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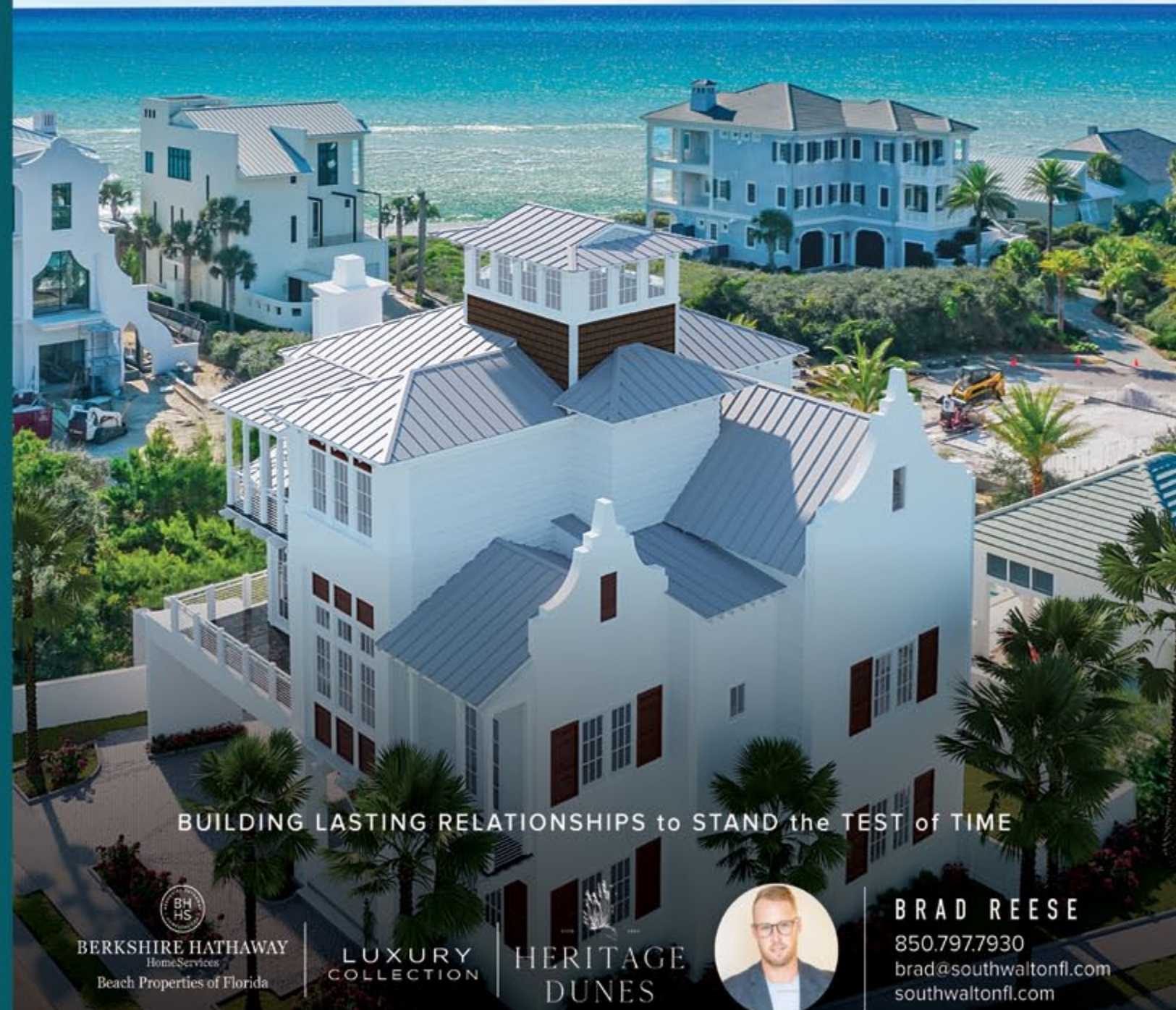


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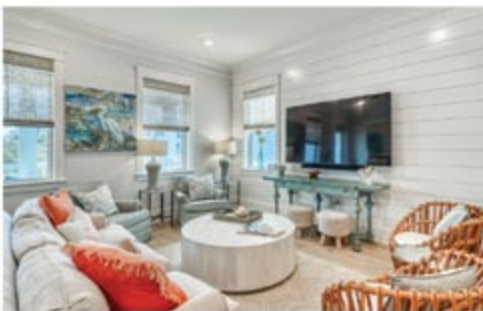
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Buying a Beach Home?

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THE 30A GUY

LETTER FROM

I write this letter from Dongtan Beach in a little community in eastern Thailand known as Jomtien, just over the mountain from the rowdy and raucous Pattaya scene, which seems to be slowly flickering back to pre-pandemic life.

At first, I misread “Dongtan” on Google Maps as “Dogtan,” which made infinite sense to me, given the sheer number of dogs running (and lounging) around this quiet little beach community. They’re everywhere, and for the most part, they all appear healthy and good-natured. I’m sure some of them are street dogs, but many sport collars and a few are even on leashes as their owners walk them under the shade of the trees along the brutally hot beaches. So for the purposes of my story, the “n” in Dongtan Beach is silent.

We’ve been on my work-cation for just over five weeks now, and one morning about two weeks ago, we learned that one of our beloved dogs, Cosmo, passed away back home. Angela’s parents were taking care of Cosmo and Ernie for us, at our home in Walton County, Florida, and well, Cosmo just had some kind of seizure or heart attack, and our little buddy is gone. He was older and not in great health (a few too many treats), but of course, we still thought we had more time. We always do, right?

Obviously, this would have been a difficult thing to deal with had we been there in person, and I hate that my in-laws had to go through it, and then had to deliver the terrible news to us by phone. Of course, it was hard to deal with the feelings of loss we’ve had from so far away, especially for Angela, who thinks of Cosmo and Ernie as our kids.

Even so, I was very proud of how well Angela handled this awful situation. But there were still moments when the floodgates would open

uncontrollably, and I knew she was carrying the great weight of “what if,” and the natural feeling that she “should have been there for him.”

Yesterday morning, here in Dongtan Beach, Angela woke up crying. I asked her why, and she would only say that she had a nightmare. She didn’t want to talk about it. Throughout the day though, as we visited teak temples and the like, I could tell she was distant and depressed, so I pressed her once again to help me better understand what she was going through.

Apparently, in her dream, I showed Angela a photo of Cosmo, and I asked her if she wanted to hold him one last time. Of course, she said yes. She said she held onto the picture for a minute, and then the photo suddenly transformed into the real Cosmo. She was able to hold him and love on him. After a few minutes though, Cosmo suddenly spoke to her. “I’m okay, Mommy,” he said. Then, he simply disappeared.

“BEST. DREAM. EVER,” I told Angela, trying my darndest to hold back my own waterworks. That wasn’t a nightmare – that was such a wonderful, wonderful gift! And indeed he was.

Unfortunately, life rarely plays out like we want, hope or expect. But sometimes, just sometimes, dreams do.

Rest in peace, Cosmo!
We’ll be home soon...

Mike

Mike Ragdale
Founder, The 30A Company



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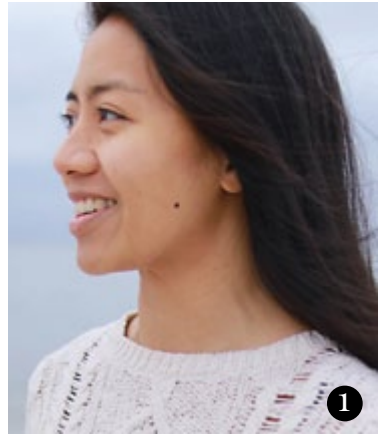
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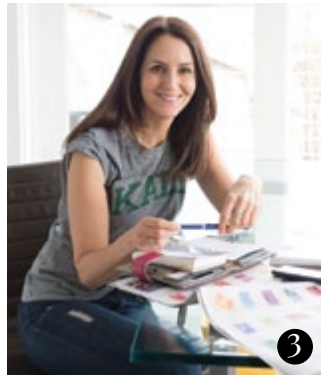
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3



4



5

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6



Painting by Tony Winters.

7



On the Cover:
Kelly Slater at the Banzai Pipeline.
Photographed by Brian Biemann.

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By Carrie Honaker
Photos: Cal + Aly

TAKE US TO THE BEACH, BOYS.

You don't need money to have a good time. You just need LOCASH.

Back in Kokomo, Indiana, Preston Brust grew up creating memories with a bunch of buddies known as the low-cash money boys. Surrounded by woods and rural landscapes, the pseudo fraternity found fun with the resources they had. When Brust and fellow DJ Chris Lucas hooked up later in Nashville, Brust brought Lucas home to meet the low-cash money boys and fate stepped in. After hanging out with Brust's buddies, Lucas suggested they could take this concept to Nashville and be the low-cash guys of country music. After all, "the best things in life are free. And it's really not about money. It's low cash," said Brust. Or LOCASH.

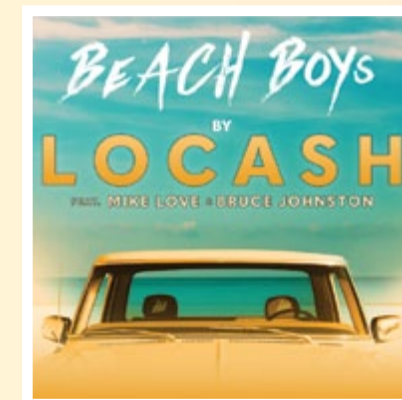
What started as admiration became a full-fledged partnership as the pair co-wrote songs for big-name country music stars. But when one of those songs recorded by Keith Urban flew up the charts to number one, they knew they were on to something.

"That moment was defining for our hearts. We wrote so many songs, basically for ourselves, and then suddenly, one of the songs fell into Keith's hands," said Brust. "Not only does he love it, but he records it. He puts it on his album. He makes it a single, and then it goes all the way to number one for two weeks. It just turned our world upside down in a good way."

A few months later, that success was followed by Tim McGraw recording their song "Truck Yeah," the highest debut single of McGraw's career. The pair were writing music that worked on country radio so they dug in and recorded their own song "I Love This Life."

"It started going up the charts like the little train that could, one spot up on the chart one week at a time until it got all the way to the top and rang the bell for us," said Brust. "That was the big moment."

That single brought them out from the songwriter background onto air waves and stages across the country. Critical acclaim with nominations for Duo of the Year from ACM, CMA, and CMT, along with chart-topping hits affirmed the singer-songwriters' rising stardom.



"You know you're actually making music that matters," said Lucas. "There's so many days where you just gotta tighten up the boots a little bit and keep on moving. There's highs and lows and in-betweens, but man, those red carpet moments encapsulate all of that hard work with acceptance by peers and fans."

And they climbed one more mountain (sand dune?) on March 4, 2022, as their single "Beach Boys," recorded with childhood



“
WE WANT
PEOPLE
TO SMILE.
”



heroes – the *actual* Beach Boys – streamed on stations everywhere. Known for their positive, feel-good music, the collaboration was a natural fit.

“Anytime you hear ‘Fun, Fun, Fun,’ or ‘Good Vibrations,’ it puts a smile on your face and lightens the day a little bit,” said Brust. “When we sat down to write a song that day, we thought, why don’t we just marry the idea of country music with Beach Boys harmonies infused with our positive spirit.”

They immersed themselves in Beach Boys culture, leaned into the iconic harmonies, and rode the wave of taking country music to the sandy beach. Then the big test: they sent the song to The Beach Boys hoping for good vibes. They loved it. Next stop was Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where Brust and Lucas set up a studio backstage at a Beach Boys concert and recorded their parts on the song right there. “The rest is history,” said Brust.

The result is a tune that layers rocking country pulse with breezy, surfer optimism and samples The Beach Boys classic “I Get Around” hook. Originally released on their *Woods and Water* EP, this version, written by LOCASH’s Chris Lucas and Preston Brust, collaborating with Dallas Wilson, Jared Mullins, Brian Wilson, and Mike Love and featuring long-time Beach Boys band member Bruce Johnston, transports listeners to sugar-sand beaches with a cooler full of cold ones.

“We had a blast collaborating with Chris [Lucas] and Preston [Brust] of LOCASH!” said The Beach Boys’ Mike Love. “The song is so hooky—I can’t get it out of my head. Country Rock met Surf Rock and created a fun summer hit.”

Ahead of the March 4th release, The Beach Boys invited LOCASH on stage to debut the single at one of their sold-out shows. They played to a full house with the iconic “Good Vibrations” band, including newly anointed drummer John Stamos, everybody’s favorite TV uncle.

“We were at the Ryman Auditorium, which is the mother church for country music,” said Lucas. “The Grand Ole Opry used to be there and we got to be on stage with The Beach Boys. It was one of those moments you never forget.”

LOCASH toured with the Academy of Country Music with another Duo of the Year nomination earlier this year, their fifth ACM career nod, as listeners across the world downloaded their infectious summer anthem, “Beach Boys.”

“Having The Beach Boys on this song is so much fun and pretty surreal for us,” said Brust. “I hope everybody feels the positive spirit we’re trying to bring.”

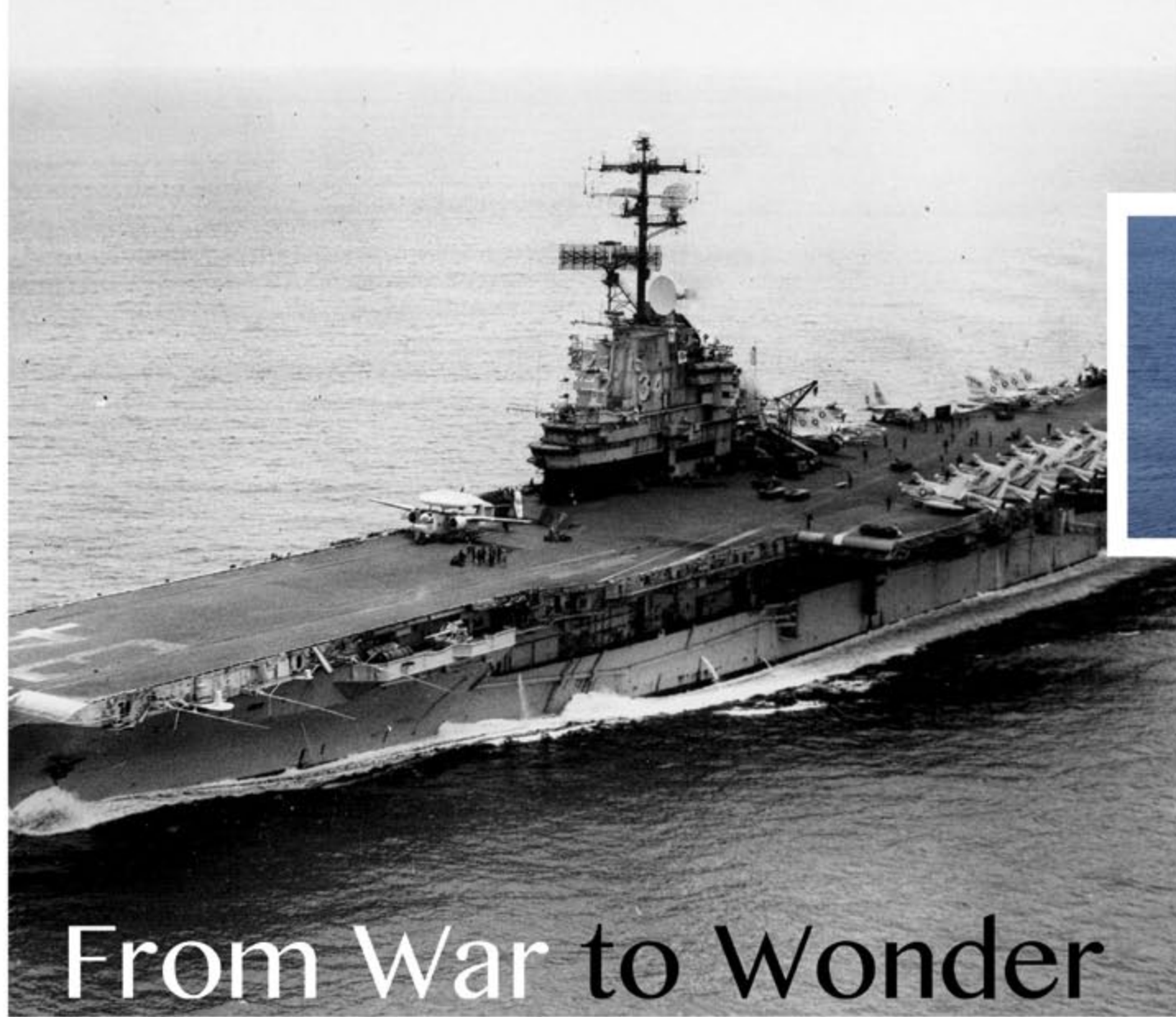
In another dream moment, they paired up once again at Stagecoach Festival in Indio, California, in May 2022. But that wasn’t the only stage they rocked. The duo participated in Guy Fieri’s Stagecoach Smokehouse, creating a signature dish with the celebrity chef. When asked about their favorite cover song, Prince’s “Purple Rain” was the reply. A spontaneous acapella version of the song filled the air, along with a storm of parmesan cheese supplied by Fieri.

What do they hope people get out of their music?

“We want people to smile,” Lucas said. “We want people to know they’re not the only ones out there going through something. Music can bring people together. And that’s what LOCASH is all about.”

To learn more about LOCASH, visit their website (locash.com) and follow them on Instagram ([@locash](https://www.instagram.com/locash)).





From War to Wonder

THE USS ORISKANY PROVIDES LIFE AFTER DEATH

By Susan Gunn
Photos by U.S. Navy, Public domain,
Wikimedia Commons

I will never forget the first time I descended on a big shipwreck as an advanced Public Safety Diver. I remember thinking this must be what it feels like to be in space. I can say first-hand it feels otherworldly to be over 130 feet down beneath the surface of the sea. If you're lucky, you will have a clear view of things you would never encounter topside. Prepare to be greeted and inspected by the environment's diverse inhabitants as they swim up and stare at you before shooting away as if to say, "Welcome, follow me!"



Photo: Jeffrey P. Kraus



When ships are sunk, intentionally or not, they become bastions of the ocean's depths, starting their new careers as artificial reefs.

If you travel by boat roughly twenty six miles southeast of the Pensacola Pass off the coast of Florida, you'll find yourself hovering above the world's largest artificial reef. Beneath a lonely spot marked by a colorful buoy lies the USS Navy Aircraft Carrier Oriskany—and she is formidable.

In her life above the surface, Oriskany earned the nickname "Mighty-O." She was officially laid down at the New York Naval Shipyard in 1944. At the time of construction completion, the Essex-class carrier weighed

The Oriskany took thirty-six minutes to sink to her current resting depth of 212 feet. The flight deck is at 146 feet, and the stack, also known as "the island," sits at 84 feet below the surface. These measurements can fluctuate due to weather systems, strong currents, and bottom surges. The main deck is over three football fields long.

At least forty documented species of fish and marine life now call it home. Thriving on and visiting the wreck are small tropical fish, large game fish, pelagic fish, rays, and various sharks such as hammerheads, bull sharks, and whale sharks. It has been affectionately named "The Great Carrier Reef."

“ I CAN SAY FIRST-HAND IT FEELS OTHERWORLDLY TO BE OVER 130 FEET DOWN BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE SEA. ”

30,800 tons and was 911 feet long. The vessel, named for the 1777 Battle of Oriskany during the American Revolution, was launched on October 13, 1945. She completed twenty five years of service, and was decommissioned in 1976. The carrier was reclaimed by the Navy in 1997 after being sold for scrap in 1995, and it was decided she would be sunk in honor of the men who served aboard her. Extensive preparations for sinking the ship included removal of any materials that might be toxic to the underwater environment, and stripping off insulation and wiring, which could pose entrapment threats to rovers and divers.

It took three years and roughly twenty million dollars to prepare the giant carrier for sinking.

With a total of seven battle stars earned for service in Korea and Vietnam, the Oriskany went from a US decorated warship to an underwater wonder when she was sunk in May 2006.

But because of its location, depth, and size, this wreck is reserved for advanced divers only, and thus earned a third nickname, "The Big Risk." It is not for the faint of heart, and many divers consider it a bucket list dive. There are dive outfits up and down the Northwest Florida coast that will take you to the Oriskany Wreck, but you will need very specific credentials to dive her. Most dive services will have those listed on their websites, but know that you should inquire ahead regarding individual requirements should you decide to brave this beautiful wreck.

Years ago, I was scheduled to dive the Mighty O, but my trip was canceled due to bad weather, so I contacted my friend Walt Hartley, owner of Dive30A. He has been diving for over twenty two years, is a double certified Open Water Dive Instructor and specialties in Emergency First Response Instruction, and full cave diver certifications. He volunteers as the board president for the South Walton Artificial Reef Association (SWARA), and has been diving



Photo: Jeffrey P. Kraus



Photo: Gareth Richards



Photo: Jeffrey P. Kraus

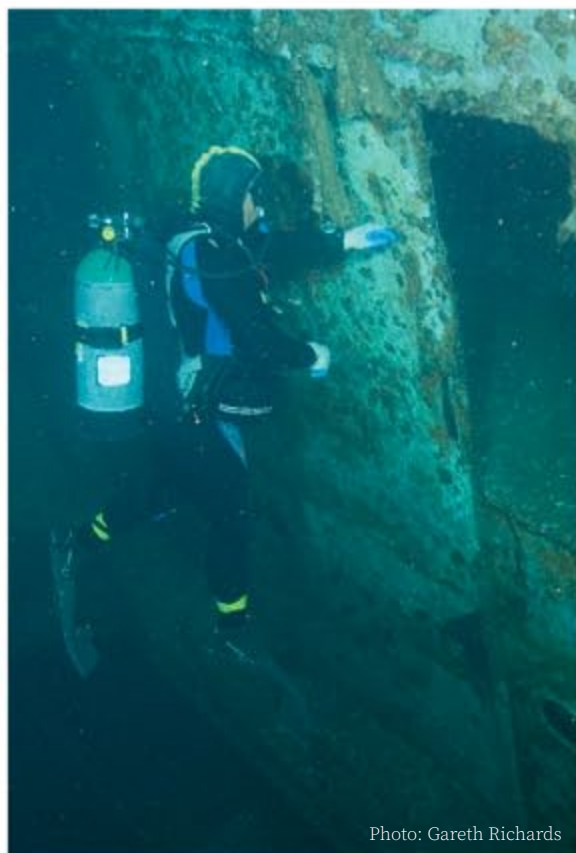


Photo: Gareth Richards



Photo: Greg Grimes

all around the world. Walt has the right stuff. He has been down on the Oriskany five times, and generously agreed to share his memories of what he refers to as “The Everest” of shipwreck dives.

“Descending down the anchor line, sinking into the blue beyond, the superstructure of this enormous ship begins to materialize,” Walt said. “My first dives on the

good bit more training and experience.

“It was on these dives that I really began to perceive the true magnitude and immensity of the Mighty ‘O,’” he recalled. “Using back-mounted doubles full of normoxic trimix (basically a mix of air and helium) plus travel gas and deco bottles, I was able to explore parts of the wreck I wasn’t even aware of before. I glided past the flight deck

“ WE GAZED DOWN AT THE FLIGHT DECK, STILL ANOTHER 30 FEET BELOW US, AND OUR EYES SLOWLY ROSE, FOLLOWING THE HUGE DECK OUTWARD INTO A GHOSTLY COBALT DISTANCE. ”

Oriskany were on air with a single tank. We buzzed the top of the control tower as we descended, slowing to a stop right around 115 feet. We gazed down at the flight deck, still another 30 feet below us, and our eyes slowly rose, following the huge deck outward into a ghostly cobalt distance. The bottom was nowhere in sight and the edge of the ship just faded into the abyss. It felt like we were on the roof of a skyscraper looking out over a city. I turned to either side to check on my teammates and our faces all shared the same sort of hollow expression like, ‘my brain is still processing this’-kind-of-awe. The sheer size and scale of this ship is literally mind-blowing. Even as we spun around to face the tower, we all did a little double-take, looking up and down this gigantic, soaring structure and realizing that this is only the tip of the iceberg.”

A few years later, Walt was able to return to the Oriskany, but this time with mixed gas, more tanks, and a

and gently swooped into the hangar bay — dark, but out of the current — and felt like I was flying an X-wing to the core of the Death Star. Swimming around the ‘screws’ made me think of the Titanic—aircraft carrier props are humongous! Numerous portholes and doorways invite divers into the darkness. It would be easy to get lost exploring what has to be miles of corridors on the inside. But with proper training and the right attitude, you’re in for a truly unforgettable dive.”

The USS Oriskany has truly made her transition from the ravages of war time to an underwater wonderland. In her sixteen years under the surface, living corals and sponges prolifically grow from this behemoth wreck structure, and she sustains so much life. And to this day, with the help of a nice Gulf current, she is still flying her American Flag. 🇺🇸

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MODERN DESIGN WITH A NOSTALGIC NOD



SURFING DEER RESTAURANT



By Carrie Honaker



SEAGROVE, FLORIDA

Ann Hartley's love affair with travel started young. As a child, her mother opened her eyes to the world, whisking her off to exotic places. She saw how large the world was beyond her hometown.

"My mother believed in experiences for her children," said Ann. "In 1969, she took my brother and I to Europe and Africa. As a young girl, going there showed me that there was a world beyond Panama City, a world beyond Florida, and there was a world beyond the United States."

Ever interested in style, Ann started her trajectory with design by working at an upscale clothing boutique as a teenager. That led to college in Texas, her first clothing store in Dallas, and eventually designing a wholesale line of clothing sold around the United States. Through travels back and forth to Indonesia for her business, her global aesthetic was further imprinted.

But it was a summer trip to Grayton Beach, Florida, that cemented Ann's future. Sitting on the beach with her husband and toasting their recently-deceased dads with margaritas, the couple received some life-changing advice from Ann's father's best friend.

"He said, 'If y'all have a dream, you need to live it now,'" Ann remembered. That single comment set a chain of events in motion. Within two weeks, their house in Dallas was rented, they moved to



HOW THE SURFING DEER GOT ITS NAME

In 1949, a man named C.H. McGee purchased 160 acres of Gulf of Mexico coastline in Walton County, Florida. It wasn't an easy transaction. McGee spent 18 months visiting the owner, J. R. Moody, at his farm, sharing home-cooked meals and persistently asking him to sell him some of that sugar white sand. McGee's son, Cube, always accompanied him on these visits.

With the land finally secured, McGee began a letter writing campaign describing Seagrove as a hidden paradise where life was only interrupted by the sounds of nesting birds and ocean waves lapping the shore. He built five houses, and the county promised a paved road to access Highway 98. At the time, McGee began developing Seagrove; there was no post office, no telephones, and no grocery store.

McGee carefully planned the burgeoning community to protect it from overdevelopment—he wanted to attract families looking for a unique vacation experience. He built a general store to supply visitors with necessities. This later became Seagrove Village Market, the Hartley's first business along Scenic Highway 30A. Newspaper and postal services were arranged, and until 1958, all phone service happened at Alfred Barrett's filling station on Highway 98, the site of the nearest payphone.

Cube McGee grew up amidst the transformation of this wilderness into a destination location, and he adopted his father's dream. When a visitor had an emergency, he would get dressed and head to the payphone. Water came in the form of a windmill-powered well, often resulting in leaks. But in 1979, things began to change. Cube facilitated infrastructure in Seagrove, appearing before the Public Service Commission in Tallahassee.



Cube was widely known for his adventures with his pet deer, Bambi. They could often be seen playing in the surf when Seagrove Beach was just a few houses and a dream of paradise. As homage to these early beginnings and to the vision of McGee, the Hartleys named their restaurant Surfing Deer.

Florida, sold Ann's store, and bought the Seagrove Village Market. "We built that business one happy customer at a time, just loving on people, building relationships, having great products, and being a part of the community."

That's the same philosophy they've approached each of their businesses with, including Surfing Deer, which was originally slated to be a boutique hotel. They never intended to get into the restaurant business. But once they did, they realized how the community along Scenic Highway 30A was evolving from its rural beginnings to a destination that travelers from all over the world were discovering. The Hartleys wanted to meet that global palate.

"We wanted those influences on our menu and in our decor," said Ann. "We love how Surfing Deer has a South Beach vibe on the outside but coastal woodsy on the inside with a nod to Old Seagrove and the great stories here."

The original Seagrove signage, a large-scale lush tropical mural, and a vintage photo of legendary Seagrove local named Cube McGee posing with his pet deer bring the nostalgia. The refined interior with its ocean-colored tile and frosted kitchen wall push up against the steel and glass modernity of the exterior.

Ever the entrepreneur, Ann later embarked on yet another venture to feed her passion for other cultures.

"I was in Paris with my daughter on her 16th birthday, and I was walking the streets missing my creative ventures and saying a prayer to God to help me figure out what to do, when inspiration struck," said Ann. When she got home, she put together a

brochure advertising guided shopping trips to Paris where she could show others what she loved about the city. That led to jaunts to Marrakech and other far-flung outposts.

"I would help them make arrangements, pick them up at their hotel in the mornings, then deliver them back about seven o'clock at night," she said. "It satisfied a creative itch in me because I was showing them things that made my heart pitter-patter. It wasn't just fashion. It was cooking and it was chocolates; it was the markets and antique textiles and all kinds of experiences."

Bits of Ann's wanderlust can be seen in the global food on the menu at Surfing Deer as well, but Chef Gregg Smith is the master at the helm of those Instagram-worthy dishes.

"I heard of the clothesline bacon idea out of New York, but the presentation wasn't what I wanted," said Chef Gregg. "I'm kind of a handyman, so I started working on a vessel. Now the bacon hangs over Southern peas with pickled peaches for a little acid. We made it more Southern by adding a sweet tea glaze to the bacon and serving it with these little sweet potato biscuits." The dish balances sweet with smoke, tang with creaminess, and delicate with robust, but the final touch of torching the sprig of rosemary tableside stuns.

Chef Gregg's penchant for global flavors extends to dishes like the snapper studded with sesame and coconut, drizzled with Thai peanut sauce, and served with a razor-thin pear salad. It is a balance

of sweet, heat, crunch, and acid, but it is also a visual masterpiece of delicate cuts and vibrant colors.

"I want to build the presentation so when the plate hits the table, people think, 'Wow, that looks delicious,'" said Gregg. "I don't want to be over-composed, but I like to put a cool aspect or ingredient on the plate that people may not have seen or heard of before."

Valet parking, enormous glass doors, and hewn driftwood entryway benches are the first indicator. White tablecloth-covered tables, perfectly coursed dishes, and Hall (Ann and George's son and the GM) checking on each table personally seal it. Surfing Deer elevates the dining experience on 30A. 🍷

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SEX ON THE BEACH

IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE TO GET LOST IN THE MOMENT, BUT, ER, DON'T. THERE ARE LAWS IN PLACE THAT CAN HARSH YOUR MELLOW...

Those images of cabana curtains stirring in the breeze, heated skin and scant clothing, the benign sun sparkling the waves...it sounds like a scene out of a romance novel.

And indeed, there's something about a spell on the beach that often stirs the spirit in a special way. But back to romantic entanglements. Remember that famous scene from the 1953 film *From Here to Eternity* where Burt Lancaster and Deborah Kerr kiss and frolic on the beach while the waves crash around them? The then risqué but now classic scene, full of overt crashing wave symbolism, was filmed at Halona Beach Cove on the Hawaiian island of Oahu (and is still a spot for film buffs to visit). The couple's embrace is simulated sex, implied sex, or whatever variation we want to imagine. But most important to note: Burt and Deborah keep their swimsuits glued on, with nary a bathing suit strap slipping off a bronzed shoulder or a waistband slipping down taut abs.

Fast forward to 2022, and the message hasn't changed one iota. You can roll around on the beach, make out, canoodle, maybe even rub sunscreen on naked breasts or thonged buttocks, but JUST SAY NO when it comes to having actual sex. And it doesn't depend on what your definition of "it" is. If your "bathing suit" area is exposed and in action, you'll

By Helen Mitsios

most likely soon have an attorney on speed dial, not to mention that if a minor sees you, you can permanently add sex offender to your CV.

Let's take a look more closely at some of the laws that prohibit sex on the beach. In Florida, for example, where beaches abound, laws vary from misdemeanor to felony. Florida law "prohibits the exposure or exhibition of ones' sexual organs in a public place, or in a private locale that is visible to the public" in a "vulgar or indecent manner." Not a debate you want to get into, but it does beg the question, who's defining vulgar and indecent?

This is a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable by up to one year in jail (!) or a \$1000 fine. Now for some folks, a \$1K fine might be worth the pleasure of having one's jollies on the beach, especially if the risk of exposure is part of the thrill. But think twice — a few years ago, a couple was filmed while having sex on the beach in view of a four-year-old. The couple escaped a potential fifteen-year jail sentence only after a plea deal was struck for two and a half years of imprisonment.

In California, famously considered one of the more progressive states, laws of old are still in place. The law states that "sex in public is not a crime in California unless someone saw you or was likely to see you and was offended by the conduct." This leaves some room for interpretation, or as some attorneys call it, "a wobbler."

If someone sees you but is not offended and/or does not make a report to the authorities, then there's no problem. However, for people caught in the act, Penal Code 647(a) applies and makes it a crime "to engage in or to solicit anyone to engage in lewd or dissolute conduct in any public place or in any

place open to the public or exposed to public view." Six months in jail and a fine up to \$1000 is standard.

Moving on to lesser fines, the state of Georgia considers sex on the beach a misdemeanor. Again, if a frolicking couple is observed by a minor — that's anyone under 18 remember — harsher penalties do ensue.

In the Hamptons, sex on the beach was brought under control on one of the most scenic beaches in the town of East Hampton. Undercover police strolled the beach and made arrests for "lewd behavior" (which included urinating on the beach and any sexual activity, including oral sex, even if participants were partially

Furthermore, the firm advises, "there is a gray area regarding what constitutes indecent exposure. Being unclothed away from civilization, like swimming in a lake, would rarely, if ever bring a charge of indecent exposure."

Regarding private beaches, they're not as private as one might think. Like any beach, your private beach instantly transforms to non-private if sexual activity can be viewed by others, and penalties will most likely be issued. In fact, all northeastern states are consistent when it comes to sex on the beach, which is classified as lewd behavior, or worse. Connecticut criminal lawyer Allan F. Friedman informs, it "is even possible to be charged with this crime for exposing

"SIX MONTHS IN JAIL AND A FINE UP TO \$1000 IS STANDARD."

clothed). Nearby residents have since hired a private security firm to walk the beaches and videotape sexual activity that's then sent on to police authorities.

In New York, like other states, the waters are murky when it comes to sex on the beach or elsewhere. If children observe the activity, the transgression escalates, yet it's otherwise deemed a misdemeanor. Stephen Bilkis law firm states that "a lewd act is a term used to describe any activity considered to be indecent when performed in public. A lewd act typically involves exposure of private or intimate parts to the public accompanied by behavior which is meant to provide sexual arousal."

yourself in your own house if you were standing in front of a window that is facing the street." The state of Maine considers sex on the beach as a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail. Somewhat unusually, Maine brings bestiality into it, covering all bases, presumably.

Rhode Island is stringent when it comes to sex on the beach and any other public place. Attorney John L. Calcagni tells us, "The first offense is a misdemeanor and has a penalty of imprisonment for up to one (1) year, or a fine up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or both."

In New Hampshire, Citizen Count



WHAT'S AN AMOROUS BEACH-LOVING PERSON TO DO?

“ indicates that ordinance RSA 47:17:XIII maintains public order “to restrain and punish vagrants, mendicants, street beggars, strolling musicians, and common prostitutes, and all kinds of immoral and obscene conduct, and to regulate the times and places of bathing and swimming in the canals, rivers and other waters of the city, and the clothing to be worn by bathers and swimmers.”

In Massachusetts, an unclothed romp on the beach can be classified as “open and gross lewdness and lascivious behavior.” Attorney Stephen J. Topazio informs, “A man or woman, married or unmarried, who is guilty of open and gross lewdness and lascivious behavior, shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than three years or in jail for not more than two years or by a fine of not more than three hundred dollars.” Jail must be worse than prison in MA.

What’s an amorous beach-loving person to do? Perhaps pitch a cabana in the sand, though an internet search doesn’t yield results for any four-walled tent or cabanas. A safe bet might be to take your vacation outside of the United States. Of the nude beaches in foreign countries, perhaps the most famous one where sex is tolerated are Cap D’Adge in France and La Mirage Swingers Complex on Spain’s Gran Canaria

island. In fact, the renowned French novelist Michel Houellebecq devotes a few chapters of his novel *Atomized* to a place modeled after Cap D’Adge, where everything under the sun, so to speak, goes.

Other foreign possibilities might include Germany, where it’s legal to have sex in public as long as one is clothed. Exposed sex risks a fine of 150 euros, which is the cost of a good meal for two somewhere nice.

The United States continues to use the term “lewd and lascivious acts,” which originates from 15th century English courts and sex on the beach is a nationwide crime if the couple is viewed by another party. It seems safe to say that amorous beach encounters are better left to fantasy. For those who prefer the in-real-life option, the best bet is to hop on a plane to Europe and head to a swinger’s beach. Or a German one.

With so many shades of gray when it comes to legalities, the bottom-line is, don’t risk doing it on the beach! Just take a quick dash to a fully enclosed premises — note that cars do not count as enclosed — and make your way to that lovely hotel room with, yes, a view of the beach. 🏖️





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Riding The Wave

SURFER-TURNED-PHOTOGRAPHER BRIAN BIELMANN HAS CAPTURED LIFE ABOVE AND UNDERWATER FOR MORE THAN THREE DECADES, AND HE'S NOT STOPPING ANYTIME SOON.

By Abigail Abesamis Demarest



Brian Biemann is a legend in the photography world. Over the course of his 43-year career he's traveled all over the world and worked with some of the best surfers—Andy Irons, Bruce Irons, and Kelly Slater—and brands, with a client list that includes Quiksilver, Red Bull, and Guinness. His photos have graced more than 200 magazine covers, plus dozens of books and magazines. Much of his work captures life on the water, including waves, surfers, and marine life, and it's no accident; surfing was Biemann's first love.

"I started surfing on the East Coast; I grew up in Virginia, and Cape Hatteras (in North Carolina) was our Hawaii," Biemann said. "It was just so beautiful down there. If you were going to get any kind of waves at all, that's where it happened." While it was only about a three-hour drive, Biemann decided to move to Cape Hatteras for the last two summers before moving to Hawaii to spend as much time on the water as possible.

"I lived with a few other guys in a trailer, and we had our little \$1.50 an hour jobs," Biemann said. "I was making subs and once I saved up \$200. Two of my friends and I jumped in a car, drove across the country for three days, and met my older brother in Hawaii." When he woke up to blue skies, palm trees, and clear water, he knew he was never going back. "That was 45 years ago," he said.

Biemann's first few years in Hawaii were all about surfing and working odd jobs to pay the bills: janitor, shoe salesman, construction, perishable foods selector, to name a few. "At some point I realized that I was 21 and had to figure out what I was going to do for a living," he said. After a month of agonizing, he decided that he would be a surf photographer. Of course, deciding to become a photographer and actually shooting photos are two very different things, and it would be almost a year before Biemann did the latter. "I bought all the camera equipment and just didn't use it," he said. "I couldn't get out of the water. I'd always jump in and say, 'Ok I'm going to surf for half an hour then jump out and take pictures' and I never would." A surfing accident changed all that.



Left: "American surfer Alan Blanchard. Her first year on the surfing tour and Transworld surf sent me over to Kauai to shoot photos of her for an article entitled *The Hottest Surfer in the World*, so I tried to do my best impression of *Sports Illustrated* Bathing suit issue. I would shoot her surfing and then shoot these photos of her looking as hot as any swimwear model on the planet."

Right: "I was in the Mentawais in Indonesia shooting stills for the video *A Fly In The Champagne* in which Andy Irons and Kelly Slater were going to do a surf trip for the first time. I had brought a black backdrop to shoot portraits of the surfers and then one evening, a few indigenous tribesmen came down to the camp and I jumped at the opportunity to shoot them. I borrowed light from the film crew, grabbed my black backdrop and got the killer portrait. It looks like a big production but it took a minute to set up and 30 seconds to shoot. I am always looking for an opportunity to shoot unplanned portraits on these trips around the world."

"I pulled into a tube and the wave collapsed," Biemann said. "It threw me over with the wave breaking over the falls. I thought I was going to land on my feet, but I was upside down. I hit the reef head first and put a big hole in my head." The doctors stitched him up but he still had some coral in his head and the wound got infected. After an emergency surgery and a few days of waiting for the swelling to go down, Biemann was discharged from the hospital but had to stay out of the water for three months. He seized this opportunity to dive into photography and make it his priority. "I started shooting more and more, and eventually got my first photo published," he said. "It was a quarter page, I made \$25, and from that moment on I was hooked."


As a surfer, surfing photography came naturally—but Biemann didn't stop there. "I'm a surfer so I'm not faking anything. I just absolutely love what I do," he said. "Unlike other sports, surfing is a lifestyle that goes beyond just competition."

On surf trips to Tahiti, for example, Biemann shoots all the action at surfing contests, but he'll also shoot underwater on flat days and travel around the island to shoot lifestyle photos and portraits. By diversifying the types of photos he takes, Biemann has been able to sell his work to magazines, advertisers, and even art lovers.

"People that don't even know about surfing love waves," he said. "I have a much bigger market than I would if I was just an action photographer. The funny thing is that I've never considered myself to be an action photographer. I'd like to think I'm a little bit more of an artist. I'm a little of both, I guess."

After more than four decades of taking photos professionally, he's still at it. "Years and years of shooting and now all of a sudden I'm the legend, which just means old guy," Biemann said. "I've watched many generations of photographers come and go, and I'm still doing it, I'm still hanging in there."

At 64, Biemann isn't flying around the world chasing swells as often he did in his peak magazine days, but he's still taking plenty of photos.



//
I couldn't get out of the water. I'd always jump in and say, 'Ok I'm going to surf for half an hour then jump out and take pictures' and I never would. A surfing accident changed all that.
//



“This past winter in Hawaii was the best winter we’ve ever had,” he said. “Out of 60 days I only had a day and a half off in a row.” Looking back at his career, there’s no doubt that Biemann has led an exciting life. “I tend to live my life with the glass half full,” he says. “Being gone is an adventure, but so is coming home.”

For more information, visit brianbiemann.com or follow him on Instagram (@brianbiemann).



// I tend to live my life with the glass half-full. //



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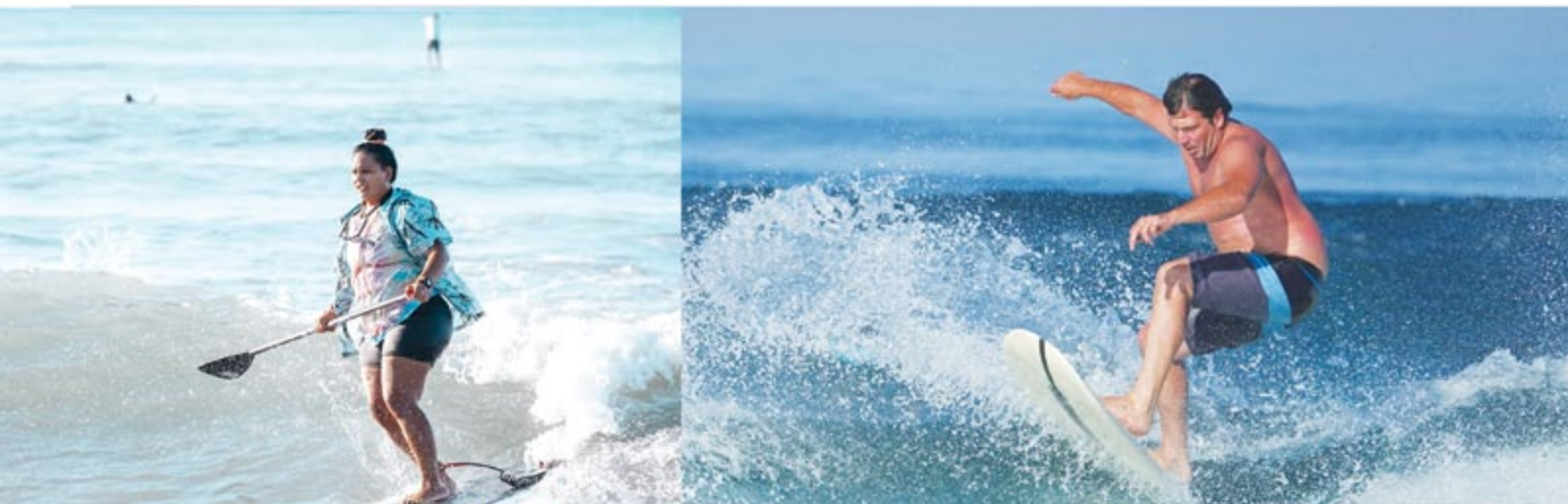
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Surfing The Web

By Martin Liptrot

No doubt, the internet has taken over the world.

It has changed everything we do – shopping, dating, watching movies – and introduced things we didn’t use to be able to do – find instant answers, live traffic updates, and order anything to be delivered at any time.

That said, surely, there must be some things that are even beyond the magical powers of the worldwide web. Surely, some things will forever remain in the physical world, only to be experienced in touchable three dimensions.

But no, actually. It seems that isn’t the case. In this technologically wonderful world, you can surf the internet. Literally.

In today’s digital age, there are more than 100 surfing lessons to be studied at online universities, any number of video tutorials to perfect your curve or break, and hundreds of sites that will hook you up with a professional surfing instructor, most likely with the name Brett, or Shane or Keanu.

But what about those of us looking to just get started?

Recently, I was lying on my sunbed, reaching for a cold drink and browsing the internet, when I discovered *Every Body Can Surf*.

It is an online surfing school that largely caters to plus-size people. Perfect.

Like me, you may have thought being, what shall we say – a little overly buoyant – may have excluded you from the joys of surfing.

“Surfing is for everyone.”

After all, movies and TV shows are dominated by ripped and shredded, bronzed and sun-kissed, beach-ready body types. You know the sort: tousled hair, low-hung board shorts revealing a firm six-pack or a lycra-tight swimsuit displaying acres of toned thigh and glutes you can bounce dimes off.

But *Every Body Can Surf* is here to dissuade you of that false notion.

Founded by Andrew Goodman and Eleonora Fiorini, this surfing program is the only inclusive coaching business specializing in plus-size surfing.

Every Body Can Surf was founded in 2020 and is currently creating a Kickstarter campaign to raise capital. It pledges to help you “feel confident in surfing, no matter your body type or size,” and you will achieve this remarkable transformation in just 8 weeks from the safe, calm, and dry conditions of your living room.

“Our program will take you from ‘I don’t think my body can do this!’ to ‘Wow! What else can my body achieve?’” said Andrew and Eleonora.

Following a step-by-step program of lessons that charts your progress, they will gently hold your virtual hand as you build the skills and confidence to take to the water.

The digital surf course is structured into seven key modules, each one using video lessons to focus on the practical aspects of learning the techniques of surfing and the theoretical knowledge while giving you the all-important positive mindset to succeed at it.

Participants will also join weekly live online sessions with Andrew and his co-founder Eleonora. As the weeks progress, you will move from understanding the big picture, the required understanding of the waves and water, to identifying the right equipment, locations, and conditions, before mastering your equipment on dry land and finally getting your feet wet and riding your first waves.

The final session is dedicated to troubleshooting problems and overcoming disappointments, which are inevitably a part of the whole surfing experience.

But what is success in *Every Body Can Surf*?

“Success isn’t standing on your board,” Andrew said. “Success is you feeling confident and supported enough to go out there and try surfing. For us, success is going from ‘No way can I do this’ to giving it a go.”

“Surfing isn’t just for athletes. Surfing is riding waves in whatever way you like. You can stand up or not. You can ride waves sitting-down, on one knee, or flat on your stomach if that feels right for you. There is no right or wrong way as long as you have fun!” he explained.

So, if you are a little larger than most, but interested in learning to surf, this might be the answer. If you are still skeptical about whether surfing is a plus-size sport, just do a YouTube search for Jimbo Pellegrine, a 350 lb behemoth who shreds and cuts waves better than people a third his size.

There will be challenges along the way, some more mundane than you might imagine.

Just finding a plus-size wetsuit can be tough, although new brands such as Truli Wet Suits are catering for women up to size 24 and Dive And Sail and Layatone offer wet suits up to 6X for budding surfers well over 6 feet tall.

Finding a surfboard that will give you the buoyancy you need is important too. Longer boards will be best when you first begin. In fact, many plus-size surfers look to Stand Up Paddle (SUP) boards to begin as they are packed with flotation and buoyancy and are much easier to catch smaller waves on.

Every Body Can Surf is currently signing up people in the waitlist for its 2023 season classes so if this is something you are interested in doing, surf the web and you could be catching a wave sooner than you think. 🏄‍♀️

To learn more, visit andrewgoodmansurfcoach.com/plussizesurfing or follow them on Instagram (@every.body.can.surf) and Facebook (@everybodycansurf).



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By Lauren Sage Reinlie

Former foster child finds purpose at the beach, founds group to help kids find homes.

In her early twenties, Jessica Stern was lost. She felt broken.

It was the year 2000, and at the advice of a mentor, she packed up and moved to the then-very-quiet beachside town of Santa Rosa Beach, Florida, to try to find her way and, maybe, even heal her soul.

When Jessica was ten, her mother died. The family didn't have much money, and, at the time, caring for her and her seven siblings was too much for her dad. She and her sisters and brothers were split up and sent to live in separate foster homes.

"One week after the loss of my mother, I lost all my siblings," Jessica recalled. "It's something you just don't get over."

She later reunited with her dad, but after he passed away in the mid-90s, all the trauma she had experienced rushed to the surface. It was just too much.

At the beach, she rode her bike up and down Scenic Highway 30A. She found peace in the serene Gulf of Mexico, but, even more integrally, she found a group of people who took her under their wing.

"The community wrapped their arms around me," she said. "That was what really healed me." She was surrounded by people who kept telling her that if she wanted something, she could do it. "Those kinds of connections and those experiences, when they are repeated, they sink in."



Jessica Stern

About eight years later, Jessica was named vice president of the local Kiwanis Club, a service organization. In 2010, after helping put on a major fundraiser for the World Food Program, that group flew her to Washington D.C. to speak at a global convention on community organizing. Today, from her home in Arlington, Virginia, she is the chief operating officer of Connect Our Kids, a program she founded that is overhauling the country's systems for placing children with foster families.

In the United States, over 100,000 children need adoption each day. The best and fastest way to find them

"What I found was 100 percent unacceptable," Jessica said.

Connect Our Kids created a not-for-profit digital platform to allow social workers, lawyers, family recruiters, and volunteers to do the work of building family trees and finding existing connections much faster. It scales up the amount of work these people can do by 60 percent, Jessica said. The organization also provides free training on how to use the tools.

Without this platform, the most successful techniques for building family trees involved extensive searches on Google, ancestry.com,

"Searching for this type of information by hand usually takes about eight days just to find one email, one phone number, or one physical address. Now it can take 30 seconds," Jessica said. "We are arming people with the best tools in the country to do this work and get these kids connected with their families."

Since officially launching the platform in early 2020, Connect Our Kids has served over 10,000 children. The platform is used in 44 states, most widespread in Ohio, which, along with Mississippi, has allocated state funds for the program. Jessica said her next target is Florida. This summer in Orlando, she will present the platform to all the state's lead agencies for child welfare.

After that time of feeling lost, Jessica did indeed find her way. She credits the people in the Florida panhandle who took the time to encourage her and show her what she was capable of.

"IN THE UNITED STATES, OVER 100,000 CHILDREN NEED ADOPTION EACH DAY."

homes is by building a family tree and finding existing connections. Often relatives, friends, and even neighbors are willing and able to provide temporary homes, decreasing the trauma of living with strangers and potentially keeping the kids out of the foster care system. Once in the system, kids often have to jump from home to home. Some move dozens of times before they find a permanent home or age out of the system.

Unfortunately, the existing foster care placement system is unable to do this work efficiently, and the process is often unsuccessful. When Jessica and Connect Our Kids CEO Dr. Jennifer Jacobs started digging into this issue, they found that social workers were using technology that was outdated by 30 to 45 years. In most cases, this work was being done on inches-thick paper files. Kids were getting shuffled in and lost in the system, oftentimes unnecessarily.

Facebook, arrest.org, even findagrave.org. The Connect Our Kids platform efficiently combs through about 300 websites looking for publicly available data to help find someone connected to the child. On the front end, the platform looks as easy-to-use and accessible as Facebook. On the backend, it acts like ancestry.com for people who are still living, Stern said.

"I think it's very important for people to understand that just because somebody is poor or they don't have the right shoes and the right education, if they have somebody who takes an interest in them and takes the time to mentor them, they can change the world," she said. 🌍

[Learn more at connectourkids.org](https://connectourkids.org)





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BEACH BOOK BRIBERY

By Martin Liptrot

HOW TO GET INVITED BACK TO YOUR FRIEND'S BEACH HOUSE

People with beach homes—or boats—have long been the most sought-after kind of friend.

Those of us who live at the beach know how many “long-lost friends” and distant family members have suddenly added us back to their Christmas card list once they heard we may have a couple of spare beds only footsteps from sugar-white sands.

This summer, many of our readers will be lucky enough to receive that most coveted of invitations: “Why don’t you come and stay at our beach house?” So, if you are lucky enough to have a pal with the keys to a gorgeous waterfront property, you want to make sure you express your gratitude appropriately.

Our local bookstore, Sundog Books, offers many great books to leave behind as thank-you gifts from grateful house guests, but there is a wide range of titles available, so which book should you choose?

After all, these books are meant to compliment your homeowner on their beautiful beachside bolthole and keep you high on the list for a return visit the next season. There are dozens of beautiful books with jaw-dropping illustrations of the perfect beach house, but beware – your gift should not be perceived as suggesting, “Hey, nice house, but it’s time for a makeover!”

Here are a few books worth considering if you want to impress your host:



The Seaside House: Living on the Water by Nick Voulgaris III

Your friend’s waterside retreat may be straight out of the pages of the high-fashion magazines – all billowing white curtains, spotless marble countertops, and no flat surface without a carefully curated piece of art or a treasured artifact.

So, if you find yourself walking around your friend’s home with a cold drink in hand endlessly searching for a coaster, Nick Voulgaris’ ‘glamor bible’ may be the one for you.

It features the beach homes of America’s design royalty. You can pore over beautiful images of Tommy Hilfiger’s Miami mansion, Donna Karan’s Hampton retreat and Giorgio Armani’s breathtaking Antigua vacation home.

The mood here is a clever blend between seaside whimsy and space to entertain and impress, so if you can imagine the beautiful people descending upon your friend’s beach retreat for cocktails, parties, and intimate evening soirees, this book will surely take pride of place on their Philippe Starck-inspired coffee table.



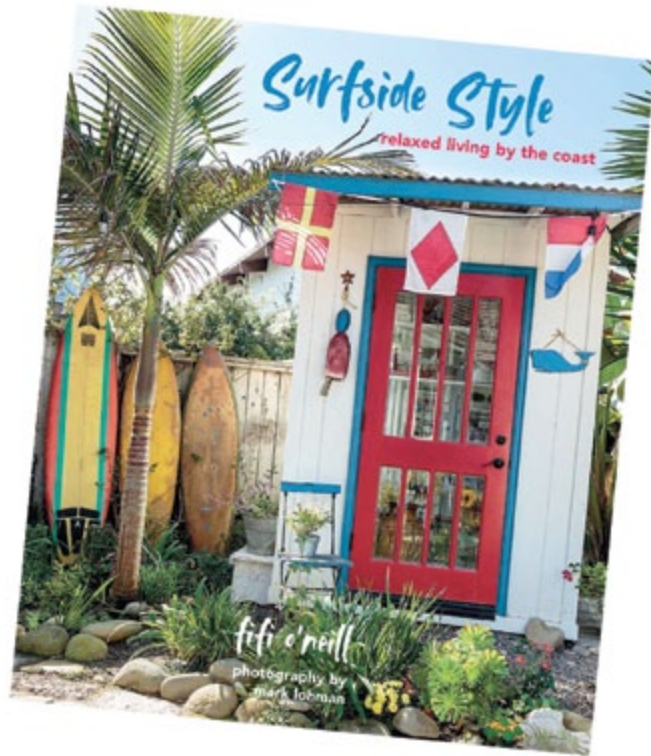
Beach Cocktails: Favorite Surfside Sips and Bar Snacks by Coastal Living

Of course, your gift book doesn’t have to be all about interior design. It could be a guide to making the most of life at the beach, and this collection of the best coastal cocktails and seaside sips will be warmly-welcomed, I’m sure.

This collection has been compiled over two decades by the editors at *Coastal Living*. Not only does it give budding beach mixologists the lowdown on how to make the perfect Mai Tai, Daiquiri, Mojito, or Caipirinha, but it also provides you with the backstory to these classic coastal cocktails, how to expertly garnish them, what glass to choose, and how to serve them.

It also makes stellar recommendations for great nibbles and snacks to share with guests as you rattle the ice cubes and pour your all-time favorite sun-down tippie. Salty snacks, fruity garnishes, savory morsels, and dips for chips will definitely complete the beachside bar vibe.

Perhaps this great gift book could be paired with a cocktail shaker or a pair of classic martini glasses? That’s bound to get you a repeat invite, don’t you think?



Surfside Style by Fifi O'Neill

If your friend's beach house is all "no shoes, no problem" barefoot style, this may be the book for you. Fifi O'Neill is a Paris-born but Florida-based designer whose latest book encapsulates the flip-flops and shorts lifestyle so many associate with coastal life. The book features a dozen U.S. houses stretching from coast to coast, which capture the spirit of calm and harmony found only at the beach.

The cool cribs in this tome are bedecked in maritime shades of ocean blues and sea foam greens, wrapped in natural textures with weathered woods and bleached planks and festooned with soft fabrics, throws, and furnishings that invite you to chill and unwind after a busy day lounging in the sun or floating in the aquamarine waters of the Gulf.



Be Our Guest - A Coastal Guest Book by Dan Zadra

It might be a nice idea to provide a gift that is practical too. There are many guest books available, but there are some important considerations before you make your big purchase.

First, make sure your guest book is hardcover. Not only will it be more durable as it is used, read, and thumbed through by guests over the years, but it also has a better chance of being displayed in pride of place rather than the flimsy paperback version, which is destined to finish up in the kitchen drawer with all the other things that don't have a natural home.

This guest book compiled by Dan Zadra, founder of Compendium Books, has a cool and calm cover befitting any relaxed beach retreat. It also contains lovely pastel, nautical designs and images, inspirational quotes are sprinkled throughout, and it provides plenty of space for sharing your favorite memories and experiences for all to enjoy.

But the real beauty of buying your host their first guest book is that you also get to be the first to write in it. Not only will you be forever recognized as the "first" to have been invited, but you can also display your wit and charm to set the tone for all other contributions and comments that will follow.

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LOOKING COOL ON THOSE

HOT SUMMER DAYS

By Abigail Abesamis Demarest

Beach chairs, an umbrella, some towels, a good book, and a cooler packed with your favorite chilled beverages are all must-haves for a perfect day at the beach, but what about your outfit? Whether you're one of the lucky ones who live by the beach or packing for a beach vacation, finding the perfect bathing suit and accessories to complete your look can be fun, and you deserve nice things. These are some of our favorites.



Summersalt The Sidestroke in Lava & Hibiscus & White Sand (\$95)

1

UNICORN OF SWIMSUITS

The bestselling "Unicorn of Swimsuits" has a super flattering one-shoulder style and comes in a variety of color combinations. It has more than 5,000 five-star reviews, and fans love it for the quality material, exceptional fit, and great support. It's available in sizes 0 to 24 and even offered in a long torso style.

summersalt.com



Lively The Ruched Plunge Bralette & High Waist Swim Bundle in Lilac (\$95)

2

VINTAGE VIBES

We're digging the vintage vibes of this lovely lilac swimsuit. The plunging tie-front is super cute and functional—tie it looser or tighter for a custom fit, and adjust the straps as needed. High waist bottoms and a ruched texture round out the set. It also comes in bright pink and black.

anthropologie.com



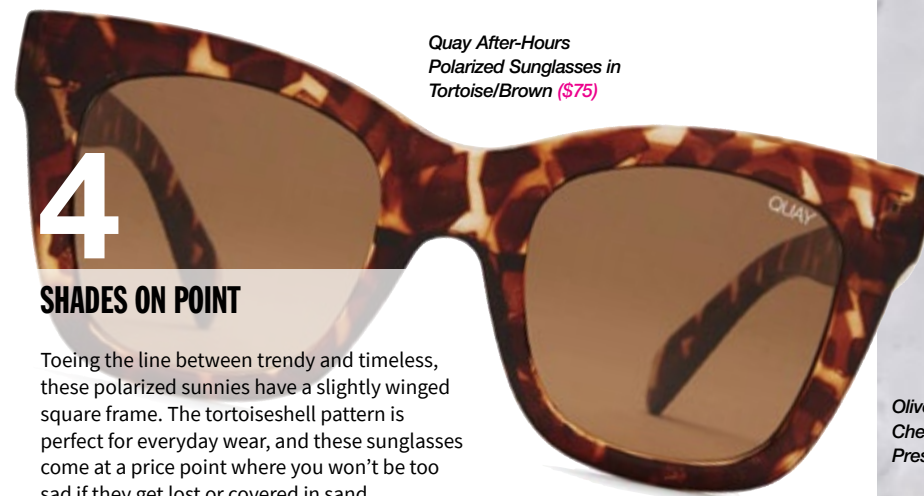
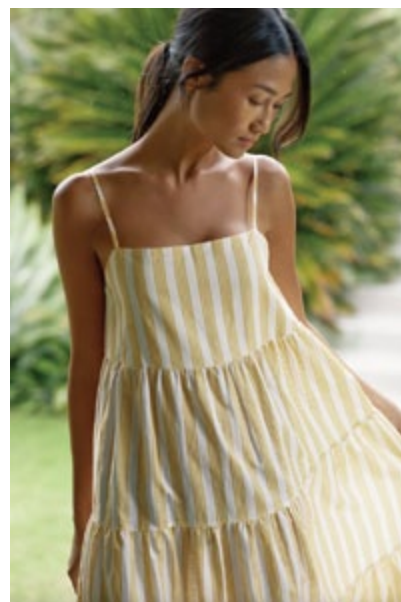
3

CASUAL CHIC

Go from the beach to brunch (or vice versa) without the need for an outfit change by simply throwing on this chic maxi dress with a flowy fit and golden yellow stripes. It's made of a lightweight linen and cotton blend and has adjustable straps for a customizable fit.

anthropologie.com

Isabelle Maxi Dress (\$154)



Quay After-Hours Polarized Sunglasses in Tortoise/Brown (\$75)

4

SHADES ON POINT

Toeing the line between trendy and timeless, these polarized sunnies have a slightly winged square frame. The tortoiseshell pattern is perfect for everyday wear, and these sunglasses come at a price point where you won't be too sad if they get lost or covered in sand.

quayaustralia.com



5

LIGHTWEIGHT HOODIE

For those beach days when it's a little windier than expected, or when you want to keep the sun off your arms, this lightweight hoodie is a beach bag must-have. Better yet, it's made with 40% recycled material (from recycled plastic bottles that could otherwise end up in our beautiful oceans), though you wouldn't guess it for how seriously soft it is.

30Agear.com

Beach Happy Women's Pullover Hoodie in White (\$55)



7

DIY PRESS-ON NAILS

These fierce AF press-on nails are a total mood and the perfect statement manicure for a beachy getaway. It takes only a few minutes to pop them on using the included non-damaging glue, and there are 21 sizes in each set to ensure a perfect fit—people won't believe they aren't your actual nails. The long almond shape is super elegant, and the fiery red cheetah print tip is 100% fierce. No expensive trip to the nail salon required, just DIY!

oliveandjune.com

A TOTAL GAME-CHANGER

This isn't just any old pair of slides. APL's TechLoom Slides are the most comfortable slides you'll ever wear—they're a total game-changer. It's all in the design: the soft and flexible TechLoom strap with mesh lining, a 3D molded footbed that massages your feet with every step, and a midsole and outsole that cushions your feet. They come in a rainbow of colors, and you're going to want them all.

athleticpropulsionlabs.com



APL Women's Big Logo TechLoom Slide in Bellflower (\$120)

30A'S COLLAB

8 This co-branded sunscreen from The 30A Company and Shine On Living

is part of a product line of high-quality sun care products that are designed to be friendly on both your skin and our fragile marine ecosystems. The entire line (which also includes Aftersun and an Aloe Recovery Gel) is made of natural, organically grown ingredients and sold in recyclable packaging. 30A SPF 30 Sunscreen protects against UVA and UVB rays and is face, reef, and marine life-friendly.

30Agear.com



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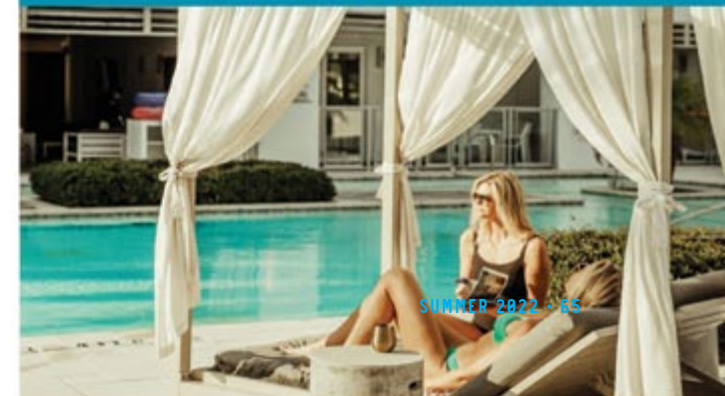


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Sea and Be Seen

Five Seriously Sexy Swimming Pools in Florida

The Beach Club

Alys Beach, Florida

If being amongst the “beautiful people” is high on your lists of vacation musts, one of the most exclusive communities along the Florida Gulf Coast is undoubtedly Alys Beach.

Its architecture gives a nod to the Caribbean, and with its hidden courtyards, billowing linen curtains, and breezy walkways between the stunning alabaster-white homes, there is a little hint of Marrakech or Casablanca as well. The latest amenity, exclusively reserved for homeowners and permanent residents, is the breath-taking Beach Club.

This infinity pool with views of the Gulf catches the sun from early morning to sunset and is perhaps the most luxurious pool in Northwest Florida, if not the entire state. And while the three-story Beach Club offers homeowners easy access to the Gulf, with its stunning pools, day beds, lounges, bars, and sweeping views, I imagine many residents of Scenic Highway 30A’s most boujee community will be keeping their sandals and kitten heels sand-free.

By Martin Liptrot

Swimming pools have always made summer feel special.

It might be the shallow inflatable type you messed about in as a child, the local pool where long, hot teenage summers were spent chillin’ and relaxin’, or a full-size, in-ground pool hidden away in a friend or family member’s back

garden you could use when the mercury started to rise.

But pools aren’t just for kids. They’re big business for resorts trying to lure adults craving some sultry, sunny vibes. Hotels, private beach clubs, resorts, and condo buildings increasingly compete to provide the most exquisite pool

decks, shady cabanas with table service, and glorious infinity-edged pools, often showcasing incredible sweeping sunset vistas.

Florida—the Sunshine State—is gifted with a number of seriously sexy swimming pools. Here are five that you can dive right into this summer.



Sand Pearl Resort

Clearwater, Florida

The pool at the luxurious Sand Pearl Resort is one of those zero-entry affairs where you can sit or lie in the shallow water, topping up your tan and watching the world go by. The lagoon-shaped pool is surrounded by cabanas kitted out with HD TVs so you can keep track of your stock portfolio or baseball scores while reclining and sipping on specialty cocktails. And if all that pristine pool-side living gets to be too much, it is only a short walk to the private sandy beach and a dip in the salty water to sharpen your senses.

To make your day even more memorable, as the sun is just about to kiss the horizon, the hotel rings the Sunset Bell and guests gather on the pool deck to watch the fiery-red orb dip out of sight into the Gulf. Perfect.



Gaylord Palms Resort

Orlando, Florida

Even away from the coast, pools are a mainstay of Florida life. In the entertainment and visitor mecca of Orlando, the recently refurbished Gaylord Palms Resort has taken pool life to a new level.

With a \$158 million refurbishment recently completed, the highlight is the Cypress Springs Water Park – exclusively for guests of the hotel – with seven slides, including the Florida Freefall where a trap door slides open letting you plummet 35 ft down before racing to the bottom, a zero-entry pool, hot tubs and massage spas, a fast-flowing river rapids, and a perpetual surfing wave called FlowRider.

At night, the high-octane fun continues with DJs playing live sets poolside and the video wall showing classic flicks at ‘Dive-in Movies’ night.

And if all that fun and adrenaline-inducing action sounds a little too much, don’t worry because the Gaylord Palms has something for you in mind too. Part of the refurb was the completion of the South Beach Pool, inspired by the hipster hot spots in Miami and dotted with private cabanas for hire, each featuring sun-loungers, towel service, a fully-stocked mini-refrigerator and a flat-screen TV with surround sound to play your favorite tunes.

Ara Roof-Top Pool and Lounge at Hotel Effie

Sandestin, Florida

One of the newest attractions along the Northwest Emerald Coast is Hotel Effie, a luxury 5-star spa hotel in Miramar Beach. The property boasts not just a rooftop pool but also a top-notch lounge serving cocktails and fine wines. Visitors can spend the day soaking up the sun, reclining in the cabanas, and taking a refreshing swim in the pool, all while enjoying the views across Sandestin, the Gulf, and the Bay. But as the sun starts to set, the mood switches from “dip” to “sip” as the fine wines, champagne, and carefully-crafted cocktails start to flow. With cool tunes drifting on the evening breeze, you can rub shoulders with some of the many fashionistas preparing for a night out at any of the sparkling Emerald Coast’s hotspots.



Delano South Beach

Miami, Florida

No list of fabulous Florida pools could possibly ignore South Beach, Miami. The Fontainebleau, Shelborne, and Mondrian have all been attracting glamorous guests from around the world to their pools for years, but the one that has perhaps stood the test of time best is The Delano.

Originally, the concept of Studio 54 impresario Ian Schrage, the hotel continues to reinvent itself and is recognized as launching the latest craze in Miami, *daylife* – the sunlit equivalent of Miami’s famed nightlife.

During the day, hotel guests can exclusively unwind poolside. Classical music plays through underwater speakers and an ornate silver table and chairs are placed knee deep in the pool for an Instagram-worthy glass of champagne. The pool is surrounded by an orchard of manicured Ficus trees, and with its giant chessboard and huge mirror, it has a bit of an *Alice in Wonderland* feel.

On weekends, live DJs spin tunes and glamorous hosts and hostesses bring cocktails and tasty bites to your lounge or wade into the pool with champagne bottles to charge your glass as you chat with the beautiful people all around. The cabanas and private bungalows with their luxury service make the pool a scene, but it is still very relaxing — at least by day, when only hotel guests are allowed in.

When the sun goes down, it changes from pool to a lively bar vibe as Miami’s pretty young things and their older acquaintances crowd around the water’s edge to see and be seen.

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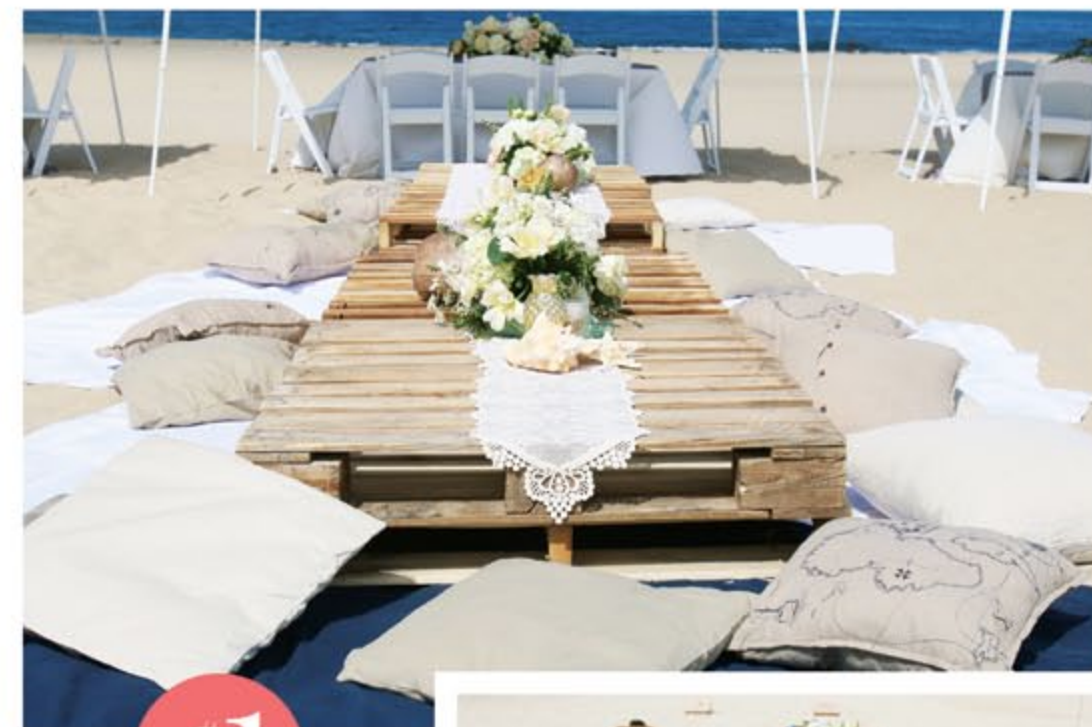


Coastal Tablescapes

By Lauren Sage Reinlie

A Feast for the Eye

We asked two of our favorite coastal designers and event planners to give us some do-it-yourself tips for creating table settings with a dreamy, beachy vibe. Here's a guide on how to bring the beach to your next gathering, whether you are landlocked, in the dead of winter, or the beach is just outside your door.



#1
Tip

Use table coverings to create texture with a light, airy vibe.

A lace runner or light cloth will let some of the natural finishes of the table show through. Add a chiffon runner in either light blue or gray for a little more flair. White linen will give the table a crisp and clean look and serves as a blank canvas for any accessory.



– Paola Franco
(sayidotodetails.com)



#Tip 2

For accessories, use the colors of the ocean and beach.

Think natural elements like coconuts, seashells, wood, and even sea glass bottles. Add pieces of gold coral or mercury-colored pineapples for a more festive look. Galvanized trays filled with summer fruits will add color and a tropical feel. Accessories add dimension and layers to the table design.

– Paola Franco
(sayidotodetails.com)



#Tip 3

Keep it simple for beachy elegance.

Try a simple flower arrangement with white and blue hydrangeas. Consider bamboo plates and cutlery. They're eco-friendly and complement a natural, beachy vibe.

– Paola Franco
(sayidotodetails.com)





Tip 4

Use elements widely available at the beach.

This included sand, seagrass, and saw palmetto. People get a little nervous about putting things directly on a table cloth. Don't! Put sand down the middle of the table cloth, place pillar candles around it, sprinkle in some sea glass and seashells, and perhaps add a piece of driftwood as a centerpiece. "It's amazing how quickly, all of a sudden, this becomes a gorgeous centerpiece. Be creative, and don't shy away from using pieces you see in your everyday life. You just never know what will end up making it beautiful."

— Keith Willard
(keithwillardevents.com)



Tip 5

For indoor events, use glass trumpet vases.

This is an easy way to elevate the look. The trumpet vase looks like the instrument with the wide part facing upwards. It can be filled with anything, but consider sand, seashells, pebbles, rocks, or gel beads for a beachy look. Top it off with some beautiful hydrangeas by themselves or interspersed with roses, which can be ordered directly from South America for a reasonable price. For added drama, add some orchids sprouting out of the top of the arrangement. To add a stunning visual element that evokes the feeling of being under the sea, add water to the base of the vase and some underwater LED lights. (For outdoor events, opt for low vases. The wind will knock over anything tall.)

— Keith Willard
(keithwillardevents.com)



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BEACHES ABROAD

NATAI BEACH PHANG NGA, THAILAND

By Mike Ragsdale

Anyone even halfway familiar with Thailand has no doubt heard about its famous trademark beaches along Phuket, Krabi, Koh Samui and Pattaya. And while those beaches have colorful personalities (some more colorful than others), if you're looking for a long, lonely stretch of pristine beach that even few Thais know about, then put Natai Beach into your GPS.



Toh-Deang Restaurant



Khao Lampi-Hat Thai
Mueang National Park



Wat Tha Sai

WHY GO?

After traveling to more than 50 countries – wedging in as many beaches along the sandy way as possible – Natai Beach on the Andaman Sea ranks among my personal top 5, both for its striking natural beauty and its quiet, meditative serenity. There are no high-rises here, by law, and much of the surrounding land appears to be protected (or at least, as of yet, undeveloped). What's left is a handful of upscale but low-profile resorts, gorgeous seaside Buddhist temples, remote jungle waterfalls, a few villages, a bajillion coconut-dropping palm trees, and mile after mile of soft, off-white sand. One afternoon, in the sweltering April sun (one of Thailand's hottest months), I slathered up with SPF 10,000, plugged in my earbuds and sweated my way along the beach for well over an hour. I never saw another human being. The only thing more stunning than the turquoise water lined with endless palm trees is Wat Tha Sai, a teak temple just a few kilometers north. This park is quiet and frequented only by locals seeking a beach picnic paradise. Twelve miles north of Natai Beach is Khao Lampi-Hat Thai Mueang National Park, a long in-and-out drive through a pristine palm tree forest. Pull over just about anywhere and take a trail out to the most reclusive stretch of sand you're likely to ever find. Just watch for cobras – we nearly ran over one. Your ticket to the park also gives you access to nearby waterfalls, including Tonprai and Namtok Lampee. It's about a 20-minute hike through lush jungle to get to Tonprai waterfall, but it's worth every slippery stone step.



Tonprai Waterfall

HOW DO I GET THERE?

After you land at Phuket International Airport, rent a car and drive north for about 30 minutes. This drive on the right side of the car and the left side of the road, but if that doesn't intimidate you, it's an easy uncongested drive from the airport to Natai Beach. Along the way, don't miss the chance to grab lunch or dinner at the Michelin Bib Gourmand-rated Toh-Deang Restaurant by Baan Ar-Jor, right before you cross the bridge connecting Phuket to Phang Nga province. Our incredibly delicious farm-to-table lunch for two cost \$34 USD, including tip and tax, and consisted of fried pork belly, fried rice with lump crabmeat, massaman chicken curry with rice, two drinks, two fresh-ground coffees and homemade Himalayan salted caramel macadamia nut pie for dessert.

WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

My wife and I had no reservations to speak of, so we didn't know what to expect when we pulled up and strolled into the temple-like lobby of Natai Beach Resort and Spa (www.natairesort.com). Inspired fountains tumbled down into a massive and modern swimming pool. Meandering stone walkways wound their way through lush tropical grounds, connecting rooms and amenities. Directly in front of the pool, the west-facing beach presented an ever-changing vista, especially at sunset, when the green-glowing fishing boats began to take their nightly positions along the horizon. We loved Natai Beach Resort and Spa so much that we extended our stay twice.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

We rented a car for two weeks at DriveCarRental.com and picked it up at Phuket International Airport. The total was 22,985 Thai Baht, which is \$672, or about \$48 per day. The food and drinks served at the resort were both delicious and reasonably priced. If you want to venture out for some legit (and ultra-cheap) street food, go to the town of Khok Kloi, just ten minutes away. Our spacious beach- and pool-view suite was 2,500 Baht per night (\$75), including all tax and fees, as well as daily breakfast with our toes in the sand. This steal of a deal was no doubt influenced by COVID-19, and will certainly return to normal levels in time. But back in the U.S., this kind of room, amenities, service and overall experience would have easily cost \$600 or more per night—perhaps even twice that in some places. Our time at Natai Beach Resort and Spa was one of the best travel deals we've ever enjoyed, and we highly recommend it to anyone looking for a little off-the-beaten-path R&R.



Toh-Deang Restaurant





HOW TO BUY A BEACH HOME

By Angela Ragsdale



YOU'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT, RIGHT?
THIS IS WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!

After two anxious years of lockdowns, home-schooling, and social-distancing, you finally spend a blissful week at the beach with family and friends. Half-propped up in a low-rise sling chair, with a fruity, frozen concoction in your hand and your pale toes shoved deep in the sand, you realize you haven't felt this relaxed – this whole – in a long, long time.

And that's when it happens. You start thinking about taking a vacation... a permanent one.

Back home, like a landlocked seashell hunter, you spend countless hours scouring the internet searching for your dream beach estate. But romance reverts to reality when you begin to drown in a sea of details and decisions (and prices). How do you find the deals? Are there any deals? Is this just a salty fantasy waiting to be doused by soaring prices and rising interest rates?

Or will this finally be the year that you take the proverbial (and literal) plunge and buy a house at the beach?

Whether you're looking for a second home or a primary plan, here are five important things to consider when looking for a beach home.

1. Know your limits before you start looking

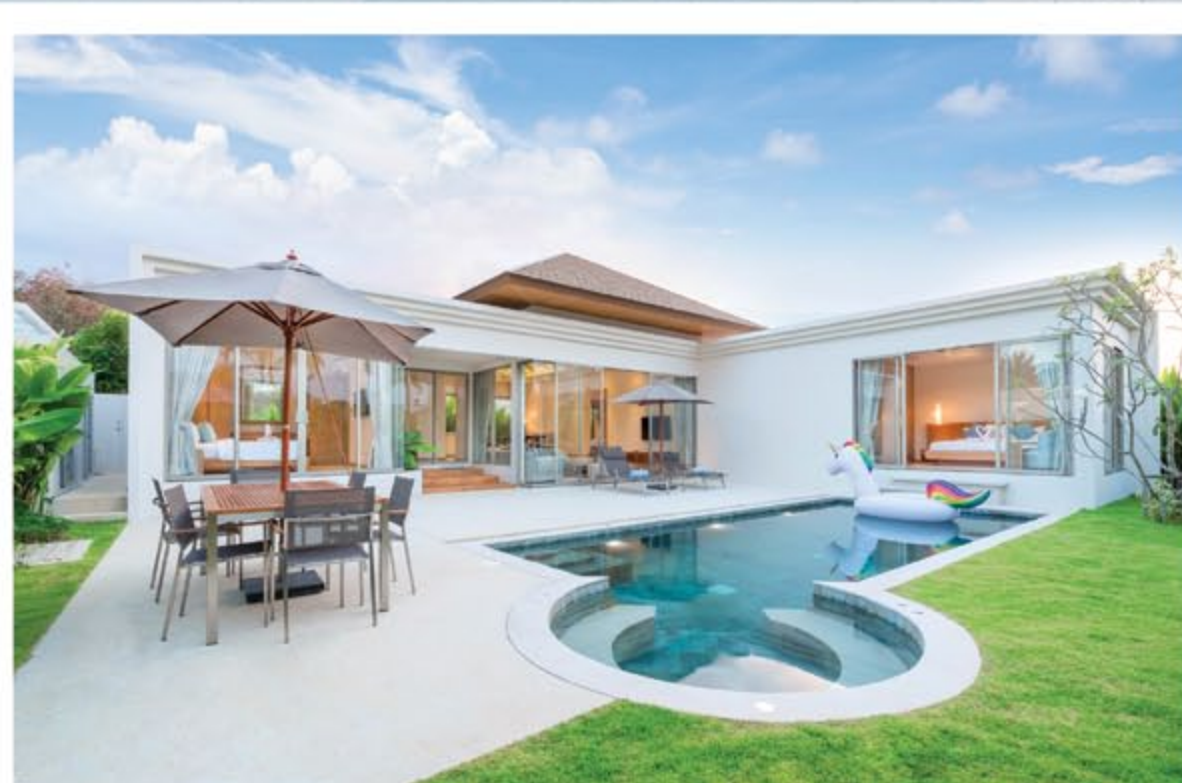
Talk to your lender and line up your finances well before you start touring properties. You need to know exactly how big of a slice of paradise you can bite off. It's a bitter, demoralizing pill to swallow when you finally find your perfect beach retreat, only to learn that there are challenging issues swimming just below the surface. Beyond the purchase price, you need to consider the utilities, insurance, taxes and upkeep.

By going into your search fully aware of your limits, you'll be able to keep the sun shining throughout the buying process.

2. Consider how you'll use the home

Are you ready to move in now, or do you want to generate rental income until the kids fly the coop? If you're looking at this as an investment property, contact a well-established and reputable rental agency in your target beach community. Most of them will gladly provide you with rental projections. If the home is currently on a rental program, ask not only for the projections but also for the actual rental income to-date.

Also, be realistic about how much you'll rent it out versus how much you'll want it for personal use. Do you plan to share your new home with family and friends? You might even want to donate a few weeks every year to charity. Factor all of that in. Make sure the math adds up.

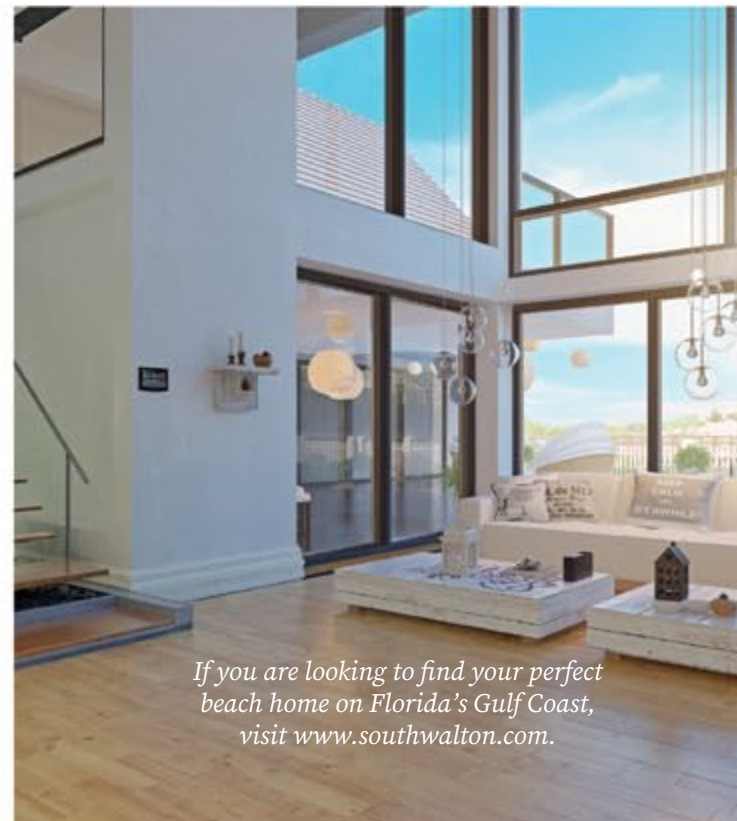




3. Rent your reality

Every beach community has a different vibe. Even communities that are just a mile or two apart can offer dramatically different experiences, especially when you're a full-time resident. Some neighborhoods are quiet and sleepy, while others are busy and bustling. Do you want to be able to stroll to the local coffee shop in the morning, and stumble home after happy hour in the evening? That's a truly wonderful (and attainable) lifestyle, but it might mean your next-door neighbors rotate every week, if they're on a rental program.

If you prefer seclusion, you might need a car, golf cart, or bike to get where you want to go, making traffic and parking a consideration. You should visit your chosen Shangri-La in both the high season and the low season so you can get a feel for what local life is really like at all times of the year. Renting homes for a week during various times of the year is a fantastic way to try before you buy.



If you are looking to find your perfect beach home on Florida's Gulf Coast, visit www.southwalton.com.

4. Make friends with the locals

Intoxicated by the euphoria of vacation, your "reality vision" can easily become impaired. Even the very best beach communities have their own pros and cons. Want to know the good, the bad, and the so-so about an area? Ask a local. Trust me, they'll gladly give you an earful of coastal reality (perhaps too much at times).

But as you prepare to make such a big personal leap, it's essential to know what's loved, what's loathed, and what's changing about a community, from a non-tourist perspective. The added bonus of buddying up to a local is that you'll already have some friends when you finally visit or move into your new home. Nothing makes you feel more connected with your community than a barista smiling when they see you stroll in, or a server in your favorite restaurant knowing just how you like your fresh shrimp prepared.

Don't be shy. Most locals will love sharing what they know, and you'll be building friendships that could last a lifetime.

5. Work with an experienced realtor

Real estate is confusing and overwhelming in normal times. And these are far from normal times, making purchasing decisions even more daunting. Do yourself a huge favor and pick a realtor who's lived in the area for a long time. They know the schools because their kids went there. They know which streets flood during heavy rain. They know where noisy construction is likely to begin soon. They know all the hidden gems that locals love but are sometimes reluctant to share. Pick someone that you enjoy speaking with and that you can really see yourself working with to find your perfect home. After all, before long, this person will likely be your friend and new neighbor.

Angela Ragsdale is co-founder of The 30A Company, and part of the 30A Real Estate team. You can reach her at angela@30A.com.

BELIEVE THE SCIENCE

What a day at the beach does for your health.

By Lisa Malin



Warm sand between your toes, a gentle breeze caressing your body, shimmering sunlight bouncing off the sea, and the rhythmic sound of waves carrying you to some far-off, dreamy place. Nothing says rest, relaxation, and wellbeing as much as time spent at the beach, and science backs this up: spending time at the beach does the body good.

While much attention has been given to the therapeutic properties of green spaces, recent research is shining a spotlight on the health benefits associated with “blue” spaces, especially the sea and coastline. Studies show that when we are near water, our stress hormones and blood pressure drop, our breathing and heart rate slow, and we feel calm and present. Marine biologist and author of *Blue Mind*, Wallace J. Nichols, refers to this cognitive and mental state change as the blue mind, “the mildly meditative state we fall into when near, in, on, or under water,” marked by feelings of “calm, peace, unity, and a sense of general happiness and satisfaction with life in the moment.”

Researchers also point out that human beings have a natural preference for the color blue and that simply looking at the ocean can alter our brain waves and help calm us down. Couple that with the rolling sound of waves crashing on the shore, which has been shown to soothe our overstimulated minds, and you have the perfect recipe for emotional wellness.

It’s important to understand the role sunlight plays in the equation. Although the harmful effects of sunlight have gotten negative attention, sunshine has been shown to have positive effects on our physical and mental health. When we spend time outdoors, the sun’s rays trigger our brain to produce serotonin, dopamine, oxytocin, and endorphins, “happy” hormones that are associated with feelings of calm, pleasure, joy, love, and connection. Higher levels of these “feel-good” hormones are linked to emotional wellbeing, whereas lower levels are associated with depression, anxiety, and stress. The hormonal high we get from the sun may even drive our desire to sunbathe.

It’s also worth noting that a daily dose of sunlight is essential for regulating our sleep-wake cycle and ensuring we get a good night’s rest. Sunlight triggers our body to produce melatonin, our sleep hormone responsible for telling us when it’s time to go to bed and time to wake up. Deep, restful sleep, which is so elusive for many, has a host of health benefits, including better energy. It’s safe to suggest that some of the more salubrious effects of being at the beach may be directly linked to days spent basking in the bright, dazzling light and syncing our sleep-wake cycle.

Sunlight is also our primary source of vitamin D, an essential vitamin that plays an important role in mood, immunity, inflammation, and disease prevention. Unlike other vitamins, vitamin D is not easily found in food and studies further suggest that supplementation does not confer the same health benefits as direct exposure to sunlight. Given our indoor lifestyles and tendency to cover up when outside, a nearly whopping 42% of us are deficient in this important vitamin, prompting some researchers to wonder if we should take a Goldilocks approach to sun exposure guidelines and find a dose that’s just right.

Like most things in life, it turns out that when it comes to sunlight, moderation and balance may be key. ☀️

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\$3,649,000

1328 Acacia Drive, St. George Island
 7 bed / 7.5 bath 4,008 sq. ft.

This sprawling, gulf-front house is located on one of the most-coveted lots on St. George Island. The home features double master bedrooms on the top floor, each with a private deck, five additional bedrooms, each with their own bathrooms, an additional half-bath, a pool and hot tub, three floors of decks overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, and an elevator. A private boardwalk over the dunes leads directly to the beach. The kitchen includes two refrigerators and a waterfall quartz slab countertop. The dining room has seating for 26, and the bathrooms feature a stylish marble-like tile slab. This newly-renovated and fully-furnished home operates as a high-end vacation rental and comes rental-ready.

Shelley Shepard (850) 653-6621

Recently, more and more people have been tuning into what is most important in their lives. Many find they want to move away from the hustle and bustle of city life to live the lives they have always wanted, or at least the lives they live on vacation. Often, this path leads straight to the palm trees and sea breezes of the Florida panhandle. If this is you, take a peek at what your money can get you. To see all your options, check out 30Arealestate.com.



THE FORGOTTEN COAST

By Abigail Abesamis Demarest

The easternmost part of Florida's panhandle has been dubbed the Forgotten Coast. This stretch of beach and bay coastline is less developed but more environmentally rich with a slower pace and still-vibrant connection to old Florida. The Forgotten Coast includes the communities of Apalachicola, St. George Island, Eastpoint, and more.



\$595,000



101 42nd Street – Unit E, Mexico Beach
2 bed / 2 bath 1,012 sq. ft.

This two-bedroom cottage located in quiet Mexico Beach is a short walk from the beach. Built in 2020, it features up-to-date custom finishes such as luxury vinyl plank flooring, nine-foot ceilings, quartz countertops, a tankless water heater, spray-foam insulation in the attic and walls, and a metal roof. The backyard, which is full fenced, includes a covered porch, a brick-paver courtyard, an outdoor shower, and a natural gas hook-up for a grill. Boaters have access to the Mexico Beach boat ramp located nearby. The cottage can be purchased alone or as a duplex with the adjacent unit, which is also for sale.

The Peevy Team (850) 227-3335

PANAMA CITY BEACH

Located right in the center of the Florida panhandle, Panama City is the largest city between Pensacola and the state capital of Tallahassee. The area is a paradise for water lovers as it is almost surrounded by coastline from the Gulf of Mexico to St. Andrews Bay, East Bay, North Bay, and the Grand Lagoon.



\$439,800

9900 S Thomas Drive – Unit 730, Panama City Beach
1 bed / 2 bath 951 sq. ft.

This beautiful 1BR/2BA unit at the Shores of Panama is one of the few true gulf-front units with unobstructed views of the beach. Located on the 7th floor and with its own parking space on the same floor, this unit is offered fully furnished and ready to rent.

Duran Group (850) 527-0221

\$1,075,000



47 S Bayshore Drive, Eastpoint
3 bed / 2.5 bath 2,344 sq. ft.

This bayside lodge between Apalachicola and St. George Island takes full advantage of its waterfront location with large, sweeping windows offering views of Appalachia Bay, full-length decks, and a pool located right on the shore. Underwater salvager Harvey Harrington, well-known for raising historic shipwrecks, designed the unique outdoor living space. Sinker cypress, old logging leftovers pulled from nearby rivers, was used for the outdoor siding. The 23-foot ceilings in the interior living space were built with juniper. The house includes a stone chimney and wood-burning fireplace, a hot tub, outdoor bar and grill, and an outdoor shower.

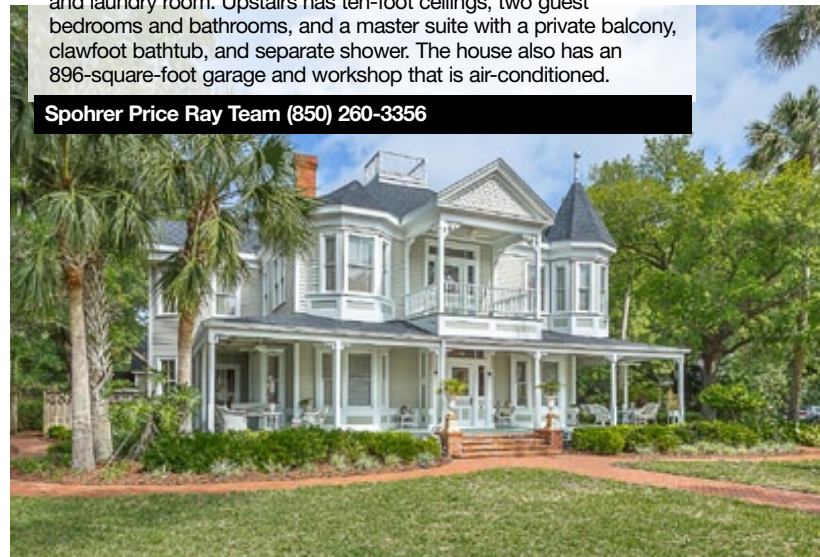
Mary Johnson (850) 370-0044

\$1,850,000

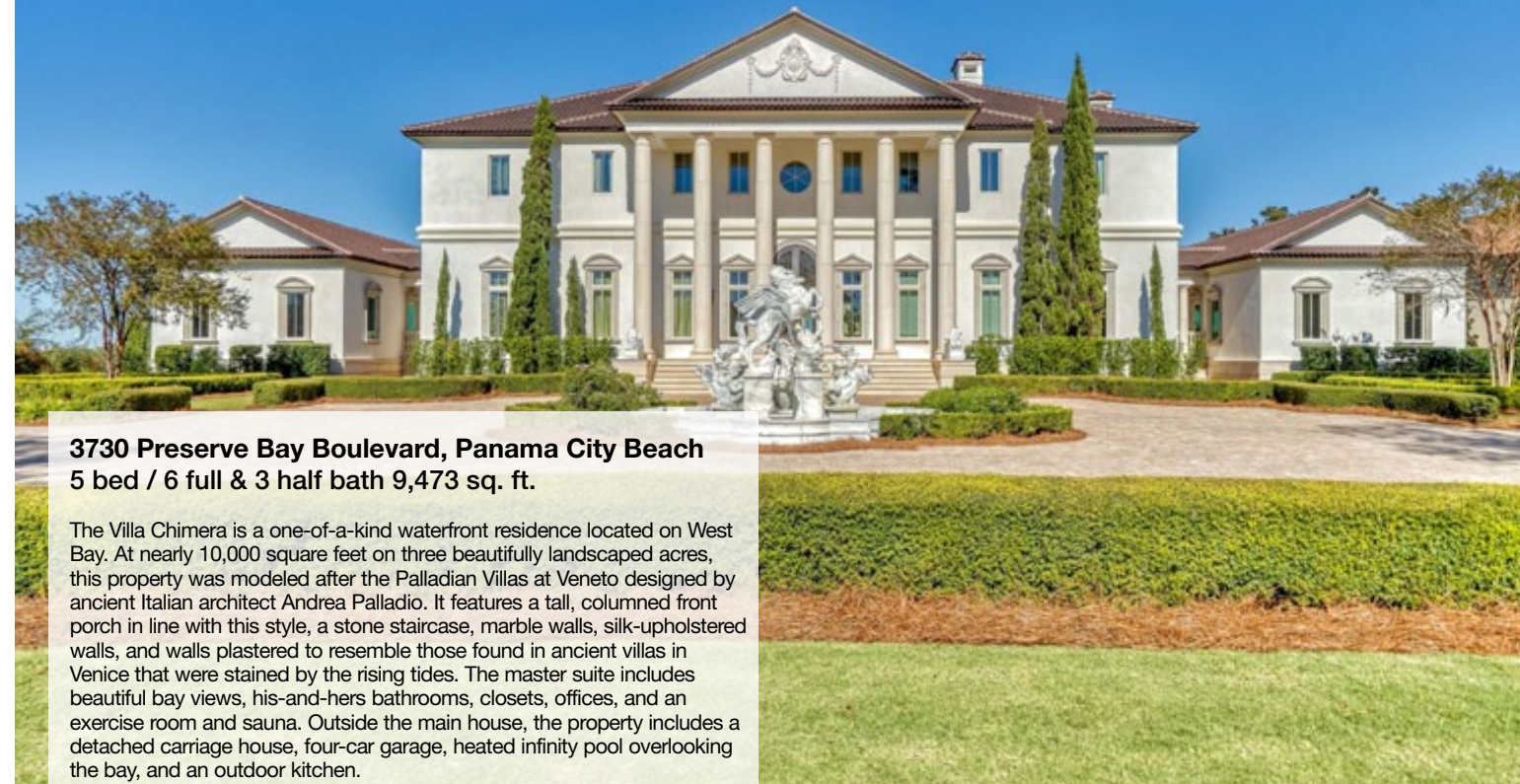
163 Ave B, Apalachicola
4 bed / 4 bath 3,832 sq. ft.

This historic and impeccably renovated Queen Anne Victorian was built in 1895 and is located right in the center of the Apalachicola historic district near Lafayette Park. The cypress and heart pine home has its original floors, walls, ceilings, wainscot, and window sashes with wavy glass. The main floor has 11-foot ceilings, three parlors, a dining room, a study or extra bedroom with a full bath, a chef's kitchen and breakfast nook, a butler's pantry, and a second pantry and laundry room. Upstairs has ten-foot ceilings, two guest bedrooms and bathrooms, and a master suite with a private balcony, clawfoot bathtub, and separate shower. The house also has an 896-square-foot garage and workshop that is air-conditioned.

Spohrer Price Ray Team (850) 260-3356



\$9,975,000



3730 Preserve Bay Boulevard, Panama City Beach
5 bed / 6 full & 3 half bath 9,473 sq. ft.

The Villa Chimera is a one-of-a-kind waterfront residence located on West Bay. At nearly 10,000 square feet on three beautifully landscaped acres, this property was modeled after the Palladian Villas at Veneto designed by ancient Italian architect Andrea Palladio. It features a tall, columned front porch in line with this style, a stone staircase, marble walls, silk-upholstered walls, and walls plastered to resemble those found in ancient villas in Venice that were stained by the rising tides. The master suite includes beautiful bay views, his-and-hers bathrooms, closets, offices, and an exercise room and sauna. Outside the main house, the property includes a detached carriage house, four-car garage, heated infinity pool overlooking the bay, and an outdoor kitchen.

Delawalla Group (850) 225-9899



NAVARRE

Navarre Beach is tucked away on the west end of the panhandle on a thin stretch of uncrowded coastline between the Gulf of Mexico and Santa Rosa Sound. This small beachside community has an unhurried vibe and combines the best of the beach with bayside boating and fishing opportunities.



\$2,500,000

8263 Gulf Boulevard, Navarre
5 bed / 4 bath 2,692 sq. ft.

This Navarre Beach house, directly on the Gulf of Mexico, takes full advantage of its location. The gulf-front sides of the house are lined with floor-to-ceiling windows. Open-air balconies are located off the kitchen, dining, main living area, and master suite. The house has updated appliances and modern design details in the bathrooms and kitchen. A stretch of uncrowded beach is just steps away, accessed by a sandy path through the dunes.

Delawalla Group (850) 225-9899



\$1,795,000

1430 Homeport Drive, Navarre
4 bed / 3.5 bath 2,799 sq. ft.

This custom-designed canal-front home in Navarre Beach offers beautiful views of the canal and the Santa Rosa Sound. Enjoy watching the sunrise over the canal from the living room, dining area, and kitchen. The kitchen features shaker cabinets, marble countertops, and an oversized pantry that could serve as an owner's closet. A master suite is located on each floor. Custom details include 12-foot ceilings, bullnose sheetrock, luxury vinyl plank flooring, and specially-made seagrass window coverings. The Gulf of Mexico beach is less than half a mile away.

Mary Skinner (850) 803-5834

\$599,000

1121 Blazing Star Street, Panama City
4 bed / 3.5 bath 2,370 sq. ft.

Located in the master-planned community of SweetBay, this home has received over \$50,000 in upgrades, including wood-look tile, plush carpet, quartz and granite countertops, a gas stove, and marble tile and a soaking tub in the master bath. The backyard is fenced, and an additional parking slab has been added adjacent to the two-car garage. A covered balcony has a clear view of the park and pond. SweetBay is nestled in a natural area alongside North Bay and features green spaces, walking trails, pet-friendly parks, bay access, two pools, playgrounds, and a planned marina and town center.

Mario Gobel (850) 527-5878



1457 Arkansas Street, Navarre
4 bed / 3 bath 2,380 sq. ft.

This canal-front, four-bedroom house in Navarre Beach was built in 2019 and includes a private boat lift on the canal, which feeds directly into the beautiful Santa Rosa Sound. It is located less than half a mile from the Gulf of Mexico beaches. The house features views of the canal, 12-foot ceilings, luxury vinyl plank flooring, stainless steel appliances, and a large garage. The master suite overlooks the canal, and the master bath has dual vanities and a separate tub and shower.

Delawalla Group (850) 225-9899

\$1,620,000





**10941 East County Hwy 30A, Unit 314,
2 bed / 2 bath 1,220 sq. ft.**

This fully-furnished Inlet Beach condominium is located directly on Scenic Highway 30A, about a third of a mile from the Gulf of Mexico beaches. The ground-floor unit at The Pointe community has easy access to the pool and other amenities from the back patio. The unit has been professionally decorated and features high ceilings, Restoration Hardware interiors, hardwood floors, and high-end fixtures. The kitchen includes stainless steel appliances and a breakfast bar, and the bathrooms feature modern fixtures and tile work. The Pointe community has a private pool with cabanas, a hot tub, a fire pit, and a rooftop sanctuary with views of the Gulf. This unit is rental-ready.

Seth Matthews (850) 830-7208

\$849,000

SANTA ROSA BEACH

This burgeoning area includes over a dozen distinct neighborhoods, all tied to the pristine waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the Choctawhatchee Bay, and the unique coastal dune lakes, which can only be found in a handful of places on the planet. Santa Rosa Beach has few high rises along the beach due to development restrictions, giving it a slower feel, and it includes an 18.5-mile paved walking and biking trail along the coast. The area has become a hotspot for music, art, culture, and ecotourism.

**141 Ridgewalk Circle,
3 bed / 3.5 bath 1,838 sq. ft.**

This unique painted-brick house is located less than a mile from the beach in Ridgewalk, a small French-inspired community with no short-term rentals. The three-story house features hardwood flooring, high-end interior finishes, modern decor, and a master suite on the top floor. Outside, the house is adorned with gas-powered lanterns and wooden shutters, and a paver-stone patio includes an outdoor fireplace. The community has a pool with lounge and picnic areas.

Anne Winicki (850) 960-1179



\$1,050,000

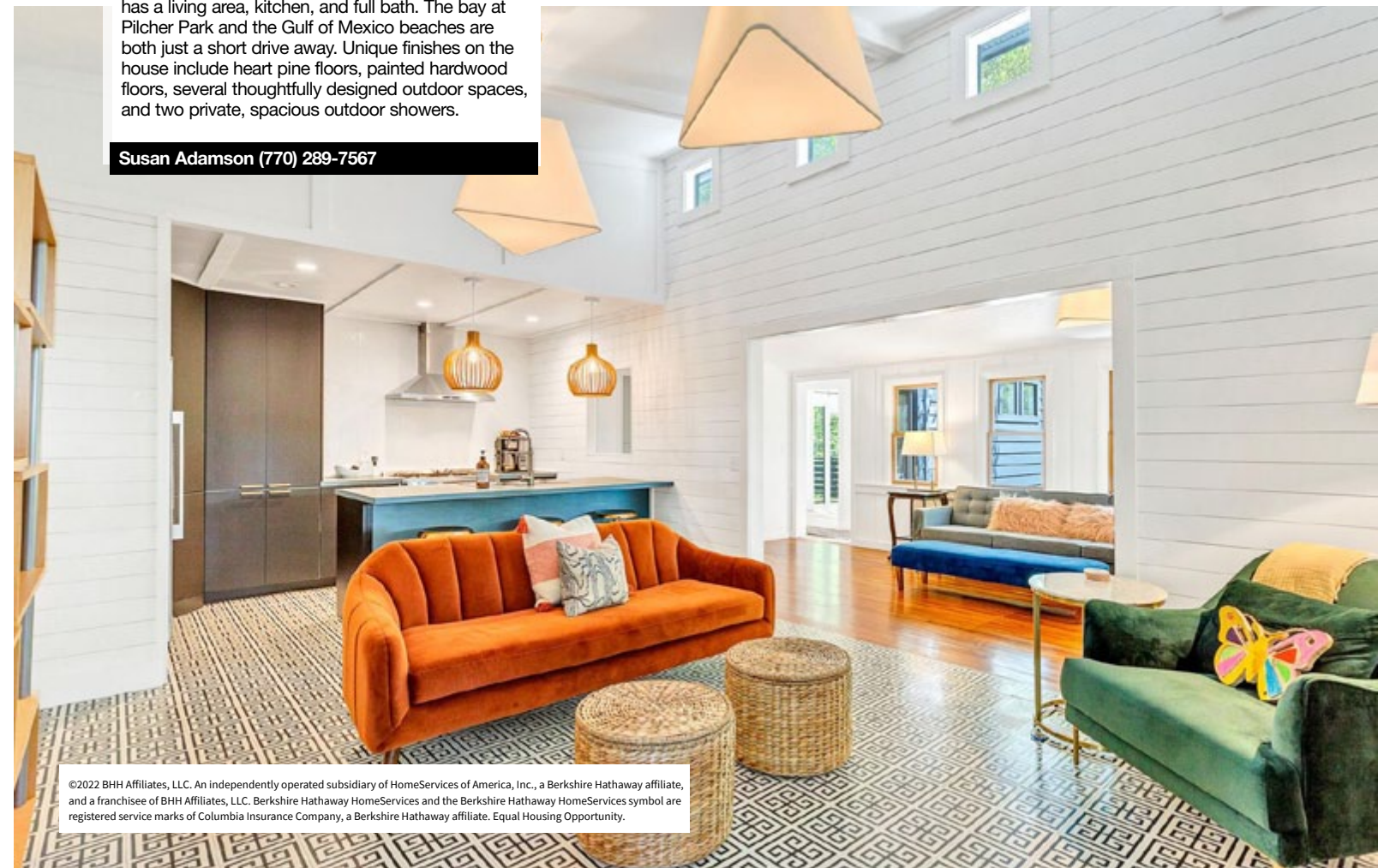


**34 Pisces Drive,
4 bed / 3.5 bath 1,585**

This private adobe located on almost half an acre is nestled in the forest, surrounded by live oak trees and backing up to a creek that leads to Choctawhatchee Bay. The main house includes three bedrooms and three full baths. The carriage house has a living area, kitchen, and full bath. The bay at Pilcher Park and the Gulf of Mexico beaches are both just a short drive away. Unique finishes on the house include heart pine floors, painted hardwood floors, several thoughtfully designed outdoor spaces, and two private, spacious outdoor showers.

Susan Adamson (770) 289-7567

\$939,000



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BEACHES

By Sean Dietrich

I am sitting on the beach, tapping on a laptop, people-watching, developing an awesome sunburn.

As a kid, I practically lived at the beach. I always sported sunburns in the summers, and my red hair always leaned more toward strawberry blond.

But then, suddenly, there was a time in my adult life when I quit visiting the beach altogether. In fact, I went years without placing a sole on this sand.

The irony, of course, is that I live a mile from the shore. Not far from my front steps are the whitest sands in the U.S., and the most ethereal Gulf waters known to man. And yet, I rarely visit.

What does that say about me?

I'll tell you what. It says that I have been taking this beach for granted. I'm not sure how I started doing that, but I did.

Maybe it all started after my first beach job as a teenager. I spent upwards of nine hours each day on the blinding hot sand, setting up awkward beach-service chairs, sounding a lifeguard whistle at rowdy teenagers, and hollering at little kids who yelled "Shark!" just for the heck of it.

"We don't have sharks here," was the official stance we lifeguards were instructed to take with the tourists.

After that, I went through a period when something simply changed inside me. I quit visiting our shores very often and found myself forgetting about our simple beauty. In other words, I ignored what was before me. Which is classic me.

Until recently.

Something has been happening inside me. Something interesting. I have been spending more time on the beach lately. Usually, I visit in the mornings, reading a book, trying to absorb the solitude.

I don't know what's come over me. I don't know what brought this change.

Maybe I'm sitting here by this water because I'm getting older, and I'm realizing I don't have that many beach days left. Or maybe it's because my world has changed.

I won't lie. These last few years have been challenging for my wife and me. My mother-in-law was ill, and we watched her die a little more each day. My wife and I were at her bedside to help her into the next world, and when she was finally gone, our universe lost its gravitational center.

Now that phase of life is over, and it's back to real life again. Except, it's not that easy.

“But then, suddenly, there was a time when I quit visiting the beach altogether.”

Nobody tells you how hard it is to find the steady rhythm of normal life after you've lost your pace. It's not easy to simply return to living the way you used to. In fact, it's almost impossible. Because you are not the same person you used to be.

Nevertheless, here I am, on this sand.

Parked beside me this morning is an elderly German couple beneath a cheap umbrella. They are visiting from Ramstein. The old Europeans wear bathing suits that resemble No. 3 dental floss, and I can see their vital organs. But you have to hand it to them, wearing such bold Euro fashions at their ages takes guts.

They tell me that their son died when he was thirty-six from suicide. Their son never saw the famed beaches of West Florida, although he always wanted to see them. It was his dream.

So after his funeral, his parents started making an annual vacation out of visiting this area. They have been visiting this place every year on his birthday.

He would have been sixty-four this year.

On the beach, I also meet a young man who is off work from working the night shift at a convenience store. He is sitting on the shore, trying to figure out how to operate a high-tech drone—which is essentially a flying camera with propellers that are capable of decapitating a musk ox.

He uses an iPad for a remote control. He sends the tiny drone over the Gulf water, staring at his screen. Then, he sidles next to me and says, "Hey, you wanna see something cool?"

"Sure," I say.

He shows me and the Germans the iPad. I am looking at the azure Gulf water on the screen, and I see a large dark shape several hundred yards out from shore, floating beneath the surface. It looks like a killer whale, or maybe a submarine.

"What is that shape?" I ask.

He points to a medial fin. "Shark."

How do you like that?

Anyway, after spending a few hours on the beaches of my youth, I'm starting to get a sense of what normal life looks like again. I think I'm even beginning to see things a little more clearly.

All my life, I thought that my life was a journey. But that's just an old cliché. And I think the cliché is wrong. They say life is an uphill grind, a grueling foot race, a battle, a contest. You fight and fight, and then one day, boom, you're just done fighting. And then you die.

But to me, this life is not an expedition or a Napoleonic conquest. Life is a Rembrandt, a Monet, a Thomas Hart Benton painting. This life is a poem. A work of art meant to be admired, questioned, wept over, enjoyed, framed, and above all, taken care of. Your life is meant to be loved. Even the bad parts. Your life is supposed to be fun. You are supposed to be having fun. And so am I.

Which is, of course, why people come to the beach. 🏖️



Sean Dietrich, nicknamed Sean of the South, chronicles life in the American South. Find him online at seandietrich.com.



SCAN TO LISTEN



SUMMER

soundtrax

Here at the beach, summer is all about the surf, the sand, and sun-soaked songs. But if you're sadly landlocked, here are 20 songs guaranteed to shine a little summer sun on your day. We currently have these songs playing in rotation on 30A Radio, which you can listen to for free in the 30A apps for iPhone or Android, on your Google Home or Alexa device ("hey Alexa/Google, play 30A Radio"), or simply by going to www.30Aradio.com on any device.

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southern coastal music 24/7



1. "Feel It Shining Down" - Cass Haley
2. "Drifting in Out of Time" - The Hip Abduction
3. "Made Up Mind" - Tedeschi Truck Band
4. "Whatever Floats Your Boat (feat. The Boat Boys)" - Brian Kelley
5. "Good Day for Living" - Joe Nichols
6. "Believe" - Caamp
7. "Now Is the Time" - Jade Bird
8. "Good Day for a Good Day" - Michael Franti & Spearhead
9. "All Day Long" - Garth Brooks
10. "Ring the Bells" - Johnnyswim (feat. Drew Holcomb & The Neighbors)
11. "Why Not" - Jake Shimabukuro (feat. Kenny Loggins)
12. "It's Time" - Bobby Alu
13. "Island Time" - Jamtown
14. "Margaritas" - The Elovaters
15. "Do Re Mi" - Trousdale
16. "My Soul Is Lemonade" - Kai Straw
17. "Higher Vibration" - Ziggy Marley & The Melody Makers
18. "Nothing To Lose" - The Floozies
19. "Tell Me" - Long Beach Dub Allstars
20. "So Ready" - Goose



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What is 30A?

This is a map of our little beach community. Old Florida "State Road 30" once started at the Alabama state line and meandered 283 miles east across the panhandle. Several "alternate routes" (hence the "A" in 30A) offered drivers a slower scenic option, usually along the beach. But we don't think of 30A as disjointed miles of soulless asphalt. 30A® is a celebration of small town beach life – the kind that's been enjoyed by families for decades all along the Gulf Coast. 30A isn't just a line on the map. It's a lifestyle; an attitude. It's that happy place we all dream of when we need to unwind, unplug and celebrate life. – 30A.com





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