

Charlotte

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2020

HOME

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DESIGNERS
at HOME

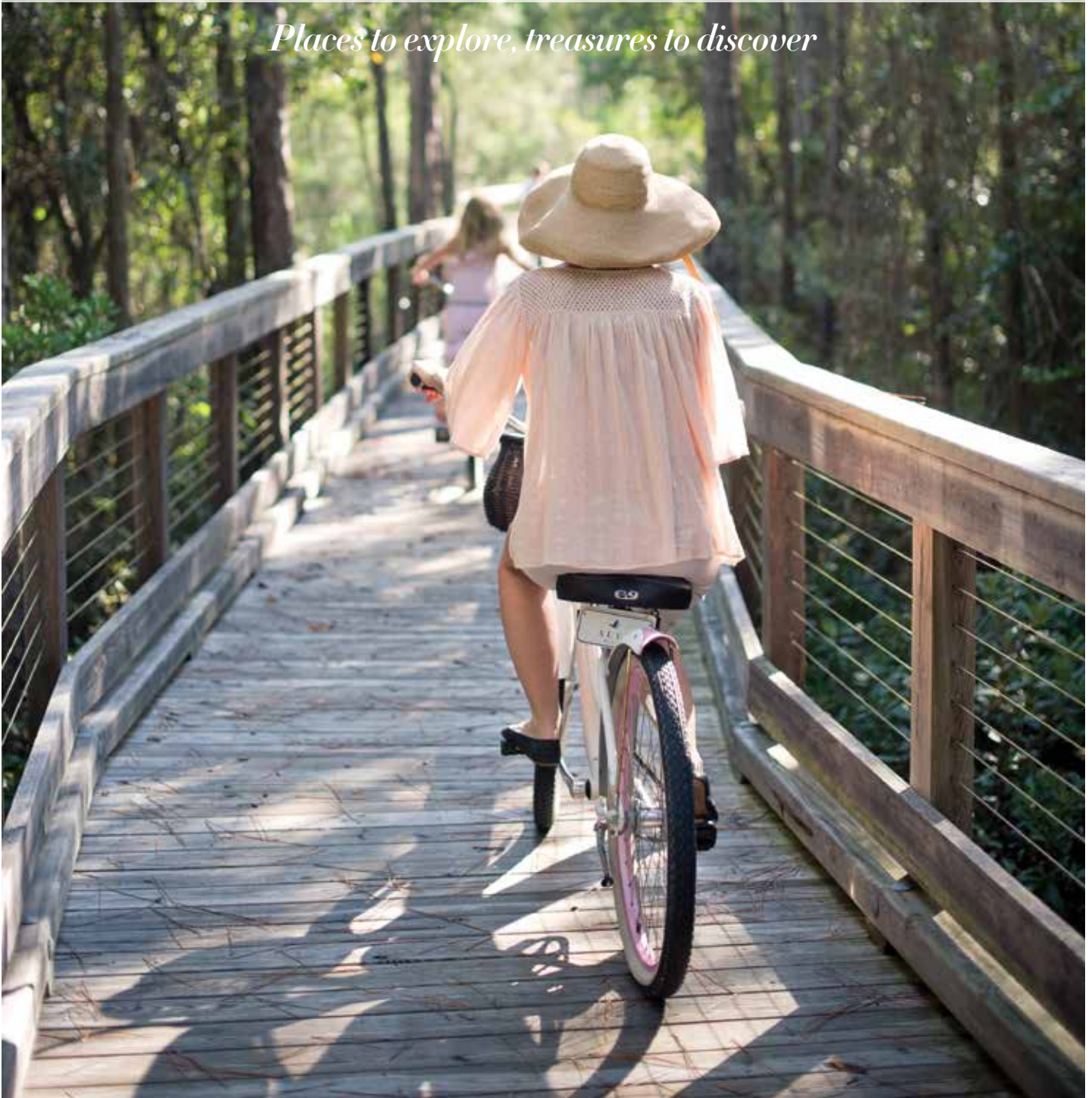
PLUS:
ONE-ROOM
REVAMPS

ON THE MARKET



OFF & AWAY

Places to explore, treasures to discover



Courtesy of Alys Beach.

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OFF *the* COAST

Produced by Blake Miller

The Southeast is chock-full of quaint coastal towns that are often overshadowed by their bigger, more popular neighbors. But if you want to get away without hopping on a plane, these four seaside cities are within driving distance and ideal for families and couples alike. Brimming with breweries and wine bars, upscale shopping, local art galleries, and luxury accommodations with expansive ocean views, these destinations will make you want to never leave the South for vacation.



ALYS BEACH, FLORIDA

With its stark-white buildings flaunting hip roofs and its emerald-green waters peeking through, this 158-acre Southern town could easily be mistaken for a Greek island or Bermuda. But this is Florida's panhandle, along Highway 30A and the Gulf of Mexico. Park the car and use your own two legs to get around, both on sand and land. —*Kristine Hansen*

STAY

While there's no official hotel in Alys Beach, that only means you get to "live like a local" by booking a vacation home. (Book at alysbeach.com.) All mimic the town's aesthetics with white exteriors, blue or green shutters, and dark-wood accents—with Moorish influences. Private courtyards with kitchens a few yards away are modeled after those in Guatemala and Antigua. Perfect for families to spread out (or a group of girlfriends), most homes offer between two and five bedrooms, although a few one-bedroom, one-bath properties appeal to the design-obsessed wanting solo-cations. Some homes are pet-friendly.

EAT

Kids love **Charlie's Donuts**, a converted Sunbeam bread truck serving donuts prepared 1920s style—hand-rolled, dipped, and filled—until they run out. For a more grownup vibe, drop into **NEAT** in the afternoons and evenings for wine, beer, and inventive cocktails such as Little Emperor, with gin and lemon-rosemary flavors. Pair the drinks with savory and sweet nibbles, from Prosciutto di Parma to truffles. Close out the night at **Caliza** over dishes like crispy Spanish octopus or black grouper pozole, and finish with a slice of key lime pie.



DO

From scoring billowy dresses, handcrafted palm bags, and gold pendant necklaces at **Alys Shoppe** to hiking at the town's twenty-acre nature preserve, there's something for everyone. Beach bums can find bliss on the private beach, and an elevated wooden boardwalk cuts through slash pine and cypress trees. Plenty of green spaces and courtyards, including a courtyard that's home to *Alberta*, Sonia Ebling's sculpture, are ideal spots to curl up with a good book or watch the kids run around. Embark on two-wheeled fun by renting a bicycle from **The Bike Shop** or further explore the waterfront in a kayak or stand-up paddleboard.

BLUFFTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

It's hard to believe that just a short drive from busy Hilton Head is a quiet, sleepy town where palm tree-lined alleyways shadow quaint storefronts and cozy coffee shops and art galleries. But that's exactly what Bluffton is. Often overlooked because of its more popular oceanfront neighbor, Bluffton is the antithesis to the busyness of Hilton Head. —Blake Miller



Montage Palmetto Bluff



Wilson Village at Montage Palmetto Bluff

STAY

If you want to be in the heart of Bluffton, book a room at the **Old Town Bluffton Inn**. Located on May River Road, this boutique property oozes Southern charm with its Lowcountry architecture and traditional interiors. But for a luxury escape, head to the **Montage Palmetto Bluff**. Set on 20,000 pristine acres, the Montage property features a variety of accommodations, from private May River-view cottages and luxury vacation homes to elegantly appointed hotel suites. montagehotels.com/palmettobluff

EAT

Formerly the executive chef at Palmetto Bluff, Brandon Carter now helms the kitchen at **FARM** in downtown Bluffton. Sunday brunch is a must here. (Get the Bloody Mary. You won't be disappointed.) Featuring locally sourced ingredients, FARM's menu is full of Lowcountry favorites with an elevated twist, such as shrimp & grits, buttermilk fried chicken, and

brown butter cornbread. For lunch, request a table on the oversized porch nearby **The Cottage Café, Bakery & Tea Room**. This lovingly restored circa-1868 home in the heart of Bluffton's art district serves up classic Southern fare as well as New American cuisine.

DO

Downtown Bluffton boasts numerous art galleries such as **La Petite Gallerie, Maye River Gallery**, and Lowcountry photographer **Ben Hamm**, whose works are a refreshing (and breathtaking) snapshot of Southern landscapes. After a day of shopping downtown (don't miss **Spartina 449**, which showcases resort-style women's clothing and accessories—think Lilly Pulitzer and Simply Southern-inspired attire), explore Palmetto Bluff by bike and travel the shaded bike paths that wind through the property.



Downtown Bluffton Shops

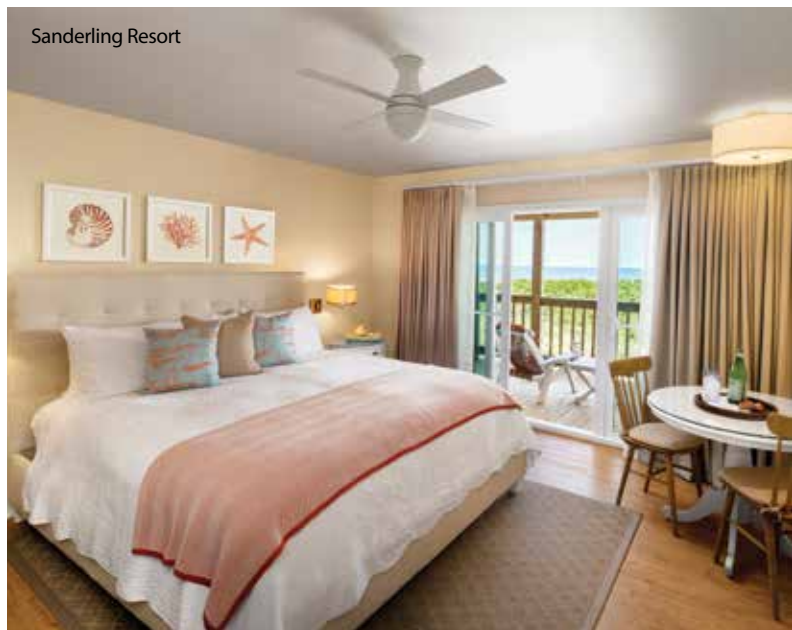
COURTESY OF MONTAGE PALMETTO BLUFF; COURTESY OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU.

DUCK, NORTH CAROLINA

Perhaps lesser known than neighboring Corolla Beach, Duck has plenty to offer travelers looking to get the most out of a trip to the Outer Banks. Though a small town, Duck's low-key nautical vibe will delight and relax, and it offers a swath of restaurants, outdoor activities, shops, and more. —Rachel Chernaskey



Duck Donuts



Sanderling Resort

STAY

The oceanfront **Sanderling Resort** feels welcoming and comfortable, like a visit to your family's beach house. In the main hall's upstairs lounge, you'll find a surplus of puzzles, books, and games to play while you gaze out at the ocean. Outside, make s'mores by the family-style fire pit or listen to the waves from lounge chairs overlooking the water. On a free afternoon, spend the day at the resort's spa and salon, which is located right on the Currituck Sound and offers steam rooms and boutique sitting areas where you can sip tea in-between services. sanderling-resort.com

EAT

The quaint town of Duck has a plethora of great spots to eat, starting with the Sanderling's **Lifesaving Station**, where the pecan waffle with maple-butter pancakes served with Vermont maple syrup is a must. For casual Southern-inspired fare, head to **Red Sky Cafe**, where you'll find small plates like burrata salad and fried green tomatoes and duck with chili-spiced

marmalade. A visit to the beach means seafood, so **Roadside Bar & Grill** is a must. You'll nosh on creamy clam chowder topped with scallions, lobster mac and cheese, a classic fish sandwich, and other seafood-centric bites. Finally, a trip to the Outer Banks would be incomplete without a visit to the original **Duck Donuts** for a perfectly cakey, hot-off-the-griddle donut topped with powdered sugar, glazes, and a number of other toppings like caramel and bacon.

SHOP

Spend a lazy afternoon perusing the book-lined walls of **Duck's Cottage** or **Island Bookstore**, which is located inside a lovely two-story cottage. Afterward, head to **SeaDragon & Yellowhouse Gallery**, which sells handmade goods and art pieces. For local candies and sweets, stock up on local wine, fudges, and saltwater taffy at **Candy & Corks** while picking up souvenirs, artisanal soaps, colorful tee shirts, and nautical trinkets.

DO

Get out and explore Duck's natural scenery by taking a beach cruiser, a



tandem bike, or even a three-wheeler from **Duck Cycle**. (Baby seats are available for little ones.) If the water is more your speed, visit **Outer Banks Boat Tours** for a tranquil trip out onto the water to watch the sunset. Or cruise to **Sanctuary Vineyards**, where you'll cross Wright Brothers Farm, which dates back to the 1800s, for a vineyard tour and a private wine tasting. For an activity that's especially filled with nature, check out **Outer Banks Kayak Adventures** for a Bioluminescence Full Moon Night Tour, where, if you're lucky, you'll catch the natural phenomenon of bioluminescence lighting up the waves.

COURTESY OF SANDERLING RESORT; COURTESY OF OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU.

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

With its picturesque views of the Chesapeake Bay, cobblestoned historic streets, and booming arts scene, Norfolk is the perfect destination for those searching for a relaxing weekend in a walkable city. Fresh seafood, locally farmed fare, and craft breweries reflect a dynamic dining destination, while world-class museums and galleries showcase the city's rich culture. —Sarah Crosland



STAY

Housed in a historic 1912 building just a few blocks from the water, the newly opened **Glass Light Hotel & Gallery** is part boutique hotel, part art gallery. Inside, you'll find stunning works from well-known artists such as Dale Chihuly and Lino Tagliapietra—and be sure to look for the playful oversized bunnies by renowned artist Peter Bremers around the lobby. The rooms are spacious and filled with natural light, featuring curated decor designed to give them the feeling of an artist's studio, but luxurious touches like Illy in-room coffee, plush Frette linens, and fragrant Nest bath products leave little doubt you're in an upscale hotel.

EAT

Plan on at least one dinner at the **Glass Light's** own lounge and restaurant. This opulent space featuring a backlit glass wall and oversized orb lights draws a stylish crowd. At the helm in the kitchen is Serge Gouloumes, a Michelin-starred French chef whose signature dishes include a slow-cooked farm egg topped with delicate truffle

shavings and a decadent foie gras apple tatin. Other spots to stop on your tour around town include **Grain**, a casual rooftop restaurant with views of the harbor and an impressive craft beer list, and **Café Milo**, a small but beautiful café where a couple from Manhattan serve up tasty sandwiches, salads, and bowls across the street from the Chrysler Museum.

DO

After a stroll past the historic stately homes in the Waterside Freemason District, pop into **Spruce Home + Design**. This bright and airy retail shop and design studio is filled with stylish furniture, home accessories, and colorful art. And be sure to wander through **Selden Market**. Housed in a historic arcade downtown, this innovative market hosts pop-up storefronts ranging from vintage clothing and retro home



decor to handmade leather goods and African art. Home to the U.S. Navy's Atlantic Fleet, no trip to Norfolk is complete without learning a little about its naval history. For a quick lesson, stop into **Nauticus**, the waterside maritime museum where you can tour the **Battleship Wisconsin**. Or, to see the Naval Station itself, climb aboard the **Victory Rover Cruise**, which sets sail to the base for an up-close look at destroyers, submarines, and more.