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[WORD OF MOUTH]

WHAT PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT IN HILTON HEAD ISLAND



John Jakes
Writer in Residence



Briny Wonder
May River Oysters



Island Tonic
Discovering Daufuskie Island

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[PROFILE SERIES]

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AFRICAN HERITAGE

Visitors must take a journey of the senses to find the heart of South Carolina's **GULLAH CULTURE**.

Most days, Emory Campbell cruises through his own neighborhood in a plush tour bus. As he drives, the grandfatherly guide explains that his ancestors were brought to the coast of South Carolina from West Africa as slaves in the 18th and 19th centuries. The culture that evolved among the slaves is known as Gullah and is commonly linked to a creole-sounding language derived from the language of Sierra Leone.

The fifth-generation Gullah islander and his family give personal tours and share memories as part of the Gullah Heritage Trail Tour, a two-hour journey through Hilton Head that departs from the Coastal Discovery Museum.

Campbell laments that many landmarks he remembers, such as "praise houses" and oyster factories, are gone. But visitors can catch glimpses of Gullah culture at the First African Baptist Church, founded in 1862, and a one-room schoolhouse built in the 1930s to educate the island's black children. Both are on the north end of the island near Beach City and Bay Gall roads in historic Mitchelville, the first town for freed slaves in the United States and a must-see on the National Register of Historic Places.



There's a growing interest in this distinctive culture.

"The music is so alive and so full of Africa," says Marlena Smalls, who directs powerful, rhythm-driven musical performances that recreate the Gullah experience. Her

Hallelujah Singers, founded in 1991, have performed for luminaries such as Presidents Clinton and H. W. Bush and audiences all over the world. Their repertoire ranges from African songs to contemporary music, and incorporates plantation melodies. The group's home base is the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina on Hilton Head.

Smalls notes that one of the best ways to explore Gullah history is to visit nearby Daufuskie Island. She leads a "Root Doctor Tour" with Calibogue Cruises in the summer, with stops at the freed-slave school and at the First Union African Baptist Church for a traditional hymn sing.

In addition to her fascinating stories, those who join her tour also have a chance to taste a bit of Gullah culture in the form of "Devil Crab." The island delicacy is a baked-in-the-shell concoction of blue crab, peppers, onions and spices. Its name dates to the 18th century and refers to a dish made with fiery condiments.—Sandy Lang



Emory Campbell

[WORD OF MOUTH]



John Jakes at the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina

NORTH TO SOUTH

Despite the seduction of island life, JOHN JAKES remains a disciplined and prolific writer.

WHEN JOHN JAKES moved from Ohio to Hilton Head in 1978, Sea Pines founder Charles Fraser bet the prolific author he wouldn't get much writing done. He was sure the beaches and easygoing lifestyle would be a distraction.

Not so, says Jakes, now 73 and penning his 18th historical novel. His body of work includes the 1970s publishing phenomenon, *The Bastard* and the best-selling Civil War trilogy that began with *North and South*.

"I've always made it a point to turn my desk from the water," he says. "Work is a matter of discipline."

Besides writing, the Chicago-born transplant has immersed himself in theatrical pursuits on the Carolina sea island. He has acted in, directed, and written numerous plays, and he helped establish the impressive Arts Center

of Coastal Carolina on Hilton Head. Jakes and his wife, Rachel, recently provided funding for a "black box theater," a state of the art studio for the creation and rehearsal of new performances.

In 2005, Jakes wrote a 45-minute version of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," just the length needed so performers could take it on the road to schools in the region.

Has he ever written about Hilton Head Island? "Nothing in particular," says Jakes.

He mentions a raucous settlement that sprung up on Port Royal Plantation during the Civil War, a place rife with gambling, ladies of the evening, and even a street named Robbers' Row. Then the author's eyes begin to sparkle. "I suppose I ought to write something about that," he says.—Sandy Lang

MADE BY HAND

JACOB PRESTON came to the island in the 1970s to play volleyball on the beach. That was back when he was asked to do things such as pose as a model for the larger-than-life sculpture of Neptune at the marina at Shelter Cove.

He liked the island so much that he decided to stay, and started to turn out pottery. He eventually set up a studio on Church Street in nearby Bluffton. Ever since, his one-of-a-kind dishes, art pieces, and sink basins (adorned with oak trees, fish, or crabs) have become part of households across the region and beyond.

Known as "Bluffton's tallest potter," the nearly six-foot-five artisan makes his clay-splattered studio a friendly place. Folks stop by to look, buy, and mostly talk. Preston is also mayor *pro-tem* of Bluffton, and he'll eagerly describe the town's colorful history and how it's been an artists' enclave for decades. Art lovers will find more than a dozen galleries to explore.



Jacob Preston



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[WORD OF MOUTH]

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IN THE BAG



Off 5th

SHOPPING on Hilton Head Island can be more cosmopolitan than you'd expect. Chic boutiques and galleries sit side by side with the likes of big-city stores such as Off 5th, the Saks Fifth Avenue outlet store.

Shopping trips here are often excursions in themselves. More than 200 retail stores are clustered in plazas all over the island. Main Street Village has fountains and gardens. Harbour Town is centered around the marina and lighthouse.

Most shopping areas also are home to eateries and spas, so it's easy to make a day of browsing and buying. This is good news for golf widows or anyone looking for a diversion from the the sporting life.

Popular spots include the Mall at Shelter Cove, Pineland Station, the Village at Wexford, and Coligny Plaza by the Sea. Nearby off-island destinations include the Tanger Center Outlets on U.S. 278, and the merchants in historic Bluffton.



Bluffton Oyster Company

BRINY WONDER

If the month has an "r" in it, your taste buds may be lucky enough to make the acquaintance of the MAY RIVER OYSTER.

ON A COOL WINTER afternoon, customers pull up every couple of minutes onto a driveway of crushed oyster shells that fronts the water. They've come to the cinderblock building and docks at the end of Wharf Street for one reason—the area's beloved May River oyster.

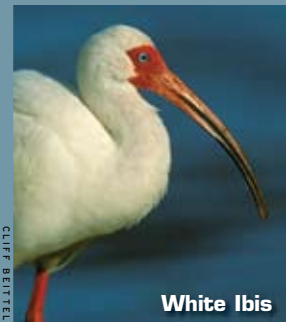
Sweet, salty, and not very big, the oysters get their distinctive flavor from the river's 7-foot ocean tides, says Larry Toomer, who operates the Bluffton Oyster Company, one of South Carolina's last shucking facilities. Open since the early 1900s, fishermen in rubber boots unload oyster harvests in the fall and winter. Customers eagerly wait to buy the local delicacy, still in the shell or shucked, and ready to be added to stews and other recipes.

As many as 100 shucking facilities operated on the state coast during the industry's heyday in the early- to mid-20th century, says Bill Anderson with the Shellfish Management Program of South Carolina. That's when oysters were shipped by the thousands of bushels to cities in the north, sustaining some 16 oyster canneries in Bluffton. The last closed in 1986, in large part because oystering is such hard work, Anderson says.

In Bluffton, most of the men who gather oysters—breaking hard-shelled clusters from beds at low tide—are from families who've been working on the river for generations. The same goes for the women who then shuck the oysters at long tables.—Sandy Lang

[WORD OF MOUTH]

SNOW FALL



White Ibis

Snow rarely falls on southernly Hilton Head. But in many places, a tree or an entire marsh island will become blanketed in white—and sometimes people wait in lawn chairs just to see.

The phenomenon is the gathering of white-feathered wading birds, often in the late afternoon and evening. In this sudden dusting of white, on-lookers may be rewarded with a glimpse of a curved-beaked White Ibis, a 3-foot-tall yellow-beaked Great Egret, or an endangered Wood Stork with black-edged wings. Perhaps most beautiful is the dainty Snowy Egret, famous for its lacy, white plumes that once adorned ladies' hats in the 1800s.

Local guide Patte Ranney says the region's most impressive rookery is on the 4,000-acre Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge. "But you don't necessarily have to go to Pinckney Island," she says. "Hundreds of roosting herons and egrets can be seen at Palmetto Bluff or just inside the back entrance to Hilton Head Plantation."

ISLAND TONIC

Enshrouded in rustic beauty, a day at DAUFUSKIE ISLAND is a restorative for body and soul.

JUST SOUTH OF HILTON HEAD is a storied sea island that was the site of colonial battles with Yemassee Indians before it was carved into plantations and eventually owned by freed slaves after the Civil War. More than a century later, the 8-square mile island has been "discovered" again, this time by resort developers.

Visitors still arrive to secluded Daufuskie by ferry or private boat. Many check into the grand Melrose Inn, a resort villa, or a private home rental before they settle in for days of golf, tennis, horseback riding, beachside fun, or spa treatments.

Outside Hilton Head shows resort and day visitors the less-developed "flipside" of the island. There, bumping along in a golf cart on wooded, sandy roads, the stories of Daufuskie's past begin to unfold. The tour passes the plain, one-story building on School Road where

author Pat Conroy taught island children in 1969. He was the first white person to teach at the school and wrote about the experience in his first best-selling novel, *The Water is Wide*.

Near the Bloody Point Lighthouse is a sign that reads "Silver Dew Winery 1953," marking the spot where the island's former lighthouse keeper once made scuppernong wine. Not far from there, at Church and School roads, is a cemetery dating to the late 1700s. It is adjacent to the circa 1881 First Union African Baptist Church, with its freshly painted clapboard walls and still-active congregation.

Need a bite along the way? Marshside Mama's serves up a mean crock of okra and sausage gumbo, topped with fresh local shrimp. Located near the county dock, the building is also the island post office, general store, and meeting place for locals.—Sandy Lang



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[IN DEPTH]

Healthy BY CHOICE

An island lifestyle compels locals
and visitors to get fit.

By Sandy Lang



Perhaps it's the logical destiny of an island shaped like a running shoe. Or it's the effect of all that sea breeze and saltwater. Whatever makes a place a beacon for the active, and for those who would like to be, Hilton Head's got it.

For 30 years, people from around the world have checked in at the resort-like Hilton Head Health Institute to lose weight in a sub-tropical island setting. Staying one week to six weeks or longer, guests at the Institute generally want to drop 50 to 150 pounds. They get a kick-start on their goals

[IN DEPTH]

through “a very mainstream program with no gimmicks or quick fixes” says staffer Elizabeth Blascho.

The Institute’s daily regimen includes walks on the beach and various fitness activities, nutrition classes, and cooking classes, along with programs focusing on behavior modification and emotional connections to food. The routine can be tough, but guests enjoy the experience, Blascho says, and they often return for a week or two each year for a booster visit.

Day spas are also a major draw here. There’s the secluded Breathe Spa on Daufuskie Island with its plush furnishings and iced fruit refreshments; the expansive FACES Day Spa on



FACES Day Spa

Hilton Head, offering anti-aging facial treatments, teeth whitening, and a full range of spa services; and the luxurious Spa at Palmetto Bluff with twin soaking tubs on a private porch that overlook a Lowcountry lagoon.

The sparkling new Beach City Health and Fitness is dedicated to more vigorous pursuits. Floor-to-ceiling windows ensure an island view while practicing yoga or working out in a private club.

In effect, “the whole island is like a playground, with the beach, nature preserves, and miles and miles of trails,” says Alfred Olivetti, a local fitness coach.

The triathlete likes the climate and healthy vibe so much, in 2000 he opened a retail store called Go Tri Sports. Olivetti soon started producing biathlon, triathlon and running events on the island. Summertime beach triathlons even draw first-time competitors who pedal along on well-worn beach cruisers.



Spa at Palmetto Bluff

Traditional Health Care

Hilton Head Island got a bridge to the mainland in the mid-1950s, but its first public hospital, opened in 1975, deepened a sense of livability.

The Hilton Head Regional Medical Center saves many residents and vacationers a long drive to Charleston or Savannah for health care. And although most of its patients are retired seniors, the medical center’s obstetricians brought 500 babies into the world last year.

In the last 30 years, the hospital has grown from 40 beds to 93 and added an outpatient facility on the mainland.

“What’s really unique about us, is that we’re relatively small but we’re still a full-service facility,” says Kelly Presnell, a spokeswoman for the hospital. “Plus, our patients can drive here in their golf carts.”—KS



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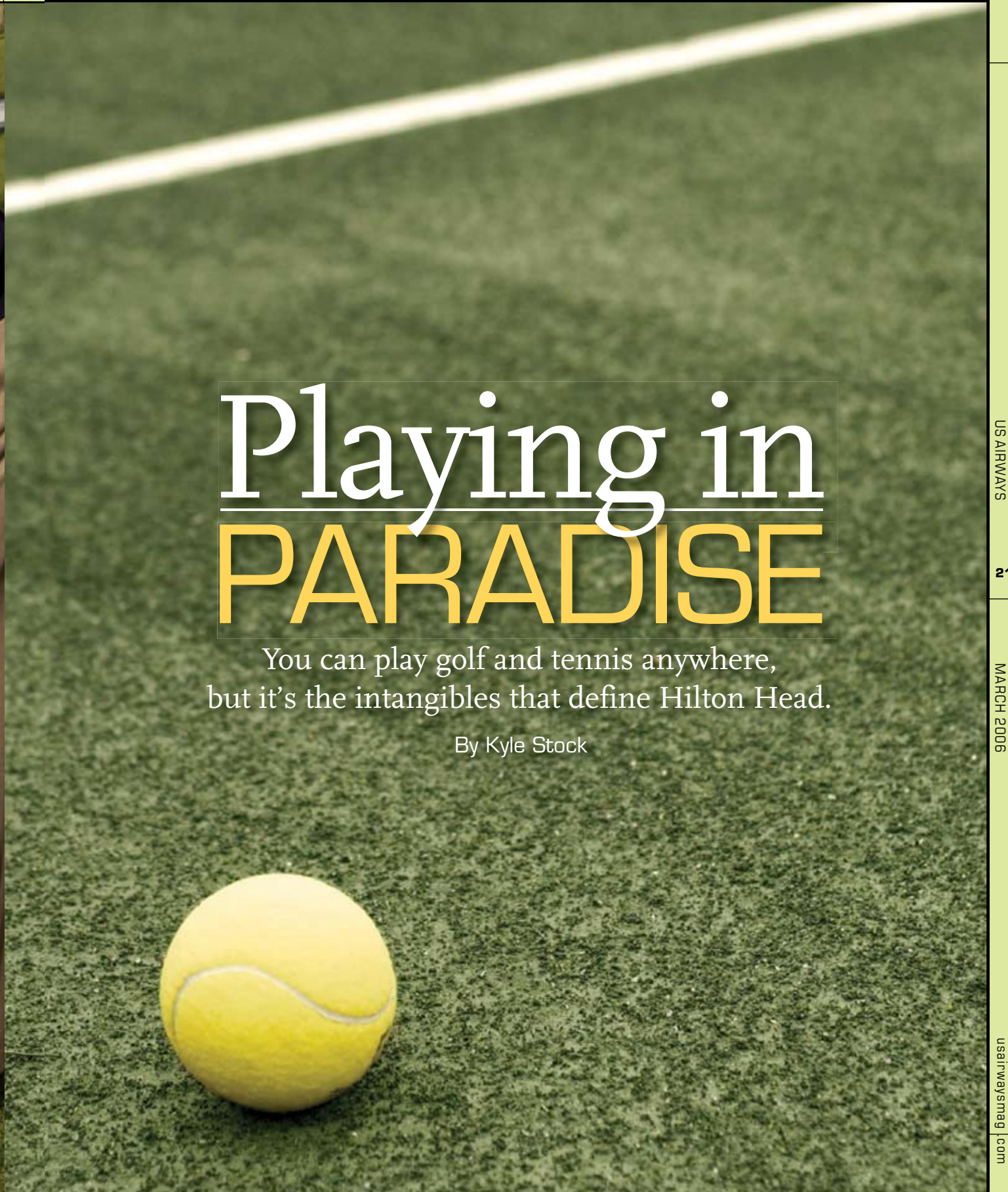
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Playing in PARADISE

You can play golf and tennis anywhere,
but it's the intangibles that define Hilton Head.

By Kyle Stock



Robert Trent Jones Oceanfront Course at Palmetto Dunes

Golf and tennis are to Hilton Head what skiing is to the mountains of Colorado, what art is to Paris, or what food is to Italy.

They aren't exclusive to this domain, but they seem to thrive here more than almost any place else. Calling cards of a sort, they're the culture that marks the island and makes it unique.

With nearly 100 tennis courts and two dozen championship-grade golf courses, the opportunities to engage in both forms of recreation are impressive for a small island. Two of the links have been rated in the top 100 in the nation by *Golf Digest* magazine. *Tennis* magazine regularly places four Hilton Head properties on its list of the top 50 U.S. tennis resorts, with Sea Pines in the number one slot.

Communities up and down the East Coast claim similar award-winning facilities, but those familiar with Hilton Head say it is the intangibles of the island that make its courts and courses such a draw. Where else does the sporting life meet the hush of the tide and a backdrop of tidal flats, moss-draped oaks, and salt-soaked beaches?

"I've traveled all over the world, and to me the Lowcountry is as beautiful an area as I can possibly imagine," says Brad King, a Hilton Head resident and former senior editor of *Links* magazine.

The first golf course on Hilton Head



Elliot Daniels, a former student at the Smith Stearns Tennis Academy

**"I've traveled all over the world and to me the Lowcountry is as beautiful an area as I can possibly imagine."
—Brad King,
former senior editor
of *Links* magazine**

opened in 1960, but the island really brought its game up to par in 1969 with the inaugural Heritage Classic—now the Verizon Heritage Classic—a PGA invitational that lures the game's greats every April.

Hilton Head jumped to the top of the tennis ranks two years later in 1971 when Sea Pines Resort founder Charles Fraser convinced a young ace named Stan Smith to sign on as the resort's touring pro. Shortly thereafter, Smith won Wimbledon, grabbed two U.S. Open titles and became the world's top-ranked player. He has circled the globe as a Hilton Head ambassador ever since.

"Some places have better golf, tennis, horseback riding, and beaches, but the Sea Pines Resort and Hilton Head have it all," he explains.

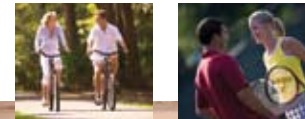
These days the 59-year-old coaches would-be pros at the Smith Stearns

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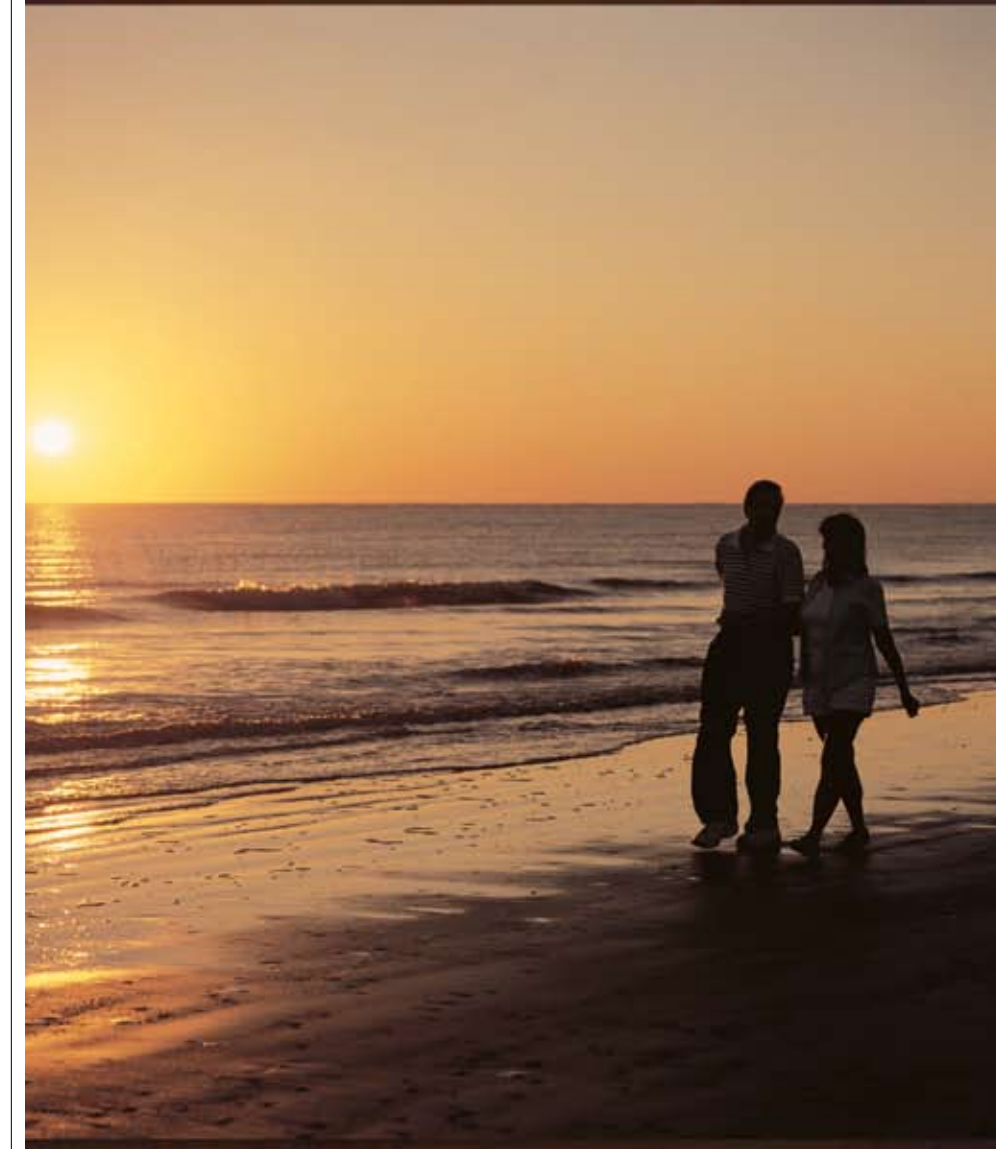
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Tennis Academy—that is, when he's not playing senior tournaments or squeezing in a round on a nearby golf course.

Doug Weaver, 46, is another pro who owes much of his livelihood to the island. He was a promising golfer in his youth, but by West Virginia standards. It was only when his family moved to Hilton Head and he joined the high school team that he really blossomed. After a successful college golf career, Weaver joined the PGA tour and played through two U.S. Opens and five Heritage invitationals.

"It's a complete experience of what golf is meant to be," Weaver explains. "When good golfers play a round of golf here, they're more relaxed when they finish than when they started. Hilton Head helps people relax."

Weaver is now director of golf instruction at the Palmetto Dunes Resort. He spends his days ironing out the swings of celebrities and running some of the island's many youth golf programs.

Both Weaver and Smith have turned down some attractive offers elsewhere.

Former PGA tour professional Doug Weaver with students



Smith dismissed the thought of leaving Hilton Head in the mid-1980s.

"I was on the beach with one of my best friends and he asked me 'What are

you going to do?'" Smith recalls. "I said 'I'll probably go back to California where I'm from.' When he asked me why, I couldn't answer the question."

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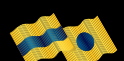
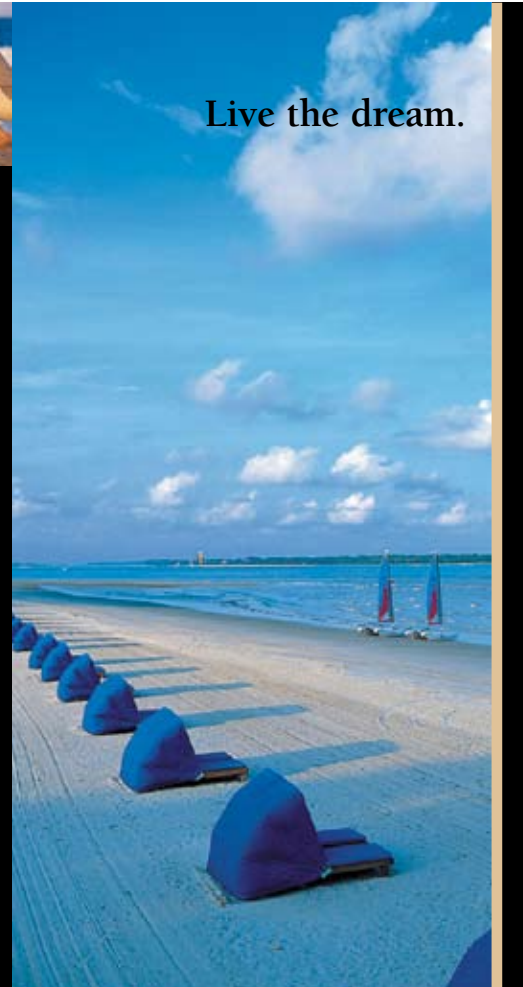
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Heritage Academy Teams Up With IJGA

Stealing a page from the play-book of Vermont ski schools and the Brazilian soccer clinics, the Heritage Academy launched in 1994 with the goal of turning out graduates at the top of their game, physically and mentally. The private institution caters to about 200 students in grades 6 through 12, offering small classes and flexible schedules. While the program works for a wide range of pursuits, including drama, art and chess, it has become especially popular with young golfers and tennis players.



Perfecting the Swing at Heritage Academy

Heritage Academy is the academic partner of the International Junior Golf Academy (IJGA), the only junior golf organization of its kind. Says IJGA President Ray Travagalione, "We attract some of the most talented junior golfers from around the world. We are committed to a single goal—preparing our students for success in tournament golf, university academics, and life."

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Conservation MATTERS

Preserving the island's intrinsic beauty
has proven key to development success.

By Kyle Stock

About 50 years ago, some of the cheapest land on Hilton Head Island was beachfront property. In those days, the island's fortunes were made by harvesting timber, and the trees nearest the ocean's salt were not as robust as those inland. Fortunes are still made by selling wood on Hilton Head. But now it is homes, not pine trees, that fuel the island's economy. And the lumber near the ocean no longer comes cheap.

In 1958, beachfront lots sold for \$5,350. Now properties with a view of the Atlantic sell at a median price of \$2.5 million and a high of \$7.5 million.

When Andy Twisdale, president of the Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors, moved to the island in 1971, there were still less than 3,000 permanent residents. Although he did not become a realtor until 1991, Twisdale could do no wrong when it came to buying and selling property. He bought a lot in 1989 for \$25,000 and sold it for a handsome profit a few years ago. Empty parcels in that same neighborhood are selling for \$340,000 today.

"If you're worried about 1 or 2 percentage points on your mortgage, you're probably not going to buy on Hilton Head," Twisdale says.

The island did not see sustained growth until the 1950s when it first got electricity and efficient air conditioners started rolling off assembly lines.

At that time, a young entrepreneur named Charles Fraser, fresh from Yale Law School, bought 19,000 acres of timberland on the island's south end from his father. He decided the land might be worth more if it were developed and sold off to residents, particularly if there was a bridge to the mainland. Fraser's pressure helped build that first bridge, but he proceeded carefully with what would become Sea Pines Plantation, and in doing so, created some of the most vanguard planning strategies the country had ever seen.

Fraser's builders went out of their way to protect trees and waterways. They built community walkways and security gates. Fraser also levied a 40-page set of covenants on his buyers, regulating everything from the color of their houses to the types of plants used in their landscaping. Concerned about the educational needs of his community, he even built a school called Sea Pines Academy, now Hilton Head Prep, so families could relocate to the area and provide a first-rate education to their children.

Other major Hilton Head developers like Greenwood Development, the Melrose Company and RBC Enterprises followed Fraser's lead.

Retirees have spurred much of Hilton Head's growth. The island is still a bargain compared to many coastal communities, and it is a couple of hours closer than Florida for snowbirds who go south each winter. More than a quarter of Hilton Head's 34,371 residents have had a 65th birthday. And the median age during the 2000 census was 46, up from 40 in 1990.

But the island is also attracting younger people with a "Why wait?" attitude. Richard Hodsdon, an executive with RBC Enterprises, said his brokers are selling more to long-distance



Inside a \$5.3 million home at Sea Pines Plantation

Home Away From Home

South Carolina boasts 130 timeshare resorts, a number second only to Florida's in the United States. Hilton Head is one of the reasons why.

Island tourists often long to buy real estate in their vacation paradise, even if it's for just one week a year. That's what Ken Taylor realized in 1982 when he founded Spinnaker Resorts and built the first timeshare on the island. Today, Spinnaker has seven timeshare resorts on Hilton Head with about 430 units. It recently broke ground on a planned 200-unit complex.

"People want to come here and have affordable second homes and that's what my father wanted to create," explains Caroline Oliver, one of Ken Taylor's two daughters who manage and market the properties. "He tried to build something where we would have wanted to vacation."

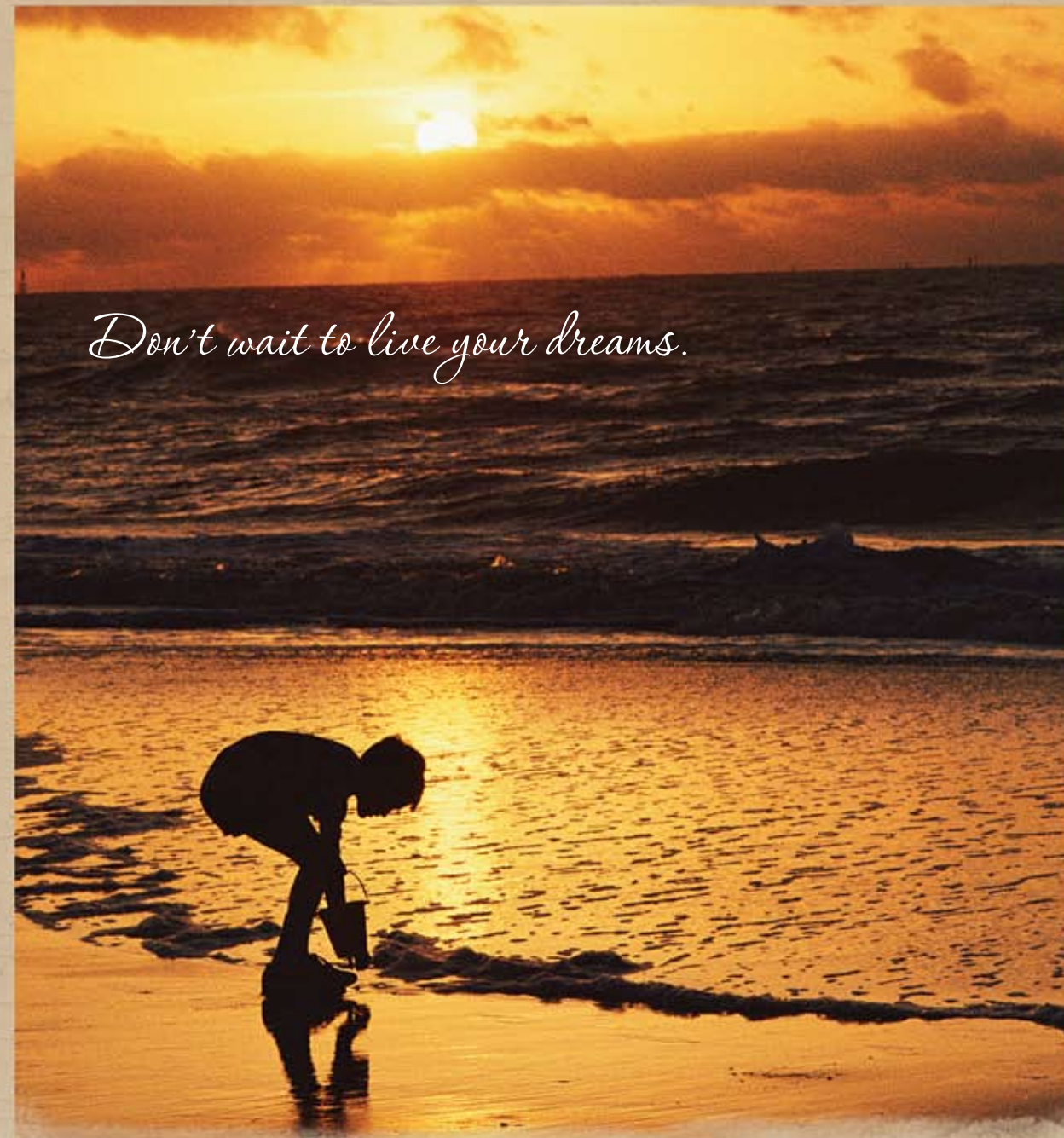
Taylor's firm swims with some of the biggest fish in the timeshare pool, most notably Marriott International, the massive Washington D.C.-based hotel company. Marriott owns and operates eight timeshare resorts on Hilton Head, including its new 195-unit SurfWatch property.

commuters and telecommuters.

It was one of many great Hilton Head vacations that convinced Charlie Clark and her husband Tom to move there

from Wyoming four years ago.

"We were sitting on the beach and we looked at each other and said 'We could actually live here,'" Clark says.



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Courtney Jaskiewicz, BIC 

Having shuttered her public-relations firm, Clark sings the praises of her new home as a spokeswoman for the area chamber of commerce.

The sensitive planning that Fraser developed in the mid-1950s is carried on today by the town, which incorporated in 1986 as a "kind of a take-control-of-your-destiny thing," according to Town Manager Steven Riley. Since Riley took the job in 1991, one-quarter percent of every real estate sale has gone to city coffers to buy more than a 1,000 acres of undeveloped land.

Thanks to vigilant town planners, there are still no billboards on the island. And commercial buildings, including a Wal-Mart, a Barnes and Noble bookstore and a few grocery stores, blend in with residential property.

"There's definitely a learning curve national retailers go through to understand that they can't just do what they do in Suburbia, USA," explains Jeffrey Barbic, who planned many of those developments as an executive at the Melrose Company.



Villas at Hilton Head Island's Shipyard Plantation

There are only about 1,200 acres left for development on Hilton Head Island. The number of properties on the market has decreased virtually every quarter in the past four years—a phenomenon that has driven prices higher.

"We wish we had another 1,000 acres to develop. Believe me," says Barbic.

Today there are a lot of communities across the country built on the covenants and strategies that Fraser cultivated. Most were spread when some of his top lieutenants took positions at other major

building companies. And that sensitivity to nature and quality of life is still evident everywhere one looks on Hilton Head, even in the frail pine trees that grow by the beach.

"Fraser really did set the standard for a lot of what is considered progressive development these days," Riley says.

"Were they absolutely environmentalist to the core? Not really. But he knew if he mowed down all the oak trees and Spanish moss, it would be just another place."

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[IN DEPTH]



CALMING *the* WATERS

Nancy Cappelmann never thought she would spend her life directing yacht traffic. But for more than two decades, she's been in charge of one of the world's most famous harbors.

By Sandy Lang

When she was a girl in the mid-1960s, Nancy Cappelmann's family would vacate the steamy upstate each summer and bring their 30-foot boat to Hilton Head. They'd spend days cruising the island's creeks and harbors, playing on the beaches, and getting dressed for dinners at the Plantation Club. "Hilton Head was a very different place then," she says. "Harbour Town wasn't even built yet."

Some 40 years and plenty of changes later, Cappelmann is the Harbormaster at the Harbour Town Yacht Basin, a keyhole-shaped cove on the southeastern end of the island at Intracoastal Waterway mile marker 565. The wife and mother of two manages the comings and goings among nearly 100 private slips in the basin. She sees every kind of vessel

imaginable from simple, flat-bottomed johnboats to gorgeous, 150-foot yachts with full crews.

Who docks there? She can't name names. Discretion is an important part of the job, she explains, but notes that celebrities from the PGA, NASCAR, and television have been known to pull their boats into slips.

She says she hadn't planned to become a harbormaster, a job rarely held by a woman. (Statewide marina listings show only six female harbormasters in South Carolina, at more than 40 facilities.) She worked up to the position from dockhand, after taking the job on a lark in 1981.

"I'd always been around boats, and wasn't sure what I wanted to do with my business degree," she says. "Once I got to Harbour Town, I just kept staying."

Cappelmann even lived on a sailboat for the first several years. These days, her tasks include everything from sorting through regulations and paperwork to installing cleats on a boat and overseeing the weigh-in of a possible state record bluefin tuna.

The view she sees daily from the docks may look familiar, even if you're not one of the thousands of visitors who pass through Harbour Town each year. Built in 1969, the yacht basin and 93-foot-tall candy-striped lighthouse—a commercial attraction more than a navigational tool—are the focal point of television coverage at the PGA Tour event played each spring on the Harbour Town Golf Course. The 18th hole of the famous course practically spills into the marina.

For slip information at the Harbour Town Yacht Basin, call 843-671-2704.

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[IN DEPTH]



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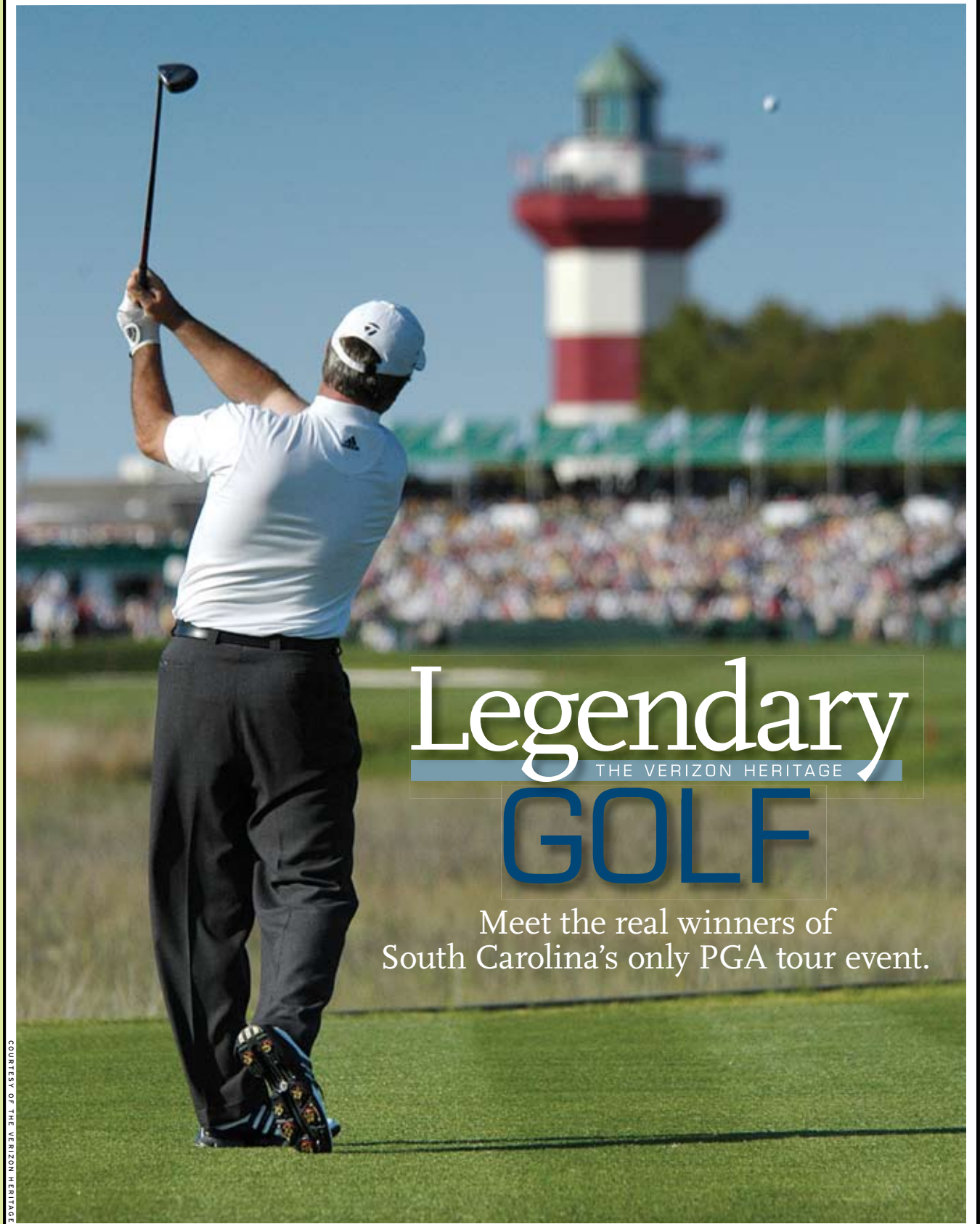


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[IN DEPTH]

The tradition of the Verizon Heritage began in 1969 when Arnold Palmer won the inaugural tournament on Hilton Head Island. Harbour Town Golf Links was so new that parts of the fairways needed to be spray-painted green.

Golf magazine's top-rated course in South Carolina, Harbour Town has hosted many champions, including Jack Nicklaus, Johnny Miller, Greg Norman, and the late Payne Stewart.

Since its inception, the driving force of the Verizon Heritage, played each April at Harbour Town, has been to improve lives. Every dollar of revenue generated by the tournament sponsor, the Heritage Classic Foundation, goes to charitable organizations across the state. Close to \$13 million has been donated to those in need, since the foundation was created in 1987.

"One hundred and thirty-six high school seniors have gone to college



Harbour Town Golf Links

thanks to our scholar program," says Tournament Director Steve Wilmot, "that is in addition to the hundreds of groups who receive grants."

One of those groups is the Hilton Head Heroes, a nonprofit organization that provides no-cost resort vacations to

children with life-threatening illnesses.

"It's a fun-filled week, free of doctor's visits and financial worries," says founder Gregg Russell. "The funding we receive from the foundation enables us to give these families a vacation they will remember forever."

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All In a Day's Work



Charles Fraser and Arnold Palmer

For the 14th consecutive year, the purse for the Verizon Heritage Golf Tournament has increased.

Tournament Director Steve Wilmot says this year's purse will be a cool \$5,300,000, an increase of a \$100,000 since last year's event.

Earnings have grown by leaps and bounds since the tournament's inception in 1969.

1969/1970	\$100,000
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This year's tournament—the 38th annual—will be played April 10–16, 2006 at the Harbour Town Golf Links.

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[IN DEPTH]

DINING OUT: ISLAND STYLE

One night, it's paper-thin slices of aged beef and cheese on a plate of peppery arugula leaves. Another, it's a fried oyster sandwich ordered at a worn counter. That's Hilton Head, with its hundreds of dining destinations—some all but hidden in shopping centers, or at the end of winding roads. The cuisine is a mix of high and low, with Lowcountry standards such as fish, grits, crab cakes, and island tomatoes. Adding to the diversity are cooking styles brought here from far afield by scores of chefs and restaurateurs who've made the island their home.—by *Sandy Lang*



Redfish

OLD FORT PUB, 65 Skull Creek Drive, 843-681-2386

Within the oak trees on a bluff overlooking the Intracoastal Waterway, and with a footpath to the Civil War ruins of Fort Mitchel, Old Fort Pub offers one of the best views on the island, especially at sunset. Open since 1973, the menu includes seafood, duck, quail, and lamb. Indoor and outdoor seating are available, as well as a charming, worn wood bar.

SIGNE'S HEAVEN BOUND BAKERY & CAFÉ, 93 Arrow Road, 843-785-9118

Begun in 1972, the popular bakery serves frittatas, tomato tarts, salads, and sandwiches, along with breads, pies, and cakes to take home—with at least a half-dozen chocolate cake varieties. *Food Network's* Rachael Ray stopped by recently to learn to make Signe's blackberry French toast.

HINOKI, 37 New Orleans Road, 843-785-9800

This beautiful sushi bar and Japanese restaurant has five dining rooms—one for sitting cross-legged at low tables—and an extensive menu that compares well with the best of larger cities. Specialties include a crispy roasted duck and filet mignon sliced on a hot stone.

MICHAEL ANTHONY'S, 37 New Orleans Road, 843-785-6272

A few doors down from Hinoki is the best Italian restaurant on Hilton Head, according to locals. The atmosphere is warm and friendly, and the restaurant is known for its service and delicious wines, along with its beautiful plates of antipasto, veal, gnocchi, pesce fresco (fresh fish), and Italian desserts.

REDFISH, 8 Archer Road, 843-686-3388

With flavors of Cuba and the Caribbean, this one's for wine lovers. Sit at wooden tables in arm's reach of bottle-filled racks in the wine store, or in a stunning dining room adorned with original black and white photography. Either way, you can select from more than 1,000 wines.

CHARLIE'S L'ETOILE VERTE, 8 New Orleans Road, 843-785-9277

The word is, this was a favorite restaurant of President Bill Clinton during his Renaissance Weekend visits in the 1990s. Today, Charlie's "Green Star" continues to concoct Parisian-inspired selections such as Carolina trout with saffron sauce and filet mignon with Boursin herb crème. The menu is handwritten and changes daily.

OTHERS TO NOTE: Sage Room (open kitchen, a hit with locals); Santa Fe Café (Southwestern, top margaritas); The Jazz Corner (dinner plus live jazz and blues, dance floor); Harold's Diner (huge hamburgers); Sea Shack (no-frills seafood); Sippin' Cow Café (sandwiches, coffee, and milkshakes in Bluffton); and Marshside Mama's (music and gumbo on Daufuskie).

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[IN DEPTH]



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BONDING GETAWAYS: ISLAND STYLE

As time-strapped travelers turn vacations into two-or-three-day getaways in most places, the 2 million-plus annual visitors to Hilton Head keep extending their stays, presently averaging 5.8 days per stay. Huge, eight-bedroom houses are some of the hottest rental properties in the area. And groups of friends who vacation without children are on the rise. To accommodate them, there are some 6,000 villas and rental houses on the island versus some 3,000 hotel rooms.—by Sandy Lang

HOTEL CHOICES

HILTON HEAD MARRIOTT BEACH & GOLF RESORT, 800-295-5998

With sweeping views of the ocean from its 10-story tower, this is the tallest structure on the island. (Height regulations put in place since it was built will keep it that way.) Indoor and outdoor restaurants, pools, a salon, and three golf courses are available to guests.

THE INN AT HARBOUR TOWN, 888-807-6873

English-style butler service (the butlers even wear kilts) is the hallmark of this elegant, 60-room inn within walking distance of the Harbour Town Lighthouse. Bicycles and use of tennis courts are included. Guest rooms overlook the Sea Pines Racquet Club or the first hole of the Harbour Town Golf Links.

HILTON OCEANFRONT RESORT HILTON HEAD, 800-845-8001

The resort is located on the beautiful grounds of exclusive Palmetto Dunes and consists of 324 amply sized studio suites and 20 luxurious full suites. It offers supervised activities for the kids as well as separate pools for parents and the little ones. For those in need of some pampering, the Ocean Tides Spa hosts a full menu of treatments and massages.

THE WESTIN RESORT HILTON HEAD ISLAND, 888-625-5144

With oceanfront and pool view rooms, this full-service resort offers many activities for guests. Among the amenities to choose from are a top-notch health club, three pools, 16 tennis courts, and three golf courses. Runners should ask for a map of recommended three-mile and five-mile jogging routes.

MAIN STREET INN, 800-471-3001

This intimate, 33-room inn charms guests with its Charleston-style gardens, French provincial furnishings, and Italianate fireplaces. Continue taking in Old World ambiance with afternoon tea. Rates include breakfast.

THE INN AT PALMETTO BLUFF, 866-706-6565

Everyone's talking about the new Auberge Resort on the May River in Bluffton. It's set in a beautiful village at the heart of 20,000 forested acres. Accommodations consist of individual cottages and homes, all with porches, fireplaces, luxurious bedding, and high-speed Internet connections.

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"Everyone thinks they want to be on the ocean," says Renee Taylor, owner of a vacation rental agency on Hilton Head Island. "Of course, price and availability will determine that."

Taylor helps those who call Sea Turtle Getaways figure out where on the island they'd like to stay and how large a villa or house they'll need. She might counsel couples looking for a romantic getaway, two or three families who'd like to rent a house together, or a group of golfing buddies.

By the time people call, Taylor says, most have reviewed options on the Internet and already have their choices narrowed down. By then it's just a matter of remaining details. For instance, do they want to rent bikes? Would they like the refrigerator stocked with food and drink when they check in?

"Returning guests always get grocery delivery. They know what Saturday night at the grocery store is like," Taylor says. For the uninitiated, Saturdays are changeover day on the island, with guests arriving and departing from the thousands of properties that are rented by the week.

Bret Anthony at Daufuskie Island Resort and Breathe Spa says he and his staff help visitors with the same kind of details.

Since neighboring Daufuskie Island is reachable only by the boat, guests who rent homes there must consider some additional logistics—such as ferry schedules. Vacation planners also help guests arrange for the use of bicycles and golf carts, and for activities like golf, spa treatments, and boating.

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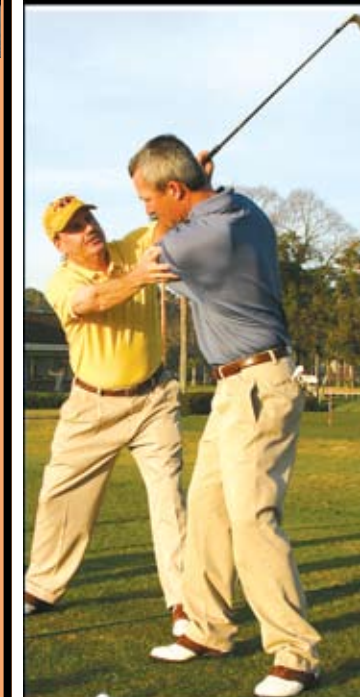


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