

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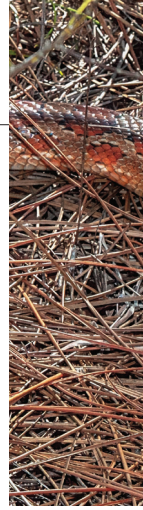
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WILDLIFE WONDER

More friend than foe

Corn snakes are beautiful, harmless and help keep your yard free of unwanted pests

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM



For many people, spotting a snake in the yard triggers instant panic. It is a fear many of us learned early, often without ever questioning why. But what if that snake quietly moving through the grass was not a danger at all and was actually helping protect your home?

The corn snake is one of the most unfairly feared animals in the Lowcountry. Often mistaken for venomous copperheads or killed simply because it is a snake, this beautiful reptile is, in reality, shy, beneficial and remarkably gentle. Far from looking for confrontation, corn snakes would much rather disappear into the underbrush, making them one of the easiest wild neighbors to peacefully coexist with.

"Corn snakes are some of the most coveted snakes in the Southeast due to their extremely variable patterns, often calm demeanors and defensive displays," says Chris Kehrer, science program manager at the Port Royal Sound Foundation. "They have a secretive lifestyle with a very convoluted natural history. This is mainly due to their ubiquity across the landscape and appearing at any time of the year."

Their beauty is one reason they have become one of North America's most popular pet snakes, but it is also why they are often mistaken for far more dangerous species. Corn snakes display a stunning range of colors, including bright oranges, reds, yellows, grays and browns.

"This species is easily identified by the arrow-like pattern on their head, blotches along their back and the hallmark checkerboard pattern on their belly," Kehrer says.

No two look exactly alike, making every encounter feel a little different. Fortunately, striking colors do not tell the full story.

SIGNATURE MARKINGS
Corn snakes are easily recognized by the spear-shaped marking on top of their head and the distinctive black-and-white checkerboard pattern on their belly. Unlike humans, they do not have eyelids and instead rely on a transparent protective scale over each eye that sheds along with the rest of their skin.

Beauty without danger

Despite their striking appearance, corn snakes are completely harmless to people. They are nonvenomous constrictors, meaning they subdue prey by wrapping around it rather than using venom. When threatened, they usually freeze, vibrate their tails in dry leaves to imitate a rattlesnake or quietly flee the area. Biting is rare and usually happens only when the animal feels cornered or threatened.

Unfortunately, their reddish coloring causes many people to mistake them for copperheads, leading to countless unnecessary deaths each year. That misunderstanding comes at a cost.

"Corn snakes and their close relative, the yellow rat snake, may be some of the most efficient predators of rodents in the natural world," Kehrer explains. "Healthy snake populations have a direct correlation to healthy ecosystems and communities by reducing the spread of rodent-derived diseases."



NIGHT SHIFT Corn snakes are most active during the cooler hours of dawn and dusk, though warm Lowcountry nights often bring them out after dark as well. From March through November, they are frequently spotted crossing roads and paths while searching for food or a new habitat.



BUILT TO HUNT
Unlike venomous snakes, corn snakes rely on strength rather than toxins, wrapping their bodies tightly around prey before swallowing it whole. When threatened, they often vibrate their tails in dry leaves, creating a rattling sound meant to scare away predators.

A single corn snake can consume dozens of mice and rats each year, quietly serving as one of nature's most effective pest-control systems for farms, gardens and neighborhoods. But rodents are only part of the story.

"Snakes in general also act as a major food resource in any ecosystem," says Kehrer. "While many species are not snake-eating specialists, they are very opportunistic, such as alligators, fish, birds of prey, amphibians and even other snakes."

In other words, removing snakes does far more than increase rodent populations. It creates ripple effects throughout the entire ecosystem.

Nature's quiet worker

If you happen to spot a corn snake in your yard, the best response is surprisingly simple: admire it from a respectful distance and allow it to continue on its way.

"Snakes are not typically aggressive toward humans," Kehrer says. "Relocation of the snake is always the best solution when encountering one in living spaces."

Ironically, many venomous snake bites happen when people attempt to kill or handle snakes rather than simply leaving them alone. Wearing closed-toe shoes and gloves while gardening, particularly during warm summer evenings when snakes are more active, is another easy way to reduce unwanted encounters. Corn snakes have become beloved pets because of their calm personalities, manageable size and relatively easy care. However, wildlife belongs in the wild. While captive-bred corn snakes from reputable breeders can make excellent companions, wild snakes should never be collected as pets. Removing them deprives local ecosystems of an important predator that has spent its life quietly keeping rodent populations in check.

Like so many animals that call the Lowcountry home, corn snakes are not asking for much. They simply want a quiet place to hunt, hide and survive. The next time you spot one slipping silently through the grass, consider yourself lucky. It is not a threat. It is one of nature's quiet workers, doing exactly what it was designed to do. *LL*



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LOWCOUNTRY ALMANAC

August

BY BAILEY GILLIAM



TINY TRAVELER August marks peak sea turtle hatching season along Lowcountry beaches, when endangered loggerhead hatchlings emerge from nests hidden beneath the sand and begin one of nature's most extraordinary journeys.

Night & day

Summer still dominates the calendar in August, but daylight gradually begins its retreat as the Lowcountry shows its first subtle signs of fall.

Sunrise: 6:38 a.m.-6:57 a.m. (later each day)
Sunset: 8:20 p.m.-7:48 p.m. (earlier each day)

A month of sweltering heat, golden marshes and savoring summer's final stretch

August settles over the Lowcountry in shimmering waves of heat and sunlight as the season reaches its finishing stretch. Long, humid days hang above warm ocean waters. Golden marshes and gardens overflow with late-season harvests. With guidance from the *2026 Old Farmer's Almanac* and *Grow Great Vegetables South Carolina*, this month's almanac helps you make the most of summer's final full chapter in sync with the coast.

Weather predictions

August delivers peak summer conditions across the Lowcountry, with oppressive humidity, soaring temperatures and frequent afternoon thunderstorms offering brief relief from the heat.

Average temperature: 80 degrees (1 degree below average)
Precipitation: 5 1/2 inches (1 inch above average)

FORECAST BY WEEK
Aug. 1-11: Scattered thunderstorms; warm
Aug. 12-14: Hurricane threat; cooler temperatures
Aug. 15-23: Periods of showers; cool
Aug. 24-28: Sunny and mild
Aug. 29-31: Scattered thunderstorms; mild

Astronomical events

August offers some of the year's best stargazing opportunities with meteor showers, eclipse activity and warm summer nights.

Aug. 12: A new moon occurs, creating dark skies ideal for nighttime viewing.

Aug. 12-13: The Perseid meteor shower reaches peak activity, and the moonless sky makes conditions nearly perfect for viewing one of the year's brightest meteor displays.

Aug. 28: The full Sturgeon Moon rises. Named by Native American tribes for the giant lake sturgeon most abundant during late summer, it will brilliantly illuminate the evening sky.

Aug. 28: A deep partial lunar eclipse occurs, with roughly 96% of the moon passing through Earth's shadow, creating a striking blood moon effect.

Tides & currents

Life in the Lowcountry moves with the water. ***Scan this QR code*** *for the latest tide and current predictions from NOAA.*

In the garden



August is a balancing act in the garden. Summer crops are reaching peak production while savvy gardeners begin laying the groundwork for the cooler months ahead.

PREP Start planning next year's garden layout, prepare strawberry beds for fall planting, thin carrots and rutabagas, cut back chard and celery, and stay diligent with weeding and harvesting.

PLANT August offers a valuable window for both heat-loving crops and the first vegetables destined for fall harvest.

Outdoors: *Continue succession planting summer crops, direct sow Asian greens, and establish seedlings for cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, collards and broccoli rabe. Early in the month, transplant quick-ripening tomatoes for a fall harvest, and sow cover crops such as buckwheat, soybeans, clovers and oats.*

HARVEST Harvest season includes Asian greens, asparagus, beans, beans, ***cantaloupes***, carrots, celeriac, celery, chard, corn, cowpeas, cucumbers, edamame, eggplant, figs, grapes, fresh herbs, hot peppers, leeks, Malabar spinach, New Zealand spinach, okra, peppers, raspberries, scallions, spaghetti squash, summer squash, sweet peppers, tomatoes, watermelons, winter squash and zucchini.



Best days

Looking for ideal timing? According to the moon's phases, these are August's most favorable dates for the following activities:

Go fishing: Aug. 12-28
Take one last summer vacation: Aug. 11-12
Go camping: Aug. 20-22
Ask for a loan: Aug. 5-6



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TROWEL TALK

Sow long, summer

Celebrate the season's end with homemade hot sauce while preparing for fall's arrival

STORY BY ALEA WILKINS AND SUZANNE BARTON



PLANT WITH PURPOSE Sugar snap peas do more than produce a crisp, sweet harvest. As nitrogen-fixing legumes, they naturally replenish nutrients in the soil, making them an ideal addition when rotating crops and preparing your garden for a healthy fall season.



As summer slows down, the beaches get quieter, but the garden stays active well past Labor Day. Whether you're eagerly awaiting fall's harvest or wondering what to do with the rest of your summer bounty, The Green Thumb's ***Suzanne Barton*** shares how to appreciate the season's grand finale while preparing for what's to come.

[LOCAL LIfe] I'm ready to start my fall garden. What's the first step? **[Suzanne Barton]** Before setting foot outside, you'll want to decide where you are going to plant your fruits and vegetables. Take a look at your current crops, and consider which need to be rotated. This will help restore essential nutrients to the soil. For example, leafy greens like kale, lettuce and bok choy heavily consume nitrogen. To add nitrogen back to your garden, plant legumes like beans and peas. This way, your garden will stay healthy and fertile season after season.

[LL] Is there anything I can plant now? **[SB]** Yes! Now is actually the perfect time to plant palm trees. In most cases, Lowcountry gardeners have to think about adding compost or fertilizer to help plants survive in our sandy soil, but palm trees thrive in it naturally. Pick up a containerized sapling at your local grower (seven- to 15-gallon pots are easiest), add a sprinkle of palm tree food, and with a little patience, you'll have a tropical paradise in your backyard.



ROOTED IN THE LOWCOUNTRY Unlike many plants that need extra compost and soil amendments, sabal palmettos thrive naturally in the Lowcountry's sandy soil, making late summer one of the best times to plant and create your own backyard oasis.



TOO HOT TO WASTE
If your summer pepper plants are still producing, don't let the harvest go to waste. Varieties like habaneros, tabasco and cayenne thrive in August and can be turned into flavorful homemade hot sauces that keep summer's heat alive long after the season ends.

[LL] I have many hot peppers. What should I do with them?
[SB] Easy — make hot sauce! I used to grow nearly 30 varieties of peppers, and I'd get to a point where I had so many, my neighbors wouldn't take them anymore. Hot peppers like habaneros, tabasco and cayenne all grow wonderfully in our area, and they make fabulous sauces. There are so many recipes from which to choose, but no matter which you try, make sure to ventilate your kitchen. One year I accidentally made our house smell like hot sauce for a whole week!



AUGUST BIRTH FLOWER

Gladiolus

Referred to as the "sword lily" for its striking blooms, gladiolus resembles strength and integrity. Growing two to five feet tall, it stands proudly above common blooms and foliage, emblazoning the backyard with streaks of red, orange, yellow and purple as it reaches toward the sky. Barton says its impressive height makes it the perfect natural fence. Like a garden wall, it shields areas for enhanced privacy, yet it decorates as it protects. Graceful and dignified, gladiolus is a reminder of the beauty in strength.

WHAT'S IN BLOOM THIS MONTH?



August's blooms mark summer's final act, splashing the Lowcountry with vibrant color before berries ripen and the landscape gently settles into fall. Take a moment to savor the season's last show.



Annuals: *Coleus, profusions zinnias, lantana, vinca*
Perennials: *Hardy hibiscus, rudbeckia, false sunflower, coreopsis, echinacea, beautyberry, chaste tree*









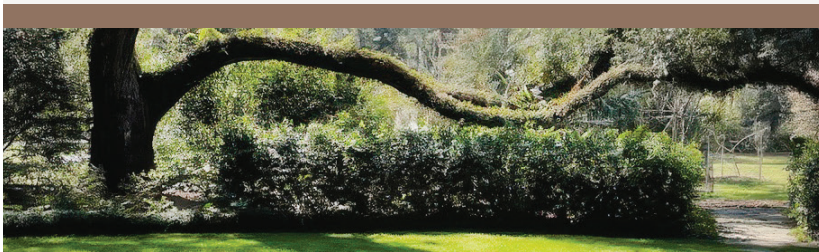
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FLORAL OF THE MONTH

Designing in layers

The best arrangements, like the best friendships, are greater than the sum of their parts

STORY BY KIM EPLEY + PHOTO BY SUM KAI PHOTOGRAPHY

***Kim Epley**, artistic director at The Studio at Farmer Blue, brings readers fresh inspiration using flowers from her 12-acre farm. For the Best Friends issue, she explores how the most memorable floral designs, like the strongest friendships, are built through layers of unique personalities working together.*



The best friendships aren't built because everyone is the same. They're built because each person contributes something different. Great floral design follows the same philosophy. At Farmer Blue every arrangement begins by listening to the season, the setting and the story the landscape is already telling. Long before we choose a single flower, we ask a simple question: How do we want people to experience this place? Should guests settle in and linger over conversation? Should the table feel relaxed and organic or polished and elegant? Every decision that follows supports that experience. The flowers simply become the language that tells the story.

FEATURED FLOWERS

1. Allium
2. Silene
3. Dahlia
4. Craspedia
5. Solidago
6. Cynoglossum
7. Aster
8. Thistle
9. Scabiosa pod

FOLIAGE & GREENERY

10. Agonis
11. Fern
12. Rumex
13. Moss

INSPIRED BY THE LANDSCAPE
Beneath Honey Horn's iconic live oaks, this early summer tablescape layers glossy gardenia foliage, feathery ferns, moss, graceful Rumex, ruby-red dahlias grown at Farmer Blue and seasonal allium and craspedia into a design that feels rooted in the Lowcountry itself.

The arrangement

This early summer tablescape, photographed beneath the centuries-old live oaks at Honey Horn, was designed to feel as though it had always belonged there. Rather than allowing flowers to take center stage, we began with the landscape itself, building a layered foundation inspired by the Lowcountry. Glossy gardenia foliage catches the filtered afternoon light, while feathery ferns soften the composition and echo the woodland canopy overhead. Moss blurs the line between the arrangement and the forest floor, and graceful stems of Rumex weave throughout, adding movement, texture and rich shades of green.

Only after that living foundation was established did the flowers begin to emerge.

Ruby-red dahlias harvested from our fields create a visual rhythm across the table. Cheerful yellow craspedia add playful pops of color, while sculptural allium — available only briefly in early summer and sourced from a specialty grower in Greenville — provide height and architectural interest. Delicate silene, airy asters, blue cynoglossum, textural thistle and sculptural scabiosa pods each contribute their own personalities. No single flower dominates. Instead, each supports the others, creating a composition that feels rooted in its surroundings rather than simply placed upon the table.

Why it works

The most memorable arrangements aren't created by adding more flowers. They're created by thoughtfully combining texture, height, movement and color. A layered foundation of foliage, moss and airy greens creates depth and establishes a sense of place before the first bloom is added. From there each flower has room to shine while strengthening the composition as a whole. Like great friends around a table, every element contributes something different, and together they create something far more compelling than any could alone.

Design notes

- *Let the season guide your choices before settling on a color palette.*
- *Begin with several varieties of greenery to establish shape, depth and movement.*
- *Combine glossy leaves with soft, feathery textures for natural contrast.*
- *Repeat accent colors throughout the arrangement instead of clustering them in one spot.*
- *Leave room for every bloom to breathe. Negative space is an essential design element.*

Final thought

Nature has always designed in layers. Forests aren't memorable because of a single tree, and gardens aren't beautiful because of a single flower. Their beauty comes from relationships — leaves and branches, mosses and vines, bursts of color and open space — each playing a distinct role. The same is true in floral design. And perhaps it's true of friendship as well. The most unforgettable gatherings happen when every personality has space to contribute, creating something richer and more beautiful together than any one element could achieve alone.





Found in friendship

One dog needed a friend. The other needed someone to show her the world

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM + PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL HRIZUK

Whether they're racing across the dog park, waiting together at the front door or curled up side by side, Lilly and Poppy rarely spend a moment apart. Their friendship looks effortless today. But not long ago, one dog was grieving the loss of her lifelong companion, while the other was too frightened to embrace the world around her. Together, they found exactly what the other was missing.

When the Beeler family adopted Lilly, she quickly became inseparable from their senior black Labrador, Gracie. Even in Gracie's later years, when play had given way to naps, Lilly always had a companion. After Gracie passed away, everything changed.

"She had always had another dog around," said Lindsey Beeler. "After Gracie passed away, Lilly became a Velcro dog. We were constantly tripping over her because she never wanted to leave our side."

After relocating from the Lowcountry to Wisconsin in 2021, Lindsey began searching for another dog. She hoped to adopt through a golden retriever rescue, but long waitlists made that impossible. Then, while scrolling social media one Saturday morning, she spotted a newly posted 7-month-old golden retriever named Poppy.

"It was meant to be," she said.

According to information shared by the rescue, Poppy had been selected for guide dog training but failed her certification evaluation. Lindsey was told she then spent approximately six months confined to a concrete kennel with little exposure to everyday life.

"She had never been outside or played with kids," Lindsey said. "She had never touched grass."



The rescue was looking for a family with children, another dog and a fenced yard to help build Poppy's confidence. The Beelers were a perfect match.

"When we first got her, she was scared of everything and everyone," Lindsey said. "She was very shut down."

Fortunately, Lilly became exactly the friend Poppy needed.

"Lilly is everybody's friend," Lindsey said. "She plays with everyone at the dog park. I really think Lilly was the perfect pair for Poppy."

Little by little, Poppy followed Lilly's lead. If Lilly greeted a stranger, Poppy cautiously followed. If Lilly ran through the grass or played with another dog, Poppy joined in. With every new experience, her confidence grew until it became difficult to imagine one without the other.

After the Beelers returned to Sea Pines earlier this year, they hired a trainer to improve the dogs' leash manners. The trainer suggested walking them separately, but the experiment didn't last.

"They'd cry waiting for each other at the door," Lindsey said. "They play all the time together. It's been so amazing to see Poppy come out of her shell."

The friendship transformed Lilly as well.

"She's calmed down a bit," Lindsey said. "Now she's content lying on the rug chewing on a bone next to Poppy instead of following us everywhere."

Looking back, Lindsey believes adopting Poppy changed both dogs' lives. Lilly found the constant companion she'd been missing, while Poppy discovered confidence, joy and the simple pleasures of being a dog.

Their story is also a reminder that rescue organizations are filled with remarkable animals of every background, including purebred dogs.

"People need to realize that purebred dogs are at rescues too," Lindsey said.

For the Beelers, taking a chance on Poppy gave one dog a second chance, another a best friend and both the life they were meant to share. *LL*

A PERFECT MATCH Every adoption has two stories: the family gaining a new companion and the dog gaining a new beginning. For Lilly and Poppy, that new beginning became a friendship that transformed both of their lives.



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The 7:30 crew

AT HILTON HEAD'S BEST FRIENDS DOG PARK, WAGGING TAILS HELP BUILD LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

STORY + PHOTOGRAPHY BY MADISON MCBRIDE



GATHERING PLACE Under a canopy of trees, Chaplin Community Park's Best Friends Dog Park has become much more than a place for exercise, serving as the daily meeting place for the close-knit community known simply as the 7:30 crew.

Every morning just before 7:30, as Hilton Head slowly begins to wake, the excitement starts building. Tails wag furiously, paws shuffle impatiently, and eager noses press toward the gate. The moment it opens, the dogs explode forward, sprinting to greet the friends they have come to know by heart.

At Chaplin Community Park's Best Friends Dog Park, the 7:30 crew has become something of a local institution. What started as a simple daily outing for exercise has grown into a close-knit community built around wagging tails, familiar routines and friendships shared on both sides of the leash.

Many members first began visiting the park with their newly adopted puppies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several of the dogs came from Jasper Animal Rescue Mission, and as the puppies grew up together, friendships between their owners began growing as well. Years later many of the dogs still wait by the door each day, eager to reunite with the companions they have known since puppy hood.

Like any long-standing tradition, the daily gathering follows a familiar rhythm. While dogs race across the park chasing tennis balls and one another, owners gather along the fence line, sipping coffee and catching up on life. Conversations cover everything from favorite local restaurants to eye doctor recommendations, contractor referrals and the latest local happenings.

Eventually, attention shifts to one of the group's favorite traditions: homemade dehydrated hot dog treats, affectionately nicknamed "crack." The nickname is well earned. Dogs come charging from every corner of the park the moment the treats appear, gathering instantly in hopes of earning a bite. The gathering typically lasts about 45 minutes, ending only when the coffee runs dry and exhausted pups decide the fun is over, guaranteeing their owners a much quieter afternoon at home.

Before long, every dog developed a reputation of its own, and their personalities became part of what keeps the group endlessly entertained.

Hazel and her best friend, Jax, serve as the park's unofficial chaos coordinators. Hazel, an energetic escape artist, has become known for squeezing beneath fences and sending her owner, Cindy, scrambling after her. Jax is rarely far behind, and the pair's roughhousing is so intense that other dogs often stop whatever they are doing simply to watch.

Not every dog brings chaos to the park. Oakley has earned a reputation for taking a much quieter approach, often spending



FAITHFUL FRIEND Murphy still makes his daily trips to the dog park, continuing a tradition built alongside Barbara and the community that became part of their everyday life.

her time closely shadowing her best friend, Davy, a Bernese Mountain Dog. Oakley rarely strays far from his side.

Then there is Valkyrie, a bull terrier known simply within the group as "Bull Terrier." While most dogs come to socialize, Valkyrie has developed a very different obsession: the park's rake. What began as a simple tool for filling holes dug by playful pups has somehow become the source of the group's favorite running joke. The moment the rake appears, Valkyrie goes completely bananas, spinning wildly, leaping through the air and chasing after the tool with relentless determination.



INSTANT ATTENTION A handful of homemade dehydrated dog "crack" treats is often all it takes to bring the entire park together each morning.





Other dogs have become known for routines so predictable, their owners hardly question them anymore. Draco can almost always be found carrying a tennis ball, as he's permanently prepared for another round of fetch. Gypsy, a German Shorthaired Pointer affectionately nicknamed the group's "old lady," has never outgrown her hunting instincts and spends much of her time carefully watching the squirrels darting through the surrounding trees.

While the dogs may have brought everyone together, the friendships between owners have become equally important. Like much of Hilton Head itself, the group brings together people from all over the country. Although they now consider themselves locals, members originally came from New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Maryland and Georgia. Despite their different backgrounds, they are united by the shared routine that continues bringing them together morning after morning.

Over time, the friendships naturally extended beyond the dog park gates. The group now regularly gathers for happy hours, restaurant outings, Salty Dog cruises, birthday celebrations and their self-proclaimed "Champagne Saturdays."

Soon those friendships began to mean far more than simple social gatherings.

Members frequently watch one another's dogs while traveling, share recommendations for doctors and contractors and help newcomers adjust to island life. Steve Ferris and his wife, in particular, have become well known for helping care for many of the group's dogs over the years.



TIME OUT Milo takes a break in the park's fenced "solitary confinement" area, a favorite retreat whenever the excitement of the 7:30 crew becomes a little too much to handle.



BALL IS LIFE Rarely seen without a tennis ball, Draco is always ready in case someone is willing to play a quick round of fetch.

The strongest reminder of what this group has truly become came earlier this year, when the 7:30 crew lost one of the people who had become part of its daily rhythm.

Barbara and her beloved dog, Murphy, had long been among the group's most familiar faces. A regular member of the morning gathering, Barbara rarely missed a visit and quickly became an important part of the routine. Murphy, who has been visiting the park for more than a decade, knew the route by heart and could barely contain his excitement whenever it was time to go.

Barbara's daughter recalls hearing the same familiar phrase whenever plans conflicted with the daily tradition.

"I can't talk. I'm going to the dog park."

It was a simple phrase, but one that perfectly captured how meaningful this community had become in her life.

When Barbara unexpectedly passed away earlier this year, the loss was felt deeply by a group that had quietly become much more than fellow dog owners. In the days that followed, these friends realized how strong these shared mornings had become over the years.

Today, Murphy still makes his daily visits, faithfully following the routine Barbara established years ago and greeting the familiar faces who now feel like family. His presence serves as a reminder that the relationships formed at the park reach far beyond the gates themselves.

For the members of the 7:30 crew, the dog park is more than a place for exercise. It has become a daily reminder that friendship often arrives when people least expect it.

For many it all began with a leash, a tennis ball and a curious puppy. Years later it has grown into something more meaningful: proof that sometimes the strongest friendships begin in the most unexpected places. *LL*



REMEMBERING BARB A floral memorial at Chaplin Community Park honors longtime 7:30 crew member Barbara "Barb," whose daily presence helped shape the close-knit community that continues gathering at the park each morning.



RAKE OBSESSION No member of the 7:30 crew reacts quite like Valkyrie, affectionately known as "Bull Terrier." The moment the park's rake appears, her full attention locks in.



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Top dog

THE SCIENCE BEHIND HOW PETS CHOOSE THEIR FAVORITE PERSON

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

If your dog races past everyone else to greet one family member, or your cat claims the same lap night after night, you've probably wondered: Why them? While it may feel personal, experts say favoritism usually has less to do with popularity and more to do with trust, consistency and connection. Every pet is different, but there are a few common reasons one person often rises to the top.



COMFORT IN COMPANIONSHIP The bond between people and pets is built in life's quietest moments. Whether working, relaxing or simply being nearby, pets often choose to stay close to the people who make them feel safest and most loved.

It starts with trust

A pet's favorite person is often the one who makes them feel safest. That trust is built over time through routines, gentle interactions and positive experiences.

"Dogs usually bond with the person who spends the most positive, consistent time with them and makes them feel safe," says Drew Kaufman, owner of Just a Walk In The Park. "That favorite can absolutely change as life and routines change."

Early socialization plays a major role, especially in puppies, but even pets adopted later in life can form strong attachments through patience and care.

It's more than treats

Treats can help build positive associations, but they are only part of the equation. Walks, playtime, grooming, training and daily care all shape the bond.

"The person who consistently offers food, medication, walks and care is usually the one the pet seeks out," says Carla Genther, hospital manager and veterinary assistant at Carolina Critical Veterinary Care.

She notes that the person a pet follows most isn't always their favorite. Sometimes it's simply the person whose communication style makes them feel most secure.

Personality plays a part

Like people, pets have preferences. An energetic dog may gravitate toward the family adventurer, while a shy or anxious pet may prefer someone calm and gentle.





Dogs are especially skilled at reading body language and tone of voice. A patient, predictable person often becomes their source of comfort, especially during stressful moments like storms, fireworks or vet visits.

Following you isn't the full story

A dog that follows you from room to room may be deeply bonded, but that doesn't always mean you're the favorite. Some dogs are naturally clingy, while others simply like staying close to the people they trust.

Pets also show favoritism in quieter ways, like choosing to nap beside you, seeking you out when they're stressed or lighting up when you walk through the door.

Favorites can change

A pet's favorite person isn't always chosen for life. Changes in routines, care giving or family dynamics can shift those bonds over time. The good news? Becoming your pet's favorite isn't about buying more toys or handing out endless treats. It's about showing up consistently, creating positive experiences and building trust.

Love isn't a competition

If your pet seems to favor someone else, don't take it personally. Animals often form different kinds of bonds with different people. One may be the playmate, another the comfort source and another the snuggle partner. Instead of competing, focus on building your own connection. In the end, trust is often what turns a pet parent into a pet's person. *LL*

STEP BY STEP Daily walks do more than provide exercise. Consistent routines like walking, training and one-on-one time help build trust, strengthening the bond that often determines who a pet chooses as their favorite person.





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Beyond belly rubs

HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE BOND YOU SHARE WITH YOUR PET

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

Few relationships are as rewarding as the ones we share with our pets. They greet us after long days, comfort us through life's challenges and offer unwavering companionship. While that connection can feel effortless, strong bonds are built over time through trust, communication and everyday consistency. Whether welcoming a new puppy or spending years with a longtime companion, investing in that relationship leads to a happier, more confident pet and a deeper friendship.



BUILT ON TRUST
A strong bond with your pet is built through everyday moments of trust, consistency and positive reinforcement. Training sessions strengthen communication while helping pets feel confident, secure and connected to their favorite person.

Show up consistently

When it comes to building trust, consistency matters more than grand gestures. Pets thrive on routine, from regular mealtimes and daily walks to quiet moments spent together.

"Bond is built in everyday moments, not only in big gestures," says Carla Genther, hospital manager and veterinary assistant at Carolina Veterinary Critical Care. "Being consistently present and having routines can help pets feel secure."

Even simple rituals, like sharing your morning coffee routine or taking an evening walk, help create familiarity and strengthen connection.

Spend quality time together

Sharing space is not the same as spending meaningful time together. Daily interaction helps pets associate being with you as something positive and rewarding.

"Usually you strengthen that bond by spending quality time together every day," says Drew Kaufman, dog trainer and owner of Just a Walk In The Park. "Training, play, walks and consistency build trust and strengthen your relationship."

Whether tossing a ball, exploring a new trail or simply relaxing together, being fully present matters most.



PLAY BUILDS CONNECTION Playtime is more than simple entertainment. Interactive activities like tug-of-war help strengthen trust, build confidence and create positive experiences that deepen the bond between pets and the people they love most.

Learn their language

Pets communicate constantly through body language, and learning those signals helps strengthen trust. A relaxed body and soft eyes typically signal comfort, while lip licking, yawning, avoiding eye contact or stiff posture can indicate anxiety.

"Learning their body language and stress triggers helps pets feel understood and protected," Genther says.

When you recognize what your pet is communicating, the relationship becomes far more intuitive.

Train with kindness

Training is not just about teaching manners. It is one of the best ways to build confidence and strengthen teamwork. Short, positive sessions using praise, treats or play help pets understand expectations while reinforcing trust.

"Training, both obedience and behavior, helps pets build confidence and trust," Genther says.

Whether practicing basic commands or learning new tricks, each success builds a stronger connection.

Be their safe place

Pets rely on us not only for care, but also for protection and reassurance. Avoid forcing uncomfortable interactions with unfamiliar people or animals, and allow pets to approach new situations at their own pace. For dogs, especially, structure can help reduce stress and create confidence. When pets learn you understand their needs and advocate for their comfort, trust naturally deepens.

Appreciate the small moments

Some of the strongest bonds are built during ordinary daily routines. Brushing your dog, scratching your cat behind the ears, practicing nail care or simply talking to them throughout the day all reinforce connection.

The strongest relationships are not built overnight. They are created through thousands of small interactions that make pets feel safe, understood and loved. By showing up consistently, respecting their needs and making time for positive experiences, you build a friendship that lasts a lifetime. *LL*



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Friends or foes

Understanding the personalities, instincts and first impressions behind animal friendships

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

We've all seen it happen. Two dogs meet on a walk and instantly become best friends, tails wagging before they even reach each other. Then another dog appears, and suddenly the barking begins. Or maybe you bring home a new kitten, only to discover your longtime dog wants nothing to do with its energetic new roommate. It can be easy to assume pets are simply being stubborn or unfriendly, but that is rarely the case. Like people, animals have individual personalities, past experiences and preferences that shape how they respond to others. They are also highly skilled at reading signals humans often miss. While some friendships form instantly, others take time, patience and the right introduction.



FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER For animals, introductions begin long before contact. Through body language, scent and instinct, pets quickly assess whether a new companion feels safe, friendly or unfamiliar, often shaping the relationship within seconds.

They notice what we don't

Long before we notice another animal approaching, dogs have already gathered important information.

"Dogs usually read body language long before we do," says Drew Kaufman, dog trainer and owner of Just a Walk In The Park. "A dog's posture, movement or energy can make them seem friendly or threatening."

Dogs also rely heavily on scent, which helps them detect whether another animal feels familiar, nervous, confident or even healthy. Together these signals often explain why dogs seem to make instant decisions about new companions.



UNEXPECTED FRIENDSHIPS
Despite their reputation, cats and dogs are not natural enemies. With patience, proper introductions and time to understand each other's unique communication styles, many become trusted companions and lifelong friends.

Personality shapes friendships

Not every pet enjoys the same kind of company. Some dogs thrive around energetic playmates, while others prefer calm, predictable companions.

"Just like people, dogs tend to have preferences," Kaufman says. "Personality, energy and past experiences all matter."

Age matters too. A playful puppy may overwhelm an older dog, while shy or reserved pets can find overly social animals exhausting instead of enjoyable.

Home can create tension

Bringing a new pet into the household often creates stress, even when animals are otherwise friendly.

"Most of the time, what looks like dislike is actually a response to comfort, safety, communication or past experiences," says Carla Genther, hospital manager and veterinary assistant at Carolina Veterinary Critical Care.

One common issue is resource guarding, when pets become protective of food, toys or even their owner. Routine disruption can also create anxiety. Giving each pet separate space and allowing introductions to happen gradually can help ease the transition.

They communicate differently

Sometimes pets are not fighting. They are simply misunderstanding each other.

"Young animals can be overwhelming for seniors. Social animals can be viewed as rude by other pets and create distance," Genther says.

Dogs generally appreciate direct greetings, while cats often prefer slower introductions and more personal space. Even among dogs, some communicate politely, while others rush in too quickly, creating unnecessary tension.

Bad experiences leave lasting impressions

Pets remember unpleasant encounters, and those memories can shape future relationships.

"Dogs tend to make associations," Kaufman says. "One bad experience with a certain look or behavior can make them wary of similar dogs, but those opinions can change."

A frightening encounter with a large or overly aggressive dog may cause hesitation around similar animals for years. Fortunately, positive experiences can gradually build new trust. *LL*

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Forever in your heart

MEANINGFUL WAYS TO HONOR YOUR BELOVED PET AND CARRY THEIR MEMORY WITH YOU LONG AFTER THEY'RE GONE

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

The hardest part of losing a pet often isn't the final goodbye. It's the quiet moments afterward: the empty spot by the door, the morning walk that never happens, the jingling tags you instinctively listen for or the warm place beside you on the couch that's suddenly still.

They aren't "just a dog" or "just a cat." They are family, best friends, trusted companions and a constant source of unconditional love. When they're gone, the silence they leave behind can feel overwhelming.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and nothing completely takes away the pain. Time may soften the sharpest edges of loss, but love doesn't disappear. Many people find comfort, not by letting go of the relationship but by finding new ways to honor it. They may no longer walk beside you, but they'll always be part of the life they helped shape. Celebrating their life becomes another expression of the bond you'll always share.



Keep them close

Surround yourself with photos

Photographs allow us to revisit some of life's happiest moments. Print your favorites, and frame them throughout your home. Create a gallery wall or display a photo beside an urn or memorial space. You also can turn favorite images into photo books, scrapbooks, ornaments, blankets, pillows, jewelry or key chains. Some companies even engrave a tiny photograph inside a pendant or ring. Every image preserves another chapter of your life together.



©BAILEY GILLIAM

Commission a piece of artwork

A custom painting, sketch, watercolor, sculpture or digital illustration can become a beautiful tribute to your pet. Display it somewhere you'll see it every day and be reminded of the personality that made them so special. Unlike a photograph, commissioned artwork often captures an animal's spirit in a personal way, creating a keepsake that can be treasured for generations.

Memorial jewelry

For those who want to carry a piece of their pet wherever they go, memorial jewelry offers a meaningful option. Rings, necklaces and bracelets can incorporate a small amount of cremation ashes, fur or fabric from a favorite toy or bandana. Some artisans transform ashes into beautiful glass or resin stones, while others can even create laboratory-grown diamonds.



©PETALS AND KEEPSAKES

ALWAYS CLOSE Memorial jewelry offers a beautiful way to carry a beloved pet with you every day. Petals and Keepsakes handcrafts rings, necklaces and other keepsakes using a small amount of cremation ashes, fur or fabric.

Preserve their paw and nose prints

A pet's nose print is as unique as a human fingerprint, making it a one-of-a-kind keepsake. Kits allow you to safely capture the impression and preserve it as artwork, jewelry or a keychain. Paw prints are equally timeless. Create an ink print, press one into clay, or display it in a decorative frame. Many people also choose to incorporate a beloved paw print into a tattoo. Together these tiny impressions become lasting reminders of the friend who walked beside you through life.



ONE OF A KIND Just like a fingerprint, every dog's nose print is uniquely their own. Precious Metal Prints transforms that impression into handcrafted keepsakes.

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A cuddle when you need one

Sometimes you simply miss having something to hold. Several companies create remarkably lifelike stuffed animals modeled after your pet using photographs. Some include hidden pouches that can hold ashes, a lock of fur or another cherished keepsake. If a custom plush isn't within your budget, choosing a stuffed animal that resembles your pet's breed or coloring can provide unexpected comfort during difficult days.

Keep their story alive

Keep talking about them

One of the healthiest things you can do is simply keep talking about your pet. Share funny stories, laugh about their quirky habits, and remember the little things that made them unique. If a memory comes to mind, don't be afraid to say it out loud. Even if another pet eventually joins your family, your previous four-legged friend never has to disappear from the conversation. Saying things like, "Your big sister used to do that," or "He would have loved this," keeps them part of everyday life. Love isn't replaced. It simply grows.

Write to them

Whether shared with others or kept private in a journal, continuing the conversation can be surprisingly healing. Write letters to your pet, keep a journal filled with favorite memories, or even write an obituary celebrating their life. Some people continue writing to their pets for months or years, updating them on family milestones, vacations and everyday moments they wish they could still share. Talking with a therapist or joining a pet-loss support group can also be deeply healing. Pet loss is real grief. Don't let anyone convince you otherwise. They were part of your daily routines, your happiest moments and often your greatest source of comfort.

Celebrate them every year

Choose a meaningful day to honor your pet each year. It could be their birthday, adoption day or the anniversary of their passing. Visit their favorite walking trail, look through old photographs, prepare a special treat for your current pets in their honor, or simply spend time reflecting on the joy they brought into your life. Annual traditions gently transform grief into gratitude while ensuring their story continues to be told.



Honor their legacy

Create a special memorial space

Whether your pet is buried or cremated, having a dedicated place to remember them can bring peace. If they're buried, consider adding a personalized marker, flowers, a favorite tree or a bench nearby. Choose a spot where they loved to nap in the sunshine or watch birds. If you have their ashes, create a small memorial area inside your home with an urn, photographs, their collar, leash, favorite toy, blanket or their food bowl. It becomes a quiet place to visit whenever you're missing them.

Continue a favorite tradition

Some of the most meaningful tributes don't cost anything at all. If your dog loved sunrise walks on the beach, keep taking them. If your cat spent every afternoon napping in a sunny window, pause there for a few moments with a cup of coffee. Visit their favorite park, hike their favorite trail, or spend a few quiet minutes in the backyard where they loved to explore. Continuing a simple ritual is a gentle reminder that while routines change, love remains.

Give back in their honor

One of the most meaningful ways to celebrate your pet's legacy is by helping other animals. Make a donation in their name to a local shelter or rescue organization. Many veterinary hospitals and emergency clinics, including several throughout the Hilton Head area, maintain Angel Funds that help families facing unexpected veterinary emergencies. You can also volunteer at a shelter, walk dogs, foster animals in need, sponsor an adoption or donate food, toys, blankets and other supplies. Every act of kindness allows your pet's love to continue touching the lives of others.

A different kind of bond

Our relationships with our pets don't end when they take their final breath. The routines may change, but the bond remains. It simply becomes one carried in memories instead of moments. Whether you honor your friend with a favorite photograph, a handwritten letter, a memorial garden, an annual tradition or a quiet walk along their favorite trail, love has a remarkable way of outlasting loss. Their paw prints remain on our hearts long after their footprints disappear from the floor. Love doesn't end when a life does. It simply finds a new place to live. *LL*



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Finding the right fit

How to find a companion that fits your lifestyle and steals your heart

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

Bringing home a pet is one of life's most exciting decisions, but choosing the right companion takes more than falling for a fluffy face or wagging tail. The best matches happen when both your heart and your lifestyle are part of the decision. All animals have different needs, personalities and energy levels, and taking time to honestly evaluate your schedule, budget and living situation before adopting helps set both you and your future pet up for success.

"There isn't one right answer," says Carla Genther, hospital manager and veterinary assistant at Carolina Critical Veterinary Care. "Nothing can prepare you for the emotional connection you may feel when you look into an animal's eyes and realize they chose you just as much as you chose them. It can't really be put into words."

That connection matters, but so do practical considerations. Thinking through your lifestyle before meeting different animals helps ensure that when you find the one who steals your heart, you're ready to give them the life they deserve.





FIND YOUR PERFECT PACE If your idea of a great day includes hiking trails, neighborhood runs or long walks, an energetic dog can be the perfect partner.

Start with your lifestyle

Before visiting shelters or scrolling through adoptable pets online, take an honest look at your daily life. Consider how much time you can devote to training, exercise and companionship, whether your home has breed or size restrictions, whether you have young children or other pets and whether your budget comfortably covers food, grooming, routine veterinary care, boarding and unexpected emergencies. The best pet fits the life you have today, not the one you hope to have someday.

Personality matters more than breed

While certain breeds are known for specific characteristics, every animal is an individual. Two dogs of the same breed can have completely different personalities, and mixed-breed pets often combine wonderful traits from several breeds. Rather than focusing on appearance alone, look for a personality that complements your own. If you enjoy hiking, running or spending time outdoors, an energetic companion may be a great fit. If your favorite evenings are spent relaxing at home, an older or lower-energy pet might be a better match. Adult animals offer another advantage: Their personalities are already developed, making it easier to know whether they're playful, independent, cuddly or calm before bringing them home.



Be realistic about the commitment

It's easy to underestimate how much time and money a pet requires. Dogs need daily exercise, training, mental stimulation and companionship. Cats may be more independent, but they still benefit from regular interaction, enrichment and veterinary care. Small animals, birds and rabbits each have their own specialized housing, dietary and social needs. Adoption isn't just an emotional decision; it's a commitment that can last 10, 15 or even 30 years depending on the species. Cats commonly live 15 years or more, rabbits can reach a decade, and some birds remain beloved family members for several decades.



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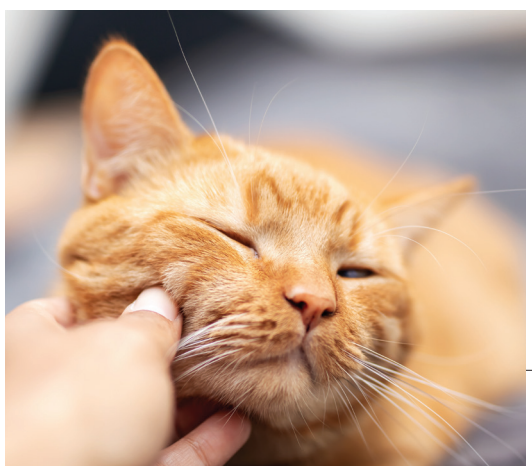
HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS Not every dog is built for nonstop adventure. If your happiest moments are spent reading, working from home or relaxing on the couch, a calm, lower-energy companion may be just the right fit.

Don't overlook the shelter matchmakers

Shelter employees and rescue volunteers spend every day getting to know the animals in their care. They often know the pets well enough to recommend companions whose personalities fit your household better than a brief visit ever could. Online resources can help narrow your search as well. Petfinder offers a matching quiz that considers your activity level, living situation, experience with pets, preferred size, age and energy level. There are no right or wrong answers, but honesty helps create a better match for both you and the animal.

Listen to both your head and your heart

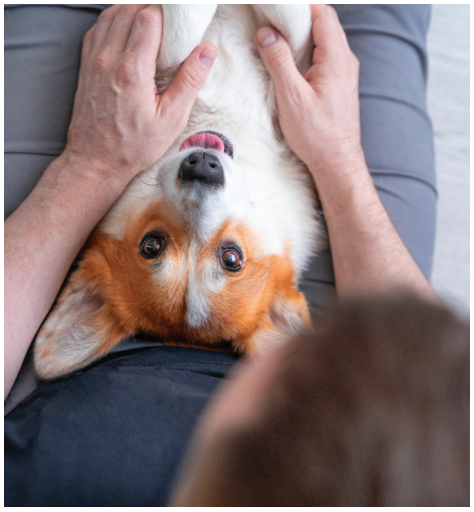
Finding the right pet isn't about discovering perfection. It's about balancing practical considerations with the connection you feel when you meet the right companion. Sometimes the pet you imagined isn't the one who comes home with you. The best matches happen when preparation meets instinct, creating a friendship that's built to last.



LOVE AT FIRST MEETING Sometimes the right pet isn't the one you expected. Meeting animals in person allows their personalities to shine and can reveal an unexpected connection.

THE 3-3-3 RULE

Bringing home a new pet is exciting, but it's also a major adjustment for both of you. Many shelters and rescue organizations use the 3-3-3 Rule as a general guide to help adopters understand what to expect during those first few months.



***FIRST 3 DAYS:* Decompress**

Your new pet is adjusting to an unfamiliar home, people and routine. They may hide, skip meals, have accidents or seem anxious. Keep things quiet, stick to a consistent schedule, and provide a safe place where they can retreat and relax.

***FIRST 3 WEEKS:* Build trust**

As your pet becomes more comfortable, their personality begins to emerge. Continue building trust through patience, positive reinforcement and consistent routines while allowing them to explore their new home at their own pace.

***FIRST 3 MONTHS:* Feel at home**

By now most pets have settled into their environment and formed stronger bonds with their family. Confidence grows, routines become familiar, and their true personality shines.

Every pet adjusts differently. Some settle in within days, while others need more time. Patience, consistency and understanding during those first few months can lay the foundation for years of trust, friendship and companionship. *LL*

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AUG Style

Summer, together

Easy, colorful looks for soaking up the last of the season with your favorite people

PHOTOS BY LISA STAFF
STYLED BY BAILEY GILLIAM

August always carries that familiar reminder to savor what summer has left to offer. There are still sunny afternoons to enjoy, spontaneous plans waiting to happen and plenty of reasons to gather with the people who make the season memorable. This month's looks embrace breezy fabrics, playful textures and colorful accessories designed for days spent out and about, whether that means brunch with friends, shopping around town or catching the last golden hours before sunset.



Hilton Head Island friends Katie Knowles & Jackie Wells-Lindstrom wearing ***Palmettoes***

Hot right now

August fashion is all about squeezing every last drop out of summer. Whether you are heading out on the boat, lounging poolside or planning one final beach escape, these local picks combine comfort, color and easygoing style made for the season's warmest adventures.





Make a splash

Pool days get an instant upgrade with ***Island Child's*** playful swim goggles. Glittering designs for girls and sporty styles for boys combine UV-protected lenses with plenty of personality, proving practical accessories can still make a statement.



Cast away

These Peter Millar swim trunks from ***John Bayley Clothier*** feature a subtle blue sunfish print inspired by life on the water. Quick-drying fabric keeps things comfortable all day, while pairing them with one of the store's soft cotton tees creates an easy look for dock days, cookouts and laid-back summer weekends.

Carry on

The Summer Fringe Tote from ***Evelyn & Arthur*** is made for warm-weather adventures. With oversized proportions, playful fringe detailing and embroidered summer lettering, it carries everything you need, whether the destination is the beach, a weekend getaway or everyday errands.





Made for shade

The upgraded Braided Fine Pressed Palm hat from ***Brims on the Bluff*** was built for long days under the Lowcountry sun. Lightweight, breathable and fully customizable, it delivers classic style while keeping you cool, from boat rides to afternoons around town.

GET THE LOOK

Mix, match, repeat

The smartest summer wardrobes are built around versatile pieces that work harder, pairing effortlessly together while standing strong on their own. This collection proves that a handful of thoughtfully chosen staples can create endless outfit combinations, making packing lighter, getting dressed easier and every purchase go further.



BOLD PERSPECTIVE
The Foxglove sunglasses by L.A. Eyeworks, available at ***Eyeland Optique***, bring instant personality to any outfit.



STEP INTO SUMMER
These white T-bar slingback sandals from ***Maggie & Me*** by OluKai deliver the kind of comfort that keeps up all day without sacrificing style.

MATCH GAME
This coordinated tank-and-skort set from ***Outside Hilton Head*** strikes the perfect balance between statement piece and everyday essential.



BAG IT UP
This woven carryall from ***Gifted*** blends everyday function with standout style.

Hilton Head Island's Jackie Wells-Lindstrom wearing Outside Hilton Head (2-piece set), Gifted (bag), Eyeland Optique (sunglasses), Maggie & Me (shoes)

Simple swaps

SAME PIECES, STYLED TWO NEW WAYS

A great wardrobe is not about owning more. It is about making the most of what you already have. With a few thoughtful changes, the same core pieces can create completely different outfits, proving that versatility is one of the smartest investments in any closet.



Swap the top

Swap the floral tank for this light blue chambray top from Evelyn & Arthur for a look that feels more relaxed and classic. The soft denim-inspired fabric balances the skort's bold print while adding effortless polish. Clip on the crossbody strap to the Gifted carryall, and suddenly you have an easy outfit made for shopping, sightseeing or lunch with friends.



Denim does it

Trade the skort for Spartina 449's cuffed wide-leg jeans to instantly shift the outfit into something more refined. The denim grounds the floral top, creating an easy transition into cooler evenings and early fall. For the finishing touch, remove the coordinating pouch from the Gifted tote, and carry it solo as a sleek clutch that pulls the entire look together.



TRUE BLUE
This denim-colored top from ***Evelyn & Arthur*** is proof that a simple shirt can become a wardrobe MVP.



EVERYDAY DENIM
Wide-leg cropped jeans from ***Spartina 449*** offer a fresh take on a timeless staple.

Local Love



FISHY FISHY

This 100% cotton dish towel features a playful fish pattern—the perfect gift for the host on the water!

Available at Forsythe Jewelers



IT'S A PUZZLEMENT

This set of 1,000-piece puzzles makes for a great gift for anyone looking to activate their brain.

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A CUT ABOVE

Some friends have a gift for making every gathering feel special. This August celebrate them with the launch of Le Cookery's new personalized serving board collection. Custom engraved with a family name, monogram or special message.

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This bread warmer is perfect for any baker in your life. It features a nature-inspired, hand carved design and handwoven basket, making every piece one of a kind.

Available at Hilton Head Oils and Balsamics





BURN BRIGHTLY

Gift a friend something from the Lowcountry with this locally made candle. Each candle features a coastal scent and is poured into a collectible cocktail glass designed to be reused.

Available at Pyramids

DRINK IT UP

Perfect for any fan of mahjong, this collection of drink tumblers features a bright mahjong-inspired pattern. These cups are available in a variety sizes, making it ideal for any occasion.

Available at Gifted



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10-MINUTE HISTORY

Bound by history

Five remarkable friendships that helped shape Beaufort County across generations

STORY BY RICHARD THOMAS

Richard Thomas is an owner and guide for Hilton Head History Tours and is the author of Backwater Frontier: Beaufort Country, at the Forefront of American History.

History is often remembered through wars, politics and turning points, but behind many of Beaufort County's defining moments are friendships built on trust, loyalty and shared purpose. Across generations, these remarkable relationships helped shape the Lowcountry in ways still felt today.

Dr. Henry Woodward and Chief Orista

The bond between Dr. Henry Woodward and Chief Orista is one of the earliest known and most significant relationships in the history of colonial South Carolina. Long before the founding of Charles Town in 1670 or Beaufort in 1711, this relationship helped establish peaceful contact between English settlers and the Native peoples of the Port Royal Sound region.

In 1666 Captain Robert Sandford led an English expedition to explore the coast of what would later become South Carolina. Accompanying him was Dr. Woodward, a young surgeon from Barbados. Exploring upriver after entering Port Royal Sound, the English encountered the Orista, the most powerful of the Cusabo peoples and one of the principal Native groups of the area. Despite enmity with the Spanish 100 years earlier, rather than meeting in conflict, the two sides developed a connection based on diplomacy and mutual curiosity.

As a sign of friendship and trust, Chief Orista agreed to an exchange of representatives. A close relative of the chief would travel with the English to learn their language and customs, while Woodward would remain among the Orista people. The chief honored Woodward from the beginning, seating him beside him in council, providing him with land to cultivate and placing members of his own family in charge of Woodward's care, indicating that Woodward had been accepted into his circle of trust and influence.



Living among the Orista allowed Woodward to learn Native languages, customs and political traditions. The trust he earned allowed him to move comfortably between Native and English societies and later enabled him to become Carolina's most important interpreter, trader and diplomat with Native nations. Chief Orista understood that Native peoples of the Port Royal Sound region were caught between expanding Spanish influence from Florida and emerging English interests from Barbados and Charles Town. By cultivating ties with the English, he gained access to a potential ally at a time when Indigenous communities were navigating the competing influences of European powers.

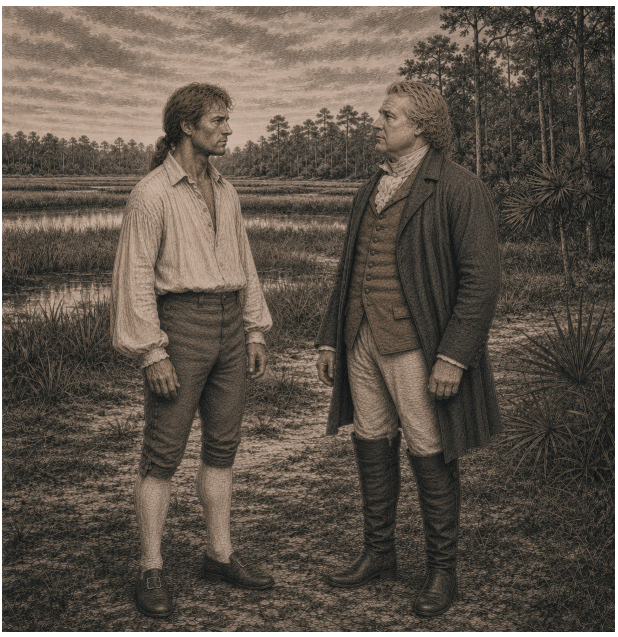
The friendship and trust established between Woodward and Orista helped open channels of communication that would influence the development of the Carolina colony and remain one of the foundational stories of the Lowcountry's colonial beginnings.

James Doharty and Richard Pendarvis

The relationship between Captain James Doharty and Captain Richard Pendarvis tells the story of a friendship torn apart by the Revolutionary War in the Beaufort District. It serves as an example of how the war in the South Carolina Lowcountry was much less a conflict between armies than a civil war among neighbors, friends and even families.

Before the Revolution, Doharty and Pendarvis appear to have been close friends and neighboring landowners and planters. Both were prominent men and socially active throughout the May River-Hilton Head-Beaufort region and were widely considered to be good friends. Before hostilities reached the area, Doharty, the son of a British subaltern, took an active role in the local militia at age 17 and by 1775 was considered a skilled guerrilla fighter. He later became a leading Patriot militia officer south of the Broad River in Beaufort District. Pendarvis, a descendant of one of the earliest settling families in the Carolina colony, emerged as one of the area's most active Loyalists, earning the nickname "Tory Dick."

As British forces gained control of much of the Lowcountry after the fall of Charleston in 1780, tensions between the two men escalated. Contemporary accounts describe exchanges of threats and challenges between



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them. According to later family and local histories, "many messages of defiance" passed between Pendarvis and Doharty before their final confrontation. The climax came at Doharty's plantation on Bear Island near Pinckney Island — traditionally accepted as being in present-day Colleton River Plantation, though recent scholarship indicates it may have been on the Skull Creek coast of Hilton Head Island. In late 1780, hearing Doharty had returned home for Christmas, Pendarvis and a party of Loyalists rode to Doharty's plantation.

What happened next depends on which side told the story. Loyalist accounts claimed Doharty and his companions ambushed the Tories first, killing one man and wounding another, after which the Loyalists returned fire and killed Doharty. Based on eyewitness accounts from people in hiding, Patriots maintained that the Loyalists had come specifically to kill Doharty and shot him on his front steps after he came out to meet the approaching party. Regardless of the details, James Doharty was killed, and Richard Pendarvis, the commander, was considered accountable.

Doharty's death sparked a cycle of retaliatory incidents typical of the partisan warfare that ravaged the Lowcountry. Four months later, Doharty's nephew, Captain John Leacraft, led a Patriot raiding party of Hilton Head militia known as the "Bloody Legion" to Pendarvis's plantation on May River Neck. They shot and killed Richard Pendarvis in front of his home and grieving wife, then carried away his horses and firearms. Three more incidents followed, and their story demonstrates how the Revolution in the Beaufort District became intensely personal. In many ways, their friendship-turned-feud is among the clearest examples of the Revolutionary War's tragic divisions in Beaufort County.

Robert Woodward Barnwell and Ralph Waldo Emerson

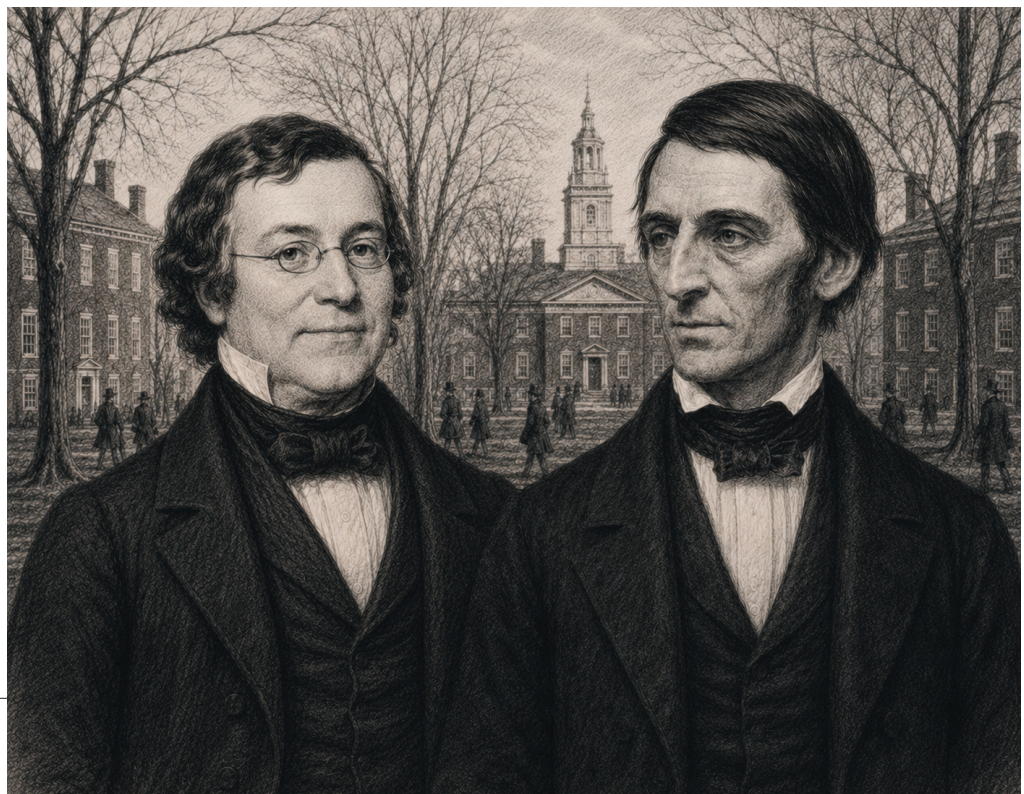
Robert Woodward Barnwell of Beaufort and Ralph Waldo Emerson of Boston first met during their years at Harvard in the early 1820s, and their close friendship became an enduring example of how intellectual respect could transcend regional and political differences in antebellum America.

Barnwell arrived at Harvard as a member of one of South Carolina's most prominent Lowcountry families. Brilliant, well-educated and exceptionally gifted as an orator, he quickly earned a reputation as one of the most distinguished students in the Class of 1821. Emerson, then a young scholar developing the ideas that would later make him America's leading philosopher and essayist, was deeply impressed by Barnwell's intellect. In his journals and later recollections, Emerson praised Barnwell's eloquence and the powerful impression he made upon classmates.

Part of Emerson's fascination stemmed from Barnwell's background. To many New England students, Southern planters represented a culture that seemed both intriguingly exotic and excessively aristocratic. Barnwell embodied a confidence, refinement and classical education associated with the Lowcountry elite. Emerson was fascinated by the vivid differences between Northern and Southern society and saw Barnwell as perhaps the most impressive representative of the South he encountered at Harvard.

Their relationship was rooted primarily in scholarship, conversation and mutual admiration. Both men possessed keen intellects and broad interests in history, literature, politics and public affairs. After graduation, Barnwell returned to South Carolina, where he became one of the state's leading political figures, serving in Congress, the United States Senate and later the Confederate Senate. Emerson remained in New England and emerged as the leading voice of Transcendentalism, advocating individual conscience and eventually becoming an outspoken critic of slavery. Notably, they maintained contact and followed one another's careers even as their lives took dramatically different paths.

These political differences could easily have destroyed their relationship. Instead, the bond endured because it had been built upon personal respect rather than political agreement. It also connected the intellectual world of Beaufort's planter aristocracy with the literary and philosophical culture Emerson would help define in nineteenth-century America. Emerson never forgot the brilliant young Beaufort scholar he had known at Harvard, and Barnwell highly valued his ongoing connection to one of America's most influential thinkers.





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Laura Towne and Ellen Murray

Laura Matilda Towne and Ellen Murray shared one of the most influential partnerships in Beaufort County during and after the Civil War. Both women were Northern abolitionists who believed formerly enslaved people deserved not only freedom, but also education, opportunity and the means to build independent lives.

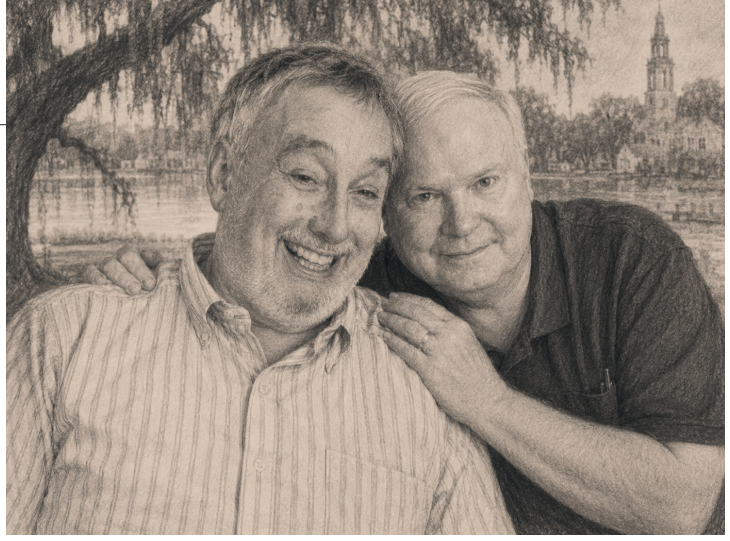
In 1862, following the Union occupation of the Sea Islands during the Port Royal Experiment, and at the request of Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, Towne traveled to St. Helena Island with a group of missionaries to teach freed people. Shortly after arriving and recognizing the enormous need, she invited her close friend Ellen Murray to join her. Together they established a small school in a room at The Oaks plantation house on St. Helena Island. That school soon grew into the Penn School, one of the first and most successful educational institutions in the South dedicated to educating formerly enslaved African Americans.

They openly recognized how their talents complemented one another. Towne was an organizer, fundraiser, administrator and often a provider of medical care, while Murray was a dedicated and accomplished teacher and educational leader. Both shared a deep commitment to racial equality and community service. Unlike many Northern missionaries who left after the war, Towne and Murray remained in Beaufort County for the rest of their lives.

In 1867 they purchased the former Frogmore Plantation, where they lived and worked together for nearly four decades. Their relationship was marked by extraordinary mutual devotion. Towne once wrote to Murray, "I shall be weak apart," reflecting the depth of their personal and professional bond. Together they educated generations of students, trained teachers, provided medical care to island residents, helped freedmen secure land and legal rights, supported community health and welfare efforts and raised several African American children in their household. For many residents of St. Helena Island, Towne and Murray became trusted advisers as well as educators.

The two women often sacrificed financially to keep Penn School operating, sometimes working without pay, and contributed their own resources to sustain the institution. When Towne died in 1901, Murray continued leading the school until her own death in 1908. Today Towne and Murray are remembered as co-founders of what is now the Penn Center. Their lifelong friendship and shared dedication to education left a lasting impact on Beaufort County and helped create one of the most important educational and cultural institutions in African-American history.





Pat Conroy and Bernie Schein

Southern literary history has rarely, if ever, seen a friendship like that between Pat Conroy and Bernie Schein. Their bond began in the early 1960s when they met as teenagers at Beaufort High School. They came from very different backgrounds. Conroy was the son of a Marine officer whose family moved frequently, while Schein was a native Beaufort resident from a Jewish family that had lived in the area for many years. They quickly discovered they shared a sense of humor, intellectual curiosity and a willingness to challenge conventional thinking.

From the beginning, the two became inseparable friends. Bound by intellectual curiosity, they spent countless hours discussing books, sports, politics, history, race relations, teaching and the complexities of life in the South. Both young men were deeply interested in literature and social justice, and both were willing to question the traditions and prejudices that characterized much of the South during the Civil Rights era. These shared values helped create a friendship that would last for more than half a century.

As adults, their lives followed parallel paths. Both became educators and writers, and Conroy would achieve international fame through bestselling books such as *The Great Santini*, *The Prince of Tides* and *The Water Is Wide*. Through all of Conroy's success, Schein remained one of his closest confidantes and one of the few people who knew him long before he became a literary celebrity. Schein witnessed firsthand many of the painful family struggles that later inspired Conroy's writing, including the turbulent relationship with his father that became the foundation for *The Great Santini*.

Their friendship was not without challenges. Like many lifelong companions, they experienced disagreements, periods of tension and estrangements. There were long stretches when they did not speak. Yet their mutual affection and loyalty always proved stronger than their conflicts. Schein described Conroy as passionate, generous, emotional and intensely devoted to those he loved. Conroy described Schein as outrageously funny and a gifted storyteller. Despite Conroy's fame, their relationship remained rooted in the same friendship that began on a Beaufort basketball court decades earlier.

Following Conroy's death in 2016, Schein memorialized their remarkable relationship in his memoir, *Pat Conroy: Our Lifelong Friendship*. The book portrays not only a celebrated author but also the private man behind the public image and a friendship that endured through adolescence, adulthood, triumphs, disappointments and the passage of more than fifty years. *LL*

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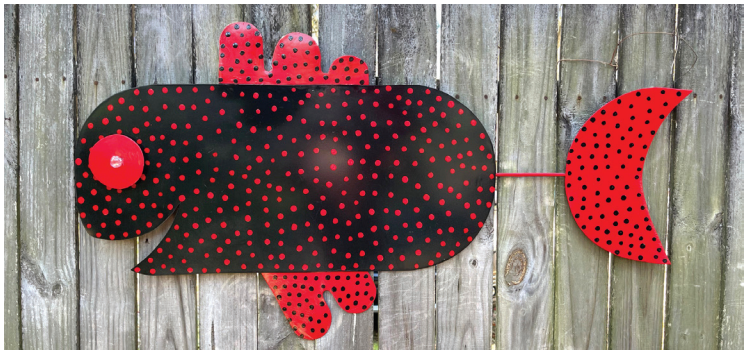




Where the wild things are

GARY ALEXANDER'S METAL MENAGERIE

STORY + PHOTOGRAPHY
BY CAROLYN MALES



© LA PETITE GALLERIE

"I'm not an artist," Gary Alexander insists. "I'm just a person who dabbles in metal." I would beg to differ. Strongly. "I've always loved art, but I can't draw a straight line," he adds, reacting to my hand held up in protest. And the latter may be true, but looking at Alexander's metal menagerie, I'm thinking that maybe there's a certain freedom that comes when one detaches from the word "art." In a way, it frees you to experiment and create something brilliant and wild.

Speaking of wild, we are standing in Alexander's Sun City garage, where a huge steel frog is splayed across the concrete floor, his ball-bearing eyes gazing up at me with a satisfied look on his weld-button patterned face. And why not? He's got his dinner: a fly outlined in metal piping that he's captured on his long, silvery tongue. Plus, he's dining in excellent company. Nearby a large angler fish, a denizen of the deep sea, is in search of her next meal. Her lure — think of it as a fishing pole emerging from her forehead — dangles in front of an open mouth lined with spiky teeth, "angling" for shrimp or whatever tasty aquatic morsel crosses her path. Alexander has fashioned the angler's lure in two parts: the illicium (or pole) from a long pipe and the esca (or the glowing bulb at its end) from an old spoon with a bicycle chain-embellished handle and polished ball bearing.



Now we head back to what I would call his studio or workshop, but which he simply calls "his room." Wall pieces — an owl fashioned from saw blades with a tail made of bent forks, a butterfly patterned with bike chains, along with an assortment of other creatures of air and water — oversee the tools of his trade: grinders, welding machines, drill presses, compressors, sanders, vises, sheet metal, odds and ends of piping, and cuttings, all neat and organized. ("I can't work in clutter. I'm constantly cleaning up," Alexander declares.) It's here that I encounter his newest sculpture: a large bee hovering over three flowers. What's fascinating is that while the flower petals and leaves are made of polished cut steel, the bee's head, wings, thorax and abdomen are crafted from bicycle chains.

Here's where we stop and delve into the backstory of how Alexander's retirement career in metal sculpture came about. One could say it all started with biking.

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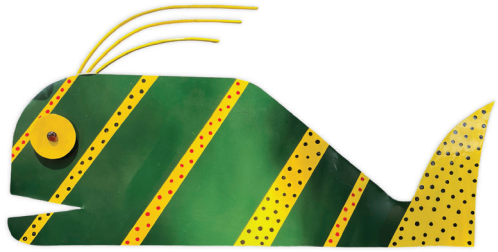
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[LOCAL Life] You're a transplanted Bostonian with a career as an engineer in manufacturing. How did you end up as a sculptor?

[Gary Alexander] About 14 years ago I was biking over a bridge on the grounds of a bio lab in Boston when something glittery caught my eye. I stopped to look and saw it was a sculpture of a dragonfly. Its body was made of blown glass and the rest of it from bronze. And I thought, what if I could do something like this? I began by making bees out of mahogany and little pieces of metal. Then I went on to make large figures of men and women out of scavenged propane tanks. And I made a whale from 18 of them. While my work was never in a gallery, people came by and bought them.

"I am not an artist."



© LA PETITE GALLERIE

[LL] And after you retired and moved down here?

[GA] One day I got to talking to Peggy Duncan at La Petite Gallerie in Bluffton and she said, "I have a little garden here at the gallery. Why don't you put some sculptures out there?" I made bees, herons, dragonflies and horses and sold them.

[LL] I see you've got a dragonfly in progress on your workbench. How do you decide what to make?

[GA] I came in and wanted to do something, but I didn't know what I wanted to do. So I was going through my scrap heap — leftovers from projects — and I saw this piece of square tubing. "I said, Let's work with that, and I began cutting it up. Then I found another piece of tubing. Dragonfly eyes sit at an angle, so I cut it at an angle and used ball bearings for the eyeballs."

[LL] Obviously, you know something about the anatomy of your creatures, and I would guess, even as fanciful as they are, you're working from references.

[GA] Whether you're working on a dragonfly or a frog or a bee, you've got to have some concept of it. I learn about them from books or by watching videos on YouTube or surfing the internet.

[LL] Recently I stepped into the garden at La Petite Gallerie and — whoa (pardon the equine interjection) — I pulled up short in front of these two big metal horses "grazing" among the greenery. Their bodies were made of gears and triangles of metal, while their heads, manes and tails were fashioned from bicycle chains. About those bicycle chains ...

[GA] I'm a serious biker. Every day I get up and bike for a couple of hours, and then I do this. [He gestures toward his workbench and machinery.] I rack up between 8,000 and 10,000 miles a year.



[LL] And you and your wife, Lois, have biked across the country. Twice!

[GA] We did one bike trip back in 2017 and another two years ago. The first time we biked diagonally across the country. The last one, we did the northern route into Canada, to Boston and down the East Coast to our house. Then last summer I biked the Great Divide right down the spine of the Rockies, which starts in Banff, Canada, and ends in Antelope Wells, New Mexico. It's mountain biking. No roads and 198,000 feet of elevation gain. And it's absolutely stunning. It took me 66 days.

Before I leave, Alexander introduces me to more members of his metallic kingdom: larger-than-life spiders, eagles in flight, egrets, a rabbit mid-hop, a dog, a mermaid and, yes, a dragon. As I head out, I think Alexander may shrug off the title artist, but the beauty, whimsy and boldness of his creations linger long after we say goodbye. *LL*







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LOCAL ART & POETRY

summer of the push mower

& the mediocre slash-job
i perform for house owners

on the lower portions of their backyards,
where they cannot spy how i've shorn the grass

like a child's head who forgets to speak back properly
to his father after opening his eyes during prayer.

wreathed in sweat, I march and schlep
the mower, its motor sputtering like skillet grease.

i beseech neighbors for ten dollars
to defile their lawns with rust-baptized blades.

all that's left behind are dandelions
growing too close to stumps and shallow ditches.

i mourn to raze anything that grows so wild.

— Evelyn Berry

This poem originally appeared in Day Job Journal and later was published in Grief Slut (Sundress, 2024)



Dandelions In the Way by **Pearl Mintzer**



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WHAT'S FRESH IN AUGUST?

More zing than sting

Banana peppers offer the perfect balance of sweetness, tang and versatility

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM



Few peppers work harder in the kitchen than the banana pepper. Found everywhere from deli sandwiches and pizzas to salads and jars of pickled vegetables, this bright yellow favorite has earned its place, thanks to its mild heat, tangy flavor and impressive versatility. Named for their curved shape and sunny color, these peppers gradually ripen to shades of orange and red as they mature. Peak harvest season runs from June through September, making August one of the best times to enjoy them fresh. Whether eaten raw, pickled, sautéed or stuffed, they deliver plenty of flavor without overwhelming heat.



LOCAL LIFE TEST KITCHEN

Pork-stuffed banana peppers

If your garden is overflowing with banana peppers, this savory recipe offers the perfect way to put them to use. Filled with seasoned pork and pan-fried until beautifully golden, these tender peppers transform a simple harvest into a bold, satisfying meal packed with flavor.

INGREDIENTS (peppers)

6-8 banana peppers
1 tablespoon oil
Pinch of salt

INGREDIENTS (pork filling)

1/2 pound ground pork
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon shallot, finely chopped
1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon breadcrumbs
1 egg yolk
1 teaspoon soy sauce
1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
Salt and black pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS [1] Wash the banana peppers and slice them lengthwise. Remove the seeds and membranes, leaving the stem intact. **[2]** In a bowl, combine the ground pork, garlic, shallot, parsley, breadcrumbs, egg yolk, soy sauce, sesame oil, salt and black pepper. Mix well until everything is evenly incorporated. **[3]** Spoon the pork mixture into each pepper half, pressing gently to fill. Do not overfill. **[4]** Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the stuffed peppers, filling side down, and cook for 4-5 minutes until the filling is golden brown and the pepper begins to soften. Flip and cook for another 3-4 minutes until the peppers are tender and the pork is cooked through. **[5]** Transfer to a plate and serve hot with steamed rice, dipping sauce or a squeeze of lime.

Pro tip: *You can prepare the filling in advance and refrigerate for up to 24 hours before stuffing and frying.*



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Pickled Hot Banana Peppers

Pickling is one of the most popular ways to preserve banana peppers, allowing their tangy flavor to shine long after harvest season ends. This recipe also works for Hungarian, chili and jalapeño peppers.

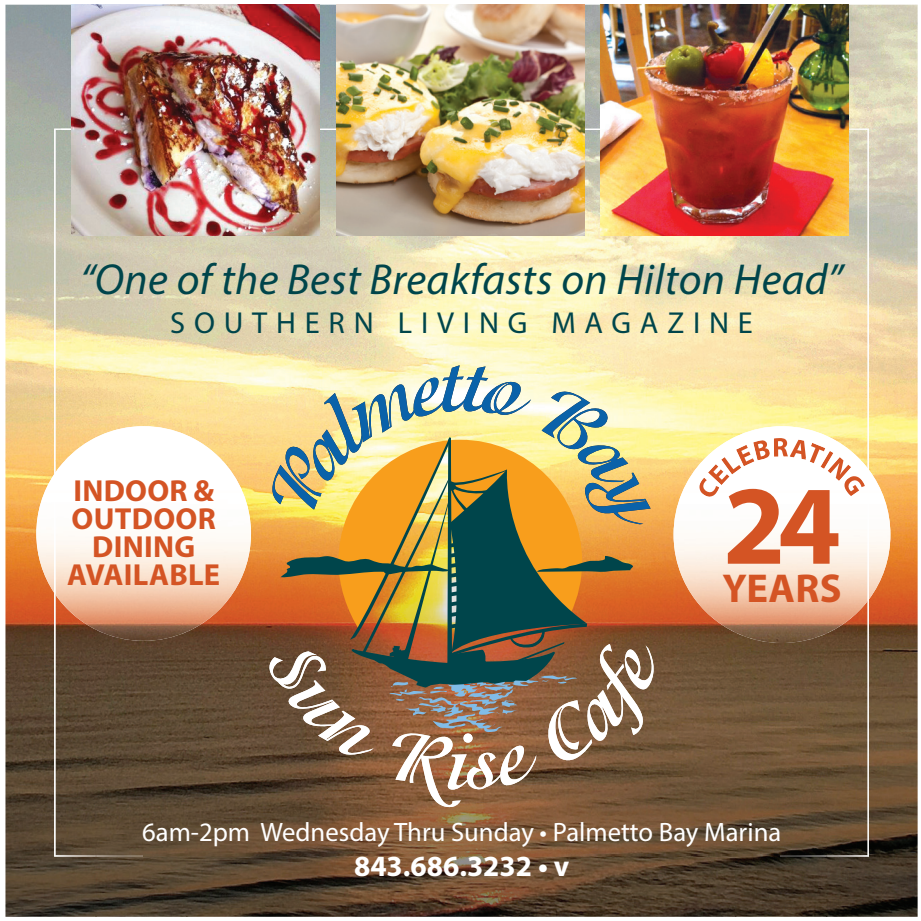
INGREDIENTS

4 pounds fresh banana peppers
5 cups white vinegar (5% acidity)
1 cup water
4 teaspoons canning or pickling salt
2 tablespoons sugar
2 cloves garlic

DIRECTIONS [1] Wash peppers thoroughly. Remove stems and slice peppers into rings, or leave small peppers whole and cut two to four slits in each pepper to allow the brine to penetrate. **[2]** Pack peppers firmly into hot, sterilized jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. **[3]** Combine vinegar, water, salt, sugar and garlic in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove and discard the garlic cloves. **[4]** Pour the hot pickling liquid over the peppers, maintaining 1/2-inch head space. Remove air bubbles and adjust head space if needed. Wipe jar rims, apply lids and bands, and tighten to fingertip tight. [5] Process pint or half-pint jars in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes. [6] Remove jars and let cool undisturbed for 12 to 24 hours. Check seals before storing in a cool, dark place.

Know your peppers

Though often confused, banana peppers and pepperoncini are entirely different varieties. Traditional sweet banana peppers have smooth skin, subtle sweetness and very little heat, typically topping out around 500 Scoville Heat Units. Pepperoncini have thinner, wrinkled skin and a tangier bite with slightly more heat. Not all banana peppers are mild, however. Certain hot banana pepper varieties offer the same familiar shape and color but deliver significantly more kick, often reaching 5,000 to 10,000 Scoville Heat Units. Another commonly mistaken relative is the Hungarian wax pepper, which looks nearly identical but is usually much spicier and favored in dishes that call for more serious heat.







A pepper's journey

Like all peppers, banana peppers trace their roots to Central and South America, where peppers have been cultivated for thousands of years. After European explorers introduced peppers abroad, growers in Hungary began experimenting with new varieties, eventually helping shape the banana pepper we know today. Introduced to the United States in 1932, its mild flavor, thick walls and easy-growing nature quickly made it a favorite in backyard gardens. Before long, it was topping pizzas, filling sandwiches and earning a permanent place among America's favorite pickled toppings.

More than flavor

Low in calories but surprisingly nutrient-dense, these colorful peppers bring more to the plate than tang and crunch. They deliver fiber along with vitamins A, C, B6 and K, plus potassium, calcium and folate. Their vitamin C content helps support immune health, while capsaicin, the compound behind a pepper's heat, has been linked to improved metabolism and better digestive health. In other words, banana peppers add flavor, color and a small nutritional boost without weighing down a meal.



Picking perfection

When shopping for banana peppers, look for ones that feel firm, crisp and glossy, with smooth skin and vibrant color. Avoid peppers that appear soft, wrinkled or dull, as these are signs they may be past their prime. While most are harvested and sold yellow, peppers allowed to ripen to orange or red tend to develop a sweeter, slightly richer flavor. To keep them fresh longer, store them in the refrigerator's crisper drawer, where they typically stay in peak condition for up to two weeks.

Grow your own

Easy to grow and highly productive, banana peppers are a favorite among home gardeners for good reason. According to Clemson Cooperative Extension, these warm-weather plants thrive in full sun and well-drained soil, making them especially well suited for summer gardens across the Lowcountry. Space plants about 12 inches apart, water consistently, and add mulch to help retain moisture during hot stretches. Under ideal conditions, plants begin producing peppers in as little as 70 to 85 days, with regular harvesting encouraging even more growth. Popular varieties include Sweet Banana, Banana Supreme and Key Largo.

The spice of life

Few ingredients offer as much versatility as the banana pepper. Balancing brightness, crunch and just enough heat, these colorful peppers have become a favorite ingredient for cooks looking to enhance everyday meals. Fresh slices bring crisp texture to sandwiches and salads, pickled rings brighten burgers and pizzas, and their sturdy walls make them ideal for stuffing with cheeses, meats and savory spreads. Whether grilled, roasted, sautéed, pickled or enjoyed straight from the garden, these peppers prove that big flavor does not require serious heat. *LL*





MICHAEL ANTHONY'S CUCINA ITALIANA

Tre Porcellini Pizza

Chef Will Overacre shares this crowd-pleasing pizza topped with three pork favorites and a generous helping of banana peppers. The peppers add just the right amount of tangy brightness to balance the rich sausage, bacon and pepperoni.

INGREDIENTS

1 personal pizza dough of choice (about 8-10 inches)
1/2 cup pepperoni slices
1/3 cup Pomodoro sauce (available at Michael Anthony's)
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
1/2 cup sausage, cooked and crumbled
1/4 cup bacon, cooked and chopped
1/4 cup sliced banana peppers
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan or pecorino cheese
1 teaspoon chopped parsley

DIRECTIONS [1] Prepare dough according to package directions. **[2]** Spread the Pomodoro sauce over the dough, leaving a small border around the edge. Top with mozzarella, sausage, pepperoni, bacon and banana peppers. **[3]** Bake according to package directions or until the crust is golden and the cheese is bubbly. For a restaurant-quality finish, top with freshly grated Parmesan or pecorino and a light sprinkle of chopped parsley to add savory depth and a pop of fresh color.

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RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Local flavor: Best friends edition

THE RECIPES AND INGREDIENTS THAT PROVE GREAT MEALS START WITH GREAT PARTNERSHIPS

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

Like great friendships, the best food pairings make each other better. Peanut butter and jelly. Tomatoes and basil. Olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Some ingredients seem destined to share a plate, balancing flavors, textures and aromas in ways that create something greater than the sum of their parts. This month we're celebrating those culinary best friends through favorite local recipes, classic flavor combinations, expert tips and the delicious science behind why certain foods belong together.



THE PURPLE COW

Fried PB&J

A peanut butter and jelly sandwich is already one of America's favorite comfort foods. At The Purple Cow, owner ***Lisa Bernstein*** took the childhood classic one delicious step further by dipping it in batter and frying it until golden brown. The result is one of the restaurant's signature desserts, with a crisp exterior giving way to warm, gooey peanut butter and sweet grape jelly. It's nostalgic, unexpected and guaranteed to bring out your inner kid. "We had a fryer in the original location and needed a hot item on the menu to qualify for a liquor license," Bernstein says. "I love PB&J, so I thought, why not fry it? We also did fried mac and cheese balls and fried grilled cheese with tomato soup."

INGREDIENTS

Vegetable oil, for frying
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup whole milk
2 eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 slices bread (white, sourdough or your favorite variety)
2-3 tablespoons All Natural Jif peanut butter
2-3 tablespoons Smucker's Grape Jelly
Powdered sugar, for dusting



DIRECTIONS [1] Heat 2 to 3 inches of vegetable oil in a heavy pan to 375 degrees. **[2]** In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. **[3]** In a separate bowl, whisk together the milk, eggs and vanilla. Add the dry ingredients, and whisk until smooth. **[4]** Spread the peanut butter on one slice of bread and the jelly on the other. Assemble the sandwich, remove the crusts and gently pinch the edges together to help seal the filling. **[5]** Dip the sandwich into the batter until fully coated, allowing any excess batter to drip off. **[6]** Carefully lower the sandwich into the hot oil, and fry for 2 to 3 minutes per side, or until golden brown. **[7]** Drain briefly, dust with powdered sugar and serve warm.



AMERICA'S FAVORITE SANDWICH

Few sandwiches are as iconic as peanut butter and jelly. The combination balances creamy, salty peanut butter with sweet fruit preserves, creating a simple meal that's satisfying, portable and requires no cooking. The first published peanut butter and jelly recipe appeared in 1901 in the Boston Cooking School Magazine of Culinary Science and Domestic Economics. The sandwich became a household staple after World War II, when peanut butter, grape jelly and sliced bread were all included in U.S. military rations. Returning soldiers helped make PB&J a lunchbox favorite, a title it still holds more than a century later.



OTHER FUN WAYS TO ENJOY PB&J

Cookies: *Bake thumbprint cookies filled with jelly, then drizzle with melted peanut butter.*

French toast: *Stuff a sandwich with peanut butter and jelly, dip it in an egg mixture, and cook like French toast.*

Waffles: *Spread peanut butter and jelly between two waffles for an easy breakfast.*

Milkshake: *Blend vanilla ice cream, peanut butter and a spoonful of grape jelly.*

Banana bites: *Sandwich peanut butter between banana slices, and drizzle with warm jelly.*

Oatmeal: *Stir peanut butter into hot oatmeal and swirl in your favorite jam.*

Yogurt parfait: *Layer vanilla yogurt with granola, peanut butter and berry preserves.*

Ice cream topping: *Warm peanut butter and jelly separately, and drizzle over vanilla ice cream.*



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WHAT THE PROS LOVE

We asked local chefs and restaurateurs to share their favorite culinary BFFs.




OKÀN BLUFFTON

"My favorite pairing is a little crazy: I love ramen with spicy beef jerky. I cut the jerky into small pieces and add it to the broth while I'm making the ramen. The key is not to overcook the noodles. I pour out some of the broth because I don't like it too soupy. Then I add garlic, lime, Cajun seasoning, a smidge of butter and bam! Pair that with a fruity mezcalrita, and you've got the perfect late-night summer meal."

— Chef Bernard Bennett



TRUFFLES CAFÉ

"A BLT made with fresh summer tomatoes is the perfect Sunday lunch."

— Price Beall



RUSSO'S FRESH SEAFOOD

"Oysters, caviar and Champagne. They complement each other beautifully on the palate."

— Charles Russo



CACTUS STREET CANTINA

"Steak and potatoes. It's not something I ever make for myself, so it's always a treat when I order it."

— Tracy Wilson



MICHAEL ANTHONY'S CUCINA ITALIANA

"I'm a big fan of extremely spicy hot wings with an ice-cold, juicy IPA. IPAs are highly carbonated and slightly acidic, so the effervescence scrubs your palate, cutting through the rich fat of deep-fried chicken skin and buttery buffalo sauce. The robust hop flavors provide a bold, aromatic contrast to the tangy buffalo sauce."

— Chef Will Overacre

SIGNATURE DISH

Sage Sausage & Chèvre Quesadillas

A SAVORY FUSION OF MEXICAN COMFORT AND FRENCH FLAIR



Everyone has a go-to recipe — the one family and friends request again and again. Each month our Signature Dish celebrates one of those favorites by sharing the recipe and the story behind it. The featured cook then nominates someone else, creating a chain of beloved local recipes passed from one kitchen to the next.

This month's recipe comes from lifelong Lowcountry resident and architect ***Ansley Hester Manuel***, who was nominated by Charlie Drawdy. Her Sage Sausage & Chèvre Quesadillas combine the comfort of a Mexican classic with the elegance of French ingredients. The result is a crispy, buttery quesadilla layered with savory sage sausage, creamy chèvre, melted Monterey Jack and fresh salsa.

"It was my late husband's favorite quick meal," Manuel says. "The ease of a Mexican quesadilla, with the flair of French-inspired ingredients. The savory sage sausage, tangy chèvre, sweet salsa and buttery Monterey Jack create a combination that's simple, comforting and full of flavor."



ANSLEY HESTER MANUEL

Sage Sausage & Chèvre Quesadillas



INGREDIENTS

1 (16-ounce) roll ground sage sausage
1 (4-ounce) log chèvre cheese
Flour tortillas
Butter
Shredded Monterey Jack cheese
1 jar ***salsa***

DIRECTIONS [1] Brown the sage sausage in a skillet over medium heat. Drain the grease, and let cool slightly. **[2]** Spread chèvre over one half of a flour tortilla. Top with Monterey Jack, cooked sausage and a spoonful of salsa. Fold the tortilla in half. **[3]** Lightly butter a skillet, and cook the quesadilla over medium to medium-low heat until golden brown on both sides and the cheese has melted. Slice and serve warm.

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SECRET INGREDIENT



Oil & vinegar

OPPOSITES ATTRACT IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST BELOVED FLAVOR PAIRINGS



Some pairings become classics for a reason. Rich, fruity extra-virgin olive oil and sweet-tart balsamic vinegar strike a perfect balance, with one adding richness and the other, brightness. Together, they elevate everything from salads and grilled vegetables to meats, pasta and even dessert.

Rachel Lively, owner of Hilton Head Olive Oils & Balsamics, believes choosing olive oil and vinegar deserves the same thought as selecting the right wine.

"Just as wine is thoughtfully paired with food, olive oils and vinegars should be paired intentionally," she says. "Different varieties complement different ingredients, creating layers of flavor that transform even the simplest dish into something memorable."

Although many Americans associate olive oil and balsamic with bread baskets at Italian restaurants, that tradition actually developed in the United States rather than Italy. In Italian cuisine,



the two are typically used separately throughout a meal, but together they've become one of America's favorite flavor combinations.

The possibilities extend far beyond bread. Drizzle them over Caprese salad, roasted vegetables, grilled meats or fresh pasta. Add them to strawberries, peaches or vanilla ice cream, where the vinegar's acidity enhances the fruit, while the olive oil contributes a silky richness.

At Hilton Head Olive Oils & Balsamics, customers can sample more than 60 extra-virgin olive oils and flavored balsamics to discover unexpected combinations. Blood Orange Olive Oil paired with White Peach Balsamic creates a bright, creamsicle-inspired dressing, while robust extra-virgin olive oil with traditional aged balsamic remains a timeless favorite.

"When paired well, olive oil and vinegar create harmony on the palate," Lively says. "Richness meets brightness, and the result is a flavor-enhanced dish."

Beyond flavor, the duo offers nutritional benefits. Extra-virgin olive oil is rich in heart-healthy mono-unsaturated fats and antioxidants, while traditionally aged balsamic vinegar adds depth, natural sweetness and beneficial plant compounds. Together they create a vinaigrette that's as nourishing as it is delicious.





TRY IT ...

- *Layer fresh mozzarella, ripe tomatoes and basil, then drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil and aged balsamic.*
- *Whisk together a simple vinaigrette using 3 parts olive oil to 1 part balsamic vinegar.*
- *Finish grilled vegetables, steaks or seafood with a light drizzle just before serving.*
- *Spoon over vanilla ice cream with fresh berries for a sweet-and-savory dessert.*
- *Dip warm, crusty bread into high-quality olive oil, then finish with a few drops of aged balsamic.*



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HOW TO

Flavor friends

Simple principles that help ingredients bring out the best in one another

Great cooking isn't just about following recipes. It's about understanding why certain ingredients bring out the best in one another. Some pairings succeed because they balance opposing flavors, while others work because they share similar aromatic compounds that naturally complement each other. Texture, temperature and even nutrition also influence how foods work together. Learn a few simple principles, and you'll start creating delicious combinations with confidence.



Balance the five basic tastes

The most satisfying dishes combine several of the five basic tastes: sweet, salty, sour, bitter and umami. When one flavor feels overwhelming, its opposite often restores balance.

Rich or fatty + acidic: *Lemon juice, vinegar and citrus brighten rich foods. Try steak with chimichurri, fried seafood with lemon or avocado with lime.*

Sweet + salty: *Salt intensifies sweetness, while sweetness softens saltiness. Think watermelon and feta, bacon with maple syrup or salted caramel.*

Spicy + creamy: *Dairy and healthy fats tame heat. Sour cream, yogurt and coconut milk all help mellow spicy dishes.*

Bitter + sweet: *A touch of sweetness balances bitterness. Honey on roasted Brussels sprouts or maple syrup in coffee are simple examples.*

Find natural flavor partners

Many classic pairings work because the ingredients share similar aromatic compounds, creating flavors our brains naturally recognize as harmonious. Some timeless combinations include:



Tomatoes + basil
Strawberries + basil
Chocolate + coffee
Lamb + rosemary
Seafood + lemon
Apples + cinnamon
Peaches + vanilla
Mushrooms + thyme

Chefs have also uncovered surprising matches, including white chocolate with caviar, chocolate with blue cheese, fried chicken with Champagne and even beef with coffee.

Create contrast



Flavor is only part of the equation. Great dishes combine contrasting textures and temperatures to make every bite more interesting. Pair creamy with crunchy, crispy with tender or warm with cool. Toasted nuts add crunch to salads, crispy breadcrumbs bring texture to pasta and fresh herbs brighten rich soups. Even a sprinkle of flaky sea salt over dark chocolate creates a delicious contrast, enhancing sweetness while balancing bitterness with a satisfying crunch.

Pair for better nutrition

Some foods help your body absorb nutrients more effectively.



- *Pair spinach or beans with citrus or bell peppers to boost iron absorption.*
- *Serve tomatoes with olive oil to increase absorption of lycopene.*
- *Enjoy carrots, leafy greens and sweet potatoes with healthy fats like avocado or extra-virgin olive oil to help absorb vitamins A, D, E and K.*

Trust your taste buds

Food pairing is part science, part creativity. Flavor principles provide a great starting point, but your palate is the best guide. Taste as you cook, experiment with new combinations, and don't be afraid to break the rules. Many of the world's favorite dishes began with someone willing to try something unexpected. *LL*

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FROM SCRATCH

Bone appétit

Treat four-legged family members to a homemade frozen snack made for summer

STORY + PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEA WILKINS



The best treats have a way of spreading joy with every bite. While summer often means ice cream runs, backyard cookouts and sweet indulgences for the humans, dogs deserve something special of their own. For her Boykin Spaniel, Camo, LOCAL Life publisher **Lori Goodridge-Cribb** makes these homemade frozen snacks that send his tail wagging the moment he hears the freezer door open. Unlike many store-bought dog treats filled with preservatives and unrecognizable ingredients, this recipe keeps things wonderfully simple. Made with just three wholesome staples, these frozen bites deliver a refreshing reward pups love while giving owners complete confidence in exactly what goes into every batch.

Watch & learn

*Want to make a batch yourself? Watch Lori prepare these homemade dog treats on From Scratch, LOCAL Life's YouTube Channel **@LocalLifeSC**.*



Pupsicle Bites

INGREDIENTS

4 cups plain yogurt (a great source of probiotics and protein)
15-ounce can pumpkin puree (rich in fiber and digestive support)
3/4 cup natural peanut butter (for flavor and shiny coats)
Olive oil spray, to prevent sticking (coconut oil works too)

DIRECTIONS [1] In a mixing bowl, stir together yogurt, pumpkin puree and peanut butter until fully combined. **[2]** Lightly coat a cupcake pan with olive oil spray. Spoon mixture evenly into molds, then freeze for at least 12 hours. **[3]** Remove treats from molds, and serve frozen. Store extras in a resealable bag in the freezer for up to two weeks.



PAW-FECT PAIRING

Some dogs do not savor treats. They make them disappear in seconds. For especially enthusiastic pups like Camo, Lori places snacks inside a Woof Pupsicle Treat Dispensing Dog Toy, turning snack time into a fun challenge that encourages slower licking, longer enjoyment and a little extra mental stimulation along the way.



CAMO APPROVED As you can tell by Camo's reaction, these frozen homemade treats have earned a permanent place in the snack rotation.



localife

PRESENTS

From Scratch

an online video cooking series featuring publisher Lori Goodridge-Cribb

COMPANY'S COMING. The table needs setting. The oven is warming up. And LOCAL Life publisher Lori Goodridge-Cribb is right there with you. Each month on From Scratch, Lori invites readers into her kitchen to share a seasonal recipe made for gathering. She believes the best memories happen around the table, and she is happy to show you exactly how she brings it all together. For August, she is preparing Pupsicle Bites for her Boykin Spaniel, Camo.

To see Lori in action and watch every episode of "From Scratch," scan the QR code or visit LOCAL Life's YouTube channel at @LocalLifeSC.

Follow the recipe on the left, then head to LOCAL Life's YouTube channel at @LocalLifeSC to watch the full episode. You will pick up smart kitchen shortcuts, simple hosting ideas and a few well-earned stories from Lori's years of cooking for family, friends and anyone lucky enough to pull up a chair.

RESTAURANT news & notes

FRESH FOOD + NOW OPEN + HOT PRODUCTS

BY BAILEY GILLIAM

Hot off the plate

The Lowcountry's dining scene never sits still. This month brings a wave of new coffee shops, bakeries, food trucks and dessert destinations, along with restaurant expansions, national honors and community milestones. Whether you're looking for your next favorite bite or simply keeping up with what's new, here's a taste of the latest happenings from around the region.

NOW OPEN







Dawsey Boy Bakes *BLUFFTON AREA*

What began as a path toward healing has grown into one of the area's newest home-based bakeries. *Stephanie Skager founded Dawsey Boy Bakes after discovering the therapeutic power of sourdough while grieving the loss of her young son. Today her handcrafted loaves are available at Rollers Wine & Spirits, Nantucket Meat & Fish Market and Piggly Wiggly, or by direct order for local pickup.*



American Munchies

FOOD TRUCK, HILTON HEAD

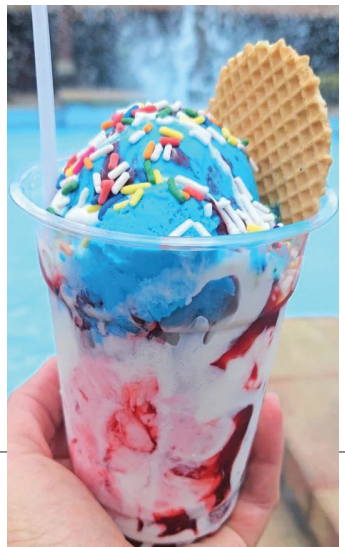
Comfort food is hitting the road. *American Munchies is a locally owned food truck serving smash burgers, hot dogs, wings, loaded sides and other crowd-pleasing favorites. Owners Adam Julian and Alexandra Abrahamowicz-Pettry bring their passion for great food to stops around Hilton Head.*



The Daily Drip

MOBILE, HILTON HEAD AND BLUFFTON

Your morning coffee now comes on wheels. *The Daily Drip is rolling across Hilton Head and Bluffton in a mobile coffee trailer serving handcrafted espresso drinks and specialty beverages. Follow its social media pages to see where it's brewing each day.*



Scoop & Sip

BERKELEY PLACE SHOPPING CENTER, BLUFFTON

Bluffton has a sweet new gathering spot. *Scoop & Sip opened in Berkeley Place Shopping Center on Buckwalter, offering soft serve, 24 flavors of premium hard ice cream, sundaes, banana splits, shakes and floats in a colorful, retro-inspired setting. Freshly brewed coffee, cold brew, sodas and juices round out the menu, with dairy-free, gluten-free and sugar-free options available for every craving.*

Skull Creek Boathouse Ice Cream

397 SQUIRE POPE ROAD, HILTON HEAD

A meal at Skull Creek Boathouse now comes with an even sweeter ending. *The popular waterfront restaurant opened a walk-up ice cream window outside the restaurant, serving frozen treats daily from noon to 10 p.m. Perfect for grabbing a scoop before a sunset stroll.*



Corakko Beach Club Restaurant & Bar

175 AVENUE OF OAKS, DAUFUSKIE ISLAND

The former Melrose Beach Club has been reimagined as Corakko Beach Club Restaurant & Bar. *Overlooking the beach on Avenue of Oaks, the relaxed waterfront spot serves burgers, seafood baskets, cocktails, beer and wine. It's open Wednesday through Sunday.*

Ranchito Escondido

FOOD TRUCK, HARDEEVILLE

Authentic Mexican street food has rolled into Hardeeville. *Ranchito Escondido is serving made-to-order tacos, burritos, tortas, gorditas, sopes and other traditional favorites from its food truck on Whyte Hardee Boulevard, bringing fresh flavors and family recipes to the community.*





Burleys Bakery *POP-UPS IN BEAUFORT*

Small-batch baking is taking center stage at Burleys Bakery. *The pop-up bakery specializes in naturally leavened sourdough, handcrafted bagels and chewy cookies, with weekly appearances at Okatie River Farms on Saturdays. Customers can place orders for convenient local pickup.*

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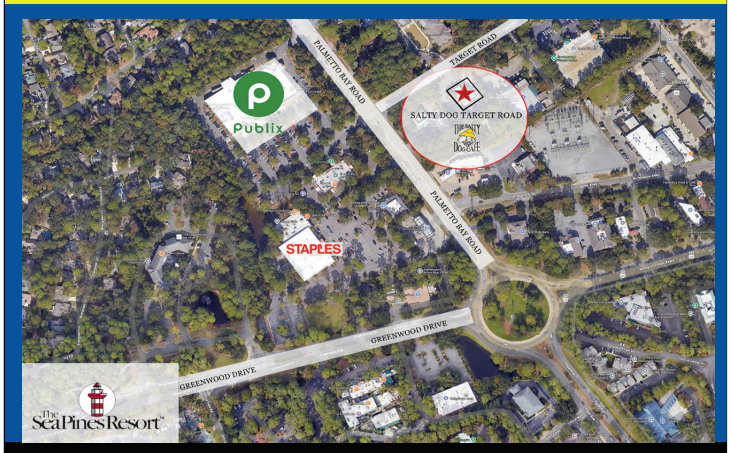
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COMING SOON



Culver's

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Bluffton's first Culver's is expected to open Oct. 19. *Located near Publix in Buckwalter Place, the popular Wisconsin-based chain will bring its famous ButterBurgers, fresh frozen custard, crinkle-cut fries and cheese curds to southern Beaufort County. The restaurant is expected to create 80 to 100 local jobs.*





Ellianos Coffee

91 SEA ISLAND PARKWAY, LADY'S ISLAND

A new drive-thru coffee stop could be headed to Lady's Island. *Ellianos Coffee is exploring plans for a location at 91 Sea Island Parkway, bringing its double-sided drive-thru, handcrafted espresso drinks, smoothies and signature energy refreshers to Beaufort County. If approved, the café would mark another step in the rapidly growing southeastern chain's expansion across South Carolina.*

Quick Bites

FAST NEWS FROM THE LOWCOUNTRY FOOD SCENE.

Good Soul Southern Kitchen *on Marshland Road, Capri Pizza HHI in Coligny and Frosty Frog Bluffton are now open.*

Piace Pizza *is relocating to 831 Parris Island Gateway.*

Superbaked Pizza & Wings *on Hilton Head and Scratch Italian Kitchen + Bar in Beaufort have permanently closed.*

NEWS & NOTES

Sallie Ann Robinson honored by James Beard Foundation



Sixth-generation Gullah native, chef and cookbook author Sallie Ann Robinson has been inducted into the James Beard Foundation Book Awards Hall of Fame, one of the culinary world's highest honors. *Robinson received the recognition at the foundation's Media Awards in Chicago for her lifelong dedication to preserving and celebrating the food, stories and traditions of the Gullah Geechee people. Through her acclaimed cookbooks, educational programs and decades of advocacy, she introduced authentic Gullah cuisine to audiences around the world while helping ensure its history, culture and culinary traditions are preserved for generations to come.*

Nickel City Family Kitchen keeps growing



Nickel City Family Kitchen is expanding beyond catering. *The veteran-owned business now offers pop-up events, private in-home dining experiences and a meal-prep partnership with Strikeline Training. Guided by the motto "From our table to yours," the team continues to support the community through charitable meal donations and local events.*



Sea Pines restaurants earn national honors

The Sea Pines Resort continues to collect culinary accolades. *Coast, Oceanfront Dining, Links, an American Grill, and Quarterdeck each received the 2026 DiRōNA Award of Excellence, recognizing exceptional cuisine, service, beverage programs and overall guest experience. The honors further cement the resort's reputation as one of the southeast's premier dining destinations.*

Hilton Head Island Coffee Company adds a second home



Hilton Head Island Coffee Company expanded with The Shop, a second location on New Orleans Road. *Complementing the original Cardinal Road roastery, the café offers another welcoming space to enjoy handcrafted coffee while gathering with friends and neighbors.*

Slider Showdown debuts at Jeep Island

Jeep Island is turning up the flavor with the inaugural Slider Showdown on Oct. 10 at Lowcountry Celebration Park. *More than 15 local restaurants will compete with creative slider creations priced at $5 or less while guests enjoy Jeeps, live music, family activities and plenty of friendly competition.*



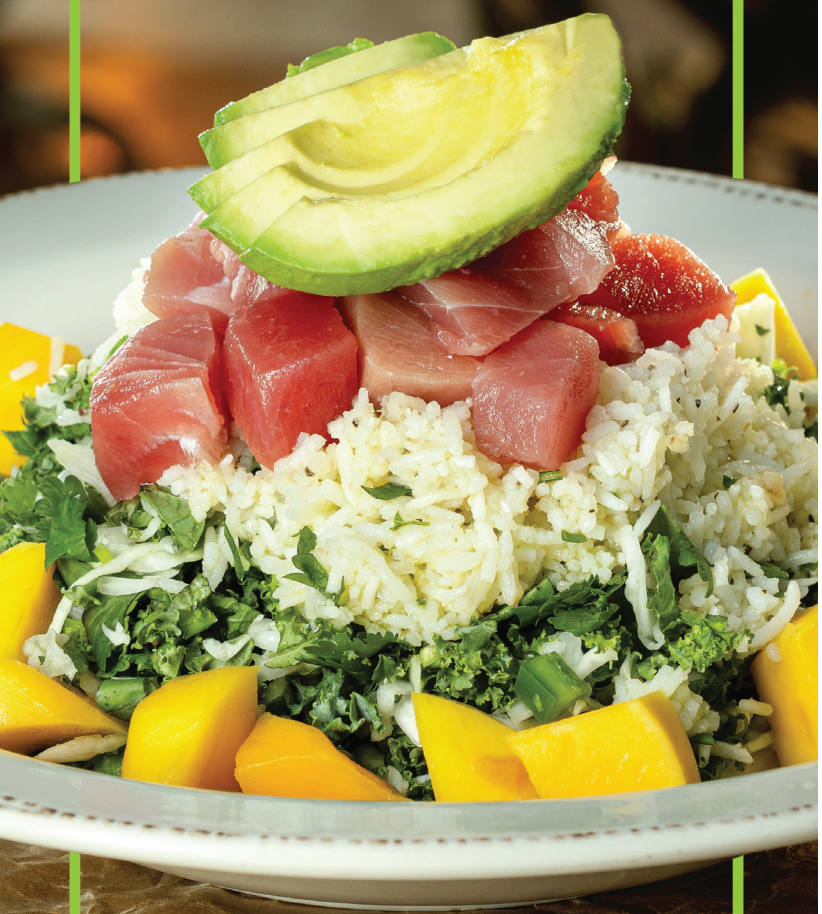
Blacksheep is back

After months of renovations and unexpected setbacks, Blacksheep has reopened. *What started as a flooring update evolved into a major restoration project, temporarily sidelining the popular Beaufort restaurant. The comeback includes a new à la carte dinner menu, rotating seasonal dishes and first-come, first-served bar seating.*

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TRY THESE

Some friendships happen on the plate

This month we're celebrating iconic duos, time-tested flavor pairings and creative twists on beloved combinations. From burgers and fries to surf and turf, these local dishes prove that when the right ingredients come together, the results are unforgettable.



SURF & TURF

Charlie's L'Etoile Verte elevates the classic pairing with grilled beef shoulder topped with lump crab béarnaise, served alongside roasted fingerling potatoes and asparagus. Rich, refined and undeniably satisfying.



CHOCOLATE & STRAWBERRY

Nosh NY Bagels gives a timeless favorite a playful spin with the French Kiss. A French-toast bagel is layered with Nutella and fresh strawberries for a combination that's equally suited to breakfast or dessert.



CHIPS & DIP

SliderBar proves this humble snack deserves the spotlight. Crisp house-made sweet potato chips paired with a fluffy marshmallow dip create an unexpectedly delicious sweet-and-salty combination.



EGGS & HAM

Bye Bye Birdie reimagines a familiar duo with its Charcuterie Deviled Egg Flight. Topped with salami, prosciutto with fig jam, and gouda with apple butter, each egg offers a different take on the classic pairing.



TOMATOES & MOZZARELLA

Benny's Coastal Kitchen puts a fresh spin on the caprese with its Caprese Flatbread. Fresh tomatoes, creamy mozzarella and basil are finished with pesto and a strawberry balsamic glaze for a bright, summery bite.

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What would Margaret drink?

Margaret Pearman, *a certified sommelier with the Court of Master Sommeliers, curates the acclaimed wine program at Charlie's L'Etoile Verte. This month she explores how great wines are born from partnerships built on trust, friendship and shared passion.*

Better together

How friendship and collaboration shape an exceptional Napa Valley Cabernet

In wine, much of the attention naturally falls on the winemaker — the visionary whose name often appears on the label and whose craft shapes the final bottle. But behind every exceptional wine is another equally important figure whose work begins long before fermentation: the vineyard manager.

Few wines illustrate this relationship better than Caterwaul Cabernet Sauvignon, a Napa Valley Cabernet born from the longstanding friendship between vineyard manager Matt Hardin and acclaimed winemaker Thomas Rivers Brown. Their contrasting personalities have become one of the secrets behind the wine's success. Hardin is known for his energetic, larger-than-life personality, while Brown brings a quieter, more analytical approach to the craft. Together their differences create a collaboration built on balance and mutual respect.

A seventh-generation vineyard farmer, Hardin has spent his life mastering the art of growing exceptional fruit. His expertise goes far beyond farming, requiring a deep understanding of climate, soil composition, vine health and the countless variables that influence grape quality. Brown, widely regarded as one of Napa Valley's premier winemakers, takes that carefully cultivated fruit and transforms it into something extraordinary through precision, instinct and years of experience.

What truly sets Caterwaul apart is the friendship behind it. Rather than operating independently, Hardin and Brown collaborate closely throughout every stage of production, from decisions made in the vineyard to blending choices in the cellar. Their mutual respect allows each to challenge and elevate the other, resulting in wines that showcase remarkable balance, complexity and a true sense of place.

Caterwaul Cabernet Sauvignon serves as a reminder that great wine is rarely the product of one individual. It is the result of partnership — proof that, much like the best friendships, remarkable things happen when talent and trust work in harmony.

CRAZY LABEL, SERIOUS WINE
Don't let the wild label fool you. Caterwaul Cabernet Sauvignon delivers rich, dark fruit, polished tannins and serious Napa structure, all born from a remarkable partnership and priced around $60.





The friend group

One classic grapefruit cocktail and four flavorful sidekicks worth inviting to happy hour

Every great friend group has its cast of characters. The same goes for the Greyhound, a nearly century-old cocktail traditionally made with gin or vodka and fresh grapefruit juice. Loved for its bright citrus flavor and simplicity, it proves great drinks do not need to be complicated.



Greyhound

The dependable friend

Simple, crisp and endlessly refreshing, the Greyhound is the friend you can always count on. With only spirit and freshly squeezed grapefruit juice, it delivers the perfect balance of tart, bright and smooth.

INGREDIENTS

2 ounces gin or vodka
5-6 ounces freshly squeezed pink grapefruit juice
Ice

DIRECTIONS Fill a highball glass with ice. Add gin or vodka, top with grapefruit juice, and stir gently until chilled. Serve immediately.

THE SOCIAL CIRCLE

With a few simple twists, the classic Greyhound transforms into four distinct variations, each bringing its own personality to the glass.

SALTY DOG | The loyal friend

A salted rim adds savory contrast that sharpens the grapefruit's citrus bite and makes each sip even more refreshing. Rub the rim with a grapefruit wedge, dip only the outside edge into kosher salt, and serve.

ITALIAN GREYHOUND | The sophisticated friend

A float of Campari adds bittersweet depth and an elegant herbal finish that beautifully complements the bright citrus. Prepare a classic Greyhound, then slowly pour 1/2 ounce of Campari over the top before serving.

PINK GREYHOUND | The social butterfly

A splash of grenadine softens the grapefruit's tart edge while adding sweetness and a vibrant blush-pink glow. Prepare a classic Greyhound, then stir in 1 teaspoon grenadine before serving.

DALMATIAN | The wild card

Black pepper syrup adds subtle heat and surprising complexity, transforming the drink into something bold and adventurous. Add 1/2 ounce black pepper syrup, and stir gently. To make the syrup, simmer equal parts sugar and water with cracked black pepper, then cool and strain.

***Pro tip:** Fresh grapefruit juice makes all the difference. Skip bottled juice, and let the citrus shine.*



Play ball!

GRAB A FRIEND, AND HIT THE ROAD FOR A LATE-SUMMER BASEBALL ADVENTURE

STORY BY LANCE HANLIN



©SAVANNAH BANANAS

For baseball fans, summer comes with a familiar soundtrack: the crack of the bat, the smell of ballpark food and warm evenings that somehow feel better spent under stadium lights. The best part for Lowcountry residents? Some of the Southeast's best baseball experiences sit just a short drive away. Unlike the major leagues, minor league baseball still offers something increasingly rare in sports: affordability, personality and pure fun. Tickets cost far less, fans sit much closer to the action and quirky promotions, fireworks and themed nights often make the experience feel less like a game and more like a full night out. Whether you are planning a family outing, gathering a few friends or simply chasing one last great summer memory, these nearby ballparks prove America's pastime still delivers some of the season's best nights out.



©SAVANNAH BANANAS

Savannah Bananas

Somewhere along the way, the Savannah Bananas stopped being a baseball team and became one of the country's biggest live entertainment phenomena. What began as a quirky collegiate summer team has evolved into a national sensation, transforming traditional baseball into something fast-paced, chaotic and nearly impossible to ignore. Their signature version of Banana Ball blends choreographed dances, trick plays, nonstop fan interaction and enough unpredictability to make every inning feel more like a live performance than an actual baseball game. The Bananas spend much of August traveling nationally on their sold-out 2026 World Tour, with home games returning to Savannah in September.

Drive there: *58 minutes (34.6 miles) from Hilton Head Island. Savannah home games return Sept. 11-13 and Sept. 18, though every game is already sold out. Tickets originally started around $35, but resale prices often climb significantly.*

Insider tips: *Lower-level seats near the dugouts offer the closest views of the action, but the truth is there really are no bad seats here. Players constantly interact with fans throughout the stadium, making the experience feel immersive no matter where you sit. Arrive early, because the pregame entertainment often feels like part of the main event.*



©SAVANNAH BANANAS





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©CHARLESTON RIVERDOGS

Charleston RiverDogs

For baseball fans who appreciate the classic version of America's pastime, few summer outings do it better than the Charleston RiverDogs. As the Single-A affiliate of the Tampa Bay Rays, the team offers an early look at future major-league talent while delivering one of the Southeast's most entertaining minor-league experiences. Games unfold at scenic Joseph P. Riley Jr. Park overlooking the Ashley River, where energetic crowds, quirky promotions and one of the Lowcountry's liveliest game-day atmospheres have helped turn RiverDogs baseball into one of Charleston's favorite summer traditions.

Drive there: *2 hours (97 miles) from Hilton Head Island. The 2026 season runs through early September, with single-game tickets typically starting around $15-$18.*

Insider tips: *For early evening games, grab seats along the third-base side, where shade arrives sooner and makes hot summer nights far more comfortable. Come hungry, and order the stadium's legendary Homewrecker hot dog, a gloriously excessive creation stacked with enough barbecue, bacon, chili, pimento cheese and Lowcountry-inspired toppings to qualify as a full meal. If possible, plan around Friday night games, when packed crowds stick around for popular post-game fireworks shows.*


©CHARLESTON RIVERDOGS



©COLUMBIA FIREFLIES

Columbia Fireflies

Quietly becoming one of South Carolina's best sports venues, the Columbia Fireflies deliver a baseball experience that feels far bigger than most fans expect. As the Single-A affiliate of the Kansas City Royals, the team gives fans a chance to watch future big-league talent while enjoying one of South Carolina's most fan-friendly game-day atmospheres. Segra Park combines excellent sightlines, family entertainment zones and some of the most affordable professional baseball tickets anywhere on this list, making Columbia one of the easiest and most affordable baseball getaways available.

Drive there: *2 hours, 34 minutes (157 miles) from Hilton Head Island. The 2026 season runs through early September, with the final home stretch running Aug. 25-30. Tickets typically start around $7 for lawn seating and $10-$16 for reserved seats.*

Insider tips: *For the best overall experience, fans recommend grabbing seats near home plate or along the first-base lower bowl, where sightlines throughout Segra Park are hard to beat. Hungry visitors regularly rave about the stadium's custom Adluh Grits bowls topped with shrimp or chicken, along with the popular Philly Cheesesteak Nachos, often served inside a collectible souvenir helmet. Weekend games consistently offer the strongest crowds, best promotions and the liveliest atmosphere.*



©COLUMBIA FIREFLIES

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SPECIAL SHOW on Saturday, July 4th!

August 4, 11 & 18

Due to safety reasons, please do not fly drones during fireworks shows

SHANNON TANNER
Two shows: 6:30 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.
Now - August 19: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. Now, - August 20.
Two shows on Labor Day Weekend: September 5 & 6





CAPPY THE CLOWN
Face painting, balloon animals, sand art & more! 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Now to September 4: Monday to Friday.
Plus Labor Day Weekend: September 5 & 6

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ShelterCoveHarbourfest.com

LOCATED MID-ISLAND, MILE MARKER 8, ACROSS FROM ENTRANCE TO PALMETTO DUNES, When using GPS, please use 13 Harbourside Ln.
**All events subject to change without notice. Weather permitting*



©AUGUSTA GREENJACKETS

Augusta GreenJackets

A night at SRP Park feels like far more than a simple baseball game. Home to the Augusta GreenJackets, the Single-A affiliate of the Atlanta Braves, this North Augusta destination combines rising young talent with one of the most scenic ballpark settings anywhere within driving distance of the Lowcountry. Perched along the Savannah River, the stadium pairs a modern design with a laid-back atmosphere that makes the entire experience feel more like a summer outing than a sporting event.

Drive there: *2 hours, 36 minutes (133 miles) from Hilton Head Island. The 2026 season runs through early September, with single-game tickets generally starting around $10-$14.*

Insider tips: *For the best overall experience, grab club-level seats behind home plate, where you'll enjoy excellent sight lines along with some of the stadium's best riverfront views. Adventurous eaters should seek out the ballpark's unforgettable Brisket Brownie, an over-the-top sweet-and-savory creation, featuring a brownie topped with chopped brisket, bacon and caramel sauce. Evening games feel especially memorable here, when sunset light spills across the Savannah River.*



©AUGUSTA GREENJACKETS



©JACKSONVILLE JUMBO SHRIMP

Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp

For baseball fans who want the closest thing to the major leagues without paying major-league prices, Jacksonville is the clear winner. The Jumbo Shrimp serve as the Triple-A affiliate of the Miami Marlins, meaning nearly every player on the field sits just one call-up away from making a major-league roster. Because Triple-A sits just one step below the majors, nearly every player taking the field is fighting for a shot at the big leagues, making this the closest thing to an MLB experience anywhere on this list. Games at VyStar Ballpark combine a classic baseball atmosphere with excellent promotions, giveaways and some of the strongest on-field talent anywhere nearby.

Drive there: *2 hours, 41 minutes (172 miles) from Hilton Head Island. The Triple-A season runs through mid-September. Tickets typically start around $8-$18.*

Insider tips: *For the full Triple-A experience, choose seats in the lower bowl behind home plate, where you'll enjoy the best overall views and stay closest to the action. Fans regularly seek out Sausage Fest-Duuuuuval, a popular concession area serving the famous two-foot Slugger smoked sausage, one of the stadium's signature menu items. Promotional giveaway nights and weekend evening games consistently deliver the strongest crowds and best overall game-day atmosphere.* LL



©JACKSONVILLE JUMBO SHRIMP

TRANSFORMING GENEROSITY INTO OPPORTUNITY

2026-27 SCHOLARSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

$1,393,000 Awarded
115 First-time Recipients
129 Reapplicants
50 Received Multiple Awards
4 Counties Served

244 Students
323 Awards
85 Universities



For the 2026-27 school year, scholarships were awarded through 48 scholarship funds administered by the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry, including nine new funds.

Since its inception in 1994, CFL has awarded over $14 million in scholarships to 1,300+ students.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

4 Northridge Drive, Hilton Head Island, SC
843-681-9100 | cf-lowcountry.org

AUGUST happenings

Arts & Culture







SOBA Summer Art Exhibition

When: Times vary, now-Aug. 31
Where: Fair Winds Bar & Grill, Rose Hill Plantation
Turn dinner or happy hour into a mini gallery visit at this relaxed exhibition featuring works by Society of Bluffton Artists founding member, ***Betty Hintz***. Her paintings capture the beauty and spirit of the Lowcountry, making this an easy way to enjoy local art in an inviting setting. ***sobagallery.com***



Mean Girls: The Musical

When: Times vary, now-Aug. 9
Where: Arts Center of Coastal Carolina
Whether you're a longtime fan of the movie or discovering the story for the first time, this Broadway hit delivers big laughs, catchy songs and plenty of heart. Beneath the sharp humor is a reminder that kindness never goes out of style, making it just as entertaining for adults as it is for teens. ***artshhi.com***

OTHER EVENTS

Aug. 3: *Divas Through Time*
Aug. 28-29: *Black Jacket Symphony: AC/DC*

OTHER ARTS & CULTURE EVENTS

Now-Aug. 28:
Finding Light at Art League of Hilton Head Gallery

Now-Aug. 31:
John Meckley at Beaufort Art Association Gallery

Now-Oct. 23:
"All Creatures Great and Small" at the Sea Pines Community Center

Aug. 1-Nov. 1:
A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America exhibition at Coastal Discovery Museum

Charity & Community







HarbourFest

When: Now-Aug. 18 **Where:** Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina
One of Hilton Head's favorite summer traditions, HarbourFest is the kind of event families return to year after year. Kids love the face-painting, games and Cappy the Clown's famous spinning hats, while everyone gathers along the waterfront for Tuesday night's fireworks. Arrive early to stroll the marina, grab dinner, and soak up the festive atmosphere before the show. ***sheltercovehiltonhead.com***

OTHER CHARITY & COMMUNITY EVENTS

Aug. 6 & 13: *Movie Nights at Shelter Cove Community Park*
Aug. 8: *Catwalk Collection at Hilton Head Humane's Litter Box Thrift Store*
Aug. 8: *Renegade Paws Rescue Adoption Event at Petco*
Aug. 15: *MiraSol Health Community Yard Sale at MiraSol Health*
Aug. 27: *Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce's Inaugural State of Growth at New Riverside Barn*
Aug. 28-30: *Braderie South at the Jekyll Island Club*

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Food & Drink





Salad Dressing 101

When: 2 p.m., Thursdays **Where:** Hilton Head Olive Oils & Balsamics
A great salad starts long before the lettuce hits the bowl. This hands-on class shows you how to pair premium olive oils and balsamics, build balanced dressings from scratch and add restaurant-worthy flavor to everyday meals. You'll leave with practical tips you'll actually use at home. ***hiltonheadoils.com***

OTHER EVENTS
Olive Oil & The Mediterranean Diet: *Mondays*
Appy Hour: *Wednesdays & Fridays*



Culinary events at The Sea Pines Resort

From craft-beer gatherings to chef-driven dinners, The Sea Pines Resort serves up a full calendar of events that make an ordinary evening feel like an occasion. Whether you're looking to discover a new favorite brew or enjoy a thoughtfully paired meal, there's something worth adding to your calendar. ***seapines.com/events***

UPCOMING EVENTS
Tap Takeover: *5-8 p.m., Aug. 18, Fraser's Tavern*
Pint Night: *5-9 p.m., Thursdays, Fraser's Tavern*

OTHER FOOD & DRINK EVENTS

Aug. 5 & 19: *Rollers Grapevine Academy at Roller's Wine & Spirits*

August 5: *An Evening at Bowdie's Chophouse with Winebow Fine Wine + Spirits*

Aug. 7: *First Friday Burger Night at Sister Sister Deli*

Aug. 6: *The Cocktail Affair: Event Planners Networking Event at Burnt Church Distillery*

Aug. 8: *Tiki Night on the Patio Party at Burnt Church Distillery*

Aug. 9: *Barre to the Bar at Shellring Ale Works*

Aug. 13, 21 & 27: *Mixology Class: Shaken and Stirred Fun at Burnt Church Distillery*

Aug. 18: *National Fajita Day at Holy Tequila*

Aug. 19: *Beach Glass Windchimes at Lot 9 Brewing Co.*

Aug. 20: *Mixology Class: The Art of Mixing American Whiskey at Burnt Church Distillery*

Aug. 20: *Cigar Night at Shellring Ale Works*

Aug. 22: *Soups for All Seasons – Culinary Fundamentals at Culinary Institute of the South*

Aug. 27: *Cars and Cocktails: Carolina Dreamers Car Club at Burnt Church Distillery*

WEEKLY FOOD EVENTS

Tuesdays: *Battles & Bread at Wine Time Bluffton*

Tuesdays: *Tasty Tuesday Wine Tastings at Rollers Wine & Spirits*

Tuesdays & Saturdays: *Chef's Table at Okàn*

Wednesdays: *Pasta Night at Wine Time Bluffton*

Wednesdays: *Wing Wednesdays at Hail Mary's Spirits & Sports Bar*

Wednesdays: *Wine Tasting at Wine Time Washington Square*

Wednesdays & Thursdays: *Outside Hilton Head Happy Hour Cruises at Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina*

Thursdays: *Salad Dressing 101 at Hilton Head Olive Oils & Balsamics*

Thursdays: *The Art of Tiki Cocktails Class at Hilton Head Distillery*

Thursdays: *Thirsty Thursday Wine Tastings at Rollers Wine & Spirits*

Thursdays: *Featured Wine Tasting at Wine Time Bluffton*

Fridays: *Friday Uncorked at Windhorse Gallery & Marketplace*

Sundays: *Mimosas & Melodies at Windhorse Gallery & Marketplace*







Our Favorite Summer Stops of Italy: Venice, Tuscany

When: 4 p.m., Aug. 5 **Where:** Nunzio Restaurant + Bar
No passport required. Chef Nunzio takes diners on a flavorful journey through Venice and Tuscany with refreshing summer wines paired alongside seasonal bites inspired by northern Italy. It's a delicious way to experience the tastes of an Italian vacation without leaving Hilton Head. ***nunziohhi.com***


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Markets & Shopping



FARMERS AND ART MARKETS

Enjoy the local flavors of the Lowcountry with some of these regular farmers' and art markets:

Bluffton Farmers Market:
10 a.m.-2 p.m., Thursdays, 68 Boundary St.

Farmers Market at Coastal Discovery Museum:
9 a.m.-1 p.m., Tuesdays, Coastal Discovery Museum

Port Royal Farmers Market:
9 a.m.-noon, Saturdays, Naval Heritage Park

Forsythe Farmers Market:
9 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturdays, Savannah

Beaufort First Friday:
5-8 p.m., first Friday of each month, Downtown Beaufort

Hilton Head Community Market:
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Saturdays, Shelter Cove Community Park

Habersham Farmers Market:
4-7 p.m., Fridays, Habersham Marketplace in Beaufort

Farmers & Fishermen Sunset Market at Savannah Harbour:
4:30-8:30 p.m., 1st, 3rd & 5th Saturdays, Hutchinson Island

Side Hustle Brewing Co. Farmers Market:
1-5 p.m., third Sunday of each month, Side Hustle Brewing Co.

Second Saturday Shop & Stroll:
10 a.m.-2 p.m., second Saturday of each month, The Shops of Paris Avenue

First Thursday Artisan Alley:
4-7 p.m., first Thursday of each month, Shops at Sea Pines Center

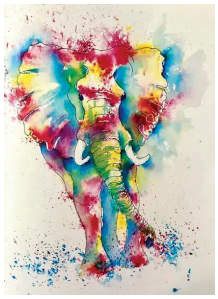
Sip and Shop Local Artisan & Makers Market:
5 p.m., Aug. 20, Burnt Church Distillery







Lectures & Classes



SOBA art classes

Whether you're picking up a paintbrush for the first time or looking to sharpen your skills, these classes at the SOBA Gallery offer a welcoming place to get creative alongside fellow art enthusiasts. For a complete schedule, visit ***sobagallery.com***.

UPCOMING CLASSES

Watercolor Basics: *1-4 p.m., Aug. 7*
Abstract Painting Your Way: *9 a.m.-noon, Aug. 15 & 22*
Brusho Elephant: *1-4 p.m., Aug. 20*

Restorative Medicine Seminar

When: Noon-1 p.m., Tuesdays **Where:** Fraum Center for Restorative Health
If you've been living with chronic pain or are curious about the latest non-invasive treatment options, this free lunchtime seminar offers an introduction to restorative medicine. Enjoy a complimentary lunch while learning how innovative therapies may help your body heal naturally. ***fraum.com***



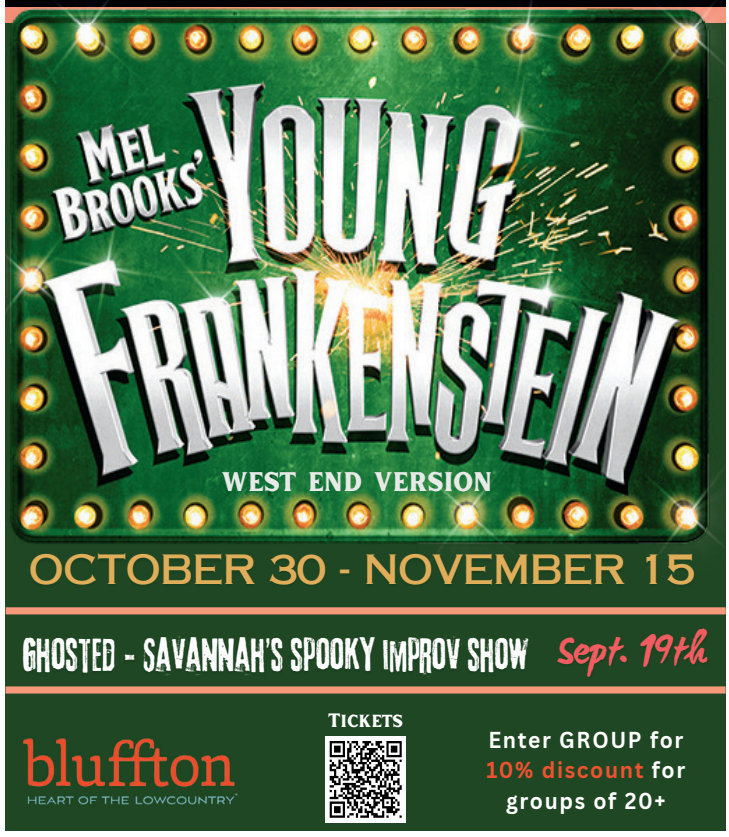
STEAM Festival 10-Year Anniversary

When: 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Aug. 15
Where: Port Royal Sound Foundation Maritime Center
Science, technology, engineering, art and math come to life through interactive exhibits and hands-on activities designed to spark curiosity. With local organizations leading the fun, it's an engaging day for kids who love to explore — and for parents who enjoy learning right alongside them. ***portroyalsoundfoundation.org***

OTHER LECTURES & CLASSES

LIBRARIES FOR KIDS INTERNATIONAL EVENTS:
Aug. 17: *Author Series: William "Billy" Douglas*
COASTAL DISCOVERY MUSEUM EVENTS:
Aug. 6 & 20: *Sweet Basket Workshop*
BEAUFORT COUNTY LIBRARY EVENTS:
Aug. 11: *Library Plant Swap at the Hilton Head Branch*
Aug. 13: *Plant It Forward Plant Exchange at the Bluffton Branch*
Aug. 14: *American Red Cross Blood Drive at the Hilton Head Branch*
Aug. 18: *Let's Talk AI at the Bluffton Branch*
PAT CONROY LITERARY CENTER EVENTS:
Aug. 27: *Author Event: An Evening with Emily Carpenter*
Sept. 5: *Dana Ridenour Book Launch*
ART LEAGUE OF HILTON HEAD EVENTS:
Aug. 11: *All About Art and Where to Start*
Aug. 18: *Impressionist Pastels: Mark Making & Color*
Aug. 30: *Make, Bake & Take: Polymer Clay Jewelry*
TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND'S "MONEY TALKS" EVENTS:
Aug. 11: *Protect Your Money: Fraud Awareness and Prevention Strategies*
Aug. 25: *Winning Government Contracts: Prepare and Position Your Business*
THE GREENERY EVENTS:
Aug. 15: *Carnivorous Plants*
HILTON HEAD PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT EVENTS:
Aug. 6: *Carolina Yards Workshop at Hilton Head PSD Community Room*
THE POTTERY STUDIO BY MAGPIE CERAMICS EVENTS:
Aug. 21: *Sip & Spin*





Music & Entertainment



Gregg Russell Summer Concerts

When: 8-9:30 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, Aug. 17-28
Where: Harbour Town
For generations of Hilton Head families, summer isn't complete without gathering beneath the Liberty Oak to hear Gregg Russell perform. Kids sing along, parents reminisce, and newcomers quickly understand why this beloved tradition has become a cherished part of island life. ***seapines.com***

OTHER EVENTS
Aug. 6: *Island Vibes Concert Series*
Aug. 7: *Rick Hubbard's Great American Kids Show*
Aug. 14: *DJ Alan Family Show*



Sunset Celebrations

When: 7-10 p.m., Aug. 7
Where: Shelter Cove Community Park
Celebrate the final Sunset Celebrations concert of the season with the legendary Deas-Guyz, whose blend of beach music, Motown and classic hits has kept Lowcountry audiences dancing for decades. Grab dinner nearby, settle in with friends, and enjoy one last summer evening of live music under the stars. ***welcometosheltercove.com***

Jazz in the Park

When: 7 p.m., Aug. 4 & 18
Where: Lowcountry Celebration Park
Bring a lawn chair, spread out a blanket, and enjoy an evening of world-class jazz beneath the summer sky. This month's free concerts feature the Charlton Singleton Quartet and the Martin Lesch Band, making it the perfect excuse to slow down and savor a Lowcountry evening. ***hhso.org***



OTHER MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS

Aug. 8: *Street Music on Paris Avenue with Wayne Baker Brooks*
Aug. 22: *Street Music on Paris Avenue with Chris Beard*

Sports & Outdoors



August races

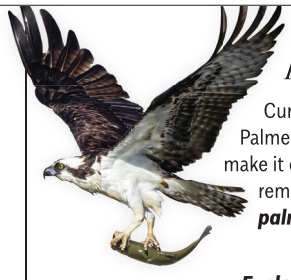
Lace up your running shoes, and make the most of the season with one of these local races. Whether you're chasing a personal best, enjoying a casual jog with friends or supporting a worthy cause, there's a starting line waiting for you this month.

UPCOMING RACES
PRC Summer Pub Run: *6:30 p.m., Aug. 5, Hilton Head Brewing Company*
Palmetto Dunes Turtle Trot 5K: *8 a.m., Aug. 5 & 12, Dunes House*
Sea Pines Dolphin Dash 5K: *8 a.m., Aug. 6 & 13, Sea Pines Beach Club*
Bobcat Scorcher 5K: *8 a.m., Aug. 8, Bluffton High School*
PRC Summer Pub Run: *6:30 p.m., Aug. 12, Tin & Tallow*
PRC Summer Pub Run: *6:30 p.m., Aug. 19, Local Legend Brewing Co.*
PRC Summer Pub Run: *6:30 p.m., Aug. 26, Burnt Church Distillery*
Beaufort Dog Obstacle Course Run/Walk 5K: *11 a.m., Aug. 29, Shellring Ale Works*

Turtle Talks

When: 7:30-9 p.m., Mondays **Where:** Lowcountry Celebration Park
Sea turtle nesting season is one of the Lowcountry's greatest natural wonders and these engaging talks offer a behind-the-scenes look at the lives of the loggerheads that return to our beaches each year. You'll leave with a greater appreciation for these remarkable animals—and simple ways you can help protect them. ***seaturtlepatrolhhi.org***

OTHER EVENTS
Put the Beach to Bed: *7-8 p.m., Tuesdays at Sonesta Resort Hilton Head Island, Wednesdays at The Beach House Resort and Sundays at The Dunes House*



Palmetto Bluff Conservancy events

Curious about the natural world just beyond the trail? The Palmetto Bluff Conservancy offers expert-led programs that make it easy to deepen your understanding of the Lowcountry's remarkable ecosystems, wildlife and conservation efforts. Visit ***palmettobluff.com/conservation*** for the full calendar.

UPCOMING EVENTS
Explore PBC: Marsh Ecology: *9-10 a.m., Aug. 6*
First Friday Lecture: Lowcountry Raptors: *6-7 p.m., Aug. 7*
Let's Talk About... Birds: *noon-1 p.m., Aug. 18*

OTHER SPORTS & OUTDOORS EVENTS

Aug. 15: *The Heritage Cares Foundation Charity Golf Tournament at Port Royal Golf & Racquet Club*
Aug. 22: *Sip and Flow Yoga at Burnt Church Distillery*
Aug. 23: *Yoga + Art on the Lawn: Creative Wellness at SOBA*
Aug. 26: *Night at the Preserve: Full Moon Wagon Ride at the Sea Pines Forest Preserve*
Aug. 27: *Full Moon Shore Explore at Sea Pines Beach Club*

HILTON HEAD ISLAND

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"WOW WOW WOW!"
- Norma Taylor, SunCity TV

MEAN GIRLS



ONSTAGE NOW – AUG 9

DIRECTED BY WHITAKER GANNON

The rumors are true: audiences are loving the Arts Center's *Mean Girls*! Featuring Tina Fey's sharp wit and a high-energy score, this musical follows Cady Heron's battle against Regina George in the wild world of high school. It's a vibrant, hilarious, and empowering story about friendship and self-discovery.

"ONE OF THE BEST SHOWS I'VE SEEN AT THE ARTS CENTER!
- RILEY MILLER MEDIA

The Cast of *Mean Girls*. Photography by Gustavo Rattia | Oceano Blue Media

SHOWCASE



AUG 3 | 4:00 & 7:30 PM



AUG 28 | 7:30PM & AUG 29 | 7:30PM

ARTS CENTER OF COASTAL CAROLINA
14 SHELTER COVE LN • ARTSHHI.COM • 843 842 ARTS(2787)



SAVANNAH EVENTS

Aug. 7: Billy Currington & Kip Moore at VyStar Pavillion
Aug. 7-16: Savannah VOICE Festival
Aug. 8: Georgia's First Fourth at Wormsloe State Historic Site
Aug. 8-10: Wexford Music Fest at Wexford Irish Pub
Aug. 15: Renegade Paws Rescue's Annual Tattoos for the Paws at Drop Dead Tattoo Savannah
Aug. 23: Southeast Crab Feast at Lake Mayer Park
Aug. 29: Savannah Pickleball Festival at Lake Mayer Park
Aug. 29: WWE Summer Tour at Enmarket Arena



Sparkle Hour by Kessler Fine Jewelry

When: 5-7 p.m., Thursdays
Where: Kessler Fine Jewelry
Enjoy handcrafted cocktails, sparkling bites and an opportunity to explore Kessler's most captivating fine jewelry creations. ***plantriverside.com***

OTHER EVENTS
September 3: *Caymus & Canvas at Kessler Fine Jewelry*

SAVE THE DATE

Sept. 1: HHSO's Jazz in the Park: John Brackett Quintet at Lowcountry Celebration Park
Sept. 3: Flex Fore St. Jude Spirits with a Purpose fundraiser at Burnt Church Distillery
Sept. 4: Bluffton Music Series — Tru Gentleman at New Riverside Barn Park
Sept. 4: The Savannah Sipping Society Opening Night at May River Theatre
Sept. 5: Hilton Head End of Summer 5K at Coligny Beach
Sept. 5: Reggae Pon De River at Bluffton Oyster Factory Park
Sept. 6: Carolina Dreamers Car Show at Lowcountry Celebration Park

TO SHOWCASE AN EVENT

You may be able to post your event for free in our Happenings section. Head to ***locallifesc.com***, click "Contact Us," and include a title, date, time, location, description, a link to the webpage and photos if possible.





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CREATE LASTING IMPACT











At the Rotary Club of Hilton Head Island, local neighbors and friends come together to create lasting impact right here and around the world.

We raise money for educational scholarships, support local nonprofits, provide shoes for children through Happy Feet, respond to disasters like Hurricane Helene, and stand behind global causes like Alzheimer's research and polio eradication.

We also recognize outstanding people in our community through our Hall of Fame, and honor students, teachers, nurses and local service providers whose dedication inspires us.

EVERY ACT OF SERVICE IS GUIDED BY ROTARY'S FOUR-WAY TEST:

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Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Join us and be part of something bigger.

Rotary Club of Hilton Head Island

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UNITE FOR GOOD

Check Us Out | Get Involved | Come to a Meeting | Participate

Meetings are held on Thursday at 12:30 pm.
Palmera Inn & Suites on 12 Park Lane, Hilton Head Island.

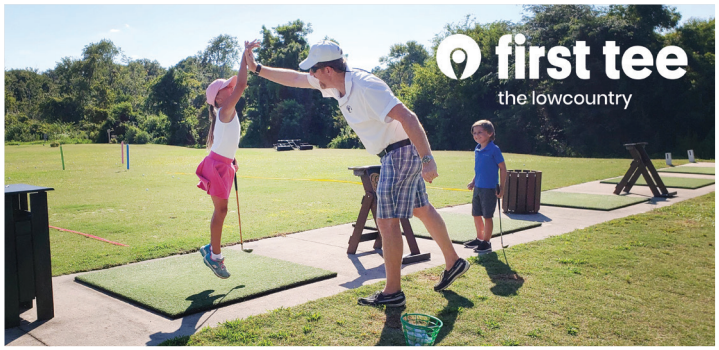
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START BEACHING StartBeaching® rents premium electric beach wagons delivered to your beach access, hotel or private residence and picks it up when you're done. Each Beachie includes chairs, shade and a cooler, with optional add-ons like ice and beach toys - everything you need for a relaxed beach day. **LOCAL Life Insider Tip:** Daily and weekly specials are available. Check online for many beach-day items.

Hilton Head Island & Bluffton · 845.683.1111 · StartBeaching.com



FIRST TEE — THE LOWCOUNTRY Experience golf on the Island with the only par-3 course — perfect for instruction, children and senior play. Driving range and putting green are open to everyone. $10 donation for adults, $5 donation for kids — all you can play. **LOCAL Life insider tip:** You don't need to bring clubs — the pros at First Tee will loan you a set at no charge.

151 Gumtree Road, Hilton Head Island · firstteelowcountry.org/about/facility



FUN ON HHI The only website you need during your vacation. Used by visitors and locals. Exciting things to see and do; places to eat and shop; and rental options like bikes, beach equipment, golf carts and Moke. Also a great resource to plan your next trip to HHI. **LOCAL Life Insider Tip:** Download the Fun On HHI app for curated discounts and offers not available on the website, sent directly to you. Plus an interactive bike map.

59B New Orleans Road, Hilton Head Island · 833.386.6644 · FunOnHHI.com

Whether you're a foodie looking to explore new culinary delights or a family seeking fun and engaging activities, these carefully curated selections of restaurants and activities have something for everyone.



THE HILTON HEAD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA brings world-class music to the Lowcountry, blending timeless artistry with a vibrant, contemporary spirit. From soaring symphonic works to intimate chamber performances, the HHSO engages both longtime patrons and new audiences, creating unforgettable musical experiences. **LOCAL Life Insider Tip:** Enjoy a pre- or post-concert meal at one of the nearby waterfront restaurants.

7 Lagoon Road, Suite 100, Hilton Head Island · 843.842.2055 · HHSO.org



KAYAK HILTON HEAD Whether experienced or a first-time family group, going on a dolphin kayak tour will likely be a highlight of your vacation. Many dolphins are known by name. Founded in 2001, Kayak Hilton Head's knowledgeable and experienced guides have been showing guests a great time on the waters of Hilton Head for 25 years. **LOCAL Life Insider Tip:** The early morning tours are our favorite! Reservations recommended.

18 Simmons Road, Hilton Head Island · 843.684.1910 · kayakhiltonhead.com



THE SHOPS AT SEA PINES CENTER Discover one of Hilton Head's most charming collections of boutiques, galleries and dining. Shopping meets community with signature happenings like the Farmers & Makers Market and First Thursday Artisan Alley, bringing the entire center to life. Stroll, browse, and experience a true Lowcountry gathering place. **LOCAL Life Insider Tip:** Time your visit with the Farmers & Makers Market or Artisan Alley for the full experience.

71 Lighthouse Road, Hilton Head Island · 843.363.5699 · theshopsatseapinescenter.com

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Hilton Head Christian Academy | hhca.org

Shared sunsets



Hilton Head Island

August has a rhythm all its own in the Lowcountry. The month begins with busy beaches and bustling summer crowds, but by the season's final stretch, the pace softens and locals once again settle back into the places they know best. It's a reminder that while the scenery here is unforgettable, life feels richest when those moments are shared with the people who matter most. Photographer Chris Smith captured this peaceful Hilton Head Island sunset, a beautiful reflection of experiencing the Lowcountry together.

HIT US WITH YOUR BEST SHOT **Have you taken a great local photo?**
Send your high-res image to info@wearelocallife.com or upload it at locallifesc.com/partingshot.


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HOME
Summer Golf
Beat the heat in style at Colleton River Club.
August temperatures may rise, but the Nicklaus Course offers a serene setting
that makes every round enjoyable. Summer at Colleton River brings a slower pace,
creating the perfect opportunity for an early morning tee time or a relaxing late-afternoon round.
There's something special about summer in the Lowcountry—it encourages us to slow down, savor the moment,
and appreciate what surrounds us. At Colleton River, Members enjoy the natural beauty of the landscape,
the camaraderie of the game, and a lifestyle that perfectly blends exceptional golf with extraordinary living.
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