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Collins Group Realty Celebrates Joan Weaver's 20th Anniversary

JOAN WEAVER, REAL ESTATE SPECIALIST



This year, Collins Group Realty proudly celebrates Joan Weaver's 20th anniversary on the team as a Real Estate Specialist – a milestone marked by commitment, compassion, and consistent excellence. After a successful career in Hilton Head Island retail, Joan sought a more independent path where she could build deeper client relationships. Real estate was the perfect fit, and she hasn't looked back since – helping over 300 clients buy and sell homes in the Lowcountry.

One standout moment came just before the pandemic, when Joan helped out-of-town buyers purchase a home via FaceTime. They saw it for the first time on closing day – and called it the best decision they ever made. It's experiences like that, and the ever-evolving nature of the business, that keep Joan energized. "No two clients are the same," she says. "That constant challenge is what keeps me excited every day."

Outside of real estate, Joan enjoys boating, traveling, and time with her husband Charlie and their dog Dooley. They recently celebrated 20 years of marriage with a trip to Croatia. She also volunteers weekly with Meals on Wheels, forming meaningful connections with the people she serves. "For some, that visit is their only interaction of the day," she shares.

Joan lives by the belief that gratitude fuels abundance, and that success comes from doing what others won't. We're incredibly lucky to have her on our team - her warmth, work ethic, and heart make her truly one of a kind.

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the team

What is/was your favorite horse?

"Black Beauty."
- LORI



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"Street Sense, winner of the 2007 Kentucky Derby."
- LANCE



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"BoJack."
- JEREMY



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"My sister's quarter horse, Charlotte."
- CHARLES



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"Spirit, the first (and only) horse I ever rode when I was little."
- ASHLAN



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"No one can talk to a horse, of course. That is, of course, unless the horse is the famous Mr. Ed!" **- BAILEY**



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"My home girl, Sparkles. My dad bought her for me at age 5 when Tuesday Morning stores were still a thing." **- SHEILA**



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"My horse, Silver. Check out my '80s perm!"
- REBECCA



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"A stallion."
- LAUREN



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"A strong Clydesdale."
- MARCI



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"Wish, who was such a great model for our fashion this month."
- LISA



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"Secretariat."
- LEAH



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"Trigger, the Golden Palomino."
- BRUCE



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May features



The Equestrian Issue

Saddle up for a ride through the Lowcountry's most captivating horse stories, from historic carriage tours to high-stakes equestrian events. This issue celebrates local riding legends, cherished horses and enduring traditions, alongside Western-inspired fashion, Southern-style derby cocktails, underrated horse films and local trail rides worth the trek. Whether you're an experienced rider or simply horse-curious, one thing's certain: the bond between human and horse still runs wild and deep across the Lowcountry.

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PASTURE PRIME Thor, a golden palomino owned by Steve and Shelly Karol, stands quietly beneath a moss-draped oak at the Spring Island Equestrian Center. With wide paths and roads designed for riding three abreast, Spring Island is a true haven for horse lovers. Meet more beloved horses and the equestrian centers and stables they call home on **page 98**.

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Horse-drawn carriage tours offer a portal to the past

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May contents

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Publisher
In the Lowcountry the bond between human and horse runs deep; a legacy lived, not just admired. From historic beach races and healing programs, to scenic trail rides and stylish nods to equestrian life, this issue celebrates the grace, grit and charm of our four-hooved companions.

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MARK BOEDGES



Mark Boedges | *Slow Southern Morning* | 24" x 30" Oil

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Where the heart gallops

Celebrating the beauty, history and rhythm of Lowcountry horse life.

"No hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle."
- WINSTON CHURCHILL



GIDDY-UP, GRANDMA
Publisher Lori Goodridge-Cribb shares a joyful moment with her granddaughter, Kinsley, during a pony ride at Lawton Stables in Sea Pines. The stables offer young riders (7 and under) a fun experience with two guided laps around the animal farm.

SCAN TO SUBSCRIBE
Don't miss an issue of LOCAL Life. **Scan this QR code** to subscribe to the upscale lifestyle magazine of Hilton Head Island, Bluffton, Beaufort and beyond.

There's an undeniable magic to horses: a quiet power in their presence, a fluid grace in every stride and a connection that runs deeper than reins or saddles. In the Lowcountry, that bond isn't just admired, it's lived. Horses aren't just part of the landscape here; they're part of the lifestyle.

For generations, they've been steadfast partners, shaping how we work, explore and unwind. They've charged into battle, raced across polo fields, turned stubborn soil and splashed through tidal creeks. From the thunder of hooves along sunlit shores to the careful footing through sticky pluff mud and thorn-lined trails, they've carried us through history with grace and grit. These unwavering companions are central to the unfolding story of the Lowcountry.

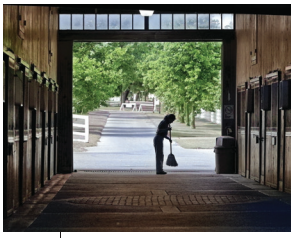
In this issue, we celebrate that legacy along with the people and places that keep it alive.

Meet local equestrian legends and get to know some of the Lowcountry's most beloved horses. Experience the healing power of programs like Heroes on Horseback. Step into a storybook carriage for a ride through historic streets, or saddle up for breezy trails suited for both first-time riders and seasoned pros.

We've added a touch of Southern-style fun too, including minty cocktails, crowd-pleasing recipes and Derby Day party tips with a Lowcountry twist. Discover equestrian-inspired fashion that blends practicality with polish. And when it's time to unwind, don't miss our roundup of underrated horse movies, perfect for a cozy night in.

With mild winters, a close-knit community and easy access to top shows, the Lowcountry is a dream for horse lovers. But even if you've never saddled up, horses have a way of finding their way into your heart. They slow us down, ground us, and remind us to move through life with intention. So here's to the racers, the healers, the hard-workers and the pasture wanderers. To the stories they carry and the lives they touch. Hold on tight, this issue promises an unforgettable ride.

LORI GOODRIDGE-CRIBB
PUBLISHER
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PUB NOTES

CAMP DAYS AND CANTER STRIDES *When I was young, summer meant camp, and for a few unforgettable years, it meant horse camp. Sounds dreamy, right? In reality, it was more sweat than sparkles. Between the early mornings, endless saddle scrubbing and memorizing every bone in a horse's body (yes, there are over 200, and no, "leg bone" doesn't count), it was tough work. But somewhere between mucking stalls and mastering the bridle, I fell in love. Horses have had my heart ever since. Now, when I drive past local stables or see well-groomed horses at parades and community events, I don't just admire the horse, I appreciate the dedication and all the behind-the-scenes work that comes with it. Because anyone who's spent time around horses knows the truth: it's tough work, but it's always worth it.*



OLYMPIC DREAMS IN THE FAMILY *A big shout out to my amazing niece, Nellie Patsch! At just 15, she's already pouring her heart, soul and countless hours into her dream of one day representing the U.S. as an Olympic dressage rider. She's been in the saddle since she was 9, and her passion, focus and drive continue to inspire us all. Our whole family couldn't be prouder. It's amazing how many competitive equestrians are hiding in plain sight in our community — doctors, dentists, Realtors. You'd never guess how many spend their free time living and breathing horses.*



SQUEAK CHIC Have you seen the LOCAL Life Jeep around town? This month we rolled up next to Debbie Wood and Gail Posey, managers at the ***Church Mouse Thrift Shop and Boutique*** — a beloved local nonprofit since 2004. Swing by the shop at 78 Arrow Road on Hilton Head Island to browse fresh spring finds and support great local causes.


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MEET LOCAL CREATIVES BEHIND THE SCENES



Ky Zubatsky *Poet*

OTHER CREDS: Purdue University graduate, fine artist and teacher for over 35 years, IWN member, Poetry Trail poet, published in IWN 2025 anthology *Sea Change*, frequent open mic participant **FOR THIS ISSUE:** Local poetry, *The Encounter in Canyon de Chelly, Arizona* **HOMETOWN:** River Hills, Wisconsin **CURRENT:** Bluffton **LOCAL SINCE:** 2019 **HOBBIES:** Painting, writing, horses, reading, hiking, thrifting **WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?** Bingeing four seasons of *The Chosen* **WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO?** The band, Weevilism, and cellist Stjepan Hauser **WHAT ARE YOU READING?** A 868-page biography, *VanGogh The Life* by Naifeh and Smith **WHAT ARE YOU DRINKING?** Dark roast Sumatra with heavy cream, Deep Eddy Peach **FAVORITE HORSE:** My first hunter/jumper, Downtown Freddie Brown **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT HORSES?** They have an innate ability to heal people both emotionally and physically, their nobility and free spirit **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT MAY?** Warm temps, sunny skies perfect for hiking and treasure hunting on the beaches. **SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW:** I bicycled coast to coast in 29 days.



Venaye P. McGlashan
Retired state veterinarian

FOR THIS ISSUE: Parting shot, *Where the wild ponies wandered* **HOMETOWN:** Jackson, South Carolina **CURRENT HOME:** St. Helena Island **LOCAL SINCE:** 2009 (part-time), 2012 (permanent) **HOBBIES:** Pottery (wheel and hand-built), sculpture, painting, reading, kayaking, biking, horse-back riding, gardening, birding **WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?** *Dark Winds, Adolescence, The Residence, Runaway Jury* (rewatched), *Sicario* (rewatched), *The Diplomat, Killing Eve*. **WHAT ARE YOU READING?** Mysteries, thrillers, occasional non-fiction. All-time favorite: *The Coming Plague* by Laurie Garrett. Changed my career direction and is still so relevant today. **FAVORITE HORSE:** George, my gray Arabian gelding I had for almost 20 years. What horse people call my "heart horse." **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT HORSES?** Beauty, strength, honesty. To paraphrase old-time trainer Will Rogers, "The horse is the smartest thing in the world — at being a horse." **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT MAY?** All outdoors! Wonderful gardening and birding month.



Brian Hibbard *Artist*

FOR THIS ISSUE: Local art, *Horse 622* **HOMETOWN:** I was born in Camden but spent most of my youth in Greenville. **CURRENT HOME:** We live on Lake Hartwell and also have a house in Beaufort. My uncle lived in Beaufort most of his life. He passed away a couple of years ago, and I purchased his estate from the family. We restored the house and fell in love with the town and location. We love to walk, and the property is along the Spanish Moss Trail. **HOBBIES:** I love to restore old or unique homes and Airstream trailers. I'm currently working on a mid-century home in Due West and a 1967 Airstream Tradewind. **WHAT ARE YOU WATCHING?** The TV series *House of David* and an older British comedy, *The IT Crowd*. **WHAT ARE YOU LISTENING TO?** Music is between Ray LaMontagne and Phantogram. I enjoy Jordan Peterson and Shawn Ryan podcasts. **WHAT INSPIRES YOUR ART?** Almost anything. I process everything visually. My sense of adventure, discovering something new, to get lost in my work and the relationships that come from sharing my paintings. **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT HORSES**? Their strength and beauty, but also their sense of freedom. **WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT MAY?** I love the warm weather and being in the water. We have an annual party with old high school friends at the end of May at our lake house.

Others who jumped in the saddle for this issue ...

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#1 Ranked Real Estate Team

Corryne Jackson, Beth Drake, Hampton Drake, and Lauren Dooley



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55 River Club Drive - $2,500,000 - Waterfront
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On the web: Articles our readers are loving at ***LocalLifeSC.com***.

1. Discover the magic of the Lowcountry's **salt marshes**



2. Nesting secrets of the Lowcountry's **wading birds**



3. **Natural remedies** from local meadows and marshlands



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About the Cover



Captured by Webb Photography at Rose Hill, the moody and magnificent portrait on the cover features Graffiti, though his barn friends just call him ***Smudge****. With his glossy chestnut coat, starry blaze and soulful eyes, Smudge cuts a regal figure as he peeks from the shadows, equal parts mystery and charm. He calls* ***Rose Dhu Creek Equestrian Center*** *home, where he's doted on by his owner, Paige Rose. Don't let his quiet confidence fool you: Smudge comes from greatness. His sire was an Olympic competitor, and Smudge is trotting right into his own spotlight, one ribbon at a time.* *Meet more local equine legends on page 98.*

YOUR SPECIALTY **LENDING TEAM**



Pictured left to right – Back row: Alan Perry NMLS# 866734, Susan Smith NMLS# 278903, Aaron Benton NMLS# 1717095, Gina Cavano NMLS# 1182146, and Jason Goldstein NMLS# 2180858. Front row: Tricia Lowman NMLS# 2440257, David Crowell NMLS# 12620, Kim Capin NMLS# 158295, and Clara Good NMLS# 2169516.

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Clip-clop through time

EXPERIENCE THE HISTORY AND ROMANCE OF THE SOUTH FROM A HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE.

There's something about the combination of the rhythmic sound of hooves echoing off cobblestone streets and the slow, steady sway of a carriage that seems to carry you straight into another century. Here in the Deep South, horse-drawn carriage tours are a portal to the past, offering a front-row seat to the ambiance, history and soul of our coastal cities and towns. Whether rolling past grand antebellum mansions, weaving beneath Spanish moss that sways like nature's own chandelier or plodding through breathtaking nature preserves, these four local tours unveil a perspective no modern vehicle could ever match. It's history, romance and Southern storytelling — all at a calming pace.

Romance & ghostly legends

SAVANNAH With its cobblestone streets, moss-draped oaks and centuries-old squares, Savannah seems tailor-made for horse-drawn carriage rides. Whether you're seeking romance, history or a touch of the supernatural, the city delivers. Tour companies like Magnolia Carriage Co., Carriage Tours of Savannah and Savannah Carriage Tours take visitors through the historic district, past landmarks such as Forsyth Park, the Mercer-Williams House (Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, anyone?) and bustling River Street. Guides spin tales of Savannah's colonial beginnings, Civil War intrigue and infamous hauntings. For those who love a good ghost story, evening carriage tours reveal the city's spookiest secrets under the glow of flickering lantern light. Tours can be booked online or in person at designated locations throughout downtown. Prices range from $30 to $50 per adult and $15 to $25 per child, with private tours available at premium rates.



The grand Southern experience

CHARLESTON
A horse-drawn carriage ride through Charleston is the definition of Lowcountry elegance. The rhythmic sound of hooves echoes through the city's historic district as guides from Charleston Carriage Works, Carolina Polo and Carriage Co., Palmetto Carriage Works and Old South Carriage Co. share the rich history of the Holy City. Depending on your assigned route, you may roll past the iconic pastel facades of Rainbow Row, the stately mansions of The Battery or the bustling Charleston City Market. Along the way, expect stories of pirates, patriots and the city's storied role in the Civil War. Walk-up reservations are an option, but booking in advance guarantees your preferred time slot. Prices range from $40 to $50 per adult and $25 to $30 per child, with private carriage experiences available for $200 to $300.



A Hollywood-worthy ride

BEAUFORT Dripping in Southern charm and framed by waterfront beauty, Beaufort — known as the Queen of the Carolina Sea Islands — feels like a movie set come to life. And in many ways, it is. A horse-drawn carriage ride through its historic district unveils streets lined with centuries-old live oaks and impeccably preserved antebellum homes, all while a knowledgeable guide shares the town's storied past. You'll hear tales of Beaufort's Civil War history, the Gullah culture that shaped the region and the city's starring roles in films like Forrest Gump and The Big Chill. Southurn Rose Carriage Tours and Sea Island Carriage Company both offer narrated rides past local landmarks such as the John Mark Verdier House and the picturesque Old Point neighborhood. To secure your spot, make reservations, especially during peak seasons. Book online or call for availability. Prices range from $30 to $35 per adult and $15 to $20 per child.

A nature lover's escape

HILTON HEAD ISLAND For those who prefer their carriage rides with a side of nature, Lawton Stables on Hilton Head Island offers a journey through the serene Sea Pines Forest Preserve. Here, beneath towering pines and winding trails, the experience is less about history and more about the tranquility of the island's natural beauty. Keep an eye out for native wildlife — white-tailed deer, snowy egrets or maybe even an alligator sunning near the water's edge — as your guide shares insights into the preserve's ecology and heritage. Unlike city-based tours, this is a quiet retreat into nature, making it the perfect choice for those who want to unwind. Reservations are required, with a maximum of four riders per carriage. The cost is $85 per person and bookings can be made by calling 843-671-2586.




New Orleans


Jekyll Island



Beyond the Lowcountry

Explore these cities and towns offering horse-drawn carriage tours, listed by their distance from Hilton Head Island:

Aiken *(110 miles northwest)*
Jekyll Island *(120 miles south)*
St. Augustine *(180 miles south)*
Wilmington *(220 miles northeast)*
Charlotte *(240 miles north)*
Asheville *(250 miles northwest)*
Atlanta *(260 miles west)*
Helen, Georgia *(275 miles northwest)*
New Orleans *(700 miles southwest)*

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Equine therapy

Vitafloor Q-Line MeRCuRR Equine Solarium

Like powerful athletes, our hoofed teammates deserve their own rest day. Vitafloor's line of equine solariums brings the spa to the stable with red-light therapy. Similar to its effects on humans, the infrared lamps warm and relax overworked muscles, easing soreness and promoting quicker recovery. Research shows that solariums can help prevent disease by boosting white blood cells and vitamin D production. Designed for complete wellness, the solarium is the ultimate glow-up for horses. ***vitafloor.com. $5,560.***



Full horsepower

Equestic SaddleClip

Track every trot with the Equestic SaddleClip, a tool that monitors rides and offers key insights to help equestrians enhance performance. It easily fastens to saddles and captures data about equine movement. Via Bluetooth, it sends the information to a mobile app, where it's translated into digestible graphs and metrics. Review jump counts, transitions from halt to walk to canter, and more. Create individual logbooks for each horse and analyze trends over the last 20 rides to stride toward success. ***equestic.com. $310.***

Watch and learn

PIXEM 2 Robot Auto-Follow Camera

Never miss a moment with a smart tripod that moves with the action. The auto-following robot uses radio triangulation technology to zoom, rotate and reposition the camera 10 times per second for the highest-quality footage. Equestrians use this smart device to record sessions or races, but the PIXEM 2 is also perfect for speakers at conferences or parents filming dance recitals. It focuses on subjects up to 330 feet away — even with others in the frame — for professional quality without the camera crew. ***pledo.co. $959.***







Tack-nology

American Equus Leather iPhone Holster

Old West meets modern tech. Stay connected with a holster intentionally designed for smartphones. Casual riders can roam the countryside with a camera always at their hip, while competitors can keep instructors' notes within reach as they train. Made of durable, fine leather, the holster is also ideal for any hands-free activity — from captaining a boat to walking the dog. Add a monogram for a tailor-made addition to any tack box. ***americanequus.com. $49.***



Post time

EQ Saddlery Optimum Time Ultimate Event Watch

Durable, wearable and high-tech, this watch is internationally preferred by riders to time their cross-country rides. Slide the elastic strap around your wrist or over your sleeve to monitor performance while on course. Its adjustable viewing angle allows riders to check their pace without compromising form, and specialty functions like countdown and count-up warnings make it ideal for any type of training. ***eqsaddlery.com.au. $200.***



Rhythm and hooves

I Rock n Ride Speaker

Soundtrack your riding sessions. The I Rock n Ride portable speaker fits the contours of both English and Western saddles, making it ideal for any rider. Its sound system amplifies audio without the distractions of wearing headphones. Control volume, skip, pause and answer phone calls with the push of a button. It's also water- and dust-resistant — perfect for bringing the concert wherever you canter. ***irocknride.myshopify.com. $79.***



Shape up

EquiFit ShouldersBack Lite

Saddle up straight with a back brace that corrects posture and form while riding. Originally developed by orthopedic specialists for equestrians, EquiFit's ShouldersBack brace has since been worn by everyone from dancers to dental hygienists. The vest gently pulls the shoulders back to align the spine while seated, helping prevent back pain and potential injury. It's also breathable for riding in any weather and fits seamlessly under equestrian jackets. Giddy upright! ***equifit.net. $62.***



Knead for speed

FASCIQ Massage Gun Mini

Whether it's a recovering racehorse or a companion in need of R&R, equines can unwind with the same massage gun designed for humans. This model includes four unique attachments that target muscles all over the body. Massage deep tissue on joints, knots and trigger points with the ball-shaped head, or use the U-shaped head to stimulate the spine, neck and shoulders. It's quiet enough not to spook horses and compact enough to bring to any track or trailer. Always consult your equine practitioner before use. ***fasciq.com. $130.***



In the rearview

Compact Front/Tail Lights

Tail lights take on a whole new meaning. Worn by both mounted police and recreational riders, Tail Lights offer a safe solution for trotting any time of day (or night). The new compact version attaches to the front or back of saddles, providing maximum visibility in any riding environment. Its lightweight, long-lasting design makes for stress-free use, and customizable color and brightness options help keep herds organized in the dark. Ride on from dusk till dawn. ***tail-lights.com. $450.***



Tanner Sutphin *(Real Estate Advisor)*
and Cash *(Rescued from Rogue Rescue)*.

To fetch your dream home on the May River you're gonna need a Realtor that is Top Dog.

If you're looking to buy or sell your Lowcountry dream home, Tanner Sutphin is here to make that dream a reality. As a trusted expert in May River real estate, Tanner has achieved over $20M in sales on the May River — including a record-breaking $6.2M sale at 135 Gascoigne Bluff and the highest price per square foot ever recorded at 51 Colcock *(according to Hilton Head MLS)*. Tanner doesn't just know the May River lifestyle — he lives it. Now he's ready to help you make it your home too.



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May 12th



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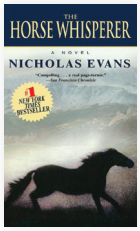
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Horse tales

Stories of courage, connection and the healing power of hooves.

***Denise Friday**, a school social worker at Hilton Head Island Elementary and mother of twins, finds both escape and inspiration between the pages of a great book. This month, she shares a selection of equestrian-themed reads that capture the grace and depth of life with horses. Whether you're a seasoned rider or simply love a compelling story set in the stables, these books are sure to stir your spirit.*



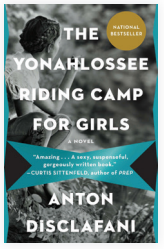
THE HORSE WHISPERER *BY NICHOLAS EVANS*

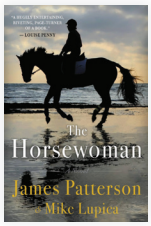
A horrific accident involving two girls on horseback and a truck on a snowy road has shattered two families. While Grace and her horse, Pilgrim, survive the accident, they are not okay. Her mother, Annie, gives up everything to travel across the country to seek help from the famous Horse Whisperer to save Pilgrim. In doing so, she hopes to save her daughter too. A stunning and emotional story of love and redemption—and of a horse's amazing ability to trust.

THE YONAHLOSSEE RIDING CAMP FOR GIRLS

BY ANTON DISCLAFANI

Fifteen-year-old Thea Atwell has been sent away from her Florida home to attend a riding school for girls in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Surrounded by Southern debutantes, she finds herself in an odd social struggle based on money, looks and established friendships. Meanwhile, we slowly learn why Thea was sent away by her family and how the onset of the Great Depression threatens everyone.





THE HORSEWOMAN

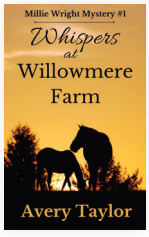
BY JAMES PATTERSON AND MIKE LUPICA

A mother and daughter, both show jumpers, are making names for themselves—but they never compete against each other. That changes when a bid for the Paris Olympics forces them to face off in their shared quest to become the best. Family drama meets the fast-paced world of competitive show jumping in this fun, fast read.

RIDING LESSONS *BY SARA GRUEN*

Annemarie was a champion equestrian and Olympic hopeful until an accident ended her riding career—and her beloved horse, Harry. Twenty years later she returns to her father's New Hampshire farm as he is dying. With her troubled teenage daughter in tow, Annemarie must confront the ghosts of her past. Romance and a new horse may shake her world in ways she never expected.





WHISPERS AT WILLOWMERE FARM *BY AVERY TAYLOR*

A good old-fashioned ghost story set in the Kentucky bluegrass. Millie Wright lands a dream internship at Willowmere Farm, a Lexington thoroughbred breeding farm. But from the moment she arrives, a series of accidents, incidents and unexplained events leads her to discover secret passageways and hidden conflicts. Determined to uncover the truth, Millie sets out to find who—or what—is responsible. A fun, cozy mystery among newborn foals.



Never, never, never give up.

With all of the changes in the world, since and during the pandemic, we sometimes forget that we lived through a long slog of a deep recession; not that long ago and one that rocked our island's key sources of revenue.

I remember that in 2010 when I decided to open my own shop, I was peppered with comments like, "How brave of you!" (actually I could barely breathe), and "Just don't sign an office lease" (which I had), and "Definitely don't sign a copier lease!" (I did that, too). I hired one full time administrative assistant (again, gulp); I think we had eight rental properties at the time and we almost literally could not give property away.

I also remember people telling me that I needed to decide if I wanted to be in the real estate business or the rental business. I politely responded by adding an interior design and renovation business. Very often there is no black and white, no definite do and definite don't. Sometimes you have to forge a path where there isn't one if you want to create and flourish, or sometimes just to keep the lights on. And almost always, you just have to figure it out.

And while I am certainly not fearless, I did make a conscious decision to push through the fear. I had to. I still do. We all have tests and trials, and sometimes we never even see them coming. Whatever you do, keep going. Keep creating. Never give up.

What if it turns out even better than you imagine?

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Saddle up for the ultimate movie night

PICK THE PERFECT HORSE-THEMED FILM TO STREAM, BASED ON YOUR PERSONALITY



We all know the legendary horse movies — ***Secretariat***, Seabiscuit, Black Beauty, The Black Stallion. These cinematic champions have galloped their way into our hearts and claimed their rightful place in the hall of fame for equestrian films. But if you're ready to venture off the beaten trail and uncover some hidden gems (or revisit a forgotten favorite), you're in for a treat. Whether you crave a heartwarming underdog story, a sweeping adventure or a tearjerker that will leave you emotionally unbridled, there's a horse movie waiting to whisk you away.

For the free spirit



Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken (1991)

Personality: You're independent, fearless and firmly believe that rules were made to be creatively interpreted. You'd rather take a leap of faith (literally) than live a life of playing it safe.

Why you'll love it: Based on a true story, this film follows a young woman who defies the odds to become a diving horse performer in the 1920s. If you've ever dreamed of running away to join the circus (or at least taking a very spontaneous road trip), this one's for you.

Stream it: Disney+

STIRRUP SCALE
Adventure factor (4) 👢👢👢👢
Tearjerker level (3) 🐴🐴🐴
Horsepower (4) 🐎🐎🐎🐎

For the nostalgic adventurer



The Man from Snowy River (1982)

Personality: You have an old soul, a deep appreciation for sweeping landscapes and a soft spot for rugged cowboy types. If given the choice, you'd rather be riding through the mountains than sitting in an office.

Why you'll love it: This Australian classic delivers jaw-dropping scenery, an unforgettable score and some of the most breathtaking horse-riding scenes ever put to film. If you long for wide-open spaces and heroic journeys, this is your must-watch.

Stream it: Apple TV

STIRRUP SCALE
Adventure factor (5) 👢👢👢👢👢
Tearjerker level (2) 🐴🐴
Horsepower (4) 🐎🐎🐎🐎

For the underdog champion



Racing Stripes (2005)

Personality: You cheer for the little guy, love a good laugh and believe that anything is possible with enough heart and determination. You also firmly believe that being different is a superpower, not a weakness.

Why you'll love it: This feel-good family film follows a zebra who dreams of becoming a racehorse (because why not?), proving that courage and perseverance can beat the odds. Equal parts funny and heartwarming, it's perfect if you enjoy rooting for the misfits.

Stream it: Hoopla

STIRRUP SCALE
Adventure factor (3) 👢👢👢
Tearjerker level (1) 🐴
Horsepower (2) 🐎🐎

For the historical drama fan



War Horse (2011)

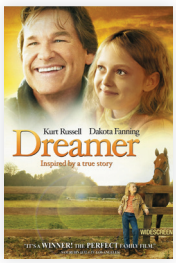
Personality: You love powerful, emotional stories, dramatic battle scenes and films that leave you staring into the distance long after the credits roll. You're the kind of person who still thinks about that one history lesson from years ago that really stuck with you.

Why you'll love it: Directed by Steven Spielberg, this visually stunning film follows the incredible journey of a horse through World War I. It's moving, it's beautifully filmed and it'll leave you ugly-crying into your popcorn.

Stream it: Hulu

STIRRUP SCALE
Adventure factor (4) 👢👢👢👢
Tearjerker level (5) 🐴🐴🐴🐴🐴
Horsepower (5) 🐎🐎🐎🐎🐎

For the heartwarming storyteller



Dreamer (2005)

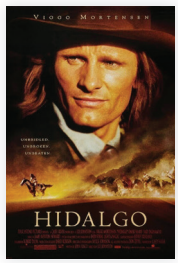
Personality: You believe in second chances, happy endings and that sometimes a good cry is just what the soul needs. You're the one who always brings tissues to the movies — just in case.

Why you'll love it: Starring Kurt Russell and Dakota Fanning, this touching film follows a young girl and her father as they rehabilitate a racehorse and repair their relationship. It's uplifting, sweet and will have you texting your family by the end.

Stream it: Pluto TV

STIRRUP SCALE
Adventure factor (3) 👢👢👢
Tearjerker level (4) 🐴🐴🐴🐴
Horsepower (4) 🐎🐎🐎🐎

For the action lover



Hidalgo (2004)

Personality: You thrive on adrenaline, witty banter and survival stories that leave you on the edge of your seat. If there's a wild adventure to be had, you're already packing your bags.

Why you'll love it: This action-packed adventure stars Viggo Mortensen as a cowboy who enters a grueling 3,000-mile race across the Arabian desert. It's fast-paced, thrilling and has just the right amount of humor to balance out the high stakes.

Stream it: Hulu

STIRRUP SCALE
Adventure factor (5) 👢👢👢👢👢
Tearjerker level (2) 🐴🐴
Horsepower (4) 🐎🐎🐎🐎

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EMPOWER FUTURE GENERATIONS





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The late Jim and Marge Krum retired to Hilton Head in the 1980's and immediately became active in various charitable ventures. The Jim and Marge Krum Foundation Scholarship, administered by CFL, continues to transform the lives of promising Lowcountry students. The scholarship is unique – Krum scholars can receive financial support for their entire undergraduate and graduate education. To date, hundreds of local Krum scholars have been awarded over $4.5 million!

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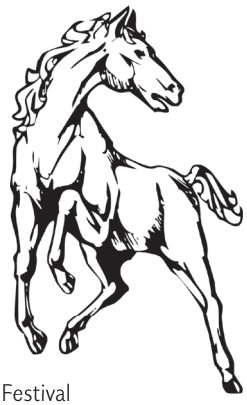
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Local IQ

May crossword challenge for locals.

This month's puzzle is a true triple threat, covering equestrian life, May holidays and all things local. Saddle up and put your knowledge to the test.

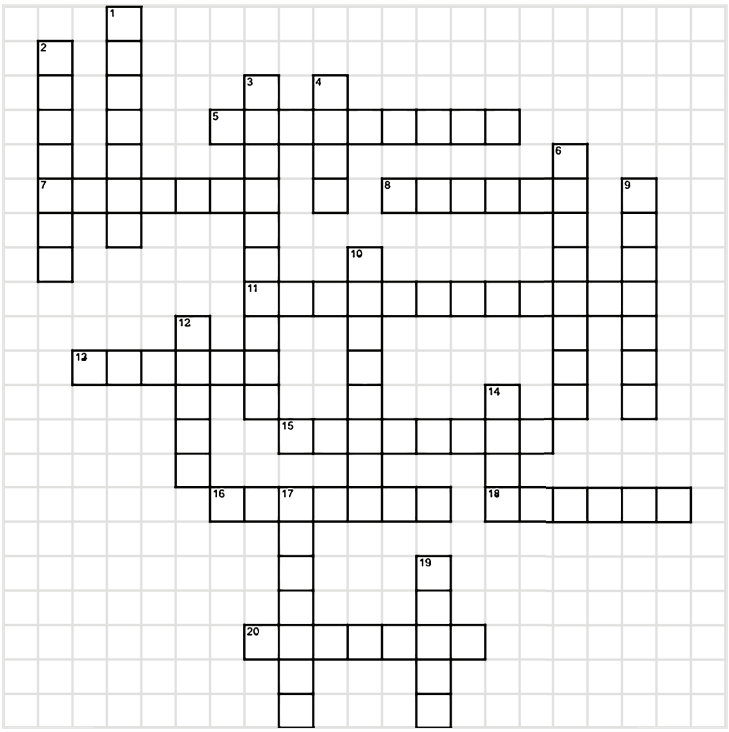


ACROSS

5. Second leg of the Triple Crown
7. May's birthstone
8. Headgear for controlling a horse
11. A horse breed known for racing
13. Country honored on May 5
15. An adult male horse
16. Swamp tree with distinctive knees
18. Zodiac sign for early May
20. Honored and celebrated on May 11

DOWN

1. A specialist who shoes horses
2. Formerly known as the Bluffton Village Festival
3. Many students celebrate this in May
4. An adult female horse
6. A day of remembrance observed on the last Monday in May
9. A castrated male horse
10. A highly skilled form of horse training
12. A strap that secures a horse saddle
14. A young male horse
17. Enclosure for horses
19. A brush or comb used in horse grooming



ANSWER KEY

ACROSS 5. PREAKNESS 7. EMERALD 8. BRIDLE 11. THOROUGHBRED 13. MEXICO 15. STALLION 16. CYPRESS 18. TAURUS 20. MOTHERS
DOWN 1. FARRIER 2. MAYFEST 3. GRADUATION 4. MARE 6. MEMORIAL 9. GELDING 10. DRESSAGE 12. GIRTH 14. COLT 17. PADDOCK 19. CURRY

Official Mensa® Challenge

Answers are available on LocalLifeSC.com/Mensa

QUIT HORSING AROUND!

Saddle up and solve this Mensa quiz.



1. The 16 letters below can be anagrammed into a two-word menu item that might be found at the Ming Jade restaurant. What is the item?

A B C E E E L N N O O R S S T T

2. Martin had a fairly slow motorized bicycle. It took him 4 hours to ride uphill for 60 miles to his cabin and 2 hours to come back down. He averaged 15 miles per hour uphill and 30 miles per hour downhill. What was his average speed?

3. Which of the words below is least like the others? The difference has nothing to do with vowels, consonants or syllables.

ITALY CHINA ANGOLA PANAMA

4. Frank is twice as old as his daughter Amanda. Twelve years ago, Frank was three times as old as Amanda. Twelve years from now, Amanda will be three-fifths of her father's age. How old are Frank and Amanda now?

5. Fill in the blanks below to complete the names of the cities or states in the United States.

_ _ D _ _ N _ _ O _ _ S

_ A _ _ F _ _ N _ _

_ L _ B _ M _

_ I _ W _ _ _ E _

ANSWER KEY

1. *LOBSTER CANTONESE* ***2.*** *20 mile per hour (6 hours for 120 miles)*
3. *PANAMA (The three other words can be anagrammed: LAITY, CHAIN, ANALOG.)* ***4.*** *Frank is 48; Amanda is 24.*
5. *INDIANAPOLIS, CALIFORNIA, ALABAMA, MILWAUKEE*

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The hot list

What to watch, read and listen to in April.

STREAMING









APPLE TV+ ***Fountain of Youth*** *(adventure)* The elusive draw of the "fountain of youth" has sent people on wild goose chases all over the world. When intrepid treasure hunter Luke Purdue (John Krasinski) gets a lead on the fountain's location, he calls on his sister Charlotte (Natalie Portman) to help him follow the clues and dodge the forces protecting it. Reminiscent of Indiana Jones and National Treasure, this movie brings the classic treasure-hunting film into a new age. **Release date: May 23**

MAX ***The Better Sister*** *(crime series)* Based on the eponymous book by Alafair Burke, sisters Chloe (Jessica Biel) and Nicky (Elizabeth Banks) are forced out of estrangement when Chloe's husband is murdered. Both Chloe and Nicky have been married to Adam (Corey Stoll), and Chloe currently parents Nicky's biological son, Ethan (Maxwell Acee Donovan). Needless to say, the dynamics are complicated. Accusations fly that one of the family members might be to blame for the murder, and everyone must band together to find out the truth. **Release date: May 29**

NETFLIX ***Nonnas*** *(comedy)* A love of food is often passed down from generation to generation. For Joe Scaravella (Vince Vaughn), his mother and grandmothers instilled an appreciation for Italian cuisine. When Joe's mother passes away, opening an Italian restaurant seems like a logical way to reconnect with a part of himself that feels missing. To spice things up, he employs his two elderly grandmothers as the chefs. It's a perfect recipe for chaos, laughter and some incredible food. **Release date: May 9**

NBC ***151st Kentucky Derby*** *(live horse racing)* Watch the most exciting two minutes in sports as the 151st running of the Kentucky Derby kicks off from Churchill Downs. The iconic race features top 3-year-old thoroughbreds vying for the first jewel of the Triple Crown. Expect high fashion, big hats, mint juleps — and a thrilling finish. **Post time: 6:57 p.m., Saturday, May 3**

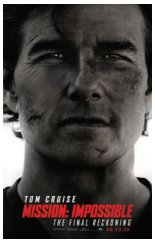
MOVIE THEATERS



The Surfer *(thriller)* One man (Nicolas Cage) is on a mission to return to his hometown and walk a mile in nostalgia's shoes. With his son (Finn Little) in tow, he heads to the "locals only" beach to catch a few waves. When a group of hardheaded locals berate the duo for being outsiders, the father's desire to move back home is thwarted by his own psychosis. **Release date: May 2**



Friendship *(comedy)* Craig (Tim Robinson) is your typical suburban guy. He goes to work, comes home and sits in his chair in the living room for the rest of the day. His wife (Kate Mara) arranges for Craig to meet up with a charismatic neighbor, Austin (Paul Rudd), who might help get him out of his shell. Her plan works a little too well, as Craig falls head over heels for his newfound friend. When Austin shares that this might have been too much too fast, Craig kicks things into high gear to get revenge on a friend who never really was one. **Release date: May 23**



Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning *(action)* The second installment of Ethan Hunt's (Tom Cruise) latest effort to save the world, The Final Reckoning sees Hunt and his IMF colleagues racing against the clock to stop a sentient AI from wreaking havoc on society. Now, he travels to the wreckage of a Russian submarine deep within the Arctic Ocean to complete a mission deemed impossible. Despite the name, this might not be the final Mission: Impossible movie—but it will close one chapter of Hunt's adventures. **Release date: May 23**

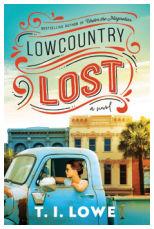
BOOKS



The Names *By Florence Knapp (fiction)* Shakespeare's famous question, "What's in a name?" is a complex query about the power of naming and language. The Names follows the story of one family in three alternative universes, where one of their sons has a slightly different name. While the change may seem minor, it reveals how one alteration can fundamentally shape a family's destiny. **Release date: May 6**

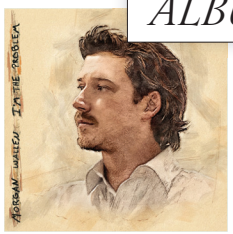


Big Dumb Eyes: Stories from a Simpler Mind *By Nate Bargatze (nonfiction)* Stand-up comic Nate Bargatze has found a niche in clean, family-friendly humor. He finds laughs in everyday experiences and retells them with a down-to-earth tone. With hosting credits on Saturday Night Live, appearances on The Tonight Show and several stand-up specials, Bargatze has built a successful comedy career — one explored in this humorous memoir. **Release date: May 6**

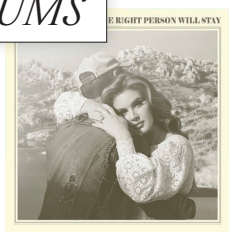


Lowcountry Lost *By T.I. Lowe (local)* The satisfaction of turning something old and rundown into something pristine is unmatched. For Avalee Elvis, remodeling and restoring homes across the Lowcountry is a form of meditation that helps her find peace with her past. While working in the small town of Somewhere, she comes face-to-face with a ghost from her past — structural engineer Rowan. With personal baggage mixing with work, Avalee must find a way to overcome her past and embrace the silver lining in her new situation. **Release date: Out now**

ALBUMS



I'm the Problem
By Morgan Wallen
(country)
Release date: May 16



The Right Person Will Stay *By Lana Del Rey*
(alternative)
Release date: May 21



Something Beautiful
By Miley Cyrus (pop)
Release date: May 30



Another Car
By April Teppe (local)
Release date: Out now

PODCASTS



Bad Therapist
Subject: Culture



Scam Factory
Subject: True crime



Strangers on a Bench
Subject: Human interest



Paving the Lifestyle
Subject: Local business

TRAVEL



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Unsung heroes

A mother's mission

ROSE FOTIA'S JOURNEY TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

STORY BY SHEILA PAZ

The Lowcountry thrives, thanks to countless volunteers whose efforts often go unnoticed. *These unsung heroes are the driving force behind local nonprofits, making a difference in the lives of many. Each month we'll feature one of these inspiring individuals to highlight their contributions and raise awareness for the organizations they support. Know someone deserving of recognition? Email* ***sheila.paz@wearelocallife.com,*** *and help us honor the heroes among us.*



A MOTHER'S LOVE Pictured are Rose Fotia and her son, Gregory. Through his memory, she discovered her purpose in the community: serving children with special needs and establishing an organization dedicated to this vital work.

Rose Fotia made the Lowcountry her home in 1981 when her husband, Frank, opened Year Round Pool Company. Their lives changed in 1988 when their son, Gregory, was diagnosed with West syndrome, a rare seizure disorder that causes developmental regression. Gregory became wheelchair-bound and fully dependent on his family.

Facing limited local resources for children with special needs, the Fotias refused to relocate or send Gregory to services in Beaufort. Rose, a physical therapy assistant working with children with disabilities, was part of the team that established the first pediatric rehab center in Hilton Head. Drawing from her experience, she and Frank founded the Children's Relief Fund in 1991 to help families like theirs.

One of Rose's most significant achievements with the Children's Relief Fund was the creation of the first handicap-accessible playground at the Island Recreation Center in 1994, made possible with the help of community partners. It became a haven for children of all abilities. In 2019 the original playground was demolished and upgraded with new equipment and a surface designed for wheelchair and walker mobility, ensuring it remains inclusive for future generations. Rose's work has left an enduring legacy of care and inclusion in the Lowcountry. The playground is affectionately named the Gregory Michael Fotia Memorial Playground.

Children's Relief Fund: Providing love and support to all

Since its founding in 1991, the mission of the Children's Relief Fund has been to provide tools and resources for children with special needs in the Lowcountry. The money raised helps fund therapy, equipment, summer programs and other group activities for children with disabilities in the Hilton Head and Bluffton area. One of the programs supported by the Children's Relief Fund is Heroes on Horseback, a nonprofit organization that helps children with special needs, veterans and emergency responders by providing equine-assisted therapy.



JOY ON THE AGENDA Since 1991 Rose Fotia has been an advocate for children with special needs, organizing countless outings and activities through the Children's Relief Fund — the nonprofit she and her husband, Frank, co-founded to bring joy, support and opportunity to these children and their families.



HORSE POWER Horses help children with disabilities build strength, confidence and coordination through gentle, therapeutic movement and the powerful bond of connection.

How you can help

If you'd like to support the Children's Relief Fund, visit its website at ***thechildrensrelieffund.org***. Staff always welcome passionate volunteers to assist with programs like Heroes on Horseback. Donations are also greatly appreciated, as the Children's Relief Fund serves as the financial backbone for numerous programs benefiting children across the Lowcountry.

children's relief fund



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What makes them local



RIDING TO GLORY
In 1980 Eddie Maple captured the Belmont Stakes aboard Temperance Hill and returned to win the race again in 1985 on Creme Fraiche. He rode in nine Kentucky Derbys, with his best finish coming in 1982, when he guided Laser Light to second place behind winner Gato Del Sol.

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*

More than a finish line

How Eddie Maple found peace in the Lowcountry after a legendary racing career.

STORY BY BECCA EDWARDS + PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA STAFF



A LIFE IN THE SADDLE
Bluffton's Eddie Maple is a retired American thoroughbred jockey with 4,398 career wins. In a career spanning more than three decades, he earned induction into the National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame, rode Secretariat to victory in his final race and became one of the most respected figures in the sport.

With more than 4,000 career wins and a place in the National Museum of Racing Hall of Fame, Eddie Maple is a legend in the world of thoroughbred horse racing. But these days, the Ohio native is enjoying a slower pace of life in the Lowcountry, which he has called home for the past two decades. We caught up with Maple to talk about his remarkable career, his connection with horses and why the rhythm of the racetrack still echoes in his heart.

Q: How did you become a top-level thoroughbred jockey? A: I always thought I'd end up with a pony. We were nine kids living out in the Ohio country, and the fact that I was able to get a job with George Stribling at a thoroughbred farm when I was 14 — I knew it was something I wanted to do.

Q: What was your training program with George like? A: Let's just say it was the hard way or the highway. You couldn't exercise a horse until you learned how to clean stalls, feed them and walk them. Then you had to learn how to come out of the starting gate, and so on. As a trainer, you have to pass both written and physical exams. Jockeys can't weigh over 115 pounds, so they have to be disciplined. You've got to be able to stick it out. I exercised a horse 365 days a year, met high-powered people and got along with them just as well as I rode their horses.

Q: You rode Secretariat to his last winning race. Why was he such a celebrated and successful horse? A: There are a lot of books out there about Secretariat, and they all get it right. He's a horse you can't say enough about. He checks all the boxes — his pedigree, his beautiful coat, his personality. Like a rookie baseball player, he just got better and better, and his muscles were exactly where they needed to be.

Q: What was it like to be inducted into the National Racing Hall of Fame? A: Oh my gosh, I was nominated one year before I retired in 1998, and I couldn't have been happier. Still, I always raced because all I wanted to do was race and win races.

Q: Very few sports involve working with an animal. How do you communicate with the horse? A: Racing requires every aspect of equine horsemanship and communication. The jockey can't be afraid. You have to have good balance, soft hands and get in rhythm with the horse. When the horse moves forward, you have to be going forward. You can't ride like a sack of potatoes. You get attached to these horses, and every one of them makes you a better rider.

Q: Horses are amazing animals. What do you appreciate most about them? A: Horses are smarter than people give them credit for. They're affectionate and love to interact with people. They're also tolerant. Really, all the things you'd want to say about a friend, you could say about a horse.

Q: What is your race philosophy? A: If you screw with me, I'll screw with you! No, really — I never got into that many fights. I'd always straighten things out on the oval. LL



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Local business buzz

FRESH FACES, BOLD MOVES AND BIG PLANS IN THE LOWCOUNTRY

STORY BY SHEILA PAZ

Looking for something new around town? From big-name bargains to boutique charm, these fresh arrivals are making waves in the Lowcountry. Here's what's new and noteworthy.



NOW OPEN

Front Light Design Studio

321 Hope Pond Way, Unit 104, Bluffton

Say hello to South Carolina's first and only state-of-the-art design studio, now open in the Lowcountry. Front Light Building Company's new Design Studio offers an immersive experience where you can walk through your future home before the first brick is laid — previewing every layout, material and finish with jaw-dropping clarity. Get ready to design your new home like never before.

PRN Staffers *711 Bladen Street, Beaufort*

PRN Staffers is now open in Beaufort, focused on connecting top-notch healthcare professionals with medical facilities across the Lowcountry. Their mission? To streamline staffing and meet the region's growing demand for medical expertise — one quality match at a time. Learn more at prnstaffers.com.





Hilton Head Christian Academy

3088 Bluffton Parkway, Bluffton

The new high school building at Hilton Head Christian Academy is officially open — and it opened a full year ahead of schedule. Designed with innovation and collaboration in mind, the new space includes flexible learning zones, a student commons with an outdoor learning porch and grand staircase, a second indoor/outdoor café, a state-of-the-art science lab and dedicated spaces for student-teacher connections.



Boohags

7 Maryfield Court, Daufuskie Island

Daufuskie's got a new gem! Boohags is the island's newest boutique, offering coastal-chic style in everything from sunglasses and jewelry to home accents and gifts. It's the perfect spot to pick up something that captures the charm and ease of Lowcountry life.



Five Below *Next to Tanger 2, Bluffton*

Say hello to fun for just five bucks! Five Below has officially opened its doors in the Old Navy and Marshall's shopping complex near Tanger 2, bringing unbeatable bargains on everything from trendy tech and home décor to sports gear and snacks. Bluffton's location features a bonus: an exclusive party shop loaded with décor, balloons and favors. It's a budget-friendly playground — let the treasure hunt begin!

BUSINESS NEWS



The Breeze Trolley returns

All aboard! Hilton Head's beloved Breeze Trolley is back for the summer season, now with four new stops: Marina Side Drive, Fresh Market Shoppes, Park Lane and South Island Square. That's 25 convenient stops in total. The trolley is free for all riders and runs seven days a week—1 p.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and 1 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, through September 1. Plan your ride at breezetrolley.com, or download the CatchTheBreeze app for routes and real-time updates.



Aldi *80 Mathews Drive, Hilton Head*

Big news for bargain hunters — Aldi is coming to Hilton Head! Just two years after opening in Bluffton, the fan-favorite grocery store is expanding its reach with a brand-new location in Sea Turtle Marketplace off William Hilton Parkway. The 20,000-square-foot standalone store is currently in its final design phase, with construction plans on the horizon. Stay tuned — affordable groceries are heading to the island soon!



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HOW A NONPROFIT HAS CHANGED LIVES THROUGH EQUINE THERAPY

STORY BY SHEILA PAZ





TRIED AND TRUE Heroes on Horseback has eight horses that assist with therapy. Most are quarter horses, ranging in age from 15 to 20 years old. Their oldest horse is 30, now retired at Lawton Stables in Sea Pines. Each therapy horse undergoes a simulation of various scenarios they may encounter before officially joining the program.

The soft crunch of hooves on gravel, the warm breath of a horse against your hand and the gentle nudge of a curious muzzle — these quiet moments are part of the magic happening at Heroes on Horseback. For more than 20 years this local nonprofit has used equine therapy to help children with autism, veterans battling PTSD and people facing emotional and physical challenges. By connecting with horses, participants build confidence, improve communication and find calm in ways that traditional methods often struggle to provide. We spoke with Bob Lee, executive director of Heroes on Horseback, to learn more about the impact of this unique therapy.

Equine therapy

For centuries horses have been trusted companions everywhere from battlefields to farmlands. Their sensitivity to human emotions makes them ideal for equine therapy, where participants build trust and emotional awareness through connection.

Equine therapy promotes physical, emotional and mental well-being. Horses naturally sense anxiety, fear or calmness and respond in ways that help individuals gain confidence, improve communication and develop better emotional control. As herd animals, horses rely on clear verbal and nonverbal cues, making them especially attuned to those with mental or physical disabilities. This natural connection is something Heroes on Horseback strives to achieve with every participant.

GOLD STANDARD Heroes on Horseback is a member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH), a global organization that supports equine therapy centers through programming, volunteer training and instructor certification. Heroes on Horseback holds PATH's premier accreditation — the highest level of membership recognition.

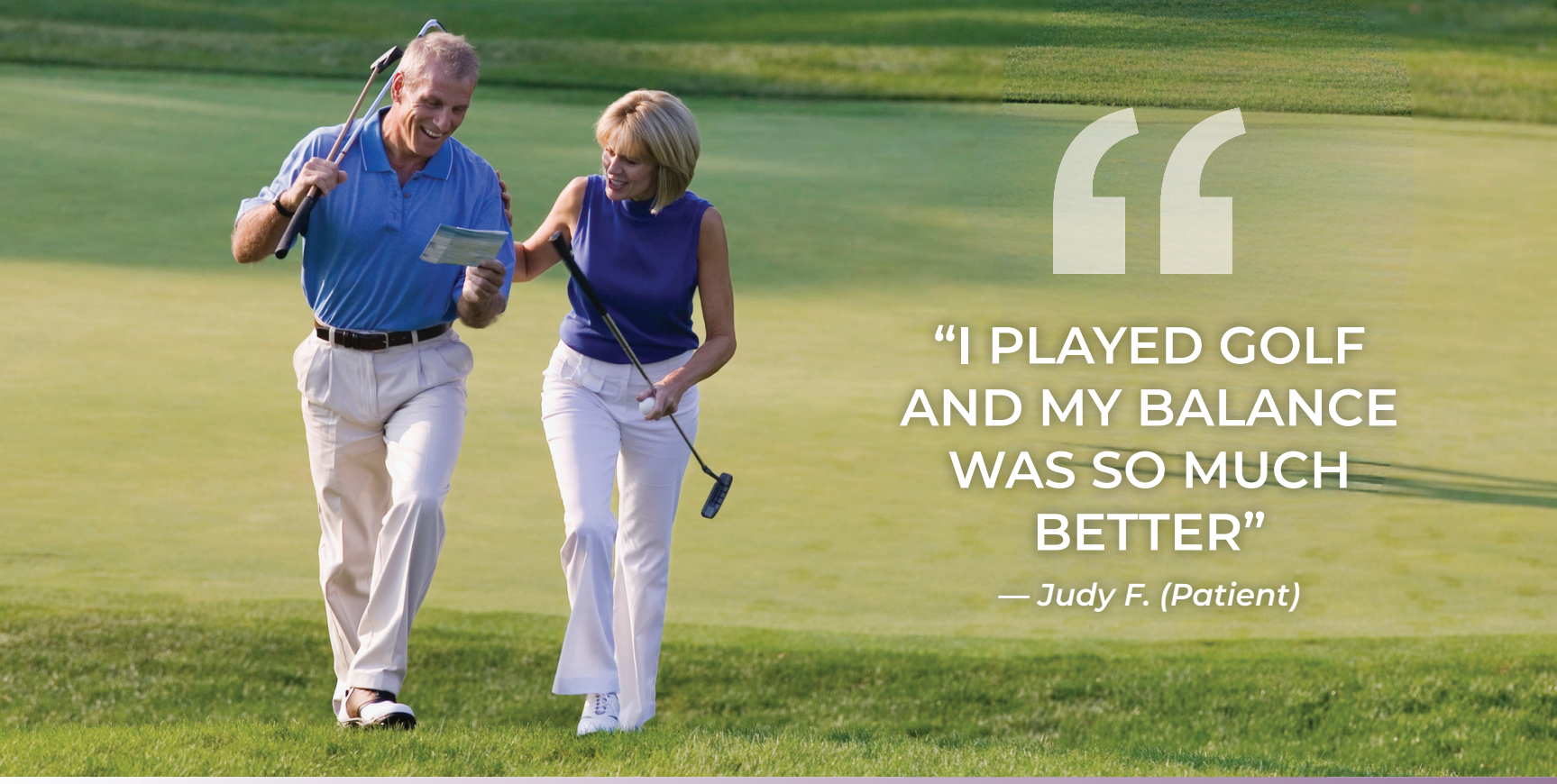
A unique approach

Founded in 2000 by two equestrians who believed in the healing power of horses, Heroes on Horseback has grown to serve special-education students in Beaufort and Jasper counties, along with disabled military members and emergency responders. Each program is tailored to the individual. Caregivers, teachers, families and doctors are consulted to determine each participant's needs.

"We don't serve anybody who is not considered special needs," Lee said. "Everybody has to bring us some medical certification of what the challenge is so that we can structure a program that addresses those measurable objectives."



FLEXIBLE FREEDOM The veteran program is less structured than the children's six-week program, offering flexible ground and horseback lessons to accommodate veterans' varying schedules and personal needs.



"I PLAYED GOLF AND MY BALANCE WAS SO MUCH BETTER"

— Judy F. (Patient)

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— Cal B. (Patient)

"I DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT MY FEET ANYMORE. I JUST ENJOY LIFE."

— Jim C. (Patient)



A PLACE TO HEAL
Heroes on Horseback operates on 20 acres owned by Lawton Stables at 95 Stillwell Road in Bluffton. In exchange for maintaining the land and caring for horses boarded there, Heroes on Horseback can use the property free of charge.

A day in the life

Programs typically run for six weeks. Most participants are students who are divided into three groups: one rides on horseback, one performs groundwork with horses, and one participates in equine-inspired art. Each group rotates every hour during the three-hour session.

In the riding arena children learn to maneuver a horse through tasks such as starting and stopping, backing up and weaving through cones. A certified instructor provides guidance, while a horse leader and two side walkers help as needed.

"Sometimes they get a little help from a horse leader, but they are the ones pulling the reins or pushing their knees to control the horse," Lee said. "That success builds confidence and, for those with physical issues, helps build core strength and improves posture."

Groundwork focuses on "horse knowledge," where participants learn how to connect with, care for and communicate with their horse. This knowledge helps them become better equestrians and more comfortable around the animals.

One of the first groundwork lessons involves Rosie, a wooden horse that introduces children to the basics.

"A lot of the kids are scared at first. They'll be screaming that they don't want to get on the horse, but after 45 minutes of riding, they don't want to get off," Lee said.

Equine art allows participants to engage in creative expression while reinforcing listening and communication skills. Originally designed specifically for children with disabilities by an instructor from the Arts Center of Coastal Carolina, the program provides therapeutic value beyond traditional art classes.

"A lot of the time you want comprehension, listening and verbal and physical feedback. That can be accomplished through art," Lee said.



CHAMPIONS IN THE SADDLE
Heroes on Horseback is home to several Special Olympians who receive certified training in preparation for competition.



SMALL BUT MIGHTY
Ponies assist with grooming lessons, offering children a hands-on opportunity to learn horse care. Their smaller size makes them ideal for younger participants, adding both practicality and fun to the activity.

Great success

The impact of equine therapy can be life-changing. Many children arrive at Heroes on Horseback with low self-esteem, and some are nonverbal. After just a few sessions, families often see remarkable progress.

"I had a mother say to me, 'You don't know what it means to hear your name when you've never been called Mom before,'" Lee said.

Heroes on Horseback has also helped train Special Olympics equestrians, as they are the only certified Special Olympics equestrian program in the area. In 2010 two local athletes competed in the World Games in Athens, Greece, medaling in all six events they entered. Another participant went on to medal in one of three events at the 2015 World Games in Los Angeles.

For veterans and emergency responders, the program has proven equally powerful. Many face depression and anxiety, yet they often find a sense of peace that follows them home after each session.

"We're not therapists; we're equine people who use a therapeutic program to help," Lee said.

The stories shared at Heroes on Horseback demonstrate the healing power of horses and the impact they can have on those seeking hope and confidence. If you are interested in being a part of its mission — whether you'd like to volunteer or donate — visit heroesonhorseback.org to learn more. *LL*



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Hearts in the saddle

Meet four Lowcountry equestrians whose bond with horses goes far beyond the barn. It's a legacy of love, healing and purpose.

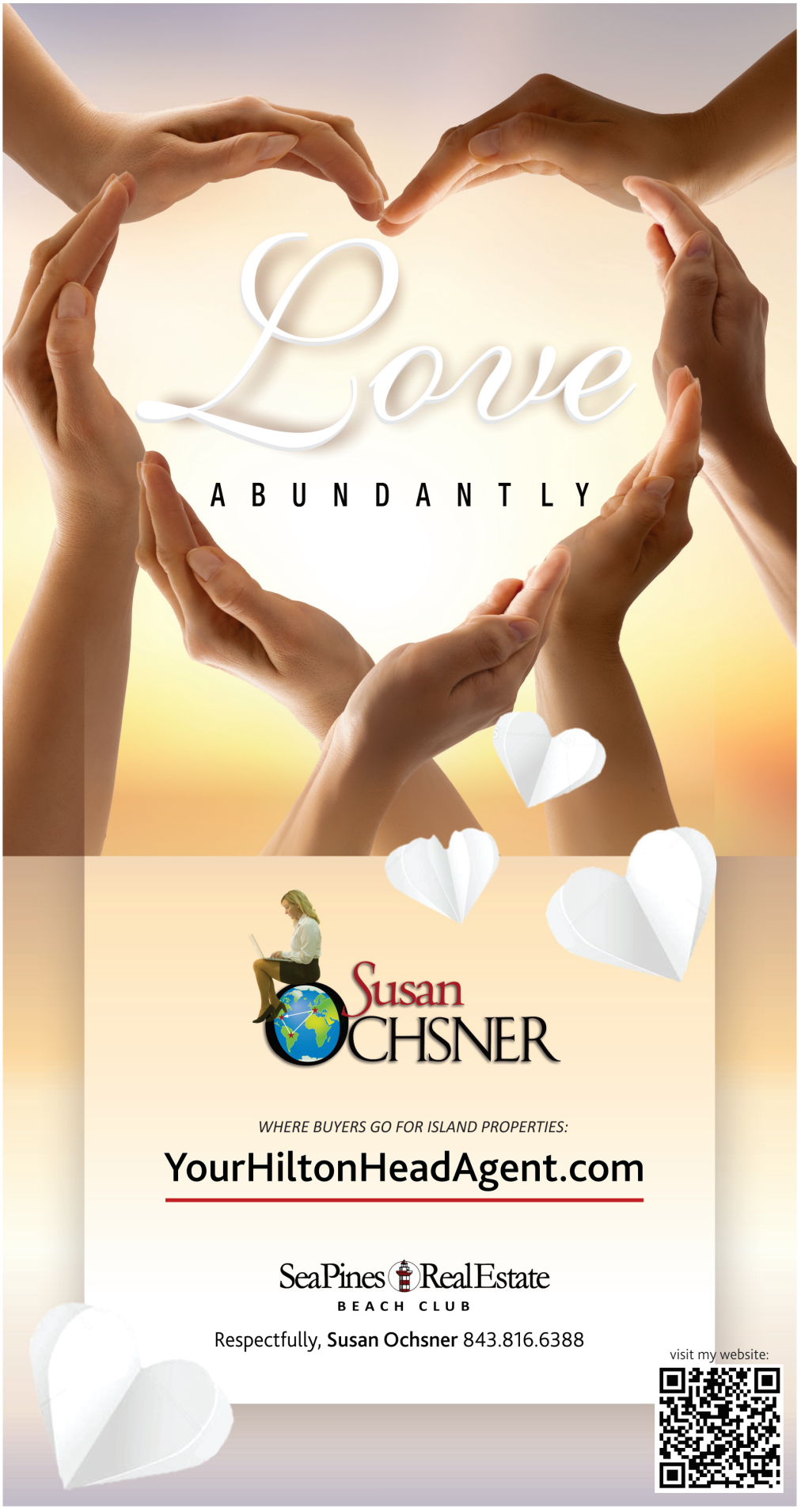
STORY BY BARRY KAUFMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA STAFF

It's hard to tell where we'd be without horses.

Among the strongest symbiotic relationships we share with another species, horses stand apart. Dogs taught us to work as a pack. Domesticating cows and chickens allowed us to settle and build the communities that became civilizations. But horses... they gave us freedom.

When they first yielded to our hands, we discovered an entirely different way of interacting with the world. On horseback, borrowing their strength and speed, we traveled the globe, reaching every corner of the earth. When introduced to the New World, horses became a symbol of the continent's rugged glory.

We owe much of humanity's advancement to them, even as we began to rely more on planes, trains and automobiles. For a few select locals, that special relationship between human and horse still lives on.



Karen Kuehler

THE LEGACY RIDER

When Karen Kuehler's grandmother gifted horseback riding lessons for a birthday, she likely had no idea she was setting her entire family's destiny on an exciting new trail. Kuehler was just five years old, but the enchantment was instant.

"We all started taking lessons. My father was a real estate developer, and he found a farm in foreclosure. He figured if his kids were going to ride, we may as well board at our own property," she said. When her parents were gifted a broodmare named Without Words, the whole family was soon hooked. "It instantly made it fun. We were riding; my mom and dad were breeding and racing... that was in 1977, and it never stopped."

Her parents became celebrated breeders, with their Sunnyfield Farm producing horses like Upstart, who competed in the 2015 Kentucky Derby, and two foals sired by Triple Crown winner American Pharoah. While they built their legacy, Kuehler grew up in a very different world than most kids.

"It was kind of a foreign language," she said. "I'd get asked, 'You go to a horse show every weekend? What's that?'"

By college she had earned a national championship and the rare distinction of riding her horse — Hall of Famer Watership Down — in the final championship held at Madison Square Garden.

"There's nothing like walking your horse down a Manhattan sidewalk," she said. "But anything goes in New York!"

After a youth spent on the road, she longed for a more traditional life.

"I saw college as a chance to be a normal kid. I wanted a family. I didn't want to be an athlete living on the road," she said.

She married her high school sweetheart and went into the breeding business. Working with her mother, she bred up to 11 broodmares a year and raised foals on their farm.

"We made it a business. We tried to sell all of them, but if there was one we wanted to keep, we would," she said. "There's a horse who ran on Saturday, Dear Moon — she's fourth generation on our farm."



Twenty years ago she began volunteering with an equine-assisted program in New Canaan, Connecticut, called Super Troopers. It sparked a new passion — sharing the joy of riding with special-needs students.

"That has brought me more joy and fulfillment — seeing students overcome fear and experience the joy, confidence and accomplishment of riding," she said. "It's absolutely life-changing. You get emotional every time."

Now living in the Lowcountry, she continues that joy. She first volunteered at Heroes on Horseback while it was at Lawton Stables in Sea Pines and Midway Farm. Currently she volunteers for the Moss Creek Equine Assisted Program while she manages their horses up north to carry on the family legacy.

"I hope to carry this on," she said. "I'm just trying to continue Mom and Dad's bloodline."



BRIDLED GRACE Karen Kuehler, a nationally acclaimed equestrian and accomplished breeder, moved to Hilton Head Island in 2014 after a lifetime immersed in the horse world. She rose to prominence in 1988 by winning the Grand Junior Hunter Championship aboard her horse Watership Down, later inducted into the National Show Hunter Hall of Fame. Her family's Sunnyfield Farm in New York produced elite racehorses, including Kentucky Derby contender Upstart and a record-breaking American Pharoah foal. Now Karen continues her equestrian journey through therapeutic riding, sharing her lifelong passion with special-needs riders through the Moss Creek Stables Equine Assisted Program.

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Derby days, solo style

As a celebrated rider and breeder, you'd think Karen Kuehler would be at the top of any Kentucky Derby party guest list. But if she shows up, don't expect her to mingle — at least, not during the race.

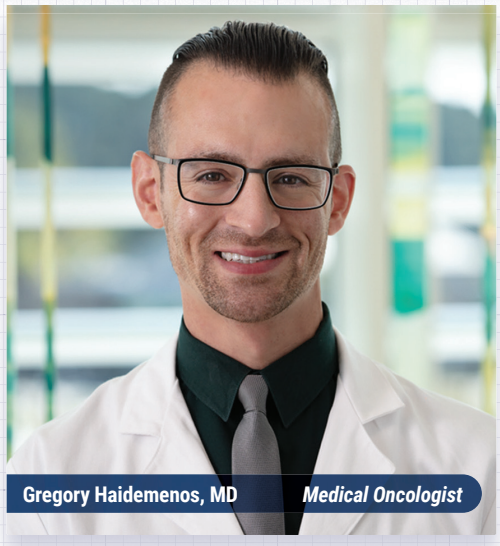
"I have to watch the Derby by myself because I get so nervous. If I'm at a party, I have to leave," she said with a laugh. "It's one of the most difficult races to handicap — so many factors, so many traffic issues. I get pretty emotional."

And as fun as a party may be, nothing beats being there in person — especially when you're cheering for a horse you bred.

"My sister and I went, and just walking into Churchill Downs was like the Super Bowl for us," she said. "We bred Upstart, so we call ourselves the grandparents of Upstart's offspring."

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Mary Daly

A RIDE TO REMEMBER

Most horse people can describe the rush of their first ride. For Mary Daly — born three months premature, battling cerebral palsy and recurring staph infections — her first time in the saddle felt almost divine.

"I remember feeling completely free. I felt like everybody else," she said. "The way the horse moved and reacted... there was just something so special about it."

It happened on a trail ride through Yellowstone, and it changed her life. Back home in upstate South Carolina, she searched for a way to ride again.

"I found a barn 15 minutes away and spoke to the riding coach. She had never worked with a disabled student, but she was so willing," Daly said. "She told me, 'We'll do what you can do. If you can't, that's OK.'"

That coach, Dayna Cabaniss, became her champion — and a lifelong friend. Six months later Daly decided she was ready for her own horse. To her surprise, her mother said yes — as long as she could afford and support it.

The search began, and though she met a few horses who weren't the right fit, she kept thinking about one named Eclipse. He'd originally been listed out of her price range, but something told her to call.

"The owner told me she had listed the price wrong," Daly recalled.

Eclipse not only fit the budget — he was perfect. His previous owner had Erb's Palsy and was paralyzed on one side.





"I knew it was a God thing," Daly said. "Eclipse was never hesitant of my walker and came up and started licking it right away. It was meant to be. Like the part in Cinderella when the shoe fits — Eclipse was the perfect fit."

Now living at Lawton Stables, just a mile from Daly's Sea Pines home, Eclipse remains her loyal companion.

"What I love about him is he's an incredible friend who's given me so many experiences I never thought I'd have," she said. "I feel so liberated with him."





RIDING HIGH Mary Daly's journey began with early-life challenges, including cerebral palsy, but it was during her time at the University of South Carolina Lancaster that she discovered the transformative power of horses. Now a Sea Pines resident, she devotes much of her free time to caring for her horse, Eclipse, at Lawton Stables, a bond that continues to inspire and uplift.

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Nicole L. Clegg, MSN, APRN, FNP-C *is board-certified nurse practitioner providing effective and compassionate care to patients at Main Street Medical with more than 17 years of experience.*

Nicole received an associate's degree in nursing from Belmont College in St. Clairsville, Ohio. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Jacksonville University in Jacksonville, Florida. Nicole then received her Master's of Science in nursing from Walden University in Minneapolis.



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The Roaring Twenties (horse edition)

If you're near Sea Pines' Lawton Stables on June 30, don't miss the biggest bash of the year. Mary Daly is throwing a Gatsby-style Roaring '20s birthday party for Eclipse's 20th.

"He has these major birthday parties every year with a different theme," said Daly. "We've had the circus, a Hawaiian luau, a red-white-and-blue patriot party... and he's the star."

With around 30 guests and a signature cake of oats, carrots and molasses, Eclipse's birthday is a can't-miss celebration of a one-of-a-kind friendship.

"God really worked everything out and brought us together," Daly said. "We'll have been together 12 years in September. Even if I could never ride again, it wouldn't matter — as long as we're together."



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Alison and Chloe Melton

THE NEXT GENERATION

Sometimes, the second best thing about being a parent is sharing your passions with your children, seeing their eyes light up with the same delight that yours did when you first discovered your calling. The only reason it's the second best thing is because the best thing about being a parent is when your children not only pursue your passions but surpass you in them.

"Chloe walks in that show ring with her game face on," said Alison Melton of her daughter. "She's at the barn at 8:30 every morning when she's not at school. She's riding, I'm working. She's very dedicated to the sport."

It's a dedication to horses that Alison simply can't match. At least, not since launching her real estate firm, The Agency Hilton Head. "I took a big step back when we started The Agency here in the Lowcountry. My last hurrah was the Hampton Classic in 2023. I placed with my horse in all our classes, and it was amazing," she said. "My goal is to get back into it this summer. Until then, Chloe's the superstar."

For Alison, riding started when she was 11 years old but never quite reached the peaks she's already seen her daughter scale.

"I was never into the circuit and all the top-rated shows that she goes to. I grew up in Buffalo," she said. "It was very different back then."

Fortunately, Alison is able to enjoy one of the peak experiences of parenthood: providing your child with opportunities you never had. Chloe also benefited from a much earlier start, as evidenced by photos of her at one year old, sitting on horseback in Rose Hill. Pony camp in New York followed a few years later, with her first true Hamptons pony camp coming at age 6.

"I don't really know when it started. My mom got me into horses when I was really young," said Chloe. "I've just always felt so attached to them."

Under the tutelage of Heidi Earle of Firefly Farm in Bridgehampton, N.Y., and Wellington, Fla., young Chloe became a champion hunter and jumper, with wins at prestigious horse shows like Tryon International, The Hampton Classic Horse Show and the Winter Equestrian Festival at Wellington International.





DYNAMIC DUO Chloe Melton and her mother, Alison Melton, share a passion for competitive equestrian sports, spending quality time together at the barn and traveling to horse shows across the Southeast, from Tryon, North Carolina, to Wellington, Florida. Alison serves as the Managing Partner and Broker-in-Charge at The Agency Hilton Head, specializing in equestrian properties within communities like Rose Dhu Creek Plantation, Rose Hill, Oldfield, Palmetto Bluff, Spring Island, Midway Farms, Moss Creek, Sea Pines and Brays Island. When not assisting clients in finding their ideal equestrian homes, she supports Chloe's endeavors in the hunter and jumper rings along the East Coast.

"I tell her to just have fun. You're on a great horse, just let the relationship work for you," said Alison. "And she has had some fabulous trainers."

She also has a fabulous horse. "I've had Leros since January. He's so sweet," said Chloe. "And you can trust him. Even on the course, when there's something big and scary coming up, you feel so safe on him."

Between Leros, her dedicated trainers in N.Y., Bluffton and Wellington and the encouragement of a mother who shares her passion for horses, young Chloe has become a true competitor in every sense of the word. "She's really starting to analyze what makes you win and what makes you drop to the bottom of a class. With the jumpers, there's so much strategy involved, and I love that for her," said Alison. "And that's how she secured top placings this year in Wellington – it was strategy. Having the chance to watch some of the best riders in the world, including over 20 Olympians, on a daily basis, you tend to pick up a few things. A kid from Buffalo would never have the opportunity to do this."

But because of that kid form Buffalo's dedication, her daughter does.

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Saddles and study guides

The life of a competitive hunter and jumper is rarely one that sticks to an easy schedule. Shows can last for weeks on end, taking riders up and down the East Coast. For a 12-year-old who wants to keep up with her school work, it can be a difficult life to maintain. Thankfully, Chloe Melton has the support of her mother and the resources of one of Hilton Head's most respected schools.

"We couldn't have done this without Heritage Academy. We switched schools so that she could go there, because that's what they do. That school exists for student athletes," said Chloe's mom, Alison. "We'll go to Wellington for the WEF (Winter Equestrian Festival), and they'll give her all her work to do while she's there. And she's kept up with everything. She's still an A student."

But it comes with some pretty sweet rewards. "My favorite part of all this is meeting new people, making new friends my age, traveling to all these different horse shows and seeing how it all works," said Chloe. She even gets to meet a few of her favorite riders from all around the world. "During the course walk, I enjoyed following Christian Kukuk, my favorite German rider (and the winner of the Rolex Grand Prix at WEF the past 2 years)."

Although she draws the line at asking for autographs, it's still a joy for her to meet her heroes face-to-face. Or, as she describes it in that particular language native to seventh graders, "It's pretty massive. Like a low taper fade."

For translation, consult your local seventh grader. But we're fairly certain it means she's living the dream. LL

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REFINED REDEFINED This sun-drenched great room in Palmetto Bluff rewrites the rules with quiet confidence. Rustic ceiling beams and classic millwork ground the space in tradition, while a modern plaster-and-tile fireplace adds unexpected edge. Neutral hues keep the mood light, letting texture and craftsmanship steal the spotlight. Thoughtful touches like the hidden coat closet and expansive windows make it clear: in this home, elegance is redefined on its own terms.



HOME SHOWCASE

The new traditional

EXPLORE A PALMETTO BLUFF HOME WHERE THE RULE BOOK IS BEING REWRITTEN.

STORY BY BARRY KAUFMAN + PHOTOS BY MOLLY ROSE







Who says modern and traditional can't get along? The most stylish spaces often borrow from both. With a little creativity, it's easy to break free from the usual rules, and this Palmetto Bluff home does exactly that. A graceful blend of past and present, it's a good example of timeless taste. It embraces the boldly modern, while respecting the textures, finishes and forms that have come to define the Lowcountry coastal aesthetic.

"My goal with the whole house was to find a nice juxtaposition between modern and traditional," said designer Lisa Whitley with ***J. Banks Design Group***. "We tried to create something that didn't take away from the setting and felt really livable and classic."

Deftly weaving together traditional elements with surprising new elements, Whitley created a look throughout the home that reimagines the Lowcountry, creating a set of rules all its own.

A graceful rebellion

The hand-hewn beams across the ceiling and the elaborate trim details found throughout shout "Lowcountry" in the stunning great room. But the details whisper a different tune. Blending elements of plaster and marble on the fireplace adds unexpected depth to the classic palette, while more farmhouse-style elements like the modified coffers along one end of the ceiling create moments as you tour the home.

"Instead of bringing in lots of heavy color, we tried to make an impact with texture and by carrying that juxtaposition of modern and traditional," said Whitley.

Adding to that impact is an intriguing detail that owes as much to form and function. "We don't really have an entry foyer, so we concealed a coat closet in the wall," she added. By drawing the foyer into the great room, architects Amanda Lamb and Lydia DePauw and builder CS Thomas Construction created a sense of hospitality and a fabulous wall of windows into the great room.

Statement starters

If there are a couple of details that immediately jump out at you from the kitchen, that was very much by design.

"We did want to do statement lighting throughout the home," said Whitley. "Nothing over the top, but we did go bold."

The dual pendant lights, shaded in eye-catching metallics, create the contrast that Whitley was looking for throughout the home, a modern addition to the more traditional textures of marble counters and white oak cabinets.

"We see a lot of white in this area, but this client was comfortable with darker colors and deeper tones, so we have a lot of different textures," added Whitley. "It really works together to make something that feels like a long-term design rather than something trendy or dated."











Let there be light (and flow)

In the kitchen Whitley introduced the bold light fixtures that would help her find that juxtaposition between modern and traditional. In the dining room she demonstrates exactly the impact lighting can have with an unapologetically modern globed fixture that sets a decidedly different vibe.

"It seemed like a really playful element we could introduce amid so much tradition," she said.

Once again marrying form and function, Whitley omitted the traditional area rug to keep the dining room flowing through the rest of the home. "It just felt like we were cutting it off by adding a rug. They entertain a lot, and their children come home from college fairly often, so we wanted to keep that flow of a family home."

This same philosophy carries through into the butler's pantry nearby. As a connector to the home's expansive outdoor spaces, it sees a lot of traffic. Keeping that in mind, Whitley introduced just enough intrigue to turn heads without causing rubber necking. Darker windows were introduced to match the cabinets, framing views toward the Carolina room and out to the pool deck.

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Tradition, reimagined

If there is one Palmetto Bluff tradition that must be respected under any circumstances, it is the community's flair for outdoor living. Each home must have at least one screened-in spot where everyone gathers to breathe in the natural beauty of the Bluff. And this is one tradition that the home didn't dare tweak. Instead, the architects leaned into it, creating a sprawling indoor/outdoor living space beneath soaring cathedral ceilings crossed by stunning millwork.

At one end of this expanse, a full outdoor kitchen serves a formal dining area beneath a dazzling geometric light fixture custom designed by Whitley and her team, crafted by Lowcountry originals. At the other end, a living room encircles a dramatic fireplace flanked by board-and-batten. As in the great room, we find doors concealed in the texture of the wall, leading to a bathroom and storage for cushions.



And just like the rest of this home, Whitley was fearless in blending together different textures into an entirely new aesthetic.

"We opted for a brick back splash in the outdoor kitchen because of the heat, but also because it added such great texture. And we went with a darker plaster on the range hood because it had to be so large," she said. At the far end the fireplace benefits tremendously from this layering of textures, set in a unique board-formed concrete.

"We did a lot of different sourcing, and this ended up being something both the homeowner and I were looking for," she said. Formed from poured concrete cast from molds that mimicked the grain of wood, it's an eye-catching pop of texture. "Each piece has its own coloration and pattern, so it has this really great natural look that fits well with the rest of the home."



Comfort in contrast

While the rest of the home was designed to intrigue and create conversations, in the primary suite everything gets toned down a few notches. The result is an atmosphere that keeps the elegance but layers it in pure comfort.

"The style is still very similar, but with much lighter tones," said Whitley. "We tried to create an escape. This bedroom is on the rear of the home, and the property abuts a golf course, so this is a nice getaway."

That's not to say that the suite doesn't make a statement of its own. Step into the bathroom, and you'll see Whitley's fearlessness take a relaxing turn, blending modern elements with vintage runners and antique furnishings.

"I like to mix in vintage elements when I can, when it makes sense," she said. "Even though it's somebody's home, we wanted it to feel like a retreat."

Adding to this is a stunning sense of depth created by dual deep-beveled mirrors, set against each other to create infinite beautiful spaces. "It creates a very large statement and gives you the sense of a really large bathroom," she said. *LL*

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STORY BY BARRY KAUFMAN + PHOTO BY MOLLY ROSE



MOODY AND MODERN Create a bold, inviting office with dark, monochromatic walls, reclaimed wood flooring and layered textures. A custom walnut waterfall-edge desk anchors the space, while sculptural lighting and a camel leather sectional add warmth and style. Floor-to-ceiling windows frame the view, blending indoors and out for a refined Lowcountry retreat.

Throughout the home Whitley's playful blending of textures and darker tones was used to drive an aesthetic that tweaked the traditional. Moving away from the lights and neutrals that have come to dominate design, she sprinkled in eye-catching light fixtures and wove together patterns to create a home at the intersection of tradition and modernity.

In this office those contrasts are used to create an atmosphere of quiet comfort, with a more masculine color palette.

"This is the husband's office, but in the evening this is where they hang out and watch TV," said designer Lisa Whitley of ***J. Banks Design***. "I would call this color drenching. We have the same darker chocolate color on all of the walls, the cabinets and the trim, so it's a very masculine space that feels much darker in the evening."

That said, there were plenty of opportunities to introduce contrasting texture, and Whitley took all of them. On the ceiling, a wide patch of pecky cypress lends visual intrigue above a light fixture of brass and banker green. On the floor, reclaimed wood unites the room's overall aesthetic with the rest of the house. And at the center of it all, a bold custom-built desk makes a statement.

"That was custom made. We found a nice slab of walnut, and a local supplier gave it that mitered cut so we could create a waterfall edge to it," she said. At the far end, a leg of matte black metal reminds us that this is a home of bold materials, blended fearlessly.

And yet it is also a Lowcountry home. And in the Lowcountry we take our scenery very seriously. The wide bank of windows not only frame the scenery, they expand the office. "That leads out to the front courtyard, so we added the door so if you're on a call, you can walk around outside while you talk," she said. "It's nice to have those dark elements to maximize what's happening outside. Plus, the hallway across from the office is full of windows, so you feel like you're surrounded by the outdoors." LL

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Serenity in contrast

FROM SCREENED-IN LIVING TO TRANQUIL POOLSIDE VIEWS, THIS PALMETTO BLUFF HOME'S OUTDOOR SPACES ARE A STUDY IN BALANCE.

STORY BY BARRY KAUFMAN + PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOLLY ROSE



A HOME OF CONTRASTS Metal roofing, board-and-batten siding and traditional lap details come together in a design that feels layered and lived-in, as if added to over generations. The result is a timeless Lowcountry elevation with modern intention.



A PORCH WITH A POINT OF VIEW With its hanging daybed, paneled walls and serene golf course views, this rear porch offers a quiet counterpoint to the home's livelier outdoor spaces.

With one glance at the home's variety of rooflines and finishes, it's clear that this is a home of contrasts. Here, the lines freely cross, between the lines of the metal roof to the exterior's interplay of board-and-batten and traditional siding. As with many Palmetto Bluff homes, the idea is to make a home look like it has evolved over generations, creating a slightly different look with each era.

While the Carolina room may dominate the conversation when it comes to this home's outdoor spaces, the property was built to be a study in contrasts. With the screened-in expanse incorporating an outdoor kitchen, living room and dining room, it is clearly a place where the energy is lively and the vibe is communal. On this peaceful rear porch architects Amanda Lamb, Lydia DePauw and builder CS Thomas Construction created a space where serenity reigns amid lush landscaping and golf views.

"It feels really clean," said designer Lisa Whitley with ***J. Banks Design Group***. "We didn't go overboard and make it feel fussy, but the scale was used really well in this space. The architects wanted it to be usable so it's a nice, deep porch."

A hanging bed at one end drives home the peaceful atmosphere that the architects and designers were going for, oriented to take full advantage of the views and the gentle breezes. Surrounding it, paneled walls unite the home's interior and exterior design.

"We ran the paneling up to the ceiling because we had such large windows, and we wanted to create something that didn't take away from the setting," she said. "We did a lot of the interior mill-work drawings before we even started, and I think that was helpful in coming up with ways of combining styles. We don't always get that opportunity, but it really simplifies things."

Stretching away from the porch, a pool deck of brick and travertine surrounds the pool, but it's the sublime natural beauty of the landscaping that dominates the view.

"The grass comes really close to the far edge of the pool, and that little bit of space really puts nature at the forefront," added Whitley.



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GLOW WITH THE FLOW
Bathed in sunlight by day and aglow with purpose by night, the room's lighting design plays beautifully with its oversized windows. Natural daylight and thoughtfully placed fixtures work in tandem, creating an effortless ambiance that's both balanced and undeniably inviting.



TUNED TO NOSTALGIA
Embracing the "old is new again" aesthetic, a vintage-inspired McIntosh record player and high-end stereo amplifier set the tone along one wall of this stylish residence. Above, a modern LED track lighting system casts a focused glow, spotlighting the setup and inviting listeners to sink into the warm hum of analog sound, updated with a contemporary edge.



ROOM OF THE MONTH

A brighter perspective

Thoughtful lighting choices brought luxury, warmth and style to this Hilton Head Plantation condo.

STORY BY JASON CLARKE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GUSTAVO RATTIA

Lighting isn't just about seeing where you're going — it's about setting the mood, shaping the atmosphere and making a space feel truly alive. Done right, it can open up a room, stretch the walls and bring a little magic into everyday living. That's exactly what happened in this newly completed condo in The Charles, a gem tucked inside Hilton Head Plantation. Though modest in size, this space proves that square footage is no match for good design. ***CAV Integrated Home*** pulled off a masterclass in lighting by combining key elements — think task and ambient lighting, tunable white fixtures and artfully placed decorative accents — to deliver a space that feels both luxurious and livable.

Here, lighting wasn't an afterthought. It was the foundation. The design began with two essentials: functionality and atmosphere. Each fixture was chosen with care to provide just the right amount of brightness — never harsh, always harmonious. A sculptural pendant chandelier adds visual interest while keeping the room grounded in elegance. And the recessed linear LED lights? Embedded right into the ceiling, they cast a clean, modern glow that highlights the architecture without stealing the spotlight.

But the true "aha" moment? Effortless control. This condo features automated floor-to-ceiling shades that respond with a simple press of a button — ushering in soft morning light or offering instant privacy at sundown. Fully integrated into the home's smart lighting system, they enhance the flow of the day while keeping the look seamless and sophisticated.

The finished result is a space that feels open, airy and unexpectedly grand. It's proof that great design isn't just reserved for sprawling estates. With thoughtful lighting and smart tech, even a compact condo can feel like a five-star retreat — glowing from the inside out. *LL*

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EXPERT ADVICE

Stone cold stunners

TUMBLED PORCELAIN PAVERS BRING OLD-WORLD SOUL TO MODERN OUTDOOR LIVING.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SAVANNAH SURFACES

In the Lowcountry, tradition runs deep. From oyster shell tabby to hand-laid brick, our architecture tells stories that span generations. But let's be honest — even the most beautiful materials sometimes need a modern upgrade, especially when they come with constant upkeep (we're looking at you, natural stone). That's where tumbled porcelain pavers come in — the clever chameleons of outdoor design. These high-performance pavers capture the weathered charm of reclaimed stone or antique cobblestone, minus the price tag, porous surfaces or weekend scrubbing sessions. We turned to the team at ***Savannah Surfaces*** *for the scoop on how these durable beauties are redefining old-school good looks with new-school ease.*



Gather 'round the glow

This cozy firepit patio proves that comfort and durability can coexist beautifully. The soft texture and timeworn edges of these bluestone tumbled porcelain pavers bring instant character to the space, while their tough-as-nails surface stands up to the heat (and the foot traffic). Bonus: No sealing, scrubbing or seasonal maintenance. Just fire, friends and a chilled glass of wine.



Grace meets grit

This elegant pool deck may look like it was plucked from an old Italian villa, but it's all modern muscle underneath. These Crema Di Latte porcelain pavers offer natural color variation and a gracefully aged look — minus the maintenance. Resistant to water, chlorine, cracking and the blazing Southern sun, they'll keep their cool while you soak up yours.



Shell yeah

A nod to classic tabby without the hassle, these Oyster White porcelain pavers are flecked with shell-like texture and coastal charm. Laid with gravel joints for a modern twist, they're practically begging for a barefoot stroll. Built to weather any storm (literally), they're the ideal backdrop for Lowcountry lounging — from poolside cocktails to oyster roasts.

Down-to-earth design

Soft underfoot and subtle to the eye, this Crema Di Latte paver swatch shows just how grounded style can be. The hand-hewn appearance, moss-filled joints and organic feel make it a perfect pick for garden paths and earthy outdoor kitchens. And since it's porcelain, you won't be stuck pulling weeds or pressure-washing mildew. Low effort, high charm — just the way we like it.











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INSPIRATION BOARD

Soft opening

THIS PALMETTO BLUFF ENTRYWAY PROVES THAT GREAT DESIGN DOESN'T SHOUT, IT GENTLY DRAWS YOU IN.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KELLI BOYD

*Giving your entryway a little love? Take a cue from this beautifully restrained space in Palmetto Bluff, where the interior designers at **Court Atkins Group** crafted a space that whispers "welcome" in the most stylish way possible. Entryways create a sense of arrival. In this space sculptural lighting, layered art, warm wood and tactile textures strike a perfect balance between polish and comfort. Ready for your own grand (but subtle) entrance? Start here.*





Grace under grain

The Hammond Console blends structure and softness. Crafted from distressed mindi wood and finished in a pale limewash, it feels both relaxed and refined — the kind of piece that grounds the room while letting everything else shine.



Glow for bold

Floating above like a modern sculpture, the Mollino chandelier sets the tone with its soft plaster finish and clean, tiered silhouette. The chunky brass chain adds warmth and contrast, anchoring the ethereal shape. It's proof that good lighting doesn't just illuminate a space — it defines it.



Sit quietly

Rustic, simple and full of charm, these wooden stools add a natural element to the entry while doubling as extra seating. Their hand-hewn character and timeworn finish make them feel like they've always been here — and always will be.



Layered luxury

The quickest way to soften a space? Add a touch of texture. Draped over a stool or bench, this plush shearling hide offers cozy contrast to the hard surfaces around it — and invites you to slow down and stay awhile.



Lean into it

Art doesn't need to shout to stand out. This neutral abstract from Wendover Art Group uses quiet brushwork and raised texture to add interest without distraction. A smaller, organic-toned canvas layered in front completes the pairing with relaxed charm. The takeaway? For instant visual depth, don't hang it — lean it.



Small wonder

With its glowing dome, warm brass accents and veined marble base, the Mushroom Mini Lamp brings a little mid-century magic to the console table. Compact and bold, it's a reminder that even a small light can make a big impression.



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Command central

BOLD RED WALLS, WARM WOODS AND LUXE GOLD ACCENTS SET THE TONE FOR A HOME OFFICE THAT INSPIRES PRODUCTIVITY AND STYLE

A rich, deep red doesn't just sit on the walls; it leads the room. It exudes warmth, confidence and a sense of purpose — qualities that turn a home office into a true command center. Enter Behr's Rumors (MQ1-15), the brand's 2025 Color of the Year. With its velvety, wine-inspired hue, Rumors transforms any workspace into a hub of focus and creativity. When paired with wood tones and metallic gold accents, it sets a powerful stage for big ideas, smart solutions and a daily dose of style.



©BEHR

GET THE LOOK Transform your workspace into a haven of creativity and confidence by starting with Rumors on the walls. This deep red sets the mood — bold, empowering and ready to inspire. Built-in cabinetry painted in the same shade adds seamless storage and a sense of depth, making it easier to focus on the tasks at hand. Then, soften the vibe with a desk in White Wash Pickling — a gentle, creamy contrast that keeps the room inviting and grounded. To breathe life into the space, bring in a fiddle-leaf fig. It's not just a plant; it's your leafy cheerleader, energizing the room and keeping your creativity fresh.

Next, let metallic accents shine. Picture a sculptural gold lamp catching the sunlight, brass hardware gleaming quietly or a Champagne Gold-painted bowl that adds a touch of luxe. These elements work together like a perfect supporting cast, elevating the room without stealing the show. Underfoot, a plush, geometric rug ties everything together, providing softness and a sturdy foundation for your big ideas. Don't overlook the walls — minimalist artwork in soft, neutral tones brings a quiet sophistication, leaving your office polished, focused and ready to conquer every work challenge that comes your way, day or night.

WALLS

RUMORS (MQ1-15)
Behr Ultra, Flat/Matte
A bold, moody red that makes a statement, Rumors radiates energy and elegance. Its saturated depth brings warmth, contrasting beautifully with natural textures and metallic finishes, making it the ideal foundation for a productive and inspiring home office.

ACCENT PIECES

CHAMPAGNE GOLD (SP-208)
Behr Premium Metallic Spray Paint
This radiant gold adds a touch of sophistication to decorative elements. Whether used on fixtures, hardware or accents, the sparkling shine elevates the space with a refined finish.

DESK

WHITE WASH PICKLING (TIS-580)
Behr Premium Wood Stain
A soft, creamy beige stain that enhances natural wood grain. It balances Rumors' intensity with an organic, understated warmth, creating a space that feels both bold and inviting.

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A peachy keen laundry and mudroom

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY HGTV



The 2025 HGTV Dream Home in Berkeley Hall makes everyday chores easy, with a thoughtfully designed space featuring pet-friendly amenities, high-performance appliances and smart storage solutions.

Each month we invite you to explore the 2025 HGTV Dream Home in Berkeley Hall, a masterpiece crafted by Shoreline Construction, Court Atkins Group and HGTV designer Brian Patrick Flynn. This month we step inside the laundry and mudroom — an essential space where style meets function. With bold, warm walls, a mix of open and closed storage and a pet-friendly setup, this high-efficiency space ensures household tasks feel effortless and organized.



HIGH-PERFORMANCE APPLIANCES & STORAGE

A front-load washer and electric dryer in carbon graphite offer settings for delicates, bulky loads and everyday laundry. Sturdy cabinetry provides ample storage for cleaning supplies, while foldable wall-mounted drying racks offer a sleek, space-saving solution for air-drying clothes.



SMART SOLUTIONS FOR EVERYDAY TASKS

Designed with convenience in mind, this laundry room features a built-in pet feeding station with a matte black pot filler, making mealtimes easy. A 33-inch stainless farmhouse sink, paired with a touch-activated pull-down faucet, simplifies everything from laundry prep to pet care. A water-leak detection sensor adds extra peace of mind, detecting issues before they become costly problems.

Get the look

Wall paint: Sherwin-Williams Spiced Cider (SW 7702)
Cabinet paint: Sherwin-Williams Snowbound (SW 7004)
Delta Contemporary Pot Filler ($652)
Wayfair Front Load Washer & Dryer Set ($2,030)
Delta Pivotal Pull-Down Kitchen Faucet ($919)
Delta Trinsic Hand Shower ($113)
SimpliSafe Wireless Indoor Camera ($350)



PET-FRIENDLY AND STYLISH TOUCHES

A spacious pet-washing station with an adjustable matte black hand shower makes bath time effortless, while a rolling pet gate helps manage access when needed. A handwoven jute-and-wool rug adds warmth over the matte porcelain tile flooring, and custom window treatments bring a fun touch with a black-and-sand star and polka dot pattern.


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FLORAL OF THE MONTH

Poppy explosion

ADD SOME ART TO YOUR HOME WITH FLORAL DESIGN

STORY BY SHEILA PAZ + PHOTO BY RUTHE RITTERBECK



Kim Epley, artistic director at The Studio at Farmer Blue — a 12-acre, cut-flower farm in Seabrook — captures movement and color in this month's striking floral arrangement. Showcasing the beauty of a single cultivar, this design radiates energy and joy, much like the month of May. Delicate Icelandic poppies, with their rich hues, celebrate the start of the summer season.



ICELANDIC POPPIES

Why it works

Dynamic: The naturally curved stems create an illusion of movement, as if the flowers are dancing in the wind.

Crisp white vessel: A clean, modern vase provides a striking contrast to the vivid poppy tones, allowing the flowers to take center stage.

Vivid expression: The mix of fiery oranges and golden yellows, paired with crisp whites from the same floral family, enhances cohesion while offering striking visual depth.

Natural design: Using a flower frog to support the stems and hold them in place creates an airy, sculptural arrangement that feels as though it was just gathered from a meadow.

Care tips

Fresh water daily: Change the water daily to keep the flowers fresh and free from bacteria.

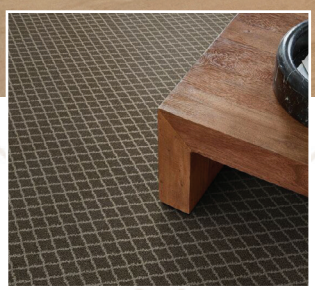
Burn, baby, burn: After cutting the stems every couple of days, burn the ends of the poppies. This prevents the milky sap from leaking and releasing excess moisture into the water.

Cool & shaded: Place the arrangement in a cool, shaded area away from direct sunlight and heat to prevent premature wilting.

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Horse'n 'round town

GREAT PLACES TO GO HORSEBACK RIDING IN THE LOWCOUNTRY

STORY BY SHEILA PAZ



©ALYSSA FRANCK

From serene beach rides to winding trails through maritime forests, the Lowcountry offers unforgettable adventures for horse lovers of all levels. Whether you're an experienced equestrian or saddling up for the first time, there's a place nearby to ride. Here are some of our favorite spots to explore the region's natural beauty from horseback, scenic, shaded and oh-so-Lowcountry.

Lawton Stables

190 Greenwood Drive, Hilton Head Island

Tucked inside Sea Pines, Lawton Stables is a beloved (and legendary) destination for locals and visitors alike. Home to a variety of horses including a gentle giant Clydesdale named Woody, this full-service equestrian center is open year-round. Guided trail rides take you through the tranquil Sea Pines Forest Preserve and are suitable for riders of all experience levels. Little ones ages 7 and under can enjoy pony rides. ***lawtonstables.com***

Trail ride: $80
Carriage ride: $85
Pony ride: $16

Pro tip: *Not planning to ride? You can still visit the horses! Bring some sliced, cored apples, and say hello to Woody and his friends.*

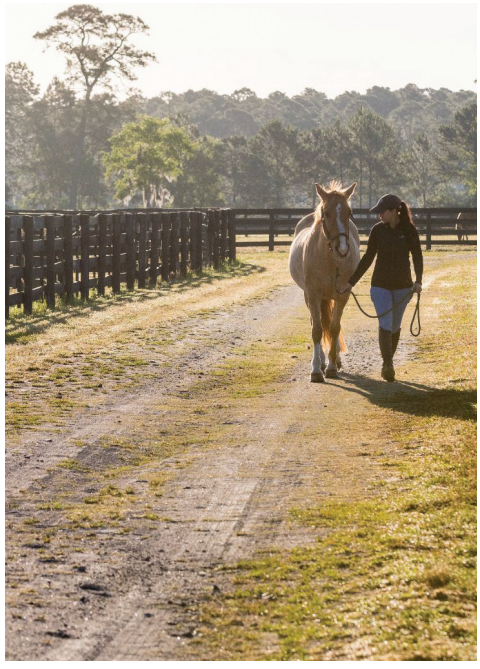


©LAWTON STABLES





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Longfield Stables

24 Healey Road, Bluffton

Available to Palmetto Bluff members, Longfield Stables offers guided rides through picturesque private lands featuring ancient oaks, tidal creeks and winding trails. With a focus on thoughtful horsemanship, the staff welcomes both beginners and seasoned riders to experience the natural beauty of the Lowcountry. ***palmettobluff.com***.



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Daufuskie Marsh Tacky Society

281 Old Haig Point Road, Daufuskie Island

For a ride steeped in history and heritage, saddle up on one of South Carolina's state heritage horses, the marsh tacky. This nonprofit offers immersive trail rides for advanced riders, including the coveted Bucket List Beach Ride, featuring jaw-dropping views of the Atlantic. Other options include forest paths and the indulgent Hack, Snack and Roadie Ride, which includes food and drinks along the way. ***daufuskiemarshtackysociety.org***

Bucket List Ride: $175
Forest Ride: $65
Hack, Snack and Roadie Ride: $450



©DAUFUSKIE MARSH TACKY SOCIETY



©DAUFUSKIE TRAIL RIDES

Daufuskie Trail Rides

Haig Point Road, Daufuskie Island

Hop on a ferry, and head to Daufuskie for the rare chance to ride horses along the beach. Options range from shady forest treks to sandy strolls with sweeping views of Calibogue Sound and the Atlantic Ocean. Choose from the whimsical "Neigh"borhood Ride, the romantic Oceanfront Ride or a customized adventure tailored to your skill level. ***daufuskietrailrides.com***

"Neigh"borhood Ride: $150
Oceanfront Ride: $175

Red Gate Farms Equestrian Center

136 Red Gate Farms Trail, Savannah

Just over the river in Savannah, Red Gate Farms offers horseback rides through 300 acres of oak-draped trails, peaceful lakes and open fields. With a history dating back to the 1930s, this farm is a haven for nature and history lovers alike. ***rideredgate.com***

Group Rides: $60-$125
Specialty Holiday Rides: $95
Carriage Rides: $125
Pony Rides: $60



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©SEABROOK EQUESTRIAN CENTER

Seabrook Equestrian Center

2313 Seabrook Island Road, Seabrook Island

If you're willing to roam a little farther, Seabrook's Equestrian Center is worth the trip. Its guided rides include fun facts about the surrounding flora, fauna and Lowcountry history. Choose from peaceful forest paths or scenic beach routes. ***seabrookisland.com***

Beginner Beach Ride: $175
Beginner Trail Ride: $105
Pony Ride: $65





©CAMELOT FARMS EQUESTRIAN CENTER

Camelot Farms Equestrian Center

101 Tom and Mike Road, St. Helena Island

Discover the unspoiled beauty of St. Helena Island by horseback at Camelot Farms. Meander down oak-lined trails, or ride beside the waves on a beach tour. Riders under age 8 can enjoy pony rides, making this a great spot for the whole family. ***camelotfarmshorses.com***

Plantation Ride: $95
Coastal Beach Ride: $150
Pony Rides: $25-$45





Rose Hill Equestrian Center

©WEBB PHOTOGRAPHY

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Oldfield Equestrian Center: *843-645-4600*
Rose Hill Equestrian Center: *912-659-0952*
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Longfield Stables: *843-706-5463*
Spring Island (members only): *843-987-4102*



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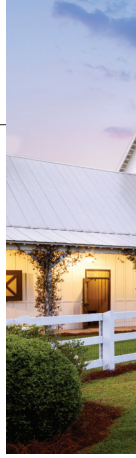
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Art meets equestrian

BEHIND THE GATES OF SCAD'S EQUESTRIAN CENTER

STORY BY CAROLYN MALES + PHOTOS COURTESY OF SCAD







THE MANE CAMPUS The Ronald C. Waranch Equestrian Center in Hardeeville serves as the home base for the SCAD's nationally recognized equestrian team. Spanning 180 acres, the facility features expansive paddocks, pastures, competition arenas and two barns for university- and student-owned horses.

A while back, if someone had told me I'd be standing in a field overlooking a grid of white fences, paddocks and pastures at an art university, I would have raised an eyebrow. But here I am at the Savannah College of Art and Design's Ronald C. Waranch Equestrian Center, watching a student rider take her horse through its paces. These 180 acres, bordered by loblolly pines, are only a few miles north on Route 17 in Hardeeville but a world away from SCAD's downtown campus, set among Savannah's live oaks, squares and historic homes.

The center, which opened in 2006, is home to the school's equestrian degree program, which prepares students with design, art and business skills geared toward the multi-billion dollar, worldwide horse industry. SCAD's equestrian program encompasses all its related fields — equine sports, racing, recreational riding, health, breeding, marketing and facilities management.

So how does this equine-focused curriculum fit into the university's art school degree programs? Equestrian team head coach Ashley Henry, a SCAD equestrian team alum with a B.F.A. in metals and jewelry, points out that it's not a one-track curriculum. "Students fuse their passion for equestrian studies with next-level science and tech, design principles and artistic talent to prepare for a vast array of career options in the equine world. They can pursue equestrian studies and fashion, photography, architecture, painting, graphic design, advertising and branding — the list goes on and on."

I have a scheduled tour, but before I head to meet my guide, I take in the elegant board-and-batten white buildings, their silver metal roofs, dormers and cupolas. Two large barns contain the school's 90 stalls, along with tack rooms, veterinarian clinic, wash stations, laundry, offices and classroom. Beyond them, along with a covered arena for practice, sit three large competition rings, 14 paddocks and a fenced, turfed derby field — all a verdant green on this early spring day.



Now I turn and walk over to the Old Barn, where a dappled horse and two dark ones poke their heads out from the line of open stall windows to check me out. My tour guide this afternoon is Michelle Blanchard, who greets me along with Timothy, a large tabby, one of six resident felines. As Timothy (who, along with his "almost twin" Peanut, is named after a type of hay) curls up next to a pillar, we enter a wood-paneled student lounge, its walls lined with an impressive display of trophy ribbons. Indeed, SCAD boasts having "won more American National Riding Commission championship titles since 2002 than any other university."

From there we head into the tack room, where Blanchard gives me a mini-lesson on equine management. Here, saddles, bridles and bits hang — the latter two fitted to each horse and labeled with their "barn" names. Barn names? Each of the 71 horses housed in the center's two stables are bestowed with an informal moniker, like "Cookie" and "Dublin." These, she explains, often differ from their registered or show names bestowed by their original owners. (Most of the horses have been donated, although a few are on loan or are owned by students.) Now, as we step into the long hallway lined with rows of stalls, I'm immediately struck by the dramatic timbered columns and trusses of the vaulted ceiling that fills the space with light. I look into Cosmo's stall, but he's clearly out for a ride. However, Bert is here. Clad in full fly sheets, a protective covering against gnats and other pesky bugs, he's ready to go out after dinner and graze.

"The horses," Blanchard tells me, "are ridden by students in an academic tract as well as students on the equestrian team." When I ask if students get to choose their favorites each time, Blanchard shakes her head. "We swap our horses out pretty much every lesson. We don't bring our horses to competitions. The hosting school provides them, so by having students ride different horses here, we prepare them for that. And," she adds, "even when we host competitions and provide the horses, our team still doesn't know who they'll be riding until that morning."





Now we walk across to the newer, larger barn where I find senior Maddy Falkowitz grooming a horse named Ancho (show name: Rolling Stone) in a wash stall. Not only is Falkowitz on the equestrian team, she's also a fine art equine photographer. "I just did a whole project on motion and movement," she tells me, providing a great example of equestrian athleticism meeting equine artistry. As we walk on, Blanchard points out the innovative on-site veterinarian clinic, which, along with more traditional medicine, provides massage, acupuncture, chiropractic, electro-magnetic therapy and other advanced therapies. "We treat them like the fine, high-caliber athletes they are."

On the way out we pass by a class in session. What might they be learning behind the closed door? The lesson could be covering any number of equine-related subjects, Blanchard answers, like judging or designing competitions, setting up horse shows, designing jumps, training, saddles — again, art meets equestrian.

Before I leave we talk about the major equestrian events SCAD holds, like this spring's ISHA (Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association) Zone Finals, some of which are free and open to the public. As I put my car into gear and pass through the white gates, I think: now that I've gotten a peek behind the scenes, not only am I eager to see these student and equine athletes in action, but I'll also be on the lookout for related works like saddles, equestrian fashion, architecture and more.







©MADDY FALKOWITZ

LEARNING THE REINS SCAD students can pursue a B.A. in equestrian studies, a program grounded in hands-on experience and enriched by guest lectures from top professionals — trainers, judges, veterinarians and show managers.





Bridling success: Four SCAD grads are redefining success in the equestrian world

SCAD's Equestrian Studies program continues to produce professionals reshaping the industry with creativity, talent and vision. "SCAD Equestrian Studies alumni are making waves across the industry," said Ahna Phelps, associate department chair. "They demonstrate the versatility and impact of their education."

Among the success stories is ***Brianne Link***, who founded Equisite Elements of Style, a luxury equestrian apparel brand based in Wellington, Florida. Her designs are now worn by elite riders across the globe.

Giana Terranova has become one of the country's top equestrian photographers, known for capturing the sport's most iconic and emotional moments.

On the training front Olivia Murray plays a pivotal role at Finally Farm, home to the celebrated Towell family, where she helps develop top-tier riders and horses. The farm's accolades include Horse of the Year titles and Grand Prix wins, solidifying its reputation as a leading hunter/jumper stable in the Southeast.

Alexandria Hurd, who paired her illustration degree with a minor in equestrian studies, recently launched Lakeview Equine, a program devoted to using horsemanship as a tool for personal empowerment and healing. *LL*



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GET THE SCOOP ON LOCAL BARNYARD STARS STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

The Lowcountry is known for its postcard-perfect beaches, championship golf courses and centuries-old charm, but venture beyond the fairways and sandy shores, and you'll find another kind of magic hiding under the mossy oaks. Here in quiet barns and shady pastures live some of Beaufort County's most beloved locals: the horses. Each one has a story to tell, a big personality to match and a loyal following of riders, barn mates and admirers who wouldn't trade them for a Triple Crown winner. From polished show ring pros to pasture comedians, these hooved celebrities are the heart and soul of their stables and their communities. Meet just a few of the many famous horses of Beaufort County, the ones who've turned heads, won hearts and left unforgettable hoofprints along the way.

HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Lawton Stables

Woody With feathered feet and a gentle spirit, Woody is the picture of Clydesdale charm. At just eight years old, this majestic gelding already has quite the local legacy. Donated by Woody's Sunglass Shop in Shelter Cove after the passing of beloved mascot, Harley, Woody was named in honor of the gift and the community it supports. Since stepping into the spotlight, he's become a familiar sight at weddings, parades and special events across Sea Pines, a towering ambassador with a kind eye and a heart of gold. Wherever Woody goes, smiles (and photos) follow.



©ALYSSA FRANCK



Jetpack If ever a pony lived up to his name, it's Jetpack. This 12-year-old bundle of energy is the ultimate pint-sized partner for pony rides, especially for little riders just starting out. He adores children, and the feeling is mutual, especially when he's decked out in his favorite color, pink. That's right, Jetpack has a thing for pink gear, which just adds to his undeniable cuteness. His exact breed might be a mystery, but one thing's certain: Jetpack is pure joy on four hooves.

Barnwell Tabby on Squire Pope

Mercedes At 35 years old, Mercedes (right) is the grand dame of the Barnwell Tabby on Hilton Head Island's Squire Pope Road, a graceful Quarter Horse mix with a heart as big as her story. She was rescued years ago when her former owner could no longer keep her, and she's spent her golden years basking in the love of the Barnwell family. Though she's long since retired from riding, Mercedes still holds court in the pasture, often seen alongside her daughter, Lexus, near the Squire Pope traffic circle. For a time, she even shared her space with a deer that wandered in and decided to stay, proving that Mercedes has a knack for turning strangers into family.

Lexus Lexus (left) is Mercedes' loyal sidekick and daughter, a 20-year-old Quarter Horse mix who's spent every moment of her life on Squire Pope Road. Though she doesn't have official papers, she's got something even better: an unbreakable bond with her mom and a heart full of love. Like her mother, Lexus no longer is ridden, but she's happy just to be by her side, grazing under the oaks and soaking in the Lowcountry sun. Together, this mother-daughter duo represents the quiet beauty of a life well-lived and deeply loved.



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HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Coastal Discovery Museum

Hawk At 29 years old, Hawk is a true local hero. Purchased with a grant from the Bargain Box, this sweet-natured Quarter Horse spent years at Heroes on Horseback, helping riders of all ages and abilities gain strength, balance and confidence. Known for his calm demeanor, he was especially beloved by nonverbal children and adults with spinal injuries. Hawk's legacy includes helping three riders reach the Special Olympics World Summer Games and earning the title of Horse of the Year in 2010 from the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International. After retirement, Hawk found a second calling at the Coastal Discovery Museum at Honey Horn, charming visitors and sharing a pasture with Marsh Tacky mascot, Comet. Now preparing to return to Heroes on Horseback for his final chapter, Hawk continues to inspire all who meet him.

BLUFFTON



Rose Hill

Tango Shall We Dance, affectionately known as Tango, is a five-year-old Quarter Horse with a flair for fun. Originally from upstate New York, he brings both talent and personality to the Rose Hill Equestrian Center. Tango is famous for his calm demeanor, trainability and smooth ride. Around the barn he is known for playing lighthearted pranks on his stall neighbors and making everyone laugh. With a winning combo of charm and skill, Tango is sure to make a splash in the hunter-jumper ring.



Cooper Small in size but big on heart, Cooper is the resident charmer of Weatherford Barn. This 15-year-old miniature horse knows how to make a grand entrance. Donated along with his brother to an outdoor residential treatment center, Cooper has worked with a herd of full-size horses to support teens and families through equine-assisted therapy. Calm, steady and always up for a little fun, he thrives on interaction, especially with kids, costumes and anything involving snacks. He has even been spotted stomping divots like a pro during halftime at Rose Hill polo matches and has never met a treat or dress-up day he didn't like.



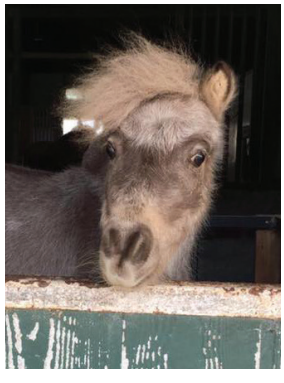
Moss Creek Equestrian Center

Maggie Maggie is a 15-year-old Quarter Horse-Clydesdale cross with the gentle heart of a therapy horse and the sturdy build to match. She came to Moss Creek five years ago from Virginia, tagging along with her devoted owner who had rescued her three years prior. Once a fearless fox hunter, Maggie has since traded the chase for calm and confidence, now spending her days patiently teaching adult riders and helping support larger therapeutic students. Sweet, wise and always willing, she's the kind of mare who wins you over with just one nuzzle.



Rose Dhu Equestrian Center

Quincy Equal parts Olympic hopeful and lovable snack thief, Quincy is an 11-year-old Anglo-European Sport Horse with serious talent and a not-so-serious palate. Bred at the prestigious Okeingham Stud in the UK, this FEI-level competitor has worked his way up the ranks from promising young prospect to international contender. In the ring he's all focus and finesse. In the barn? He's basically a giant golden retriever. Quincy is known for his gentle, affectionate personality and his very specific snack cravings. Bananas? Yes, please. Ruffles Cheddar & Sour Cream chips? Don't even think about eating those without sharing. He's as sweet as he is skilled and just quirky enough to keep things interesting.



Ed Standing just a few hands tall but with a personality larger than life, Ed, the miniature horse, is the unofficial mayor of Rose Dhu. Now eight years old, he came to the barn at just three months to serve as a companion for a partially blind horse, and he's been stealing hearts ever since. Equal parts greeter, goofball and parade professional, Ed is always up for a grooming session, a bit of play or a hop over an in-hand jump. He's especially adored by the barn's youngest visitors and has become a staple at community events. Whether he's trotting down Main Street or just hanging out with the herd, Ed brings joy wherever he goes.



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BLUFFTON

Longfield Stables



Bravo Bravo isn't just a horse, he's a local legend with hooves. This 18-year-old Marsh Tacky is one of the longest-standing and most beloved members of the Longfield herd, and there's truly nothing he can't do. Trail rides? He's your guy. Cross-country course? He's got it. Parades and demos? Been there, rocked that. He's even played the Headless Horseman's mount during Halloween and looked fantastic doing it. Bravo has the kind of calm, kind spirit that instantly puts riders at ease, whether they're in the saddle or simply stopping by to offer a peppermint or horse cookie. A true ambassador for his rare and storied breed, Bravo lives up to his name every single day.



Winter Winter may be 28, but she's still the heart of the herd and the ultimate introduction to equine friendship. This darling Pony of the Americas is many visitors' very first interaction with a horse, and she makes every moment count. She's best known for her role in the ever-popular "paint the pony" activity, where she stands patiently while artists of all ages transform her into a four-legged canvas. With her easygoing attitude, love of peppermints and occasional fondness for vanilla cupcakes, Winter has earned a loyal fan base and a reputation as one of the kindest ponies around. She's the perfect mix of gentle soul and steady presence.



Heroes on Horseback

Angel True to her name, Angel is a 15-year-old Percheron mare with a heart as big as her hooves. Once an Amish carriage horse, this gentle giant now brings her quiet strength to the Heroes on Horseback program, where she serves riders in therapeutic sessions, Special Olympics and veteran outreach. At 16 hands tall, Angel is both strong and serene, a steady presence for those who need extra support, including riders who mount via ramps. She's the kind of horse who instantly puts you at ease, patiently waiting for each rider to settle in and shining in her role as a healer with hooves.

Willow Willow may stand just 14.3 hands tall, but her impact is anything but small. This 14-year-old Quarter Horse mare is the definition of calm, cool and collected. With her compact, sturdy frame and endlessly patient demeanor, she's a perfect partner for young children and riders with physical challenges, offering security and confidence in every step. Whether she's participating in mounted sessions or simply standing quietly for grooming during a ground lesson, Willow does it all with quiet grace. She's not flashy; she's faithful, and that's exactly why everyone adores her.



DAUFUSKIE ISLAND



The Equestrian Center at Haig Point

Farley Farley is the kind of pony every kid dreams of: patient, playful and always ready to ride. This 20-year-old Welsh Arabian has become a living legend on Daufuskie Island, known for his gentle nature and willingness to do it all. Whether he's carefully toting around tiny beginners or clearing jumps with more advanced students, Farley never misses a beat. He's the kind of steady soul who builds confidence and wins hearts, and he's got a long list of young fans to prove it.



Jake With one blue eye and one brown, Jake is the George Clooney of the barn, ruggedly handsome and effortlessly cool. At 22, this Paint Quarter Horse has traded the dressage arena for scenic strolls through Haig Point's trails, where he soaks up the island breeze and attention in equal measure. Calm, collected and a total gentleman, Jake is the definition of "island time," proving that retirement can look pretty darn good when you've earned it.

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DAUFUSKIE ISLAND



Daufuskie Marsh Tacky Society

Lowther's Lucero (Louie) Louie isn't just any horse, he's a living legacy. As the prized stallion of the Daufuskie Marsh Tacky Society, this handsome bay dun roan is the backbone of the island's effort to preserve one of South Carolina's rarest treasures. Handpicked in 2014 from a line sired by the famous Hershey at DP Lowther's farm in Ridgeland, Louie brought more than good genes to Daufuskie, he brought history full circle. In 2024 he became the proud father of the first Marsh Tacky foals born on the island in more than 40 years. With his compact build, strong short back, signature dorsal stripe, zebra markings and thick double mane, Louie is the textbook image of the breed. But it's his calm demeanor and gentlemanly manners that truly make him stand out, whether he's greeting visitors, winning hearts at events or charming the mares during breeding season. Louie carries not only the traits of his ancestors but also the future of the Marsh Tacky breed, and he does it all with quiet pride and a swish of that trademark tail.

OKATIE

Oldfield Equestrian Center



Sophie Miss Sassy Sophie may be 28, but don't let her age fool you, she's still got plenty of spark. This double-registered American Quarter Horse and Paint Horse mare hails from the wide-open spaces of Nevada, where she once worked cattle, ruled the trails and showed off in Ranch Horse Versatility competitions. Since joining her current owner in 2015, Sophie has become the queen of the lesson ring at Oldfield, patiently guiding everyone from tiny first-timers on pony rides to competitive riders in hunter paces and jumper rings. After teaching hundreds, she's not just a schoolmaster, she's a heart horse in every sense.



Silver King Regal in name and nature, Silver King is a 26-year-old Oldenburg gelding with a heart as big as his stature. A former third-level dressage competitor from Virginia, he moved to Bluffton with his longtime rider, now a marine biologist and children's author, and has been holding court at Oldfield ever since. Known as the gentle giant, King loves greeting visitors (especially the grandkids) and is rarely seen without his best pals: Hambone and Charlotte, the potbellied pigs, and his loyal flock of chickens. A horse with a soft spot for smaller creatures and big hugs, King truly lives up to his noble name.

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Kit & Kat Double the fluff, double the fun. Kit and Kat are the only working horse duo in Beaufort, and they turn heads wherever they go. These affectionate teenage Percherons, a proud French draft breed, started their careers as Amish plow horses and now live the good life on a 62-acre farm with the Sea Island Carriage Company. They're inseparable besties with a flair for fashion: their hooves are often decked out in glitter, adding a little sparkle to every stroll. Nicknamed the "girly girls of the barn," Kit and Kat are as sweet as they are strong, and their synchronized steps and matching personalities make every carriage ride feel like a fairytale.



Angus Angus is a 16-year-old English Shire with movie-star looks and a comedic streak a mile wide. With his striking black-and-white coat and impressive feathering, he could easily be mistaken for a Clydesdale, and he knows it. Originally from Tennessee, Angus has spent the past eight years charming visitors with his camera-ready appearance and deadpan sense of humor. He's not one for cuddles, but he's a pro at posing, especially if there's a treat involved. And, yes, he's got a notorious talent for barnyard sound effects. Let's just say his flatulence has become legendary, much to the delight (and giggles) of his fans. If there's a cookie in your hand, Angus is your best friend. If not, well... he might just walk away with a snort.

Southurn Rose Carriage Tours

Wyatt Wyatt, a 10-year-old Belgian named after the legendary Wyatt Earp, is as curious as he is charming, and maybe a little vain. He can't pass a reflective window without checking himself out and softly winnying, as if saying, "Yep, still handsome." Whether he's watching other horses or people, Wyatt always wants to know what's going on, even if it means nearly walking into a lamppost. On tour he's fast and eager, always hoping for a detour just to see what's around the next corner. And if you ignore him? He'll gently insert his head into your conversation. With his nosy nature and endearing antics, Wyatt is impossible to forget.





Maximus (Max) At nearly 20 hands tall, Maximus is the gentle giant of Southurn Rose. He's part tour guide, part class clown and all heart. This 14-year-old Percheron was adopted from the Amish and has spent the last nine years delighting guests with his quirky charm. Max knows every twist and turn of the tour, including the local legend of William Hazard Wig and his horse, Independence. And if the driver skips the story? Max will winny on cue, like a four-legged fact-checker. He's mastered the art of slow strolling (he practically sleepwalks the route) and has a knack for tripping carriage lights just right. Best of all, Max has a soft spot for kids, earning him plenty of pats and loyal fans after every ride.

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Hooves in the sand

MARSH TACKIES ONCE THUNDERED DOWN HILTON HEAD'S BEACHES. COULD THE LEGACY RIDE AGAIN?

STORY BY ALEA WILKINS + PHOTOS BY ARNO DIMMLING





To Michael Cohen Jr., a Native Islander and sixth-generation marsh tacky owner, there's no competition for the Lowcountry's most prized horse. "Marsh tackies have that name: the best horse. It's plain and simple," he says.

The small, sturdy horse breed was introduced to South Carolina's Sea Islands by Spanish explorers as early as the 16th century. Over time, these horses became integral to the daily lives of island residents, particularly the Gullah community, who utilized them for farming, transportation and hunting, due to their adaptability to the Lowcountry's challenging terrain.

MOLLY'S MOMENT
Brittany Bowen rode a 22-year-old marsh tacky mare, Molly, to victory in the 2011 Marsh Tacky Beach Race on Hilton Head Island. Defying both age and expectation, Molly outpaced 19 younger rivals to seize the Marsh Tacky Cup, electrifying the thousands of spectators gathered along Coligny Beach.





SAND, SALT AND SPEED Once a cherished winter tradition, racing marsh tacky horses on the beach marked the end of the harvest season, with winners earning nothing more than bragging rights. The tradition was revived in 2009 with annual beach races held at Coligny Beach for four years. In 2013 the event moved to Daufuskie Island, but the races have not been held since.

Each winter, Gullah people would celebrate the year's harvest with a marsh tacky beach race. The winner of the race won no prize other than a year's worth of bragging rights for owning the fastest tacky on the island.

As the breed's population declined, so too did the races. The 2009 revival of the beach races on Hilton Head Island sparked hope to preserve the event but lasted only until 2014. The races' future relies on translating the tradition into the modern Lowcountry.

Cohen remembers what set marsh tacky races apart from other derbies. "We didn't use saddles. Everybody rode bareback," he says.

Because of the marsh tacky's mule-like features — short, muscular legs and broad hips useful for plowing — it could power through the uneven terrain. Having adapted to centuries of freely roaming the islands, the marsh tackies' toughness helped them survive.

"He can go from 6 o'clock in the morning to 6 o'clock at night, and if you give him three ears of corn, he's ready to go the next day," Cohen says. While development on Hilton Head Island decreased the breed's population, the races showcased its unique strength. "They didn't have the legs that Secretariat would have, but marsh tackies had the heart," Cohen says.



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PRESERVING A LEGACY Founded in 2015, the Daufuskie Marsh Tacky Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the critically endangered marsh tacky horse through education, outreach and hands-on equine programs. To learn how you can volunteer or become a member, visit daufuskiemarshtackysociety.org.

In 2009 the Coastal Discovery Museum reintroduced the beach races to Hilton Head in collaboration with the Carolina Marsh Tacky Association (CMTA) and the Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association (NIBCAA) to fan fervor. When the marsh tacky was declared South Carolina's official state heritage horse in 2010, Southern spirit soared.

While the revival overjoyed locals, its modern execution wasn't as simple as its beginnings. Operations and safety issues worried the organizers, and Natalie Harvey, a former vice president of programs at the Coastal Discovery Museum, explains the beach's open access was a primary concern. "There was no easy way to keep the 'race track' blockaded from the spectators," she says. If a horse were to veer off course, its collision with spectators could be extremely dangerous. Local government rulings forced the races to move to Daufuskie Island in 2013, but ongoing problems cancelled the event the following year. "Logistics planning and facilitation became challenging, and insurance coverage became a factor as well," says Colin Drew, president of the CMTA.

Beyond logistics, there were also contentious debates over the official documentation horses needed to compete.

According to Erica Veit, founder and executive director of the Daufuskie Marsh Tacky Society (DMTS), there are an estimated 450 registered marsh tackies alive today. Preserving the breed is the first step to resurrecting the races. The DMTS offers beach rides to educate and inspire the public about marsh tackies, but they have greater ambitions.

"As the head coordinator for the 2013 beach races on Daufuskie, we are working on bringing the event back," Veit says. She is confident that the support of the community will be key to a new race's success. The CMTA echoed this sentiment, and in addition to


©ERICA VEIT

its yearly lineup of marsh tacky activities, it hopes to reintroduce the most popular.

"The beach races were a very cool and signature event for this breed and for the Lowcountry itself," Drew says, "In order for them to come back, we would have to have participation and cooperation from local governments and organizations to get it all facilitated."

Cohen remembers the fun on the beach, especially the bragging rights won for the entire year ("And my granddaddy always had the fastest horse," he laughs.). As a Gullah tradition, Cohen wishes it could be restored to its origins. "It's a big thing for us when we can run on the beach. That's something that we would love to bring back," he says.



RIDE ON SAND

Ever dreamed of having a beach day with your horse? From Dec. 1 through Feb. 28, you can do just that at Hunting Island State Park. Saddle up for a dreamy low-tide trot along the shoreline. It's like a spa day for your soul and a workout for your horse's glutes. Just swing by the Visitor Center for a permit, and make sure you've got a current negative Coggins test (even horses need their paperwork). Trails are off-limits, so stay on the sand, and let the salty breeze ruffle your horse's mane. *LL*

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HOW A BOLD VISION, A DUSTY FIELD AND A FEW HORSE-LOVING DREAMERS BROUGHT POLO TO THE LOWCOUNTRY.

STORY BY SHEILA PAZ + PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHY HICKLING



HOLDING THE REINS
Players thunder across the field in a thrilling moment from the Spring 2023 Rose Hill Charity Polo Classic. While the Rose Hill Equestrian Club will take a break from hosting the match in 2025, due to the extensive planning the event requires, organizers are already hard at work exploring a return in 2026, possibly in spring or fall.

You're living the Lowcountry dream: sun-soaked days, salty breezes and the gentle hum of golf carts. But even paradise, as it turns out, craves a little pomp and thunder. Something timeless. Something with hooves.

That "something" trotted into the region in 1974 when Dr. Sandy Termotto and three friends brought polo, the sport of kings, to Hilton Head Island. Inspired by a vision to create a polo corridor from Central Florida to Charleston and Aiken, Termotto, along with Frederick Hack, Bill Ruth and Billy Roe, saw untapped potential in the Lowcountry's wide fields and rich traditions.



At the time, Hilton Head had no polo fields, no stables to speak of and certainly no precedent. But that didn't deter Termotto, a Vietnam veteran, studio musician, dentist and lifelong horseman. In true pioneering spirit, the group carved out a playing field at Honey Horn Plantation and held the island's first match during a 1974 equine-themed showcase, dubbed the Equine Expo.

The event galloped forward in popularity and in 1982, thanks to the generosity of Iva Welton and her family, found a permanent home at Rose Hill Plantation, complete with a custom-built polo field. The venue quickly became a destination for fans of equestrian sport, Southern hospitality and philanthropic flair. Polo had arrived, and the Lowcountry embraced it.

Over the years polo matches in the area became more than just sport. They were full-blown festivals. Crowds flocked to see the speed, strategy and spectacle unfold across the field. Tailgating reached new levels of elegance, with seersucker suits, sun hats and sparkling rosé under shady live oaks. Announcer Monty Jett, a Lowcountry legend himself, gave voice to the action with charm and charisma, adding yet another local touch to the experience.

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In 2022 the event was re-imagined as the Rose Hill Charity Polo Classic, with Termotto once again at the helm. The day featured not only polo but barrel racing, breed parades, hunt displays and thrilling six-bar jumping competitions. But at its heart, it remained a tribute to heritage, horses and hospitality. It also gave back, raising funds for beloved causes like the American Diabetes Association, the Gullah Museum of Hilton Head, Heroes on Horseback, SCAD's equestrian program and local chapters of Volunteers in Medicine.

Today the Rose Hill Polo Field bears Dr. Termotto's name, a symbol of passion, perseverance and polo's place in the story of the Lowcountry.



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN The unmistakable voice of Monty Jett, who passed away in 2024, echoed across the Rose Hill polo field for years. As the beloved emcee of the Rose Hill Charity Polo Classic, he brought charm, humor and heart to every match, leaving a legacy that lingers far beyond the final chukker.









DREAM TEAM Pictured from left is Dr. Sandy Termotto, James Edwards Alexander, Charlotte Hieronymus, Chef Danny Hieronymus, Vanessa Weatherford and Emily Termotto-Trott, six passionate locals who helped put together the Rose Hill Charity Polo Classic.

For the first time in decades, the charity polo match will take a pause this year; not for lack of interest, but because events of this scale require monumental effort. Still, those close to its legacy aren't calling it quits. The horses may rest, but the ideas are quietly trotting forward for either a spring or fall event in 2026. As anyone who's watched a chukker unfold knows, the next thrilling play is just around the bend.

DID YOU KNOW?

Oldest team sport: *Polo originated over 2,000 years ago in ancient Persia as cavalry training.*
Size matters: *A standard polo field is 300 yards long, about nine football fields.*
It's a team game: *Four players per team, each with a defined role.*
Chukkers: *Matches are divided into 6-8 chukkers (7-minute periods).*
Ponies: *They're actually full-size horses known for speed and agility.*
Horse swap: *Players change horses between chukkers to keep mounts fresh.*
Only right-handed: *All players must play right-handed for safety.*
The gear: *Think white pants, tall boots, helmets and numbered jerseys.*
Beyond royalty: *These days, players range from pros to philanthropists.*
Worldwide game: *Played in over 80 countries. Argentina, U.S. and U.K. are major hubs.* LL

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Yipes! Stripes!

Join the owners of **Wild Birds Unlimited Hilton Head** for every aspect of backyard birding. From equipment and outings, to solutions and resources.



Because they don't usually go for seeds, you'll have better luck bringing the black-and-white warbler to your feeder by offering suet (especially insect-blend or peanut-based), mealworms (live or dried) or insect-rich suet cakes.

Fruit, especially during migration, such as orange halves, chopped apples, or bananas are a plus.

They're more likely to stop by during spring and fall migrations when they're moving and foraging widely.

Black-and-white Warbler

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Willow is the definition of a seasoned sweetheart. At 11 years old, this beautiful Black Mouth Cur mix has perfected the art of companionship. She's 63 pounds of pure love, wrapped in a velvety brown coat and sprinkled with a little silver around the muzzle. She has the kind of face that melts hearts on sight. Surrendered by her previous owner, Willow is now searching for a soft landing and a family to cherish her golden years. Despite her age, Willow still has a spring in her step and a sparkle in her eye. She adores leisurely walks, cozy blanket nests (bonus points if you call it her throne) and plenty of belly rubs. And while she's down for downtime, she's always listening for her next adventure; one ear up, one ear down, ready to go. If you're looking for a gentle, devoted companion who still knows how to have fun, Willow is your girl.

MORE ABOUT WILLOW

Colors: Brown **Age:** 11 **Weight:** 63 pounds

Likes: Long naps on her blanket "throne," slow strolls, belly rubs and being where the action is. **Dislikes:** The White Lotus Season 3 finale (we get it, Willow — justice for that cliffhanger). **Adopt:** Meet Willow at Hilton Head Humane between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily. For more information, call ***843-681-8686*** or view his profile at ***hhhumane.org***.

COOL CAT: Happy Feet



Dapper, distinguished and just a little dramatic when it comes to dinnertime — meet Happy Feet, an 11-year-old domestic shorthair with personality to spare. With his black-and-white coat and elegant stance, he moves like a ballerino and purrs like a pro. This social butterfly adores his people, snuggling in close for company, conversation and the occasional (okay, constant) snack request. Happy Feet was surrendered by his previous owner and is managing hyperthyroidism with daily medication. The diagnosis hasn't slowed him down; in fact, his appetite is impressive! He's a bottomless pit of affection and food enthusiasm, and while he's not thrilled about the special diet, he'll serenade you with a love song anyway. If your home needs a little rhythm and a lot of love, Happy Feet is ready to take the stage.

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FREQUENT FLYER

Black-and-white warbler

THIS BOLD, ACROBATIC FORAGER HAS A FLAIR FOR VERTICAL LIVING.

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM



©MARY ALICE TARTLER

LISTEN UP
Scan this QR code *to hear the call of the black-and-white warbler.*

VERTICAL VOYAGER In the Lowcountry black-and-white warblers are most commonly seen during their spring and fall migrations. They're especially noticeable from late March through May, as they head north to their breeding grounds. During their return journey south, typically from August through October, they pass through again — often spotted foraging along tree trunks in wooded areas, parks and backyards.

Often heard before it's seen, the black-and-white warbler is one of the first signs that spring has arrived in the Lowcountry. Birders know to listen for its high-pitched, squeaky song and to scan the treetops for a flash of bold stripes — this little bird is dressed head-to-tail in black and white, like a tiny flying zebra.

But it's not just the plumage that makes it special — it's the performance. The black-and-white warbler is the only member of its genus (Mniotilta, meaning "moss-plucker") and has a foraging style all its own. With strong legs and an extra-long hind claw, it climbs tree trunks like a pro, moving up, down and sideways while probing bark, moss and even dead limbs for hidden insects. While most birds hop and flit, this one struts with purpose.

And it doesn't lack attitude. These birds are bold, bossy and not afraid to chase off larger species if they get too close. Males arrive early, claim their territory with song and swagger, and put on flashy displays during courtship. Nests, surprisingly, are tucked away on the ground among leaves — proof that even the most fearless fliers like a hidden home base.

So the next time you're out for a stroll and hear a squeaky tune from the treetops, look up — you just might spot a black-and-white warbler doing what it does best: stealing the spotlight, one vertical step at a time.



©MARY ALICE TARTLER

THE EAR TELLS ALL The difference between male and female black-and-white warblers can be determined by their ear patches. Males have a black ear patch, while females have a grayish one. Females also tend to be paler overall.

Where to find them

Black-and-white warblers typically hang around deciduous and mixed forests trees and conifers. They can be found in many habitats during migration, especially woodlots and forests. If you're hoping to identify one in your backyard or on a woodland walk, local birder Mary Alice Tartler has some advice.

"Black-and-white warblers have distinctive black and white stripes on their heads, backs and wings," Tartler said. "They have a white belly and under-tail coverts. They breed in mature forests with dense understory and forage for insects and spiders on tree trunks and branches. They usually go vertically up or down a tree trunk and are quite the acrobats. Black-and-white warblers are monogamous during breeding season and start forming pair bonds during migration. Some flowering plants to attract them to your backyard are cone flowers, black-eyed Susans or bee balm. Put out some suet feeders as well to provide lots of energy."

With the right setup and a bit of patience, you just might catch a glimpse of these bold little foragers showing off their moves. LL



©GWEN CALLAS-MILLER

Essentials

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- *EcoTough tail prop suet feeder*



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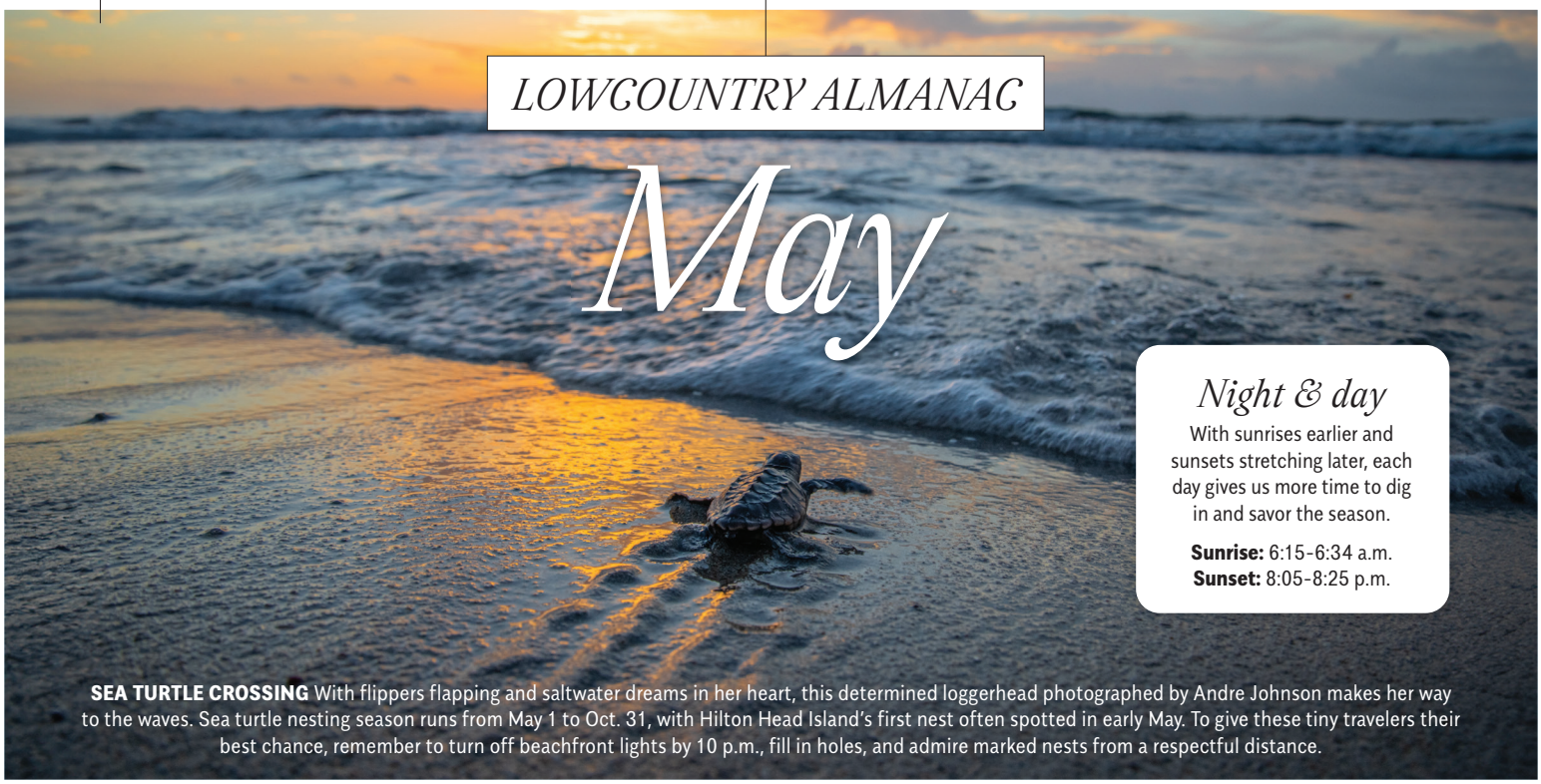
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LOWCOUNTRY ALMANAC

May

Night & day

With sunrises earlier and sunsets stretching later, each day gives us more time to dig in and savor the season.

Sunrise: 6:15-6:34 a.m.
Sunset: 8:05-8:25 p.m.

SEA TURTLE CROSSING With flippers flapping and saltwater dreams in her heart, this determined loggerhead photographed by Andre Johnson makes her way to the waves. Sea turtle nesting season runs from May 1 to Oct. 31, with Hilton Head Island's first nest often spotted in early May. To give these tiny travelers their best chance, remember to turn off beachfront lights by 10 p.m., fill in holes, and admire marked nests from a respectful distance.

May in the Lowcountry is basically nature's way of showing off. It's the perfect handoff from spring's gentle whisper to summer's full-volume playlist — minus the sweat. Named after Maia, the Greek goddess of growth, May delivers golden light, jasmine-scented breezes and weather that practically begs you to get outside. Locals answer the call with beach days, festivals and all outdoor sports. Farmers markets overflow with produce that looks too pretty to eat, while trails lure you into pretending you're outdoorsy. Al fresco dining? Yes, please, especially if it involves shrimp, a sunset and someone else doing the dishes. According to the *2025 Old Farmer's Almanac* and *Grow Great Vegetables South Carolina*, this is your month to shine. Or at least to plant something green and hope it lives.

Weather predictions

Rainy days and warm rays, May sets the stage for lush gardens and lively landscapes. Expect warmer-than-average temps and a little extra rainfall to keep things green.

Average temperature: 75 degrees (1 degree above average)
Precipitation: 5 inches (1 inch above average)

FORECAST BY WEEK
May 1-3: Showers, cool
May 4-6: Sunny, warmer
May 7-18: Thunderstorms, mild
May 19-29: Sunny; mild, then hot
May 30-31: Thunderstorms, warm



Astronomical events

Keep an eye on the sky — May brings a touch of celestial magic.

May 6-7: Eta Aquarid meteor shower (look up!)
May 12: Full Flower Moon
May 27: New Moon
May 31: Venus at greatest western elongation, brilliant in the early morning sky.

Tides & currents

Stay in sync with the rhythms of the Lowcountry coast. ***Scan this QR code*** *for the latest tide and current predictions from NOAA.*

Gardening

May is a gardener's hustle month. With longer days and rising temps, summer crops (and those pesky weeds) grow at full speed.

PREP Plan fall/winter crops. Weed weekly using a scuffle hoe. Stake, string or cage tomatoes and peppers. Harvest garlic scapes; remove mulch from garlic. Move mulch to weeded broccoli beds. Weed onions three weeks before harvest. Weed corn twice and install blueberry netting.

PLANT Time to put those seeds and starts in the soil. **Indoors:** You're off the hook, it's all outside now. **Outdoors:** Sow beans, carrots, corn, radishes, peanuts, edamame, limas, cowpeas, asparagus beans, and heat-loving greens like Malabar spinach and amaranth. Also sow squash, melons, cucumbers, zucchini (cover until flowering), and transplant tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, melons and sweet potatoes. Consider planting summer cover crops like sorghum, buckwheat or millet.

HARVEST May's bounty is big and beautiful. Enjoy asparagus, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, chard, cherries, collards, garlic scapes, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, peas, radishes, rhubarb, scallions, senposai, spinach, squash, strawberries, turnips and zucchini.

FLOWERS IN BLOOM Beyond the vegetable beds, May's gardens burst with fresh blooms. Confederate jasmine weaves its fragrant magic along trellises and fences, while vibrant petunias, lantanas, marigolds and geraniums fill flower beds and containers. The color and scent of these blossoms enhance the joy of spending time outdoors, providing a floral backdrop as you tend to your garden.

Best days

Moon phases can inspire the perfect timing.
Here are May's most auspicious days for key activities:



Fishing: May 1-12, 29-31
Bake for Mom: May 1-2, 29-30
Make jams & jellies: May 20-21
Weed flower beds: May 23-24
Pick flowers: May 6-7
Entertain guests: May 3-5, 31
Start new projects: May 27

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EQUESTRIAN INSPIRED

Saddle up in style

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA STAFF
STYLED BY BAILEY GILLIAM

This spring the spirit of the Lowcountry rides into town with a bold Western twist. With ***equestrian-inspired fashion*** galloping to the forefront, we headed to Moss Creek Equestrian Center to see where rustic meets refined. Think buttery leather, wide-brimmed hats and tailored silhouettes that whisper Southern sophistication with a side of frontier grit. We've wrangled up pieces from local boutiques to show you how to infuse your wardrobe with a little horse sense — blending cowboy confidence with Lowcountry style. From floaty, trail-ready ensembles to statement boots made for more than walking, these looks are equal parts runway and ranch. So go ahead, channel your inner cowgirl, and bring a little country swagger to your coastal life.



Haute to trot

*Paige Rose keeps it classic and cool in a bold navy-and-white shift from **Currents**, so chic beside her four-legged friend, Wish. It's stable style with a twist — easy, breezy and unmistakably polished.*

Ready to ride

Lasso some style with these three fits, handpicked from local boutiques that know a thing or two about fashion with flair. From embroidered horseshoes to denim classics and pint-sized pony prints, these looks put a fresh spin on ***equestrian chic***. Whether you're headed to the stables or just channeling your inner cowgirl, these outfits are styled to stirrup some attention.



1 Ain't my first rodeo

Rugged, refined and ready to ride. ***Outside Hilton Head*** *brings the classic cowboy look into the now with an embroidered button-up, timeless denim, beaded earrings and a leather-detailed belt. It's Western wear with main-character energy.*



2 Giddy up

A little bit lucky, a whole lot stylish. This ***Island Girl*** *look gallops ahead with a tank top embroidered with a horseshoe, a matching necklace for double the charm, a crisp white denim jacket, an embroidered belt and breezy rustic pants that tie it all together. Equal parts effortless and equestrian.*



3 Horsin' around

For the littlest rider with the biggest personality, ***Island Child*** *delivers a colorful dress covered in prancing ponies, topped off with tiny cowboy boots. It's sweet, spunky, and ready for every barnyard adventure.*

EQUESTRIAN INSPIRED

Mane attraction

*Shannon McMasters brings breezy elegance to the barn in this flowy, tropical-print maxi dress from **S.M. Bradford Co.** Paired with her golden companion, Piggy, the look channels Lowcountry glam with just the right touch of equestrian charm. It's laid-back luxury, straight from the stable runway.*



Horseplay

Whether you're riding off into the sunset or just heading to brunch, these ***curated picks from local boutiques*** will help you build the ultimate equestrian-chic capsule wardrobe. No saddle required — just a little country spirit and a whole lot of style.















1. Saddle up

Every cowgirl needs denim, and these distressed shorts from ***The Haven Boutique*** are just the right blend of tough and tailored. Slightly rugged, totally wearable and made for warm-weather wanderings.

2. The Wild West

This isn't your granddaddy's plaid. With bold, vibrant hues and a crisp silhouette, this button-down from ***Spartina 449*** brings Western flair into the modern day. Perfect for pairing with jeans or tossing over a sundress.

3. All dressed up

Florals, but make them frontier. This eye-catching dress from ***Southern Tide*** draws inspiration from classic cowboy bandanas, blending punchy colors with a flattering, feminine cut. Giddy-up glam at its finest.

4. Corporate cowgirl

Boardroom meets barn in this polished Lovlei Ranch jacket from ***Maggie & Me***. With a subtle print and easy structure, it captures the "coastal cowboy" aesthetic with understated confidence. Yee-haw, but make it executive.

5. Little cowboy

Even the tiniest cowhands need gear. This T-shirt from ***Island Girl*** features horses Charley, Butterbean and Pout — the perfect trio to spark a love of ponies and playtime adventures.

6. Yee-haw

A white striped denim jacket with just enough edge. Think cowgirl classic meets city chic — a wardrobe staple that rides the line between rugged and refined. Available at ***Palmettoes***.

7. A little bit country

Cowboy cool with a summer twist. This button-down from ***Outside Hilton Head*** features embroidered motifs and breathable fabric, making it the perfect go-to for sun-soaked days and breezy nights.

GET THE LOOK

From head to hoof

Gallop into great style with accessories that channel the spirit of the West — no horse required. From bold cow-print claw clips to wide-brimmed hats and boots made for walkin', these equestrian-inspired picks blend rugged with polished practicality. Whether you're wrangling your to-do list or heading out on the town, these pieces add just the right amount of Western edge to any outfit. Giddy-up, fashionistas — the frontier never looked so chic.



Tip your hat

Start at the top with a cow-print claw clip for a wild hair day done right, throw on a pair of leather-accented sunnies that whisper luxe outlaw, and finish it off with a classic cowboy hat worthy of a Western movie poster. Find your flair at ***Brims on the Bluff (1)***, ***Eyeland Optique (2)***, and ***Brims on the Bluff (3)***.

In the bag

Who needs a saddle when you've got bags like these? Think fringe, embossed leather and rustic-chic hardware that scream "wanderlust with style." These carryalls are built for the long haul — and turning heads. Available at ***Maggie & Me (4)*** and ***Brims on the Bluff (5)***.

In the loop

Buckle up, cowgirl. These Western-style belts are the ultimate waist-whittling wonders, featuring ornate buckles, weathered leather and just the right amount of shine. It's the detail that ties it all together. Available at ***Island Girl (6)*** and ***The Haven Boutique (7)***.

Made for walking

Stomp, strut or saunter — just do it in style. These equestrian-inspired kicks feature buttery leather, strong soles and Western accents that say, "I might ride horses, but I definitely run the show." Saddle your feet at ***Outside Hilton Head (8)***, ***Brims on the Bluff (9)***, and ***Maggie & Me (10)***.


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IT MAKES SENSE

Inspired by a family trip to Hilton Head, Summer '72 blends their mother's favorite notes of neroli, orange blossom and warm amber to capture the carefree spirit of that unforgettable season.

Available at Hilton Head Soap Co.

PRETTY IN PINK

This pink resin fruit bowl is the perfect show-stopping piece to gift your mother this Mother's Day.

Available at Finch & Co.



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SETTINGS WITH STYLE

Everything you need to set the perfect table for Mother's Day Brunch. Hand-painted leafy napkin rings with honeydew green trim. Napkins in a variety of spring colors.

Available at Le Cookery





OUR LOVE WILL BLOSSOM

A vase of love, a bouquet of joy: Make this Mother's Day unforgettable this year with a beautiful floral gift.

Available at J. Banks Design

NO MESS, NO STRESS

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WHAT'S THE TEA?

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5-MINUTE HISTORY

A Patriot's vow

WHEN JAMES DOHARTY WAS KILLED IN 1781, HIS NEPHEW JOHN LEAYCRAFT SWORE REVENGE — TRIGGERING A BLOODY CHAPTER IN THE BEAUFORT DISTRICT'S REVOLUTIONARY WAR HISTORY.

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, SC, at the Forefront of American History.

Editor's note: *In last month's edition we chronicled the 1781 murder of Patriot James Doharty by Tory militiamen, an act that would set off a bloody chain of events in the Beaufort District. This month we follow the vengeance it inspired, and the fiery consequences that followed.*



CROSSROADS OF VENGEANCE This illustration by LOCAL Life graphic designer Charles Grace depicts Patriot John Leaycraft leading a band of Hilton Head Militia on horseback in 1781. They rode to intercept Loyalist militia captain Richard Pendarvis after the murder of his uncle, James Doharty. Fueled by a mix of justice and vengeance, Leaycraft's pursuit sparked a broader clash between Patriots and Loyalists, ushering in one of the most volatile and personal chapters of the Lowcountry's Revolutionary War history.

The 1781 murder of James Doharty by Richard Pendarvis sparked a chain of violent events, culminating in the ambush of Charles Davant. Doharty's nephew, John Leaycraft, vowed revenge and, upon learning Pendarvis planned to flee to Florida, rallied Hilton Head militia to intercept him.

On April 17, as the Pendarvis family prepared to leave, a servant warned of an approaching Rebel scouting party led by Leaycraft. Despite Margaret Pendarvis's pleas to hide, Richard reportedly said, "I will offer myself as a prisoner of war," but instead turned to face the attackers with pistol in hand, declaring, "Shoot and be damned." He fired but was killed by Leaycraft. Fellow Loyalist Lt. William Patterson attempted to flee but was also killed.

Patriot accounts place the confrontation at Montpelier, Pendarvis's home on the May River, though some argue it occurred at Buckingham Plantation near Mackeys Creek. The Montpelier location, now part of Palmetto Bluff, remains the most widely accepted site.

The Royal Georgia Gazette reported on April 19 that Pendarvis and Patterson were "barbarously murdered" by Leaycraft and his men, who then insulted Mrs. Pendarvis and stole horses and a gun.

The killings enraged the Loyalist militia on Daufuskie Island, led by Mrs. Pendarvis's brother. In response to the deaths and the September capture of British schooners by local privateer Jack Stoney's Saucy Jack, they joined British regulars from Savannah to raid Hilton Head.

On October 19, 1781, about 150 British troops and Daufuskie militia landed at the southern mouth of Skull Creek, where they burned Patriot homes and captured enslaved people. The homes of Leaycraft and John Talbird were targeted, with Stoney's estate, Otterburn, marked for a future raid. *LL*

250 YEARS OF FREEDOM

July 2025 marks a monumental milestone: the 250th anniversary of the Beaufort District's pivotal role in the American Revolution. Encompassing today's Beaufort, Hampton and Jasper counties as well as parts of Allendale County, this region played a critical part in the fight for independence. To honor the district's legacy, LOCAL Life partnered with the Beaufort County 250 Committee to present a 12-part series celebrating the courage and determination of those who lived through one of America's most defining moments.

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Chasing tradition

A HISTORY OF HORSEBACK HUNTING IN SOUTH CAROLINA.



A NOBLE PURSUIT Formally recognized by the Masters of Foxhounds Association of North America in 1916, Aiken Hounds holds the distinction of being the oldest drag hunt in the United States. The hounds follow a pre-laid scent trail — offering all the thrill of the chase without involving live animals.

The story of hunting on horseback in South Carolina is one of heritage, horsemanship and a deep connection to the land. Long before GPS trackers and ATVs, mounted hunters relied on their horses and hounds to navigate dense woods, open fields and Lowcountry swamps in pursuit of wild game. This tradition shaped more than sport — it helped define the landscape, communities and culture of the Palmetto State.

Colonial beginnings

South Carolina's equestrian hunting traditions date back to the early 1700s, when British settlers brought with them not only horses, but a passion for foxhunting — a pastime of the aristocracy. The vast, untamed stretches of the colony proved ideal for this imported sport. Clad in red coats and tall boots, riders pursued foxes across fields and forested land, often accompanied by carefully bred hounds. Though foxhunting was seen as a gentleman's sport, horseback hunting served practical purposes as well. Settlers used horses to track deer, turkey and wild boar, depending on the animal's speed and stamina to cover long distances and haul game back to homesteads. From the coastal sands to swampy bottomlands, horses gave hunters a strategic edge in the varied terrain of early South Carolina.

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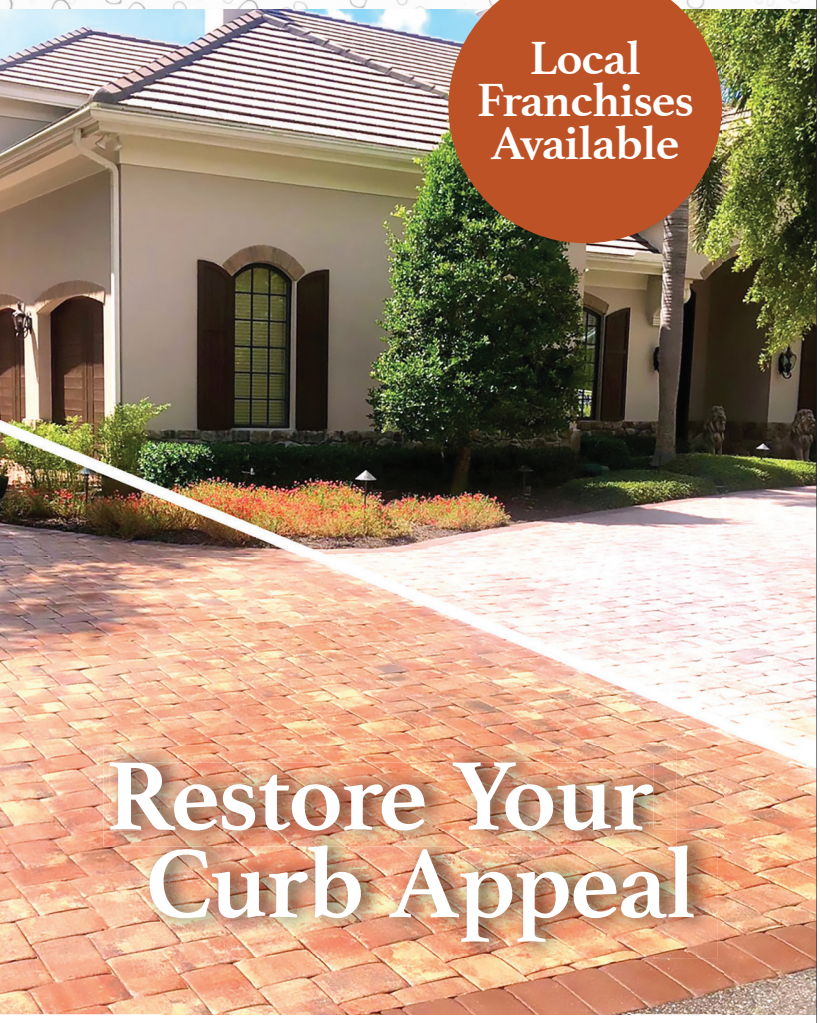
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LEAPING THROUGH TRADITION Though fox hunting began in England, it galloped into South Carolina by the 18th century. This 1839 painting by John Frederick Herring Sr., *Foxhunting: Clearing a Ditch*, captures the elegance and adrenaline of a sport that took firm root in the Palmetto State.

The rise of hunt clubs

As plantations prospered and the railroad opened access to rural regions, organized hunt clubs began to flourish in the 19th century. These clubs refined horseback hunting into a more formal affair — complete with traditional attire, scheduled meets and generations of etiquette. The Camden Hunt, founded in 1926, is one of the oldest foxhunting clubs still active in the U.S. Further south, Aiken became a winter escape for wealthy northerners who brought with them a love for equestrian sport. Hunt clubs like Aiken Hounds, established in 1914, became fixtures of this seasonal society. These clubs weren't just about sport — they also protected green space, promoted horsemanship and fostered a way of life deeply rooted in land stewardship and tradition.

A sport and a skill

While the hunt clubs thrived, mounted hunting remained a necessary skill in many rural areas well into the 20th century. Hog hunting, for example, often involved riders and dogs cornering feral pigs in dense woods — a gritty, high-stakes version of horseback hunting, worlds away from the polished foxhunts of Aiken and Camden. As transportation and technology evolved, hunting on horseback shifted from necessity to recreation. Still, the skills endured: reading terrain from the saddle, working with hounds and knowing how to move with the land rather than against it — lessons passed down through generations.

Preservation and modern-day tradition

Today, while mounted hunting is less common, its legacy lives on through active hunt clubs and local traditions. The Camden Hunt and Aiken Hounds continue to host formal meets with riders in traditional attire, preserving the pageantry of the sport. Other groups, particularly in the Lowcountry, pursue game like hogs and deer on horseback in more informal ways. Equestrian events, storytelling and community gatherings help keep the tradition alive. For many, it remains a powerful symbol of South Carolina's bond between horse, rider and the land.



UNIFORM OF THE CHASE Polished boots, worn reins and crimson coats — the unmistakable uniform of a mounted hunt. These traditional elements reflect centuries of equestrian heritage passed down through South Carolina's hunting culture.

In pursuit of tradition

In South Carolina several hunt clubs continue to celebrate the chase — some through drag hunting, where hounds follow a pre-laid scent trail rather than pursuing live animals:

Aiken Hounds (Aiken): Established in 1914, Aiken Hounds is the oldest drag hunt in the United States. They ride through Hitchcock Woods, offering the thrill of the chase with no live animals involved.

Middleton Place Hounds (Charleston): Based at Middleton and Millbrook Plantations, this club has held drag hunts since 1977, with up to three meets per week during hunting season.

Other clubs such as the Camden Hunt, Lowcountry Hunt (Walterboro), Wateree Hounds (Camden) and Whiskey Road Foxhounds (Aiken) primarily conduct live hunts, focusing on foxes or coyotes in the traditional style.

Speak the lingo

Tally-ho!: *The traditional call when a fox is spotted.*
Whip: *A staff member who manages the hounds.*
Field master: *The rider who leads and manages the group of followers.*
Cap: *A fee paid by non-members to join a hunt for the day.*
Drag hunt: *A chase following a pre-laid scent trail, not a live animal.*
Couple: *Two hounds, counted as one unit.* LL



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The Hilton Head International Piano Competition (HHIPC) has long been recognized as a premier stage for emerging pianists. In March 2025 it commissioned an original work from one of America's most celebrated composers, Lowell Liebermann.

The perfect composer for the job

In selecting a composer for the 2025 competition, HHIPC organizers sought someone whose music would challenge the young participants and introduce a fresh artistic dimension. Steven Shaiman, director of the HHIPC, explains, "We wanted a composer whose work would resonate with our young pianists, pushing them technically while inspiring them musically. Lowell Liebermann's reputation as a leading voice in contemporary classical music made him the perfect choice."

Liebermann embraced the challenge. "I'm always thrilled when I can write for young artists who are still shaping their voices as performers," he said. "The Hilton Head International Piano Competition is a wonderful platform, and I'm excited to think about how my piece contributed to that experience."

A life committed to the piano

Born in New York City in 1961, Liebermann performed at Carnegie Hall at 16, showcasing his "Piano Sonata, Op. 1." This early success began a career that would help define modern classical music.

His vast catalog includes orchestral works, chamber music, operas and piano compositions. Known for blending traditional tonality with adventurous harmonies, Liebermann studied at the Juilliard School and was mentored by legendary composers such as David Diamond and Vincent Persichetti. Early interactions with Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji also shaped his distinct musical voice.

Composing 'Moment Musical'

Shaiman called the commission a bold move that underscored the HHIPC's mission. "This was a unique experience for our competitors," he said. "It was vital to commission a premier American composer, and we are thrilled that Lowell Liebermann agreed to be part of it."

"Moment Musical, Op. 144," completed in late 2024, was inspired by works of Schubert and Rachmaninoff that share the same title. Liebermann's composition blends classical forms with his signature depth and modern edge. "My use of the title doesn't directly evoke Schubert's style," Liebermann explained, "but there are elements — binary form and an obsessive ostinato — that are reminiscent of his piano writing."



A moment to remember

RENOWNED COMPOSER LOWELL LIEBERMANN'S 'MOMENT MUSICAL' DEBUTS AT THE HILTON HEAD INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION, ELEVATING THE STAGE FOR RISING STARS.

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM

> *"As one gets older, you have this feeling that you want to nurture a new generation. You want to instill some of the musical values that you hold highly."*





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Influences and intentions

When asked about his favorite composers, Liebermann said his tastes have matured. "As I've gotten older, the list has narrowed to the core of Western classical music: Schubert, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Shostakovich. Schubert, in particular, has become more significant to me." He noted that "Moment Musical" may be the first in a series of "Moments Musicaux."

The work reflects Liebermann's belief in the abstract power of music. "My music isn't programmatic," he said. "It's about the music itself — the abstract emotions that notes and motives evoke." He likens composing to abstract painting, where emotion guides creation rather than narrative or imagery.

A performance with purpose

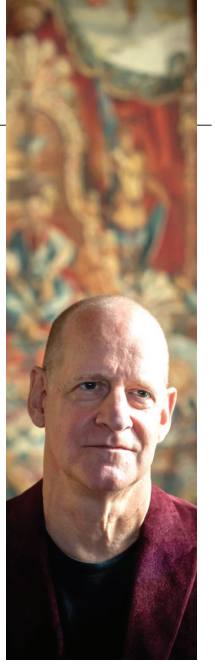
The competition this year introduced the Jim Neumeister Memorial Prize, a $1,000 award given to the competitor who delivered the most outstanding interpretation of Liebermann's piece. Sponsored by Jim's wife, Marty Neumeister, the prize was judged and awarded by Liebermann himself.

"The decision was difficult," Liebermann noted. "Many performers gave excellent renditions, but accuracy to the score and musical expressivity played major roles in my choice. I could not have been more impressed with the level of talent on display."

Legacy and looking ahead

Though the 2025 HHIPC has ended, the impact of "Moment Musical, Op. 144" lives on. For competitors, it challenged their skills and inspired growth. For Liebermann, it was an opportunity to nurture the next generation.

"As one gets older, you have this feeling that you want to nurture a new generation," he reflected. "You want to instill some of the musical values that you hold highly. And, in this day and age, sad to say, classical music needs all the help it can get." *LL*











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WATCH THE AWARD-WINNING PERFORMANCE

Twenty-nine-year-old pianist Dominic Chamot (Switzerland/Germany) was selected by Liebermann to receive the Jim Neumeister Memorial Prize for the best performance of the 2025 HHIPC commissioned work. This performance took place in Round 1 of the 2025 HHIPC on March 10 at St. Luke's Anglican Church on Hilton Head Island.

Scan this QR code to watch a video of the award-winning performance.

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FEATURED ARTIST



Peggy Trecker White: Becoming Maria Callas

STORY BY CAROLYN MALES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE FRENCH GUY

She was larger than life. When legendary opera star Maria Callas strode across the stage at La Scala, the music hall shook with "bravas" and standing ovations. Audiences showered her with red roses and hailed her as "La Divina." But by the late 1950s, as her voice wavered, those flowers and kudos would be replaced by verbal "bricks" hurled by disappointed critics.

Callas's life offstage also set the tabloids ablaze. Headlines trumpeted her tempestuous relationship with Aristotle Onassis and reached a crescendo when Jackie Kennedy entered stage right. The aging Greek multimillionaire had had his head turned by this younger, more glamorous world figure whom he would marry in 1968. "The rags," sensing fresh blood, blared "betrayal!" and gleefully noted that Callas, who had taken her last opera house bows three years earlier, fumed. In 1974 the celebrated soprano, who'd basked in the spotlight, would retreat to the shadows, hiding in her Paris apartment where she died of heart failure three years later at age 53.

When we meet up with Callas in Lean Ensemble Theater's production of Terence McNally's *Master Class*, the celebrated soprano is in her twilight years. Retired from grand opera, she's been performing recitals and teaching classes for advanced music students. In this fictionalized account, McNally has placed her in an auditorium coaching three aspiring opera singers: a gifted but unpolished tenor and two sopranos — one timid, the other ambitious. Her lessons come in a demanding, imperious and brutally honest package that demands not only artistry but deep emotional commitment — all of which she wraps in reminiscences about her own often turbulent life.





So, how does an actor tackle the role of this legendary opera star? I sat down to talk with Peggy Trecker White, who will be portraying Maria Callas for Lean Ensemble this month.

[LOCAL Life] I read where critics always said Callas "acted" her singing.

[Peggy Trecker White] Yes, there's always this qualifier about her voice – that it wasn't the best in the world. But it was her ability to fully embody a role that set her apart. In the script for the play, she says she hates the word "act." For her, it's not acting, it's "being." The idea of chewing the scenery, which is typically a negative comment, isn't in her sphere. As she says to the young soprano Sharon, "This isn't just opera. This is your life." I don't think she would believe in the idea of overacting. Passion is the only thing.


"A Comfortable Ride" by Linda Hilts

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[LL] And that passion makes her a diva.

[PTW] She is fearless. And that's not a bad thing. We use the word *diva* negatively when someone is misbehaving, but she fully embraces this diva role. Her ego is so large, but she's so fully enveloped in this world that she's okay with that. It will be great fun to live in her dramatic skin. it's not often you're given such an allowance to be so fully committed and deeply passionate and not give a damn about what anyone else thinks.

[LL] You embraced the strength, wit and fearlessness of Katharine Hepburn in Lean's production of *Tea at Five* a few seasons back. Callas, on the other hand, was a major opera star. How do you capture that, especially in a play that doesn't call for her singing?

[PTW] On the surface, I'm relieved that I'm not singing. That would be big, impossible shoes for me to fill. But that being said, you can't do this play without having some musicianship, an understanding of the art form. Even though I never trained as an opera singer, I did train classically. I'm also listening not only to her singing, but to her speaking, and watching how she holds herself and moves.

[LL] And the Italian phrases she throws in from time to time?

[PTW] She's floating languages other than English all throughout this, and it needs to be organically coming out of my mouth, so that's a number one challenge. I'm consulting with my voice teacher and the Italian opera director that I worked with in Italy when I co-directed an opera there a few years back.

See the show

What: *Master Class*
When: May 15-25
Where: HHPS Main Street Theatre, Hilton Head Island
Tickets: leanensemble.org

A FULL-CIRCLE MOMENT Years ago, Peggy Trecker White directed Whitaker Gannon in Thoroughly Modern Millie. Today, the roles have reversed — Whitaker is now directing Peggy in Master Class. A beautiful reminder that in theater, as in life, the student often becomes the teacher.

[LL] When the play opens, she's only a few years away from disappearing from public view. And Aristotle Onassis, the love of her life, has long abandoned her. As she works with her students, she keeps dipping back into her often stormy past.

[PTW] It's interesting that her life was as dramatic as the operas she sang in. She talks about her unhappy childhood and what she had to do during World War II when her mother, who favored her beautiful sister, pressured Maria to entertain German and Italian soldiers during the occupation of Greece. I feel like that gives the groundwork for all the later emotional chaos. And there are those monologues where she's going back in her mind, having conversations with Onassis as she wrestles with what happened in her life.

[LL] This is clearly a very emotional role involving much physicality. What are the challenges with that?

[PTW] There's a certain amount of heightened emotional state that she finds herself in, and that's always a little frightening to portray at the outset. But there's no way to overcome it but by jumping in and getting messy and falling on your face and then trying again. You have to put your ego aside and your desire to be good and perfect in order to find what works.

[LL] She couches her advice to these students in brutal comments, not only about their singing but their appearance or "look," their names...

[PTW] There's and old saying, "There are many paths up the mountain." Callas believes there's only one path up the mountain, which includes having "a look" and having a name and being disciplined, and so on. Here's the thing: I don't think she's wrong in terms of discipline and work ethic and passion and the like. Talent only gets you so far. You can see that hers is a career built on ambition. If your goal is to be a Broadway star, then your tunnel vision better be in place.

[LL] Callas has an interesting line in the play: "I gave everything for you. Everything. That's what we artists do for people. Where would you be without us?"

[PTW] Yes, later she says, "The sun will not fall down from the sky if there are not more *La Traviatas*. The world can and will go on without us, but we have made this world a better place, that we have left it richer, wiser than had we not chosen the way of art. The older I get, the less I know, but I'm certain that what we do matters." *LL*

Details: Maria Callas is teaching a master class in front of an audience: us. She's glamorous, commanding, larger than life — and drop-dead funny. Callas's "victims" include a ridiculous, overly perky soprano; a tenor who moves Callas to tears; and another soprano, a young singer who has talent, which is not always enough. Callas brings the class to a close by reminding us of the sacrifices that must be made for the sake of great art.

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the steep ravine to a sandy canyon floor—a familiar pilgrimage
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sink in your stirrups, tilt back like an arched reed

the arroyo welcomes and juniper roots point the way
a willow grove bows to yucca and snakeweed along the gully
the otherworldly sits beyond a sandstone boulder etched
with riderless horses on hallowed ground

shrill raven calls scold, as fingered wings test the wind
a small feral herd drinks from a pool of blue water

there will be no sharing of secrets or spiritual tongues
we witness the stillness, the wonder, as heads lift, ears
twitch, tails swish, muscles tighten, stretched over bones
who know unfettered freedom — unbroken, they disappear
in dust, and a prayer leaves my lips

— Ky Zubatsky

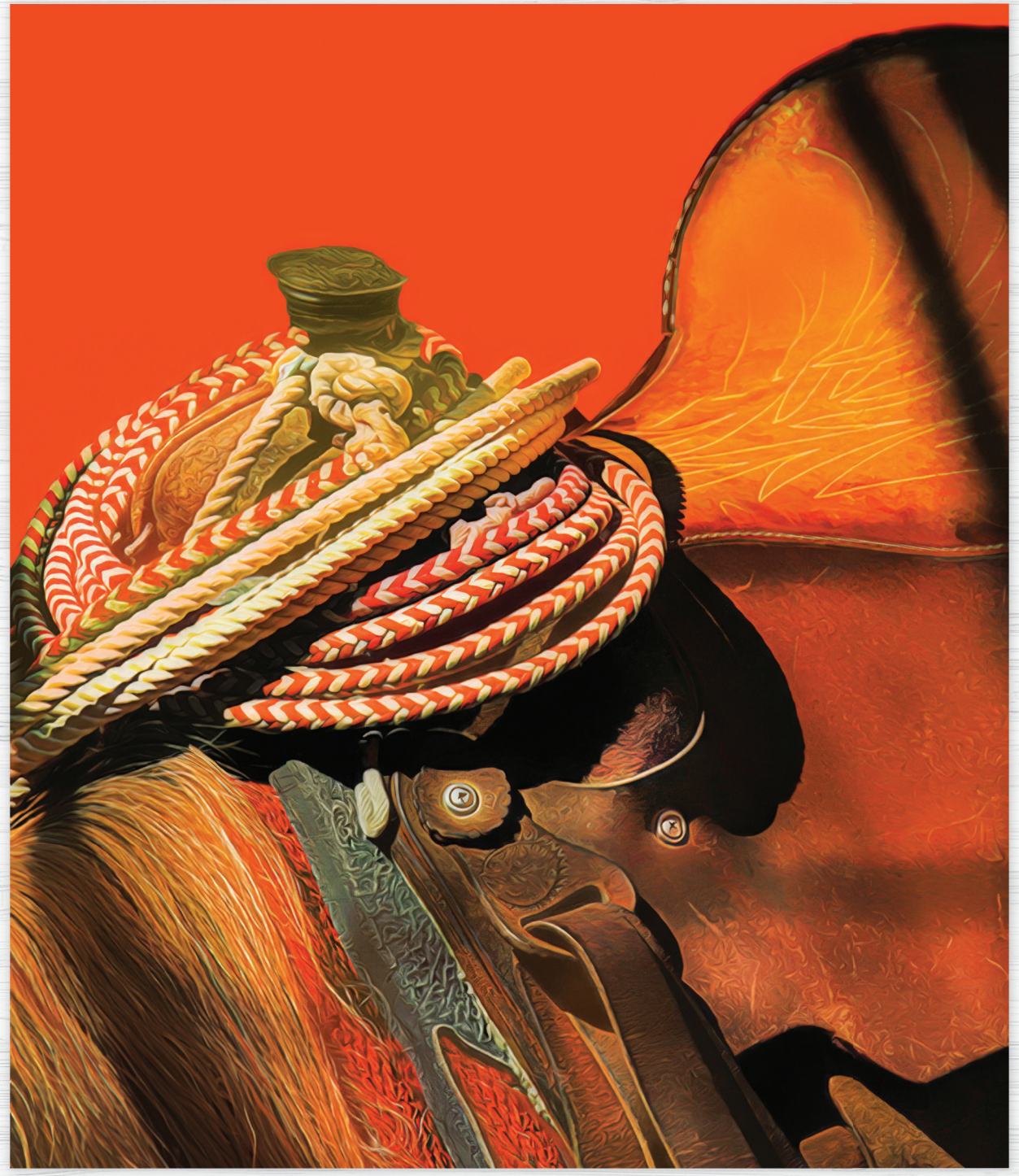
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Horse 622 by **Brian Hibbard**



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WHAT'S FRESH IN MAY?

Oh, snap!

DISCOVER THE CRISP FLAVOR OF SUGAR SNAP PEAS — FROM GARDEN TO GRILL

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM



Snap peas, also known as sugar snap peas, are like nature's candy — crisp, juicy and sweet enough to snack on straight from the vine. These bright green beauties are a standout variety of garden peas, known for their edible pods that don't require shelling (because who has time for that?). Unlike traditional English peas, which demand a little more prep work, snap peas are ready to go — perfect for tossing into a salad, stir-fry or directly into your mouth.

What makes them so special? Think of them as the best of both worlds: a hybrid of snow peas and field peas that combines the "mangetout" quality of snow peas (French for "eat everything") with the irresistible sweetness of field peas. While snow peas are flat and delicate, snap peas are plump and firm, with pods that pop with every bite.

LOCAL LIFE TEST KITCHEN

Stir-fried sugar snap peas with shrimp

This quick and flavorful stir-fry brings together tender shrimp and crisp sugar snap peas in a light, savory sauce with just a hint of sweetness. Perfect for busy weeknights, it's a protein-packed dish that comes together in minutes — and looks just as good as it tastes. Serve it on its own or over rice for a satisfying, better-than-takeout meal at home.

INGREDIENTS

1/2 pound (about 8-10) medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
2 cups sugar snap peas, trimmed
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1 tablespoon oyster sauce
1 teaspoon honey
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS [1] Pat shrimp dry with a paper towel. Season lightly with salt and pepper. **[2]** In a small bowl, whisk together soy sauce, oyster sauce, honey and red pepper flakes. Set aside. **[3]** Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large skillet or wok over medium-high heat. Add shrimp, and stir-fry for 2-3 minutes until just pink and cooked through. Remove shrimp from the pan and set aside. **[4]** In the same pan, add the remaining tablespoon of oil. Add garlic and ginger, and stir-fry for 30 seconds until fragrant. Add the sugar snap peas and cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring often, until they're bright green and slightly tender but still crisp. **[5]** Return the shrimp to the pan. Pour in the sauce and toss everything to coat evenly. Stir-fry for another 1-2 minutes until heated through. **[6]** Transfer to a plate or bowl.



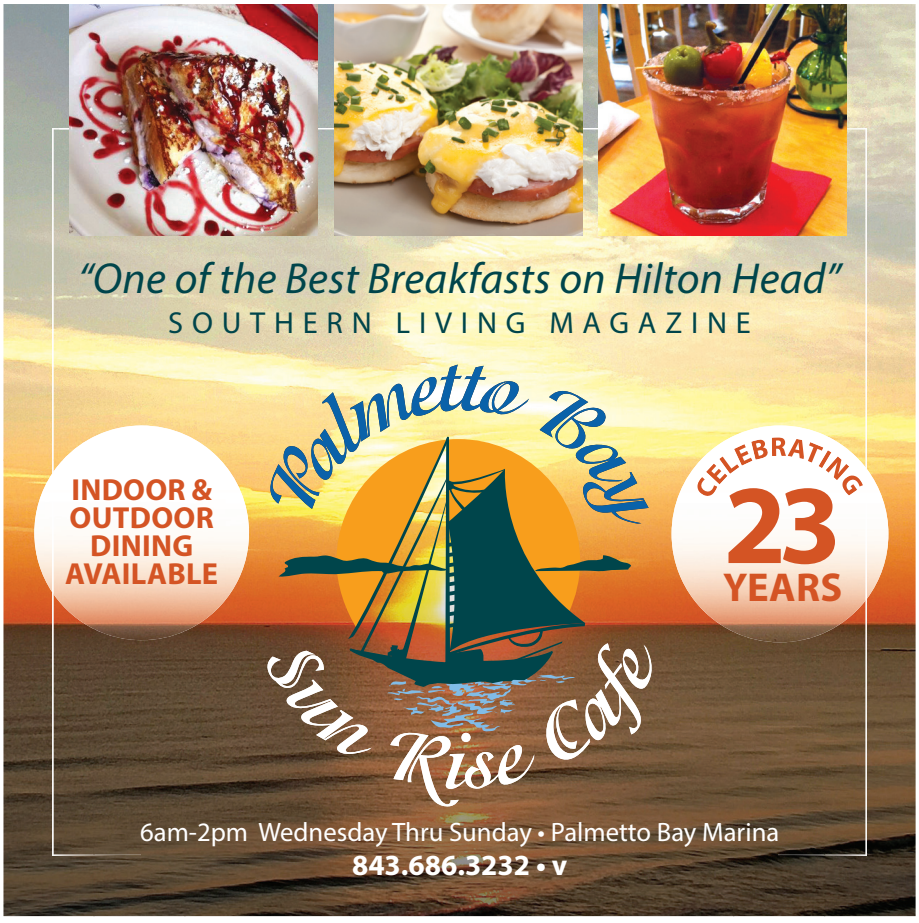
The snap heard 'round the world

Snap peas may seem like a modern garden trend, but their roots stretch back to the 1800s. A French variety called the "butter pea" first popped up in the literature of the day, though it eventually disappeared from cultivation. Fast forward to the 1950s when Dr. Calvin Lamborn and Dr. M.C. Parker decided to give the humble pea a glow-up. By crossing a mutant shelling pea with a Chinese snow pea, they solved common issues like twisting pods and uneven growth — and created a brand new variety in the process. In 1979, the "Sugar Snap" was officially introduced to the world, and it didn't take long to cause a stir. None other than culinary icon James Beard called the new pea "nothing short of sensational" in the New York Post, and the rest is delicious history.



Why your body will thank you

Snap peas aren't just a treat for your taste buds — they're a powerhouse of nutrition. Low in calories but high in fiber, vitamins and antioxidants, they make healthy eating feel indulgent. They're packed with vitamin C for immunity and glowing skin, vitamin K for bone health and blood clotting and a solid dose of plant-based protein to keep you going. Bonus points: Their antioxidants, including carotenoids and flavonoids, help fight inflammation and protect your cells. Whether you're crunching on them raw or adding them to a stir-fry, you're doing something good for your body — and your palate.





Off the vine and into your garden

If you live in the Lowcountry, you're in luck: snap peas love our long growing seasons and mild winters. Clemson Extension recommends planting from Feb. 1 to March 15 or in the fall from Aug. 15 to Nov. 30. Just pick a sunny spot with well-drained, loamy soil, mix in some compost, and plant your seeds about an inch deep and 2–3 inches apart. Snap peas are climbers, so give them a little support (think trellis or netting), and keep them consistently watered — but not soggy. In about 60–70 days, you'll be rewarded with sweet, crunchy pods. Pick them when they're plump but not overly filled out — around 3 inches long — for peak flavor and texture.



Varieties to try: *Super Sugar Snap, Sugar Sprint and Early Snap all perform well here.*

Get the perfect snap

Shopping for snap peas? Channel your inner produce detective. Look for pods that are firm, taut and snap with satisfying crispness. Their color should be a vibrant pale green, their surface smooth and unwrinkled. A little white scarring is okay — it's cosmetic, not a sign of age. Avoid anything limp, spotted or dull. Whether you're picking them out of a bulk bin or buying a pre-packed bag, go for peas that look perky and feel dense. The stem should still be attached, and if you give one a gentle bend, it should break with a clean snap — hence the name.

Crisper in the crisper

Snap peas are at their best when they're fresh, so don't let them linger. Use, freeze, or can them soon after harvest — within 2 to 3 days if stored in the fridge (unwashed!). Why the rush? Because peas start converting their natural sugars to starch the moment they're picked, and that sweet flavor won't wait around forever. Prepping for freezing? Pinch off the ends, remove the strings, and blanch them. Just 90 seconds in boiling water, followed by a plunge into an ice bath, locks in that gorgeous green color and crisp bite. Once they're dry, pack them in freezer bags, label them, and you've got a stash of spring flavor ready anytime.



Snap, crackle, yum

There's something joyful about biting into a sugar snap pea — the sweet crunch, the burst of fresh flavor, the satisfying texture. They're lovely raw (especially in salads or grain bowls), but also hold up beautifully to quick cooking methods. Their versatility makes them a dream ingredient for both home cooks and restaurant chefs. As Chef Ben Harris of The Sea Pines Resort puts it, "I don't really cook them — I eat them raw. I really like them in a salad or something like that, just for different textures." Couldn't have said it better. They pair well with fresh herbs, light cheeses like chèvre or ricotta, and flavors from around the globe — especially ginger and soy, thanks to their connection to Chinese snow peas. Think of them as a blank (and very delicious) canvas. LL

COOKING TIPS: FROM RAW TO ROASTED

Here's how to make the most of every pod:

Grill: *Toss with oil and seasoning, spread in a grill basket and grill for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.*

Roast: *Bake at 450 degrees with olive oil, salt, pepper and other seasonings for 10-12 minutes.*

Sauté: *Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high heat, add peas and cook 3-5 minutes, tossing occasionally.*

Blanch: *Boil for 90 seconds, shock in ice water and drain — perfect for freezing or using in salads.*

Steam: *Microwave in the bag or in a bowl with a splash of water for 2–3 minutes.*



CERTIFIED SC FRESH ON THE MENU

Snap pea and roasted radish herb salad

North Charleston native ***Amethyst Ganaway*** showcases the power of fresh, seasonal ingredients in this vibrant salad. Crisp snap peas meet mellow roasted radishes, bright herbs and a citrusy dressing of local olive oil, lemon juice and zest. A pinch of chili flakes adds gentle heat, making this dish perfect on its own or paired with grilled fish or chicken. Find this recipe and more seasonal favorites from South Carolina chefs at the Certified SC Fresh on the Menu website.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup snap peas or snow peas, trimmed and sliced diagonally
1 cup breakfast radishes, halved or quartered
2 tablespoons local olive oil, divided
1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon chili flakes
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
1 tablespoon fresh mint, roughly chopped
2 tablespoons flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon lemon zest
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

DIRECTIONS [1] Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Toss the radishes with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, salt, black pepper and chili flakes. Spread them on a baking sheet, and roast for 12–15 minutes, until just tender but still slightly crisp. Let cool slightly. **[2]** While the radishes roast, blanch the snap peas by dropping them into boiling water for 30 seconds, then immediately transferring them to an ice bath. Drain well. **[3]** In a large bowl, combine the snap peas, roasted radishes, thyme, mint, parsley and lemon zest. Drizzle with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil and lemon juice. Toss gently to coat. **[4]** Taste and adjust seasoning with more salt, pepper or chili flakes as needed. Serve immediately as a fresh side dish or light appetizer.


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RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Local flavor: Derby edition

WHIP UP A SPREAD WORTHY OF A WINNER'S CIRCLE — NO FANCY HAT REQUIRED.

STORY BY BAILEY GILLIAM



We may be a long stretch from Churchill Downs, but when the Kentucky Derby trots onto the calendar, the Lowcountry is off and running. Around here, we'll throw a party for just about anything (Boiled Peanut Festival, anyone?) — but give us an occasion like Derby Day, and you can bet we're going full throttle. Whether you're hosting a backyard bash, a breezy porch soirée or a spontaneous viewing party that turns into the talk of the town, this is your signal to go all in. Think of this as your starting gate for Derby Day done right — complete with bold Lowcountry flavors, expert tips from local chefs and crowd-pleasing recipes guaranteed to have your guests cheering long before the bugle blows.



CAROLINA COFFEE & CRUMBS

Kentucky Derby Pie

If you ask us, every great Derby party needs three things: a strong mint julep, a fabulous hat and a decadent slice of Derby Pie. Thankfully, the team at Carolina Coffee & Crumbs has you covered on at least one of those fronts. This rich, gooey classic comes straight from the kitchen of owner ***Erika Waronsky***, who also runs The Sandbar Beach Eats. Whether you serve it warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or chilled with a side of bragging rights, this Southern staple is a guaranteed crowd-pleaser.

INGREDIENTS

1 1/4 cups pecans, chopped
4 large eggs
3/4 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup light corn syrup
1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup butter, melted and cooled
1/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
3/4 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
1 9-inch unbaked deep-dish pie crust

DIRECTIONS [1] Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, brown sugar, corn syrup, flour, melted butter, white sugar and vanilla until smooth. **[2]** Fold in the chopped pecans and chocolate chips until evenly combined, then pour the mixture into the pie crust. **[3]** Bake for 45-50 minutes, or until the pie is set and golden brown. Serve warm or chilled — either way, it's a photo-finish favorite.

SUGAR, SPICE AND LEGAL ADVICE

The original Derby Pie was born in 1954 at the Melrose Inn in Prospect, Kentucky, thanks to the Kern family, who wanted a signature dessert for their menu. After tossing potential names in a hat (literally), "Derby Pie" was drawn — and the rest is sweet, nutty history. The name was trademarked in 1968 and is still tightly protected by Kern's Kitchen, which closely guards the original recipe. That's why you'll often see delicious variations pop up under creative aliases like "Pegasus Pie." Whatever you call it, one thing's certain: this chocolate-pecan dream is a winner every time.

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CHEF'S FAVORITE THINGS

We asked local chefs their favorite appetizer to bring to a party:



PALMETTO BAY SUNRISE CAFE
"Stu makes a really good crab louie salad dressing, so we often make crudités with his homemade dressing. You never know who has a food allergy or a dietary restriction, but everyone can eat a carrot stick!"
– Leslie Stewart



OKÀN
"Bacon-wrapped dates. Dates are naturally sweet. And they're delicious, especially if you take the seed out of the plant. They're fantastic. But then you bake them with bacon wrapped around them? Self-explanatory. Fatty, salty, sweet."
– Chef Bernard Bennett

HAMPTON HALL CLUB
"It's super simple, but it's basically a bar of cream cheese topped with pepper jelly, and you serve it with crackers. It sounds super simple, but it's pretty good."
– Chef John Huffenberger





HOLY TEQUILA
"A cheese board. But it's going to be different every time."
– Chef Michael Beeler

THE SEA PINES RESORT
"Oysters. They're delicious and simple, and it's nice because there's always the one in any group of 10 people who's never had an oyster. And you can say, 'Okay, let's do this the right way.'"
– Chef Benjamin Harris



ASK THE CHEF

Question:

Dear chef, how can I ensure every part of my meal is done at the same time? I'm having a party and want to serve everything at once.



Answer:

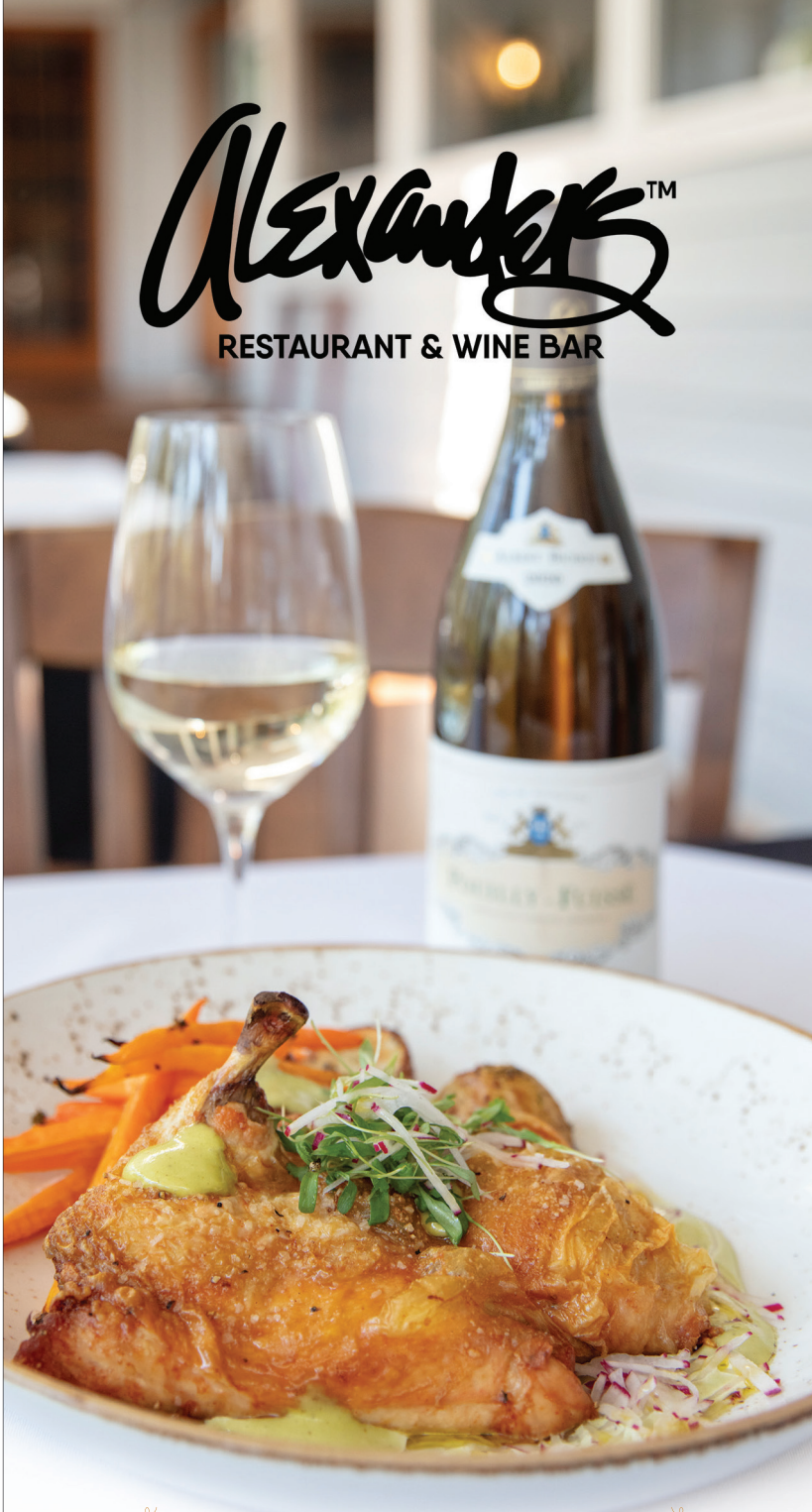
Timing is everything — especially when you're trying to impress a room full of hungry guests. One minute you're feeling like a Top Chef contender, and the next, your fish is ready, your rice is cold and your veggies are still raw. We've all been there. Fortunately, chef ***Melissa Coocran*** *of Redfish has a few pro tips to help you master the art of dinner-party timing without breaking a sweat.*

"The best thing is to do what you can ahead of time," Coocran says — and that's your new mantra. Think of your kitchen like a stage: the stars (like veal medallions or seared fish) get their spotlight at the last minute, but the supporting cast (rice, mashed potatoes, veggies) can be prepped in advance and waiting in the wings.

For sides like mashed potatoes or rice, Coocran recommends holding them in a warm water bath or double boiler to keep them hot and fluffy until showtime. No last-minute scrambling or gummy microwaved leftovers here.

And don't forget your veggies. "You have all your stuff pre-blanched," Coocran explains. Whether it's vibrant green spinach or cauliflower florets, blanch them in salted boiling water, then shock them in ice water. When it's time to serve, just finish them in a sizzling pan with butter or olive oil for that fresh, just-cooked flavor — without the stress.

By getting ahead of the game and using clever warming techniques, you can be the host who's cool, calm, and collected — serving up a meal where everything lands on the table hot, delicious, and perfectly timed.



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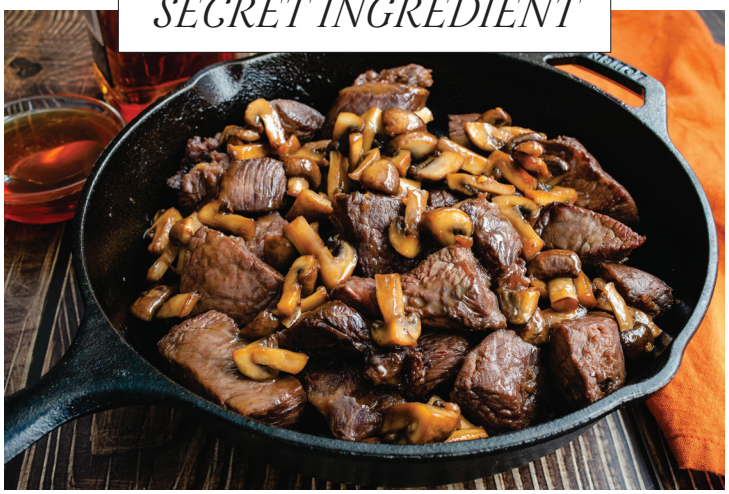




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SECRET INGREDIENT



A SHOT OF FLAVOR A splash of bourbon takes these honey-glazed steak tips and mushrooms to a whole new level. The bourbon's deep caramel and oak notes bring out the natural richness of the beef, while its subtle sweetness enhances the honey glaze without overpowering it. As it simmers down, the bourbon infuses the mushrooms with smoky warmth and a touch of Southern soul — making each bite a bold, savory-sweet celebration of flavor.

Bourbon: The spirit of flavor



When it comes to bourbon, most folks think of a smooth pour in a rocks glass, maybe sipped slowly during a horse race or a crisp fall evening. But here's a secret worth sharing: this Southern-born spirit isn't just for drinking — it's pure gold in the kitchen.

With its signature smoky-sweet profile and warm undertones of caramel, vanilla and oak, bourbon doesn't just pair well with food — it elevates it. Whether it's sizzling on the grill or bubbling in a dessert, a splash of bourbon turns ordinary into extraordinary.

"Bourbon is the perfect food enhancer," says ***Rachel Lively***, owner of Le Cookery. "It's the perfect combination of savory and sweet. And it brings out the flavor of your meat, your vegetables — anything that you're cooking with, even sweet things — without adding extra sugar."

In other words: it's magic in a bottle.

On the savory side

One of the easiest (and most delicious) ways to cook with bourbon is to use it as a marinade. It's particularly good with steak, chicken or pork, bringing out bold flavors without overwhelming the meat. Lively admits she's not a bourbon drinker, but it's her go-to marinade for steak.



"The alcohol cooks away, and all you're left with is the good flavor," she says. That flavor clings to the meat in all the right ways, leaving a subtle richness and depth.

Beyond marinades, bourbon takes sauces and glazes to the next level. It dances beautifully with dark meats, smoky bacon, roasted Brussels sprouts and earthy sweet potatoes. The bourbon's natural sweetness mellows out the saltiness, creating a beautiful balance your tastebuds will love.



Sweeten the deal

Let's not forget dessert. Bourbon doesn't just complement sweets — it supercharges them. It deepens the flavor of chocolate, caramelizes fruits and adds complexity to pies, tarts, brownies and boozy mousses.

"Bourbon's just going to bring out the flavor of whatever you put it in," Lively notes. It's also a secret weapon in homemade jams and fruit butters — imagine a bourbon peach preserve on a hot biscuit. Yes, please.

Pick your pour



When cooking, skip the fancy bottles. You want something mid-range — flavorful but not so pricey you'll cry when you pour it into a pot. Brands like ***Four Roses*** or Clyde May's are kitchen-friendly favorites, offering a well-rounded profile that holds up to heat and blends well with both sweet and savory.

So what makes bourbon so special?

It's the barrel-aging. Those charred oak casks give bourbon its unmistakable notes — spice, smoke, vanilla and toffee — that layer into dishes like a culinary symphony. One splash, and you've got a flavor enhancer that's bold, balanced and undeniably Southern.

Cooking tips

Balance it out. Bourbon is sweet and smooth, so add acidity (like citrus or vinegar) to cut through the richness.

Know your heat. Bourbon can alter cooking time and technique, especially in reductions. Watch your flame, and adjust as needed.

Respect the fire. Never pour bourbon straight from the bottle into a hot pan over an open flame. Use a measuring cup, always. Bourbon is flammable, and singed eyebrows are not a good look.

Use just enough. Too much bourbon can overpower. Too little, and you'll wonder what the fuss is about. Find your Goldilocks zone.

Let it linger. Remember, the goal is depth, not dominance. When done right, bourbon lingers in the background like a supporting actor who steals the show.

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HOW TO

Roll with it

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO HANDMADE PASTA



There's something undeniably magical about serving fresh, handmade pasta to your guests. It says, "I've got skills, and you're worth the effort." But here's the secret: Making pasta from scratch isn't nearly as intimidating as it sounds. In fact, with the right approach (and a little flour on your shirt), it can be downright fun.

Chef ***Trey Place*** from Michael Anthony's Cucina Italiana is a big believer in starting simple. "Just making a basic egg pasta is the best way to start," he says. And that's exactly where your pasta journey should begin: with flour, eggs, your hands — and a little patience.



"You don't need a lot of fancy equipment," Place adds. "A simple pasta machine — hand-cranked or the KitchenAid attachment — will do the trick." Pro tip: If you're feeling extra rustic, you can even roll it out the old-fashioned way with a rolling pin. It might not be perfect, but your guests will love you for the effort.

Now let's talk ingredients. According to Place, the foundation of great pasta is the flour blend. His go-to? A mix of semolina and double zero (00) flour. "I like to do a two-to-one ratio: two parts semolina and one part double zero," he shares. "Semolina gives it strength, and the double zero makes it nice and tender." Want a sturdier noodle? Add more semolina. Prefer something lighter? Up the 00. It's pasta — play with it.



Once you've got your flour, the rest is easy:

- *100 grams of flour*
- *1 egg*
- *A pinch of salt*
- *A drizzle of extra virgin olive oil*

That's it. "Mix it together right on your countertop — no mixer needed," Place says. The dough will come together with a bit of handwork. Knead it until it's smooth, then let it rest (this gives the gluten time to relax and makes it easier to roll out later). Need help visualizing the process? "There's always the great school of YouTube," Place jokes. "Watch a couple of videos, and dive in."

And if it's not perfect on the first try? That's where the fun begins. "Trial and error is key," he says. "You'll learn so much from the mistakes. If it's too dry, add a touch of water. Too wet? Sprinkle in more flour. You'll get a feel for it."

Bonus tip: *Pasta dough has a personality — and it changes with the weather. "Here in the Lowcountry, humidity makes a huge difference," Place explains. "In the summer we use cold water to counter the heat. In the winter, warm water helps keep the dough from drying out too fast." What works in Hilton Head might behave differently in Atlanta or Asheville, so keep an eye (and a hand) on your dough as you go.*

Once you nail your perfect dough? "Write it on the wall," Place laughs. "Literally. That's what we do at the restaurant." Because when you hit that sweet spot — where the texture is just right and the noodles practically melt in your mouth— you'll want to remember how you got there.

So go ahead. Roll up your sleeves. Dust your counter. Pour a glass of wine. Making pasta from scratch isn't just a recipe — it's a ritual. And the best part? You're not just feeding people — you're giving them something handmade, heartfelt, and straight from the soul.

DOUGH-DON'TS

Common pasta pitfalls — and how to avoid them like a pro.

Don't skip the rest. Let your dough chill (literally). Resting allows the gluten to relax, making it easier to roll out without springing back.

Don't over-hydrate. If your dough is sticky, resist the urge to power through. Add flour, a little at a time, until it's smooth and just tacky — not wet.

Don't panic over imperfections. Pasta is forgiving. A torn sheet or odd shape? Just call it rustic and move on. Your guests will still be impressed.

Don't underestimate the weather. Humidity affects dough more than you think. Trey's rule of thumb: Use cooler water in summer, warmer water in winter, and always trust your hands over the recipe.

Don't toss your mistakes. Save that weird first batch and experiment with it. Turn it into ravioli, cut it into hand-rolled pici, or add it to soup. Every attempt teaches you something.



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Entertaining with FLAIR

STORY BY CARRIE HIRSCH

Carrie Hirsch *is the Culinary & Events Coordinator at Technical College of the Lowcountry.*



Hirsch

"I like to take something ordinary and make it special," says celebrity chef Ina Garten — and I couldn't agree more. Ina, the Barefoot Contessa herself, has been gracing our screens for years with her calm confidence, beautifully roasted chickens and effortless flair. She makes it look easy — and with a little planning, it can be.



GATHER IN STYLE A little FLAIR goes a long way — fresh blooms, mixed textures and meaningful touches like woven chargers and vintage glassware turn an ordinary dinner table into a warm, inviting celebration.

I've always loved to entertain. Back in the day, I'd throw elaborate brunches for out-of-town friends and host multi-course dinner parties for a dozen people, candles flickering and playlists queued. These gatherings were magical — and also, if I'm being honest, exhausting.

These days, I've downsized the spectacle, but not the spirit. I know I'm not alone — many of my friends adore entertaining, but the idea of doing it all is enough to make them opt for takeout and a quiet night in. But here's the thing: with a little ***FLAIR***, you can still wow your guests without wiping yourself out.

Let me explain.

F is for flowers

Fresh flowers and greenery — whether snipped from your garden or scooped up at the grocery store — can instantly brighten a table. Don't overthink the arrangement; loose and natural always feels chic. Bonus points for using herbs like rosemary or mint for a little extra fragrance.

L is for linens

Start with a solid tablecloth, and layer it with a textured runner — burlap, jute, linen, hemp, even bamboo. This creates a simple, stylish base to layer in meaningful touches: your grandmother's sugar bowl, sea glass from your last beach trip, a beloved old book, black-and-white family photos. These little personal treasures are conversation starters and heart warmers.

A is for appetizers & alcohol



Keep it light and easy: five savory bites and two tiny sweets. Think crostini, olives, fancy cheese, mini meatballs, and a bowl of mixed nuts — plus something sweet like truffles or tiny tarts. Today's guests love variety and smaller portions. For drinks: offer one bubbly, one white, one red, and one festive nonalcoholic option or mocktail. Simple, smart and satisfying.

I is for inviting

Ambience is everything. Low lighting sets the mood, and battery-operated candles have become shockingly realistic — they flicker like the real deal with zero fire risk. A few well-placed lights, and your guests will be basking in your cozy glow.

R is for relaxed

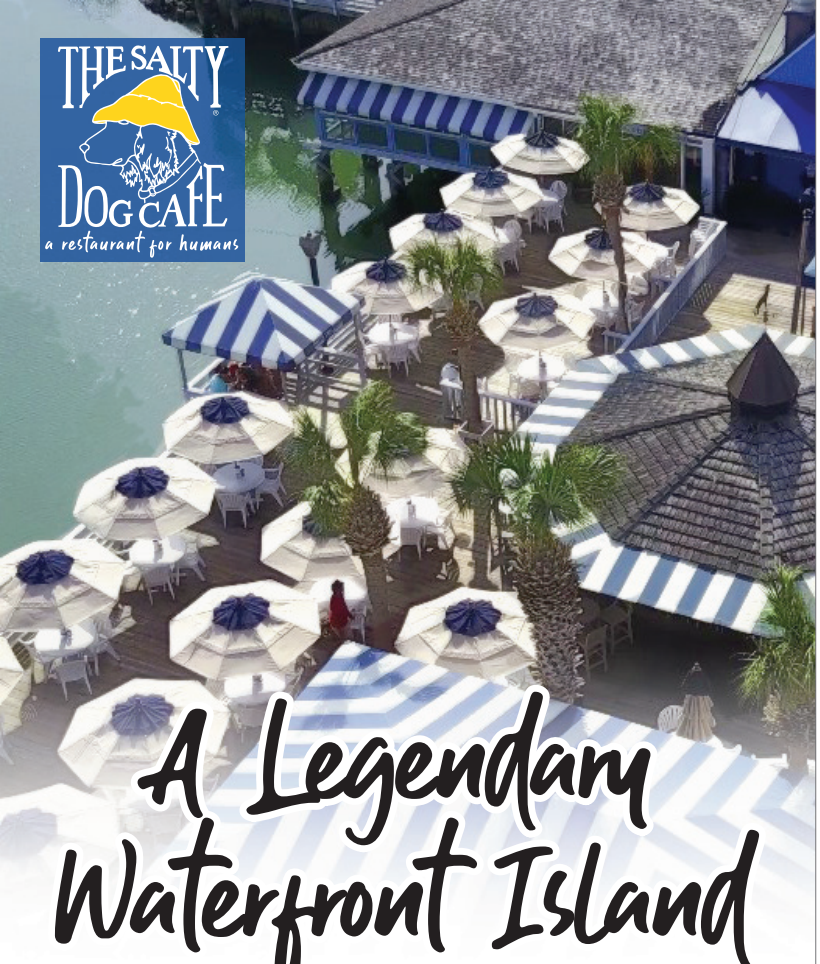
Create a playlist that sets the tone — upbeat, mellow, or somewhere in between. Music works magic on the mood, putting everyone at ease (including you). When your guests feel relaxed, they relax you, and suddenly it's a party, not a performance.

The best part? FLAIR lets you prep ahead so you're not still tying your napkin bows when the doorbell rings. You'll have time to freshen up, pour yourself a glass of something sparkly and greet your guests with a genuine smile — not a flustered one.

Entertaining should feel like a gift, not a chore. And with a little flair? It absolutely will. *LL*







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RESTAURANT news&notes

FRESH FOOD + NOW OPEN + HOT PRODUCTS

Fresh on the scene

The Lowcountry food scene is always buzzing, but lately it's been downright sizzling. From game-day-ready sports bars to charming island diners, flavor-packed food trucks to fresh-baked boba joints, there's no shortage of delicious new reasons to eat local. ***Here's what's just opened — and what's worth getting hungry for.***

NOW OPEN





Hail Mary's at Burnt Church Distillery

Bluffton Road, Bluffton *Game day just leveled up. Hail Mary's is officially open across from Square 67, bringing sports bar energy to Burnt Church Distillery. With TVs on every wall, BCD spirits behind the bar and plenty of crowd-pleasing bites, this is a new hot spot for touchdowns, tailgates and toasts. Whether you're repping your team or just go for the wings, the vibe is a winner.*

Raspado Xpress

Food truck *Cool down the authentic way. This colorful food truck is dishing out traditional Mexican shaved ice, or raspados, in a rainbow of flavors, from tangy tamarind and mango to sweet Oreo and lemon tajin. It's a flavor explosion on wheels. Look for it on Hilton Head Island, in Bluffton and Hardeeville. Track their next stop on Facebook, and follow your cravings.*



The Coffee Lab

Food truck *Coffee lovers, rejoice. The Coffee Lab is rolling through the Lowcountry with fresh coffee, handcrafted espresso drinks, smoothies, lemonade and baked-from-scratch treats like muffins and cinnamon rolls. Book them for your next event, or follow them online to catch the next stop.*

Let's Eat 843

Food truck *This isn't your average food truck. It's comfort food central. Let's Eat 843 rolls through Bluffton with a menu full of favorites, including juicy burgers, crispy fries and golden fish and chips. It's bold, hearty, and full of flavor.*



Driftwood Diner

111 Benjies Point Road, Daufuskie Island *Wake up on island time. Driftwood Diner is serving up hearty Lowcountry breakfasts and brunches with a side of Southern charm. As the only breakfast spot on Daufuskie, it's a must-visit for locals and wanderers alike. Think flaky biscuits, sizzling bacon, golden hashbrowns and zero stress.*

Starbucks

Washington Square, Bluffton *There's a brand-new Starbucks in town. Located next to Lowcountry Fresh, this café features cozy seating inside and out, a convenient drive-thru and all your favorite drinks and snacks. Time to fuel up.*



District 10 Coffee Roasters

Barnacle Bill's Seafood Market, Hilton Head *What's better than fresh seafood? Fresh seafood paired with top-notch coffee. District 10 Coffee Roasters has set up shop outside Barnacle Bill's, creating a one-stop destination for your morning brew and dinner prep. Hours are 7 a.m.-2 p.m.*



T Baguette & Boba

New River Village *This new Bluffton gem offers warm, crusty baguettes, savory sandwiches and chilled boba drinks that hit the spot. Whether you're in the mood for something sweet or something satisfying, T Baguette & Boba has you covered.*

COMING SOON

City Java & News (new location)

Ribaut Road, Beaufort *Soon to open across from Beaufort Memorial Hospital, this new location of City Java & News will offer the same rich espresso, homemade soups, breakfast burritos, and fresh pastries that locals love. In tribute to the late Joe Fox and the former Carolina Dog & Deli, the team is considering adding a special hot dog to the menu. Opening is planned for mid-September.*



Jackie G's

Heritage Plaza, Hilton Head *Get ready for red sauce realness. Jackie G's is bringing classic New York-style Italian-American fare to Hilton Head Island this summer. Located in the space next to New York City Pizza on Pope Avenue, it promises comfort food with big-city flavor.*

Origin Coffee Bar

35 Main Street, Hilton Head *A Savannah favorite is making its way to the island. Origin Coffee Bar is opening soon at 35 Main Street (next to J. Banks), offering high-quality coffee, a welcoming atmosphere and a focus on sustainability and community. It's the perfect blend of purpose and pour-over.*



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Fresh sips, hot slices and a whole lot of yum

The Lowcountry is on a roll, and we're not just talking about the fresh-baked kind. From milkshake shops under construction to pizza delivery expansions and chef-driven collabs, there's no shortage of tasty news to sink your teeth into. Whether you're team sweet, savory or somewhere in between, here's what's cooking around town.



THE DISH



Pizza, now arriving

Craving Giuseppi's but not the drive? *The Shelter Cove location is now delivering to homes and businesses near Arrow Road, Point Comfort Road, Helmsman Way and Paddleboat Lane. Orders are available daily from 4 to 10 p.m. Call 843-785-4144, or order online at* ***giuseppispizza.com****.*



Meet Bin 843, your new wine obsession

Beaufort Wine has uncorked something special. *Their new Bin 843 Wine Club invites members to sip and savor four featured wines each month, including two reds and two whites or sparklings. Tastings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. You'll sample four, then take home your two favorites. Sign up in person on Harrington Street, or visit* ***beaufortwine.com*** *to join.*

Pi Day showdown

Local Pie served up a slice of math-inspired fun for Pi Day with 10-inch pizzas priced at $3.14. *Both locations saw big crowds, but Bluffton took the bragging rights this year with 1,408 pizzas sold compared to Hilton Head's 1,114. Either way, tasty pizza at a great price made everyone feel like a winner.*





Wingin' it like pros

The 29th annual Hilton Head Wingfest brought the flavor to Lowcountry Celebration Park with more than 8,000 pounds of wings from over 20 local restaurants. *Coconutz earned the People's Choice Award, and Street Meet American Tavern impressed the judges to take home the top honor. Wing-eating contests, live music and family-friendly activities made it a hit, all while supporting the Island Rec Center's Children's Scholarship Fund.*

Milkshake magic in the making

Something sweet is stirring on Hilton Head Island. *Construction is underway at the soon-to-be MilkShake Factory, and we can already hear the blenders whirring. For sneak peeks and opening updates, follow MilkShake Factory (Hilton Head) on Facebook. Or, if you're the curious type, swing by 1201 Main Street and peek through the windows. We won't judge.*



A roast worth raising a mug to

Ronnie's Bakery and Cakes by Lou has partnered with Savannah Coffee Roasters to craft a signature blend available only at the bakery. *The Coffee Cake Roast is rich and cozy, perfect alongside your favorite pastry. Enjoy a cup at the shop, or grab a bag to brew at home. Details are available at* ***ronniesbakeryandcakesbylou.com****.*







Sunday supper, elevated

The teams behind FARM Bluffton and Common Thread have teamed up for a new monthly takeout experience called Chef's Sunday Supper. *Each offering features a chef-curated meal with an optional dessert add-on from the Flora and Fauna baking team. Meals are fully prepared and ready to warm at home. Quantities are limited, so be ready to order as soon as each menu is released.*



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Quick Bites

TASTY TIDBITS FROM THE LOWCOUNTRY FOOD AND DRINK SCENE

Michael Anthony's Cucina Italiana is partnering with **TCL's Culinary Institute** to provide student internships that help prepare future chefs for successful careers.

Side Hustle Brewing Company's Bluffton Taproom now offers its own line of beer-can candles, available in a variety of fun designs and scents.

O-Cha Noodle Cafe is slurping up a fresh start, relocating from Beaufort to Lady's Island, right next to Ryan's Hibachi.

Ralphie's Pizza launched a new website, making it easier than ever to get your favorite slice.

Lincoln & South Brewing Company is now selling custom Jeep ducks, perfect for adding personality to your ride.

Sabor De Casa is doubling the love by operating a second food truck, serving up flavor in two different locations daily.

Tailgators Bar & Grille in Okatie just made satisfying your cravings easier with the launch of online ordering.

MILESTONES WORTH CELEBRATING

The Salty Dog just turned 38, proving that good seafood, great views and Jake never go out of style.

Joelle celebrated one delicious year of serving up elegant Italian favorites. One year in, and already a Bluffton classic.

Magnolia Café Beaufort marked its one-year anniversary with Southern charm and plenty of cake to go around.

Fly Pies Pizza Truck turned five, and yes, it was a party on wheels. Here's to five more years of flying dough and fired-up flavors.

R Bar toasted to 12 strong years of cold drinks, loyal locals and good times. Here's to round 13.

Corner Perk hit the 16-year mark of serving up morning magic, from sleepy sips to full-on fuel-ups.

Lincoln & South Brewing Company hit a social milestone with 5,000 Facebook followers. Cheers to every like, share and sip.

Eggs Up Grill Bluffton cracked the one-year mark and kept the griddles hot with breakfasts worth waking up for.

WHAT TIME IS IT?

UPDATED HOURS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Southern Barrel Brewing Company is now pouring earlier on Tuesdays, opening at 11:30 a.m. Cheers to that lunchtime pint.

Alfred's Restaurant has extended its reservation hours to 5 to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 5 to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday. More time to wine, dine and savor every bite.

A Lowcountry Backyard Restaurant has fine-tuned its flow, serving lunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and dinner from 4:30 to 9 p.m. Southern comfort, perfectly timed.

Relish Thai Cuisine is now serving lunch and dinner seven days a week, with lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and dinner from 5 to 9:30 p.m. Your noodle cravings just got a wider window.

The Grind Roasters is keeping the caffeine coming until 6 p.m. on weekdays. More hours, more lattes, more productivity.

Uncle Billy's has made happy hour a daily thing. Stop by from 3 to 6 p.m., and toast to your new favorite ritual.

Breakwater Restaurant & Bar has the bar ready for you daily at 4 p.m. Come for the cocktails, stay for the vibe.

The Kitchen has expanded hours for dine-in and takeout: Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. (DoorDash until 6:30 p.m.), Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Scratch Italian Kitchen + Bar is now dishing out lunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Get your pasta fix midday.

GIVING BACK

Hardee Greens *is now donating weekly to Second Helpings as a way to give back to the community.*

Throughout April, **Burnt Church Distillery** *gave a portion of sales to Sea Turtle Patrol Hilton Head Island and Bigvision Community.*

Tacarón Trading Company *supported the Libraries for Kids event by providing wine, matching all in-store donations made in April and offering a private wine tasting to the top silent-auction bidder.*

Village at Wexford *raised $2,500 for Sea Turtle Patrol during the season's first Wine Down Wednesday.*

The Grind Roasters at New Riverside *is donating 5 percent of sales from Monday through Wednesday to May River High School.*

Local Pie *donated fresh pizzas to the St. Andrew's by the Sea Soup Kitchen, bringing comfort and kindness to the table.*

Ralphie's Pizza *participated in JPII Day of Giving and contributed 10 percent of proceeds to John Paul II Catholic School.*

Locals Only Taproom *raised $1,500 for the Deep Well Project last month, with even more added through a Birdies for Charity match and an anonymous gift from a local dog-loving donor.*

Every Wednesday, **Choo Choo BBQ** *supports local causes by donating a portion of sales. Last month's "Pork with a Purpose" supported Compassion Christian Church, The Church of the Cross Bluffton and TCOTC Food Bank.*

Zunzibar *donated a portion of quarterly sales to Feeding America.*

Cactus Street Cantina *gave 10 percent of April bowl sales to Osprey Village.*

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

FRESH FLAVORS, FUN TWISTS AND TASTY NEW TEMPTATIONS

Two Thai Cuisine *is now fully licensed and serving wine and domestic beer. Pad Thai and a cold one? Yes, please.*

Bluffton Pizza Company *is getting ready to rise and shine with a breakfast menu coming soon. Morning pizza? We're here for it.*

Ralphie's Pizza *rolled out revamped menus, with pitas on the lunch lineup and new pastas at dinner, including clam sauce and scampi that might just steal the show.*

The Juice Hive *introduced a fresh seasonal menu filled with clean, craveable delights to power your day.*

The Salty Dog *has a new breakfast menu that includes soon-to-be crowd favorites like the Breakfast Quesadilla. Mornings just got way more delicious.*

GG's Restaurant and Bar *is now serving brunch from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and the new menu is stacked with both comforting classics and exciting new bites.*

Cassandra's Kitchen Store *is now officially carrying microgreens from Hardee Greens after several flavorful collabs. Fresh and local? Always a win.*

Island Winery *brought back its fan-favorite Margarita Wine. It's crisp, zesty and ready for a porch party.*

The Grind Roasters *just dropped a brand-new spring menu. Expect bright flavors, bold brews and a reason to go back daily.*

Miramare Italiano *launched their spring and summer menu, just in time for patio weather and pasta cravings.*

Sliderbar Bluffton *added boozy milkshakes to the mix. Your inner child and your grown-up taste buds are both going to be very happy.*

Pour Richards *now offers catering, bringing their elevated eats straight to your next gathering.*

SlapTruck *added seafood to the menu, so now you can slap some shrimp on your plate too.*

E-Tang Asian Bistro *in Okatie rolled out new menus along with a new catering service, perfect for a party that needs a little extra flavor.*

FARM Bluffton *brought back its popular Steakhouse Tasting Menu. If you've missed it, now's the time to book your seat.*

JOURNEY OF CULTURE THROUGH CUISINE



This culinary journey showcases soulfully prepared local ingredients and their evolution from West Africa to the Caribbean, through South America, to the Lowcountry. Ultimately an elevated pairing of cultures to be celebrated through taste. Collectively Ọkàn deeply impacts community through engaging local farmers, empowering employees, and compelling guests.

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WWMD

What would Margaret drink?

Margaret Pearman *is a certified sommelier under the Court of Master Sommeliers and curates the award-winning wine list at Charlie's Coastal Bistro.*
Here is her sipping suggestion for May:

The White Horse of Saint-Émilion

ON THE RIGHT BANK OF BORDEAUX, CHEVAL BLANC PROVES THAT GREATNESS GROWS BEYOND THE 1855 CLASSIFICATION.

In the world of wine there are a handful of bottles I would consider the holy grail. These are the wines we all wish we could say we've tried — and if we've had the pleasure of comparing multiple vintages, that's just an even bigger feather in our cap. Among them are Latour, Margaux, Mouton Rothschild, Haut-Brion, Lafite, Petrus and Romanée-Conti. Most of these wines are Cabernet-based Premiers Crus Classés from the Left Bank of Bordeaux. Perhaps the classification of 1855 placed these names on a pedestal just a bit too high. Nowhere else in the world has there been such a monumental coining of status. Moreover, the designation has only been adjusted once — to move Mouton Rothschild into the special club of five in 1973.



On the other side of the river, in Saint-Émilion (Right Bank), sits a less conspicuous great: ***Le Cheval Blanc***, or White Horse. It is a unique blend of mostly Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Perhaps you remember the scene in Sideways when Miles drinks his prized '61 from a Styrofoam cup, representing the utter defeat he has experienced. The domaine has been planted to vine for over 2,000 years. The Romans saw the potential of the region — as evidenced by the remaining aqueducts — which proves this land was recognized early on for its promise. Over the last 150 years, the winery has changed hands only once.

But why Cheval Blanc? The story goes that Louis XIV rode a white horse to an inn called Auberge du Cheval, though this cannot be confirmed. I believe it has more to do with the magical soil that makes up the domaine. Saint-Émilion is a unique "hill of a thousand châteaux." Properties situated on the hillsides are revered as more prestigious than those on the plateau. Even though Cheval Blanc is located on the plateau, it rests on a rare island of Quaternary alluvium and possesses the same soil composition as the famed Petrus of Pomerol — a blend of gravel, clay and sand. The white horse symbolizes purity, nobility, divinity and strength — all qualities that define this one-of-a-kind wine.

The stirrup cup

A FINAL TOAST BEFORE THE RIDE BEGINS.

Before the thunder of hooves and the thrill of the chase, there is a moment of tradition — one that dates back centuries and still holds charm in equestrian circles today. It's called the stirrup cup.



PARTING POUR A stirrup cup is a traditional "parting cup" offered to guests as they prepare to depart — often with one foot already in the stirrup. It's also the customary drink served before the start of a fox hunt, adding a touch of ceremony and warmth to the farewell or the ride ahead.

Typically offered to a rider already mounted and ready to depart, the stirrup cup is a parting drink, served as a gesture of goodwill and camaraderie. The name comes quite literally from the practice: the drink is served while the rider is in their stirrups, preparing to ride out — often for a hunt. Traditionally poured into a small, ornate silver chalice, this ceremonial libation adds a touch of ritual to the ride.

The drink of choice? Port, most commonly — a rich, fortified wine from Portugal that brings a warming sense of occasion to the moment. Its deep flavor and bold character make it ideal for a brisk morning in the countryside.



FROM PORT TO PIMM'S Bright, refreshing, and steeped in tradition — this colorful pitcher of Pimm's, loaded with citrus slices, strawberries and fresh mint, captures the spirit of the modern stirrup cup. Once a warm send-off served in silver, today's pre-ride toast at polo matches leans cool, crisp and unmistakably British.

In the sport of polo, however, British tradition takes a more refreshing turn. Instead of port, you're more likely to see players reaching for a cup of Pimm's — a gin-based liqueur blended with herbs and citrus. Often served with lemonade, cucumber, mint and fruit, Pimm's is the unofficial drink of summer in Britain and has earned a place on polo sidelines from Windsor to Wellington.

Whether it's a hearty pour of port in a gleaming silver cup or a chilled glass of Pimm's under the pavilion, the stirrup cup tradition remains a toast to good sport, great company and the bond between horse and rider.



CUPS WORTH COLLECTING Stirrup cups come in many unique and imaginative designs, often featuring the heads of animals like foxes, deer and hounds. Crafted from silver or pewter, they're cherished by collectors and equestrian enthusiasts alike — not just as traditional pre-hunt toasts, but as works of art that celebrate the pageantry and heritage of the sport.





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LOCAL TWISTS ON THE CLASSIC TRIPLE CROWN COCKTAILS

The Triple Crown isn't just about fast horses and fancy hats — it's also a time-honored excuse to sip something strong while pretending you know how to read a racing form. Each leg of this legendary series comes with its own signature cocktail, designed to enhance the race-day experience (and possibly dull the sting of betting on the longshot). We've taken these iconic sips and added a Southern twist — swapping in locally crafted spirits that bring a bit of local flavor to each glass. Giddy up, race fans. It's cocktail time.





THE RUN FOR THE ROSES

Each year during Derby weekend, Churchill Downs serves up nearly 120,000 mint juleps, pouring more than 10,000 bottles of bourbon and garnishing with 1,000 pounds of fresh mint. The iconic cocktail is traditionally served in a limited-edition Derby glass, printed with the names of past winners and the current year's logo. First introduced in 1939, these souvenir cups have become cherished keepsakes for racegoers and collectors alike. You can even bring the tradition home. Weston South, a lifestyle store in Shelter Cove Towne Centre, offers candles poured into official Derby glasses. Watch the 151st Kentucky Derby on NBC. ***Post time:*** *6:57 p.m., Saturday, May 3*

Kentucky Derby: The Mint Julep

If the Derby is all hats and horses, the mint julep is its signature sip — cool, classic and a little over the top (in the best way possible). It has been the official drink of the race since 1938, but its roots at Churchill Downs go back even further. This refreshing mix of bourbon, mint, sugar and crushed ice became a Derby staple in the late 19th century, celebrated for both its Southern charm and its cooling qualities on a warm May afternoon. Over the years the drink has become inseparable from the pageantry of the Derby, often served in collectible glasses that fans eagerly add to their bar carts year after year. It's more than a cocktail — it's a tradition in a tumbler. For a Lowcountry twist, use Hilton Head Distillery's Atlantic Bourbon, aged in tropical climates and finished in rum casks. The result? A julep that brings a hint of the islands to this Kentucky classic.



INGREDIENTS
2 ounces ***HHD Atlantic Bourbon***
1/2 ounce simple syrup
8 fresh mint leaves
1 fresh mint sprig (garnish)
Crushed ice

DIRECTIONS Gently muddle the mint leaves and simple syrup in the bottom of a julep cup or rocks glass — just enough to release the oils, not shred the leaves. Add the bourbon, and fill the cup with crushed ice. Stir until the cup is frosty. Top with more crushed ice and garnish with a fresh mint sprig (give it a little slap to release the aroma).

INGREDIENTS (Simple syrup)
1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup water

DIRECTIONS In a small saucepan, combine sugar and water. Heat over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from heat and let it cool. Pour into a clean jar or bottle, and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.

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Preakness Stakes: Black-Eyed Susan

If the Derby is all mint and manners, the Preakness is where things loosen up, starting with the cocktail. The Black-Eyed Susan was created in 1973 by Harry Stevens, the longtime caterer at Pimlico Race Course, as the official drink of the Preakness Stakes. Named after Maryland's state flower, which also adorns the winning horse's blanket, the cocktail was designed to echo the festive spirit of the Kentucky Derby's mint julep while giving the Preakness its own signature sip. Over the decades the recipe has undergone several revisions, with different versions calling for vodka, bourbon, peach schnapps or even rum, depending on the sponsor of the event. Despite its evolving ingredients, the drink remains a citrusy, crowd-pleasing staple at the Preakness and a symbol of Maryland's rich racing tradition. For a Lowcountry twist, try Rotten Little Bastard's Coosa Cut Bourbon and King Tide Vodka, both smoother than a front-runner at the finish line.



INGREDIENTS

1 ounce ***RLB Coosa Cut Bourbon***
1 ounce ***RLB King Tide Vodka***
3/4 ounce orange liqueur
1 1/2 ounces orange juice
1 1/2 ounces sour mix
Maraschino cherry (garnish)
Orange slice (garnish)

DIRECTIONS Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice, and shake like the finish line depends on it. Strain into a tall glass over crushed ice. Garnish with maraschino cherries and an orange slice, because every winner deserves a little flair.



THE RUN FOR THE BLACK-EYED SUSANS

Despite its name, the Black-Eyed Susan cocktail contains zero floral notes. Instead, it's all about bold citrus and smooth spirits. The name comes from Maryland's state flower, which blooms in yellow and black and famously tops the winner's garland. Fun fact: Black-eyed Susans aren't in season during the Preakness, so the garland is often made with painted daisies instead. Watch the 150th Preakness Stakes on NBC. ***Post time:*** *6:50 p.m., Saturday, May 17*





Belmont Stakes: The Belmont Jewel

The Belmont Jewel became the official cocktail of the Belmont Stakes in 2011, replacing a series of lesser-known drinks like the White Carnation and the Belmont Breeze, which struggled to gain popularity. Crafted to be simple, refreshing and easy to serve to large crowds, it quickly became a fan favorite. Its vibrant ruby hue, thanks to the splash of pomegranate juice, nods to the red carnations traditionally draped over the winning horse. Blending bourbon, lemonade and pomegranate juice, the drink reflects both the elegance and approachability of the "Test of the Champion," the final and longest leg of the Triple Crown. Though it's a relatively new tradition, the Belmont Jewel has solidified its place alongside the Mint Julep and Black-Eyed Susan in the trifecta of iconic race-day cocktails. For a local touch, try it with Burnt Church Distillery's Anita's Choice Bourbon, a six-grain whiskey inspired by women's rights advocate Anita Pollitzer, adding an extra layer of history and craftsmanship to this race-day favorite.





INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 ounces ***BCD Anita's Choice Bourbon Whiskey***
2 ounces lemonade
1 ounce pomegranate juice
Lemon peel (garnish)

DIRECTIONS In a cocktail shaker filled with ice, combine the ingredients and shake vigorously. Strain over fresh ice into a double old-fashioned glass. Garnish with a lemon peel twist.

THE TEST OF THE CHAMPION

The Belmont Stakes is often where Triple Crown dreams are either realized or dashed. As the final and longest leg of the series, its grueling 1.5-mile distance has earned it the nickname The Test of the Champion. Many horses have claimed victory in the Kentucky Derby and Preakness Stakes, only to fall short at Belmont. That's what makes the achievement so rare — only 13 horses in history have conquered all three races. The most recent was Justify in 2018, who captivated the racing world by becoming just the second horse to win the Triple Crown while remaining undefeated. Watch the 2025 Belmont Stakes on Fox. ***Post time:*** *6:41 p.m., Saturday, June 7*

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Gateway to good times

A LOWCOUNTRY TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO THE SWEET SIGHTS AND SPRINGTIME DELIGHTS OF ST. LOUIS.

May is a prime time to visit St. Louis, as the city comes alive with blooming dogwoods, energetic festivals and baseball fever. Known as the Gateway to the West, this riverfront city blends history, family-friendly attractions and a fast-growing food scene — all with a laid-back, Midwestern vibe.

Mild temperatures and sunny skies make it perfect for strolling through the Missouri Botanical Garden, catching a Cardinals game at Busch Stadium or riding to the top of the Gateway Arch for sweeping views of the Mississippi River

Forest Park, one of the largest urban parks in the country, bursts with activity in May — home to the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Saint Louis Zoo (free admission!) and miles of trails and picnic spots.

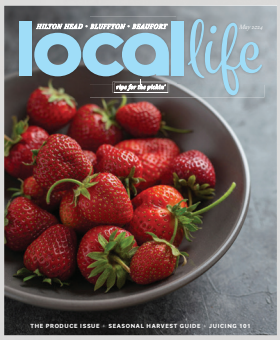
Whether you're sipping craft beer in The Grove, wandering through Soulard Farmers Market or snapping photos in the Delmar Loop, St. Louis in May offers a dynamic blend of culture, color and charm. With direct flights from Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport, it's an easy and exciting escape for Lowcountry travelers. LL

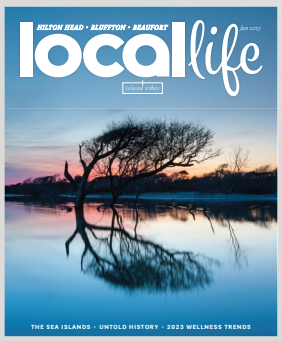
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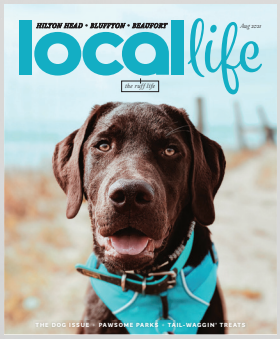


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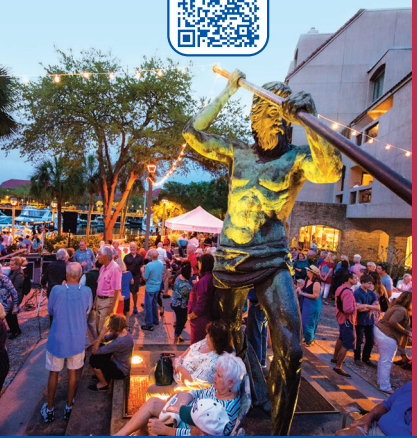
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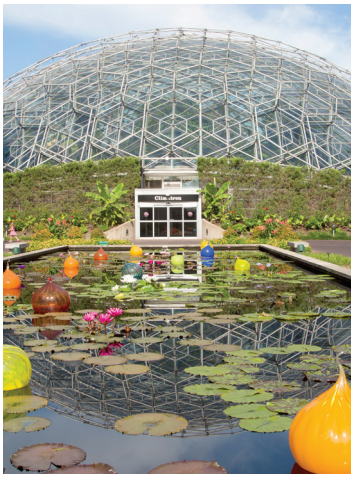
DRESS FOR SPRING WEATHER

St. Louis in May typically sees daytime highs in the 70s and 80s with low humidity, though an afternoon shower can sneak in. Pack accordingly:

- **Light layers:** A jacket or cardigan for cooler mornings or evenings.
- **Comfortable walking shoes:** Ideal for city parks and sightseeing.
- **Sunglasses and sunscreen:** Sunny days mean bright skies.
- **Umbrella:** Spring showers are brief but frequent.



Busch Stadium



Missouri Botanical Garden

ST. LOUIS BUCKET LIST

A must-do checklist to make the most of your Midwestern getaway:

- **Gateway Arch:** Take the tram ride to the top of this 630-foot national monument.
- **Forest Park:** Explore museums, paddleboat on the lake, or enjoy a picnic under the trees.
- **Busch Stadium:** Cheer on the St. Louis Cardinals with a cold beer and classic ballpark snacks.
- **City Museum:** A whimsical, artistic indoor-outdoor playground for all ages.
- **Saint Louis Zoo:** One of the best free zoos in the nation with over 600 species.

MAY ADVENTURES

From gardens to galleries, May brings energy and events to the city:

- **Missouri Botanical Garden:** Azaleas, iris and peonies are in full bloom — don't miss the Climatron.
- **Soulard Farmers Market:** One of the oldest in the U.S., packed with local produce and St. Louis flavor.
- **Shakespeare in the Park:** This annual tradition brings open-air theater to Forest Park (free admission).
- **Blues at the Arch:** Catch live music and food trucks at Kiener Plaza.
- **Art Hill:** Take a walk, or rent a paddle boat nearby — great views and great vibes.
- **Brewery tours:** Sip your way through Anheuser-Busch or local craft breweries like Urban Chestnut and 4 Hands.

SAVOR ST. LOUIS'S FLAVORS

- **Toasted ravioli:** A St. Louis original — try them at Charlie Gitto's or Mama's on the Hill.
- **Gooey butter cake:** Don't leave without trying this dense, sweet dessert — Park Avenue Coffee is home to the original.
- **St. Louis-style pizza:** Ultra-thin crust and Provel cheese — love it or hate it, you've got to try it. Go to Adriana's, Pizzeoli, Uncle Leos or Failoni's.
- **Barbecue ribs:** Head to Pappy's Smokehouse or Bogart's for Memphis-style dry rub with a Midwestern twist.
- **Frozen custard:** A Ted Drewes tradition — thick, creamy and worth the wait.
- **May cocktails:** Try a strawberry mint julep at Blood & Sand or sip a seasonal sour at The Gin Room.
- **Local brews:** Raise a glass at Schlafly Bottleworks or Urban Chestnut's beer garden.

Ted Drewes frozen custard



Charlie Gitto's toasted ravioli





Angad Arts Hotel



The Cheshire

STAY IN STYLE

St. Louis has everything from boutique hotels to classic charmers:

- **Angad Arts Hotel:** ($250+) A chic hotel where you choose your room by color — located in the arts district.
- **Four Seasons St. Louis:** ($400+) Luxury and riverfront views, steps from the Arch.
- **Hotel Saint Louis:** ($300+) A historic downtown hotel with a rooftop pool and art deco glam.
- **The Cheshire:** ($180+) A cozy, English-themed inn near Forest Park, with onsite dining and old-world charm.

TRAVEL TIPS

- **Take MetroLink:** The city's light rail system is affordable and connects key spots.
- **Use the Downtown Trolley:** A fun way to hop between attractions like the Arch, museums and the stadium.
- **Walk and explore:** Downtown, Central West End and The Loop are all walkable and filled with shops and cafés.
- **Explore nearby gems:** Drive 30 minutes to historic St. Charles, or visit nearby wine country in Augusta.
- **Handy apps:** Use Transit for MetroLink schedules, Explore St. Louis for local events and Toast for restaurant ordering.

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In the Southeast the horse isn't just a symbol of speed and strength, it's a ticket to some of the most exciting, stylish and tradition-rich events in the country. With mild weather and deep-rooted heritage, this region is a playground for equestrian enthusiasts, offering everything from grand prix jumping to elegant polo matches. Fancy hats, minty cocktails, tailgates and trophy presentations are just the beginning.

Whether you're there for the thunder of hooves or the clink of champagne flutes, these events celebrate more than sport; they celebrate culture, community and spectacle. Some are casual and family-friendly; others rival red carpet affairs. Either way, there's a spot ringside with your name on it. Here's your guide to galloping through the season's can't-miss equestrian events.

Off to the races

SADDLE UP FOR THE PREMIER EQUESTRIAN EVENTS OF THE SOUTHEAST.

STORY BY ALEA WILKINS

Aiken Triple Crown

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AIKEN TRIPLE CROWN

When: Mid-late March
Where: Aiken, S.C.

Aiken isn't just horse country — it's holy ground for equestrian fans, and the Aiken Triple Crown is its grand offering. Held across three spirited Saturdays in March, the Triple Crown kicks off with the Aiken Trials, showcasing up-and-coming horses. Week two brings the adrenaline-fueled Spring Steeplechase, complete with shopping, entertainment and a Bloody Mary bar. The finale? Pacers & Polo, a fast-paced match benefiting USC Aiken's athletics and equestrian programs. Dress the part (big hats welcome), and choose your experience — tailgate casual or VIP chic with gourmet catering and exclusive seating. Either way, you'll find yourself swept up in the Southern charm. *(130 miles from HHI)*



©CAROLINA CUP RACING ASSOCIATION

CAROLINA CUP

When: Late March-early April
Where: Camden, S.C.

Known as the "steeplechase capital of the world," Camden puts on a party as much as a race. More than 50,000 people gather each spring at the Carolina Cup for thrilling equestrian stunts, festive fashion and a good time that's as Southern as sweet tea. While the horses race for a nearly $100,000 purse, spectators sip Carolina juleps, peruse Paddock Shoppes and pose for best-dressed bragging rights. The vibe? A delightful mix of derby formality and tailgate rowdiness. Families, friend groups and race fans alike will find their pace here. *(165 miles from HHI)*





©MICHELLE RANDOLPH

GEORGIA NATIONAL FAIR DRAFT HORSE SHOW

When: October 2-12
Where: Perry, Ga.

If Clydesdales and crowd participation are your speed, head to Perry for the Draft Horse Show at the Georgia National Fair. This event is equal parts horsepower and playtime, with traditional saddle seat and hunter/jumper competitions alongside barrel racing, obstacle courses and even a feed bag fashion show. It's fun, it's family-friendly, and the majestic six-horse hitches bring the "wow" factor. With carnival games, decorated stalls and a laid-back vibe, this is where equestrian meets country fair in the best way possible. *(200 miles from HHI)*

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HITS OCALA WINTER CIRCUIT

When: January-March
Where: Ocala, Fla.

Ocala isn't called the "Horse Capital of the World" for nothing. At the HITS Ocala Winter Circuit, top-tier hunter/jumper competitions unfold across 12 dazzling weeks. The setting? The 500-acre Post Time Farm, packed with arenas, shopping, food trucks and top-notch hospitality. Spectators can catch Olympic-caliber athletes vying for the $100,000 Grand Prix while soaking up the sun. Need a break between rounds? Rent a golf cart, hit the Downtown Market, or find your favorite food truck. *(270 miles from HHI)*



©HITSSHOWS.COM



©YES MARKET MEDIA

PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL POLO SEASON

When: December-April
Where: Wellington, Fla.

Where elegance meets adrenaline, the Palm Beach International Polo Season is a dream for sport and spectacle. Held at the National Polo Center, it features prestigious tournaments like the USPA Gold Cup and U.S. Open Polo Championship. Expect players in crisp whites, spectators in bow ties and sun hats, champagne sabers at halftime and DJ-fueled poolside after-parties. With luxury seating and tailgate fun side by side, this event pairs power and polish with tropical vibes. *(460 miles from HHI)*

ATLANTA FALL CLASSIC

When: Nov. 6-9, 13-16
Where: Fairburn, Ga.

Set in the cinematic hills of Bouckaert Farms (yes, Tony Stark's cabin from Avengers: Endgame), the Atlanta Fall Classic is a must for fans of crisp autumn air and graceful competition. Riders take on challenging courses during two weekends of nationally rated hunter and jumper events, with over $20,000 in prize money up for grabs. Families love the dog-friendly grounds, leafy backdrops and spacious pavilion with concessions. With new additions like pony derbies and equitation showcases, it's a fresh spin on classic competition. *(295 miles from HHI)*

WINTER EQUESTRIAN FESTIVAL (WEF)

When: January-March
Where: Wellington, Fla.

This is the big one. The Winter Equestrian Festival is the longest-running and most prestigious horse show on Earth, attracting more than 34,000 horses and doling out $15 million in prizes. Yet, for all its grandeur, general admission is free — because great sport should be for everyone. Saturdays shine with "Saturday Night Lights" — a family-friendly spectacle with show jumping, face painting, food and live music. Don't miss the petting zoo, and save a few bucks by hopping the free shuttle instead of paying for parking. *(460 miles from HHI)*



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MAY happenings

Arts & Culture



Thumbelina, The Firebird and The Flower Fairies

When: 10:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m., May 10
Where: Seahawk Cultural Center
Details: The littlest dancers take center stage in this charming performance full of magic and fairy wings.
hiltonheaddance.com



Palmetto Bluff Artist in Residence

When: May 14–17
Where: FLOW Gallery + Workshop
Details: Ceramicist Mark Lexton takes the spotlight this month. Swing by to shop his work, or sign up for a hands-on workshop.
palmettobluff.com



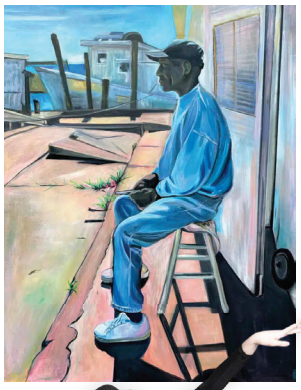
The Rhodes Collection of African American Art

When: Now–June 30
Where: USCB Center for the Arts Gallery
Details: Celebrate African American creativity and culture through this colorful, powerful collection. Artist meet-and-greet: May 31, 12–2 p.m. ***uscbcenterforthearts.com***







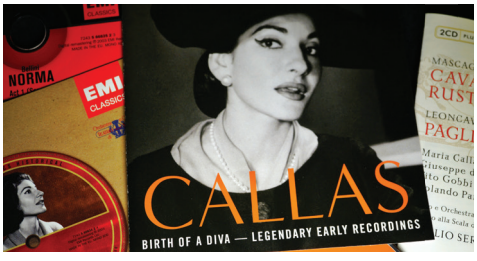


Lowcountry Classics

When: May 4–31
Where: SOBA Gallery
Details: Lynne Drake's timeless pieces anchor this new exhibit. Don't miss the artist's reception, 4–6 p.m. on May 8.
sobagallery.com

Master Class

When: May 15–25
Where: HHPS Main Street Theater
Details: Maria Callas is back (on stage, at least) in this intense, witty play from Lean Ensemble Theater. ***leanensemble.org***





Terpsichore, Too

When: 7:30 p.m., May 9–10
Where: Seahawk Cultural Center
Details: Hilton Head Dance Theatre showcases ballet and jazz by its talented students.
hiltonheaddance.com



Thanks to our 2024-2025 Season Performance and Special Events Sponsors

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Arts & Culture



Lowcountry Serenity: Celebrating Coastal Beauty

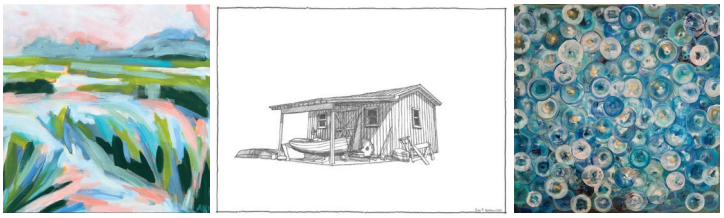
When: Now-May 3 **Where:** SOBA Gallery
Details: Time's running out to catch Janet Stevens's breathtaking homage to Lowcountry landscapes and wildlife. ***sobagallery.com***





Biennale: 29th National Juried Exhibition

When: May 13-June 13 **Where:** Art League of Hilton Head
Details: Art League's biggest show of the year is back. See the best of the best and join the awards celebration May 16 from 5-7 p.m. ***artleaguehhi.org***



Coastal Refresh Opening Reception

When: 5-7 p.m., May 16 **Where:** Coastal Lighting Studio
Details: EMROSE Projects' latest showcase highlights regional artists bringing a fresh, modern take on coastal style. ***emroseprojects.com***



©MARCI TRESSEL

Spotlight on Art

When: May 7-Oct. 24
Where: Sea Pines Community Center
Details: The Artists of Sea Pines return with fresh works from 30-plus creatives. A must-see for fans of local art.
theshopsatseapinescenter.com



Waitress

When: Now-June 1
Where: Arts Center of Coastal Carolina
Details: A dash of love, a pinch of drama and a whole lot of pie, Sara Bareilles's hit musical is serving up all the feels. ***artshhi.com***



Beaufort Children's Theatre: Alice in Wonderland, Jr.

When: May 16–18 **Where:** USCB Center for the Arts
Details: Tumble down the rabbit hole for a whimsical, family-friendly ride through Wonderland.
uscbcenterforthearts.com



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Limited tickets available day of event

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Charity & Community



Mayfest

When: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., May 10
Where: Historic Downtown Bluffton
Details: A Bluffton tradition like no other. Browse arts and crafts, savor street food, enjoy live music, and don't miss the always-hilarious Ugly Dog Contest. ***blufftonrotary.org***



All Saints Garden Tour

When: 9 a.m.-4 p.m., May 16-17
Where: Various locations
Details: Tour six stunning private gardens, and explore a brand-new artisan market, all for a great cause. ***allsaintsgardentour.wordpress.com***



The Original Gullah Festival of SC

When: 10 a.m., May 23
Where: Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park
Details: Celebrate the living legacy of Gullah culture with music, food, storytelling and handmade crafts. ***originalgullahfestival.org***

Bluffton Sunset Party on the May River

When: 5:30-9:30 p.m., May 16 **Where:** Oyster Factory Park
Details: The second Sunset Party of the season brings local bands, local bites and plenty of sunshine-soaked Lowcountry vibes. ***bearfootsports.com***

Bluffton Block Party

When: 5:30-7 p.m., May 8 **Where:** Agave Sidebar
Details: The Hilton Head Island & Bluffton Chamber of Commerce's annual block party is back with bites, sips and a healthy dose of business-meets-fun. ***hiltonheadblufftonchamber.org***



16th Hilton Head Island Art Festival

When: Times vary, May 23-25
Where: Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina
Details: Stroll the waterfront and shop stunning works from dozens of artists at this beloved festival. Add live music, dining and a picturesque setting, and you've got a perfect spring weekend. ***sheltercovehiltonhead.com***

Hilton Head Hall of Fame

When: 12 p.m., May 8
Where: Arthur Hills Clubhouse
Details: Honor the legacy of local legend James Cuthbert 'Jim' Self at this year's Rotary Club Hall of Fame luncheon. ***hiltonheadrotary.org***

2025 Memory Matters Annual Gala

When: 5:30-8:30 p.m., May 22
Where: The Westin Hilton Head Island Resort & Spa
Details: An elegant evening of music, wine and community spirit, all supporting local families facing Alzheimer's and dementia. ***mymemorymatter.org***

Light the Night for Life Gala

When: 5:30-8:30 p.m., May 16
Where: Country Club of Hilton Head
Details: Enjoy dinner and inspiration at this heartfelt gala supporting the Pregnancy Center & Clinic of the Lowcountry. ***pregnancycenterhhi.org***

mayfest!

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Charity & Community



32nd Annual Memorial Day Remembrance

When: 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., May 26
Where: Shelter Cove Veterans Memorial Park
Details: Pay tribute to fallen heroes with a moving ceremony featuring Captain Ken Roman, Commodore of Submarine Squadron 10. Check Shelter Cove Veterans Memorial Park on Facebook for updates.

Sankofa Nights

When: 6 p.m., May 15-16
Where: First Presbfyterian Church, USCB Hilton Head Campus
Details: Experience two nights of culture Sankofa Nights, a fundraiser and silent auction to benefit the Historic Gullah Land Preservation Program. Watch a free screening of the documentary Gaining Ground: The Fight for Black Land at 6 p.m. on May 15 at First Presbyterian Church. Attend the dinner and silent auction at 6 p.m. on May 16 at the USCB Hilton Head campus. Dinner tickets are $75. ***Eventbrite.com***



IACHH Italian Sunday Dinner

When: 5 p.m., May 18
Where: St. Francis by the Sea Catholic Church
Details: Mangia! Homemade pasta and hearty hospitality highlight this annual dinner hosted by the Italian American Club of Hilton Head. ***iachh.org***

Palm Leaves & Summer Breeze

When: 4:30-6:30 p.m., May 22 **Where:** Billy Wood Appliance
Details: Kick off the season with the Hilton Head Area Home Builders Association at this laid-back summer party, complete with tunes, cocktails and bites from chef Vinnie Balducci. ***hhahba.com***

Big Band, Big Hearts

When: 12-4 p.m., May 18
Where: The Jazz Corner
Details: Celebrate 30 years of PEP (Programs for Exceptional People) with live music, good company and lots of heart. ***pephhi.org***



Lectures & Classes



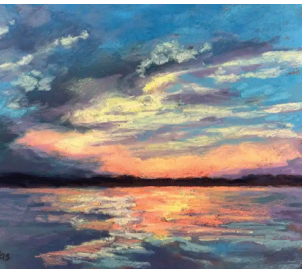
Art League Hilton Head classes

Where: Art League Academy, Cordillo Parkway
Details: Explore your inner artist with these playful, skill-building workshops led by guest instructors. ***artleaguehhi.org***

UPCOMING CLASSES
May 6: *Papermaking – It's More than Pulp Fiction, 3:30 p.m.*
May 15: *Paint & Sip: Beautiful Oysters, 4:30 p.m.*
May 25: *Make, Bake & Take: Polymer Clay Jewelry, 1 p.m.*

Restorative Medicine Seminar

When: Noon-1 p.m., Tuesdays **Where:** Fraum Center for Restorative Health
Details: Discover cutting-edge ways to support your body's natural healing process at this weekly wellness seminar. Bonus: You'll leave with new knowledge and a free lunch. ***fraum.com***



SOBA art classes

Where: SOBA Gallery
Details: Whether you're learning plein air, oils or abstract, these creative sessions will leave you inspired and maybe a little paint-splattered (in the best way). ***sobagallery.com***

UPCOMING CLASSES
May 3, 17 & 24: *Abstract Painting Your Way, 9 a.m.-noon*
May 13, 20 & 27: *Fall in Love with Oils, 9:30 a.m.-noon*
May 29: *Plein Air Painting in Bluffton, 9 a.m.-noon*

Lunch with Authors

When: Noon, May 6 **Where:** Belfair Clubhouse
Details: Dine and dish with New York Times bestselling author Patti Callahan Henry as she shares stories behind The Story She Left Behind. ***uscbcenterforthearts.com***



Coastal Discovery Museum events

Where: Coastal Discovery Museum
Details: From behind-the-scenes animal care to butterfly docent training, these classes offer a unique peek into Lowcountry ecology. ***coastaldiscovery.org***

UPCOMING EVENTS
May 12: *Animal Care in the Discovery Lab, 1 p.m.*
May 23: *Docent Training: Butterfly Learning Station, 10 a.m.*
May 30: *Docent Training: Critter Meet and Greet, 10 a.m.*

Port Royal Sound Foundation classes & events

Where: Port Royal Sound Foundation
Details: Connect with the land and sea through educational talks and outdoor adventures. ***portroyalsoundfoundation.org***

UPCOMING CLASSES
May 6: *Tuesday Talk: Reconstruction in Beaufort County, 9:30-10:30 a.m.*
May 17: *Pluff Mudder Club, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.*

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MAY RACES

Sign up for one of these May races to support a good cause and stay in shape.

UPCOMING RACES

69th Annual Water Festival 5K-10K: *8 a.m., May 3, Live Oak Park*
Mom's Day 5K & Loggerhead Loop: *8:30 a.m., May 10, Coligny Beach Park*
Fun-Day Run-Day Fundraiser: *10:30 a.m., May 23, Oscar Frazier Park*
Beast Mode Rudis Challenge: *9 a.m., May 24, Beaufort YMCA*
May Day 5K: *8 a.m., May 24, Martin Family Park*
Palmetto Dunes Turtle Trot 5K: *8 a.m., May 28, Dunes House*
Tulip Trot 5K: *9 a.m., May 31, Rose Hill Equestrian Center*
Beaufort River Swim + Run: *7:30 a.m., May 31, Beaufort Waterfront Park*



The Lowcountry Tulip Trot 5K & Walk for Parkinson's Disease

When: 9 a.m., May 31 **Where:** Rose Hill Plantation Equestrian Center
Details: Don't miss this heartfelt event inspired by the life and legacy of Leslie W. Matthews, who left a lasting impact on all who knew him. Honor his memory by raising awareness and funds for Parkinsons Disease. ***lowcountrytuliptrot.org***



Sea Pines adventures

The Sea Pines Resort is home to some of the best outdoor events, with exciting activities for all ages. Visit ***seapines.com/experiences*** for a complete list of upcoming events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Gregg Russell Spring Concerts: *8-9 p.m., May 22-24 & May 28-Aug. 7, Liberty Oak Tree in Harbour Town*
Full Moon Shore Explore: *7:30-8:30 p.m., May 13, Sea Pines Beach Club*
Stan Smith Super Series: *Times vary, May 23-25, Sea Pines Racquet Club*



Palmetto Bluff Conservancy events

The PBC team facilitates tours, classes and workshops, programs, research and field trips to promote conservation. Visit ***palmettobluff.com/conservation*** for a complete list of events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Brown Bag Lunch: Historic Preservation Month: Squire Pope Carriage House: *12-1 p.m., May 7*
Birding Global Big Day – Sandhill Loop: *10:30-11:30 a.m., May 10*
Brown Bag Lunch: Sea Turtles: *12-1 p.m., May 28*



Beaufort Water Festival events

Although the official festival isn't until July, there are plenty of outdoor activities to hold you over. Check ***bftwaterfestival.com*** for a details.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pickleball Tournament: *May 10*
Fishing Tournament: *May 10 & 17*
Volleyball Tournament: *May 31*



Hilton Head Audubon events

Support the leading voice for conservation in the Lowcountry at one of these upcoming events. ***hiltonheadaudubon.org***

UPCOMING EVENTS

Newhall Work Day: *8:30-10 a.m., May 10, Newhall Preserve*
Demonstration: Raptor Experience – Meet the Majestic Birds of Prey: *1-3 p.m., May 10, Tidepointe on Hilton Head*
Bring Your Mom on a Field Trip to Cypress Wetlands: *8:30-11 a.m., May 11, Cypress Wetlands*
Annual Picnic: *4:30-7 p.m., May 13, Jarvis Creek Park*



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Food & Drink



May happenings at Okàn

Where: Okàn
Details: Travel the culinary road from West Africa to the Lowcountry with Chef Bernard Bennett at one of these flavorful events. ***okanbluffton.com***

UPCOMING EVENTS
May 18: *Pilates & Prosecco Brunch, 11 a.m.*
May 18: *Tiny Bar Concert, 7-9 p.m.*
May 27: *Cooking Class with Chef Bernard Bennett, 5-8 p.m.*



Salad Dressing 101

When: 3:30 p.m., Thursdays
Where: Hilton Head Oils & Balsamics
Details: Learn how to make the perfect salad dressing at this best-selling class. ***hiltonheadoils.com***

May events at The Salty Dog

Where: The Salty Dog Café
Details: Celebrate Derby Day, birthday bashes and race-day revelry at this iconic waterfront favorite. ***saltydog.com***

UPCOMING EVENTS
May 3: *Derby Day*
May 10: *38th Birthday Bash*
May 17: *The Preakness Party*

TCL Culinary Classes

When: 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., May 16 & May 31
Where: Culinary Institute of the South
Details: Sharpen your skills and broaden your palate at these immersive culinary classes. Whether you're exploring global flavors or roasting a whole suckling pig, it's guaranteed to be a delicious time. ***tcl.edu***

UPCOMING CLASSES
May 16: *Around the World: How Ingredients Influence Different Cultures*
May 31: *A Spanish Banquette: Roast Suckling Pig Holiday Feast*



Tap Takeover at Big Jim's

When: 2-5 p.m., First Friday of every month
Where: Big Jim's BBQ, Burgers & Pizza
Details: Southern Barrel Brewery takes over the taps with three rotating brews each month. Come thirsty. ***palmettodunes.com***

In-store demo with Julie McAllister

When: 4-6 p.m., May 8
Where: Cassandra's Kitchen Store
Details: Watch cake artist Julie work her magic with buttercream piping and chocolate molding, perfect inspiration for your next showstopper dessert. ***cassandraskitchen.com***

Fraser's Tavern Events

When: Various dates in May
Where: The Sea Pines Resort
Details: Sip and savor with monthly tap takeovers and pint nights at Fraser's. It's where local flavor meets laid-back fun. ***seapines.com***

UPCOMING EVENTS
May 20: *Tap Takeover*
Thursdays: *Pint Night*

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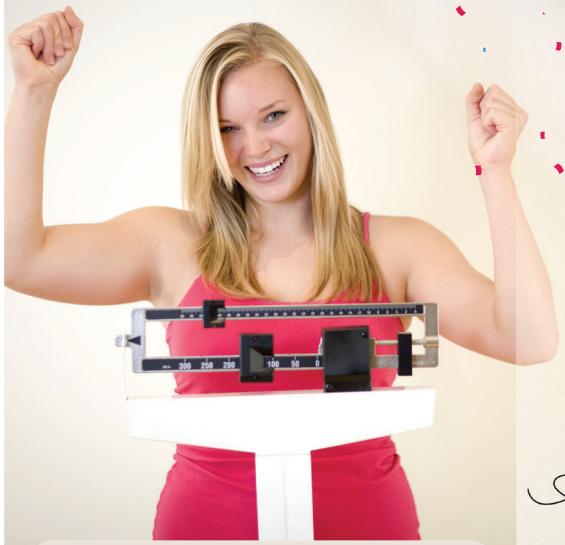
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Food & Drink



From Vine to Glass: The Ancien Winemaking Tasting Experience

When: 5:30 p.m., May 8 **Where:** Celeste Coastal Cuisine
Details: Dive into the world of Ancien Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays with Ken Bernards, paired with coastal cuisine made to match. ***celestehhi.com***

Radici Wine Dinner

When: 6 p.m., May 14 **Where:** Radici Italian Chophouse
Details: An indulgent evening of fine wine and a four-course Italian feast awaits at this Bluffton hot spot.
radicibluffton.com

Neyers Vineyards Wine Dinner

When: 6-9 p.m., May 15
Where: Alexander's Restaurant & Wine Bar
Details: Enjoy a curated evening of exceptional wines, chef-crafted dishes and unforgettable conversation.
alexandersrestaurant.com

Massican Wine Dinner

When: 6:30 p.m., May 9 **Where:** Harbour Town Clubhouse
Details: Chefs Sean Carroll and Iain Jones present a refined dinner paired with wines from one of Napa's finest boutique wineries. ***seapines.com***

Masca del Tacco Wine Dinner

When: 6:30-9:30 p.m., May 8 **Where:** Ombra Cucina Italiana
Details: Experience Italian elegance with an expertly paired dinner and insights from master sommelier Daniele Girolami.
ombrahhi.com

A Spring Evening in Milan

When: 6 p.m., May 21 **Where:** Nunzio Restaurant + Bar
Details: Enjoy Chef Nunzio's regional menu from Italy's Lombardy region while special guest Yorke Dalton, from Santa Margherita USA, speaks on the evening's wine selection.
nunziohhi.com

Honey & Thistle Events

Where: Honey & Thistle, Harbour Town
Details: Taste, sip and discover at this chic boutique's curated wine and shopping events.
honeyandthistlehhi.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 2 & June 6: *First Friday Wine Preview Party, 4-6 p.m.*
May 12: *Second Monday Pub Night, 5-7 p.m.*



SAVANNAH EVENTS

May 4: *Humane Society Doggie Carnival at Forsythe Park*
May 6: *Alice Cooper at Johnny Mercer Theatre*
May 9: *Rotary Club of Savannah 2025 South Crab Races and Live Auction Fundraiser at Coach's Corner*
May 9: *Chris D'Elia at Johnny Mercer Theatre*
May 10: *Mark Mustian Book Launch at The Gingerbread House*
May 10: *Isley Brothers at Enmarket Arena*
May 11: *Mother's Day Brunch at Plant Riverside District*
May 15: *A Taste of the South of France Wine Dinner at Emporium*
May 16: *TEDxSavannah at the Fine Arts Auditorium at Georgia Southern University's Armstrong Campus*
May 16: *Plies at Johnny Mercer Theatre*
May 17: *Pour Painting Workshop at the Jepson Center*
May 17: *The Savannah Mile at Forsythe Park*
May 17: *2025 Walk from Obesity at Lake Mayer Park*
May 17: *Dancing with the Stars at the Savannah Convention Center*
May 22: *2025 Best of Savannah at Kehoe Iron Works at Trustees' Garden*
May 22: *DAOU Wine Dinner at Chart House Savannah*
May 29-30: *Megan Moroney at Enmarket Arena*
May 30: *Lauren Daigle at Johnny Mercer Theatre*

GET TICKETS NOW

June 7: *Vince Gill at Johnny Mercer Theatre*
June 12: *Luke Bryan at Enmarket Arena*
June 21: *2 Chainz at Johnny Mercer Theatre*
August 1: ***Brad Paisley*** *at Enmarket Arena*

SAVE THE DATE

June 1: *Sunset Beach Yoga at Fish Haul Beach Park*
June 2: *Turtle Talks at Lowcountry Celebration Park*
June 4: *Global Running Day Pub Run at Local Legend Brewery*
June 4: *National Cheese Day at Holy Tequila*
June 5: *Sea Pines Dolphin Dash 5K at Sea Pines Beach Club*



The Drowsy Chaperone

When: Times vary, May 22-25
Where: Lucas Theatre for the Arts
Details: The SCAD School of Film and Acting presents a musical-within-a-musical that will have you laughing out loud. ***scad.edu***

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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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.-4 p.m., Thursdays, 68 Boundary St.*
Hilton Head Island Farmers Market: *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 & Makers Market: *10 a.m.-2 p.m., Tuesdays, The Shops at Sea Pines Center*
Palmetto Bluff Farmers Market: *9 a.m.-1 p.m., May 28, Palmetto Bluff Farm*



Wine Down Wednesday for a Cause

When: 5-7 p.m., May 7
Where: Village at Wexford
Details: Enjoy a progressive wine tasting, shopping and more to support Sea Turtle Patrol.
villageatwexford.com



Spring Artisan Market

When: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., May 24
Where: Tanger 1
Details: Enjoy a pop-up vendor market at the Tanger Outlets in Buffton.
lowcountryvendorevents.com

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bridgewebs.com/hiltonheadisland 843.342.7529

ACBL.ORG

Music & Entertainment



Boy Named Banjo

When: 7:30 p.m., May 30 **Where:** USCB Center for the Arts
Details: Hear the band that's taken Nashville and beyond by storm with a series of critically acclaimed music with Americana and bluegrass roots. ***uscbcenterforthearts.com***

Music & Taste

When: 6-9 p.m., Thursdays, now-May 15
Where: Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina
Details: This outdoor seasonal event at Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina's Neptune Statue combines local bands with delicious food and drinks. For a complete lineup, visit ***sheltercovehiltonhead.com***.



Street Music on Paris Avenue

Season 33 of Spring Street Music begins this month. Bring your chairs and dancing shoes–all shows start at 6 p.m. in downtown Port Royal. ***portroyal.org***

UPCOMING EVENTS
Austin Reece Band: *May 3*
The Adventures of Matte Black: *May 17*
Piper & The Hard Times: *May 31*

Gullah Geechee Cultural Series: Gullah Me, Gullah You

When: 6:30 p.m., May 6 **Where:** SoundWaves
Details: Don't miss the HHSO cultural series celebrating all things Gullah. This event features Grammy Award-winning vocalist Quiana Parlor of Ranky Tanky. ***hhso.org***

DAILY LIVE MUSIC VENUES

Life is better with music, so why not enjoy live music every day of the week? These are some of our favorite local spots with regular live music this month. Check their websites and Facebook pages for details.

ADDITIONAL VENUES



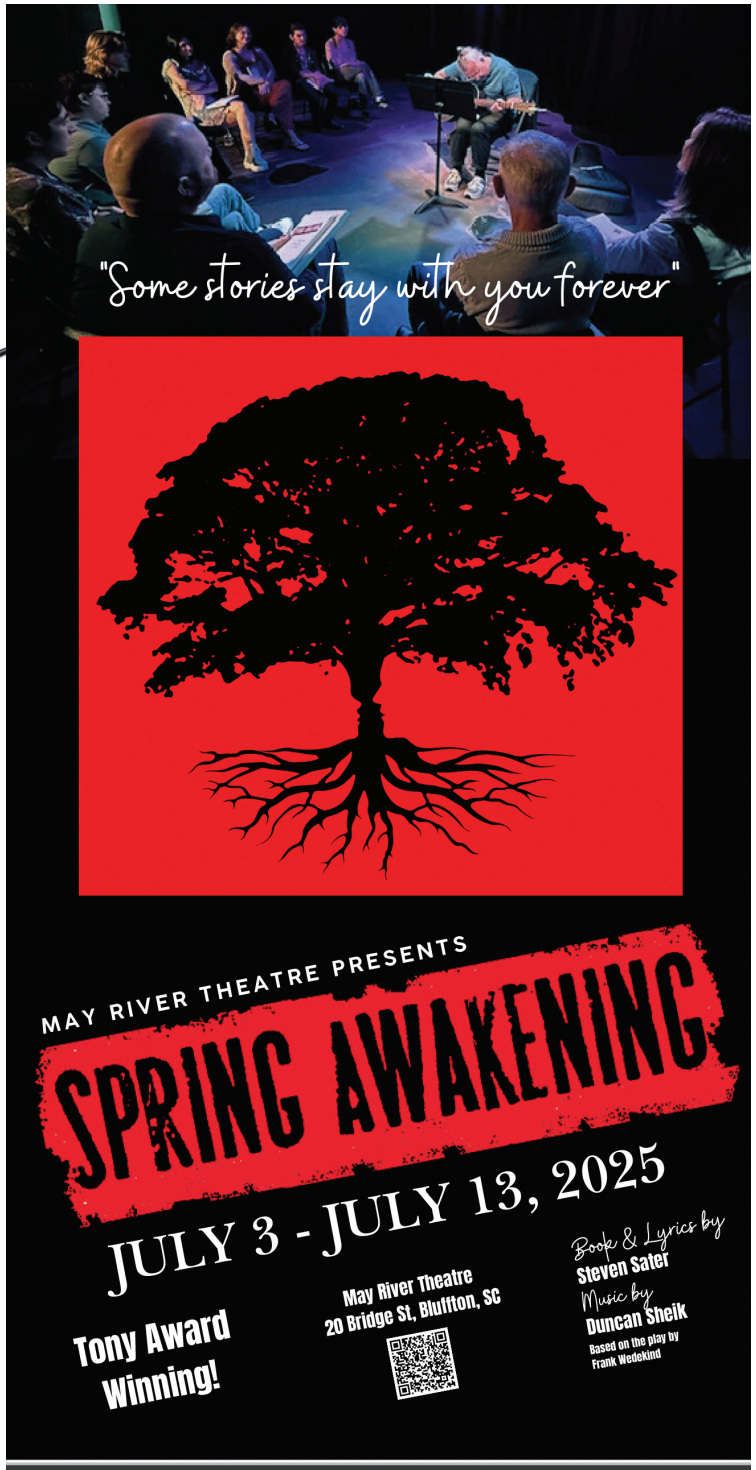


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Frosty Frog
Harbourside
Kind of Blue
Lincoln & South Brewing Company
Luther's Rare & Well Done
Quarterdeck
Ruby Lee's
Scott's Fish Market
Skull Creek Boathouse
The Boardroom
The Crazy Crab Jarvis Creek
The Jazz Corner
The Salty Dog Cafe
The Sandbar Beach Eats
The Studio
Tiki Hut

OTHER LIVE MUSIC OFFERINGS

A Lowcountry Backyard Restaurant (Mondays-Fridays)
Agave (Thursdays-Saturdays)
Big Bamboo Cafe (Mondays-Saturdays)
Black Marlin Bayside Grill & Hurricane Bar (Wednesdays-Saturdays)
Bluffton Oyster Co. Family Seafood House (Fridays & Saturdays)
Burnt Church Distillery (Thursdays-Saturdays)
Calhoun Street Tavern (Thursdays-Sundays)
Captain Woody's Bluffton (Tuesdays)
Carolina Crab Company (Sundays)
Celeste (Fridays & Saturdays)
Cheap Seats Tavern 2 (Fridays)
Chophouse 119 (Fridays)
CocoNutz Sports Bar (Fridays)
Fishcamp on Broad Creek (Tuesdays-Sundays)
Hilton Head Brewing Co. (Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays)
Hilton Head Tavern (Mondays & Tuesdays)
Hop Dog (Fridays)
Island Winery (Fridays)
Local Pie (Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays)
Luther's Rare & Well Done (Thursdays-Saturdays)
Nectar Farm Kitchen in Old Town Bluffton (Fridays-Sundays)
Okàn (Thursdays and Saturdays)
Pomodori Too! (Thursdays-Saturdays)
Red Fish (Tuesdays-Saturdays)
Reilley's Grill & Bar (Wednesdays-Fridays)
Rollers Wine & Spirits (Tuesdays & Thursdays)
San Miguel's (Thursdays-Saturdays)
Santa Fe Cafe (Tuesdays-Saturdays)
Shellring Ale Works (Fridays-Sundays)
Sprout Momma: (Wednesdays & Fridays)
Sundown Saloon (Saturdays)
The Clubhouse at Okatie Creek (Mondays-Thursdays)
The Rooftop Bar at Poseidon (Wednesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays)
The Westin Hilton Head Island Resort & Spa (Every third Friday)
Tio's Latin American Kitchen Bluffton (Fridays & Sundays)
Top Dog Tavern & Pizzeria (Wednesdays)
UnCorked Wine, Bar, Food, and Music (Tuesdays-Saturdays)
Zunzibar (Mondays-Thursdays)







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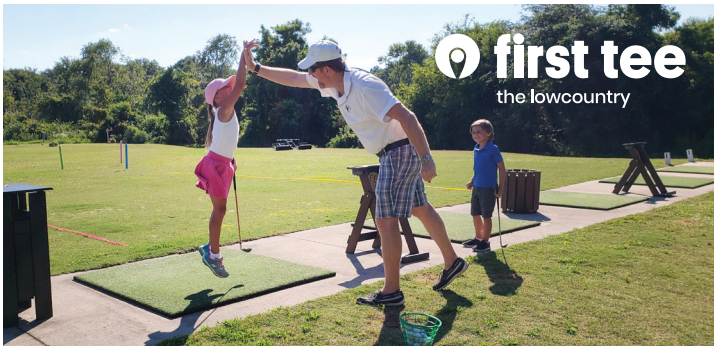
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539 William Hilton Parkway, Hilton Head • 843-255-7303 • gullahcelebration.org



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 lend you a set at no charge.

151 Gumtree Road, HHI • firstteelowcountry.org/about/facility/



THAI SMILE CUISINE is Hilton Head's go-to spot for authentic Thai flavors, featuring classics like Pad Thai, drunken noodles and massaman curry. Owned by Chef Kanlaya and her husband Sawat, their dishes bring the essence of Thailand to life with fresh herbs and traditional recipes passed down through generations. **LOCAL Life Insider Tip:** Inspired by family recipes, bringing Thailand's flavors from kitchen to table.

11 Palmetto Bay Road, HHI • 843-715-3492 • ThaiSmileCuisine.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.



OMBRA CUCINA ITALIANA Ombra is dedicated to bringing to you the finest and freshest fish and seafood from local markets. It prides itself on homemade pastas and the finest selection of meat dishes such as veal chops and filet mignon cooked to your perfect temp. They also offer an amazing array of Italian and California wines. **LOCAL Life Insider Tip:** Ombra hosts special events to entice and engage foodies.

1000 William Hilton Pkwy, Hilton Head • 843-842-5505 • ombrahhi.com



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TOOMERS' BLUFFTON SEAFOOD HOUSE It's blue crab season! Enjoy them at Toomer's Bluffton Seafood House, or order them fresh while they last from Bluffton Oyster House. The Toomer family has harvested Lowcountry waters since 1913 and serves high-quality, locally sourced seafood. **LOCAL Life Insider Tip:** Always call ahead. Catering is available. Online at blufftonoyster.com.

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DIRECTED BY TARA JEANNE VALLEE

APRIL 23 – JUNE 1

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When a baking contest offers her a chance at escape, Jenna must weigh her commitments against a rare shot at freedom. Featuring music and lyrics by Grammy Award-Winner Sara Bareilles, *Waitress* celebrates dreams, the family we choose, and the beauty of a well-baked pie.

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"WHAT'S INSIDE"
"I DIDN'T PLAN IT"
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Where the wild ponies wandered



Little Horse Island

For over 50 years, a herd of semi-wild marsh ponies, a mix of Carolina marsh tacky and Shetland pony, roamed freely across Little Horse Island near St. Helena Island. Small but spirited, they grazed with the tides and easily navigated pluff mud that would have trapped larger breeds. In November the herd was rounded up and relocated to nearby farms to live out their days in peace. Pictured here is Passion, a beloved buckskin mare and longtime matriarch. Like the rest of the herd, she thrived on a tough diet of land and marsh grasses, one few domestic horses could manage. The photo was taken by St. Helena resident Dr. Venaye P. McGlashan, a retired veterinarian who helped care for the ponies for over a decade.

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