



The Inn At Palmetto Bluff A Lowcountry State Of Mind

Pat Conroy, who wrote eloquently in *The Prince of Tides* about the magical landscape of South Carolina's lowcountry, said, "Once you have traveled, the voyage never ends but is played out over and over again in the quietest chambers."

He could have been referring to the lingering effect of a visit to The Inn at Palmetto Bluff. Situated at the headwaters of the May River, where islands of shimmering saw grass and 22,000 acres of towering pines and gnarled oaks dripping with Spanish moss create the loveliest backdrop, the setting is as intrinsic to The Inn as the region's culture and history. It simply could not exist anywhere else.

Watch an osprey skim the river from the verandah of a guest cottage. Fly-fish for a spot tail bass. Savor a

dozen on the half shell from Bluffton Oyster Company up the road, one of the last oyster houses on the eastern seaboard. It's easy to slip into a lowcountry state of mind, and The Inn offers many seamless ways to connect.

THE MAY RIVER GOLF CLUB

As Charlie Kent, director of the May River Golf Course, says, "Regardless of how you play, you'll enjoy yourself." The 7,171-yard Jack Nicklaus-designed course is one low-key golf outing. Live oaks and palms line the fairways, with deer and marsh birds the occasional spectators. Four-somes feel like they have the course to themselves. Golfers are encouraged to walk, and caddies are mandatory, a good thing since there is no signage cluttering the course.

SPA AT PALMETTO BLUFF

The Spa at Palmetto Bluff leverages the heritage and setting, creating an environment where it's easy to disconnect—starting with no scales in the locker rooms. A southern porch with floor-to-ceiling shutters houses the dipping pool and steam bath. Harkening to the past, eight treatment rooms have private balconies with claw-foot tubs overlooking the lagoon. Chaises in the secluded garden are ideal for both a spa lunch and bird watching.

Treatments by the gracious technicians go above and beyond, leaving one not pampered, but spoiled. All products are natural and organic.

FUN AND EXPLORATION

Opportunities for fun and exploration abound, many of which are complimentary and a short pedal away on the cruiser that comes with your cottage. Two pools, adult and family, have adjoining fitness centers offering Pilates, yoga and other classes. At the bocce and basketball courts, balls are out and ready for play. Fishing poles, kayaks, canoes and paddleboards await at Wilson's Landing.

The Lawn & Racquet Club, a beautiful facility that complements the surroundings, has eight Har-Tru courts and two croquet lawns.

For the water-borne, choose an evening cruise on The Inn's *Grace* or a two-hour to full-day adventure through estuaries and out islands with tour-provider Outside Palmetto Bluff, spotting dolphins and wood storks along the way. For the land-based, check out the Conservancy at

DINING GUIDE

['THE SUBJECT OF FOOD IS NEARLY A SACRED ONE TO ME.' — Pat Conroy]

Jeremy Walton, director of Food and Beverage, might say the same. Raised by his grandmother, a fine southern cook, he and executive chef Kirk Gilbert, formerly of Sea Island, have been passionate about creating a refined but authentic southern culinary experience that pays homage to lowcountry cooking and bounty. "We like to think we are enriching people's lives through the dining experience," says Walton.

Three resort gardens supply fresh herbs for both the restaurants and the Lounge Bar's "Garden to Glass"

cocktails. From Sapelo Island clams to artisan cheeses, many ingredients are locally sourced, and much is made in-house, including the sausages for the charcuterie platter.

[REFINED SOUTHERN FARE]

River House is formal but not stuffy and succeeds in executing Walton's vision of serving refined southern fare. Chef Gilbert's creativity and knowledge of lowcountry cuisine conspire to make memories. Shrimp and grits is a masterpiece of freshly caught shrimp, homemade Andouille sausage, and steel-cut Anson Mill grits. Boneless southern fried

chicken, white and dark meat magically married, is tasty and moist. Sides like "Mac & Cheese" served in cast iron ramekins are not to be missed, nor is the beignet and doughnut flight for dessert. Jackets with collared shirts for gentlemen, resort wear for ladies.

BREAKFAST AND BRUNCH SUNDAY, 8 A.M.–11 A.M.; DINNER DAILY, 6 P.M.–9:30 P.M. 843.706.6542

[CORNER CAFE] **Buffalos**, warm and welcoming, is a step up from the traditional corner café. Breakfast and lunch menus include standards like pancakes, omelets, sandwiches and pizzas, but between the brick

oven, use of local ingredients, and in-house preparation, the cooking is far from ordinary. Breakfast must? Palmetto Bluff eggs Benedict, a stack of perfectly poached free-range eggs smothered in hollandaise, wilted spinach, homemade corned beef hash and buttermilk biscuit. Lunch must? The house-made hot dog with green tomato chow chow served on a freshly baked roll.

BREAKFAST MONDAY TO SATURDAY, 7 A.M.–11 A.M.; LUNCH DAILY, 11 A.M.–3 P.M. 843.706.6630

[GOLF CLUB FARE] **May River Grill**, with a view of the palm that

CALENDAR

CIAB Mid-Year Board of Director's Meeting & Strategic Work Session

The Inn at Palmetto Bluff
Bluffton, S.C.
April 27–29

Spoletto Festival USA 2011

Charleston, S.C.
May 27–June 12

Palmetto Bluff's outings, such as the favorite Owl Prowl, or take a two-hour trail ride into the wild offered at the resort's state-of-the-art equestrian center, Longfield Stables.

A COTTAGE TO CALL YOUR OWN

Most of The Inn's 50 king-bedded cottages, solidly built with pine floors and beamed ceilings, have views of either the river or lagoon. Tastefully decorated rooms have oils of the lowcountry hanging above the fireplaces and wood blinds covering the French doors leading to the verandah. While there are only eight suites with separate living rooms, cottages are roomy with two club chairs and an ottoman, a separate dressing room with built-in drawers and two closets, and an outstanding bathroom with an oversized marble shower that doubles as a steam shower. Details, such as a book on birds of the Southeast and a fridge stocked with complimentary juices and bottled water, illustrate how The Inn always goes the extra mile.

LUXURY



tide. The 15-acre resort opened a year ago with 12 suites. This season, they've added another 15, bettering odds for finding a place to lay your head where you can literally watch the whales migrate (April to October) from the privacy of your own room. Designed by owner, Lisa Harper, who drew the hotel on a cocktail napkin, all offer Pacific and mountain views and are presented with lively Mexican flair, including palapa-covered patios ideal for siestas.

"We want them to squeal when they get here and cry when they leave," best describes the resort's philosophy. Two pools with poolside libation stations. Bright blue, four-poster cabana beds sitting smack on a two-mile beach. A brand-new 2,000 square foot yoga and Pilates pavilion. Surfing the legendary waves or casting for dorado is easily arranged for the more energetic. Dining is Baja seafood meets local, seasonal, organic fruits and vegetables at the hotel's Todos Santos Mexican restaurant. 910.300.8891 (U.S.), + 011.52.1.612.135.5849, WWW.RANCHOPESCADERO.COM

Big and little duffers unite! Pinehurst Resort, North Carolina's temple to golf, has set aside three long weekends this summer—June 23–26, July 7–10, and July 21–24—for parents and children to learn to swing and putt together. While serious golfers flock to Pinehurst's challenging links, the Parent/Child Weekend program "isn't worried about pace of play, but how much fun you can have learning the game together." Highlights of the package include instruction at the resort's renowned Pinehurst Golf Academy, greens fees and the use of clubs.

Reasons to extend beyond the long weekend? Providing inspiration for little duffers, Pinehurst will host both the U.S. Kids Golf Teen World Championship July 28 to August 1 and U.S. Kids Golf World Championship August 3–8. Providing inspiration for big duffers, after tweaking by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw, Donald Ross's legendary Pinehurst Number 2 course is ready for play as it was intended by Ross. Prices vary depending on choice of accommodations—Manor Inn, Holly Inn or Carolina Hotel. 866.291.4427, WWW.PINEHURST.COM



FAMILY

Channeling Indiana...Jones that is. You're on horseback riding through Belize's Maya Mountain foothills. A guide uses a machete to hack back the jungle. You pass by unexcavated Mayan burial ruins and descend to a hidden waterfall or cave river, a cool swim your reward. How to experience an adventure fit for Indy? Mountain Equestrian Trails, a horseback-riding lodge located in the remote Cayo district, much of which is protected tropical rainforest aflutter with hummingbirds, tanagers and toucans.



The small lodge, just 10 stucco and hardwood, thatched-roof cabanas perched over a valley, is a simple but idyllic base for exploring the region by foot and binoculars. Experienced guides assist riders in selecting a horse and tack according to their riding level. Horses are well trained to handle steep descents while providing a lively canter through the woods. Hearty, delicious home-style cooking using the local fare is served at the Cantina, a bar/gathering spot where the day's adventures are shared. Cabanas have private baths with hot water but lack electricity—kerosene lamps provide light and ambiance. Be sure to add time for a four-wheel drive excursion to Tikal's amazing Mayan ruins in nearby Guatemala. On the bucket list. 800.838.3918, WWW.MET-BELIZE.COM

ADVENTURE

stands before a spreading live oak that inspired the club's logo, serves what a duffer wants after a day on the links—soups, salads and sandwiches. Heavy on standards—Cobb salads, grilled Reubens—the menu also offers dishes that include local fare, such as grouper sliders. Comfortable and clubby, the bar has a flat screen TV so you won't miss The Masters.

LUNCH DAILY, 11 A.M.–3 P.M.; BAR 11 A.M. UNTIL THE LAST GOLFER FINISHES.

Charming Todos Santos, Mexico, an hour north of Cabo San Lucas, has long been a favored Gringo outpost for those seeking to throw back a cerveza in more authentic surroundings and putter around art galleries. But aside from the 11-room Hotel California, it lacked accommodations for more than a day's dally. Rancho Pescadero, a tony, tiny beachside resort, has turned the



Making Tracks
CARRIE WILLIAMSON
GLOBAL LEISURE TRAVEL



BUDAPEST

[STAR-STUDED DINING] Costes is the first restaurant in Hungary to receive a Michelin star, the result of a carefully planned campaign on the part of owner-impresario Károly Gerendai. Argentinean chef Nicolas Delgado presides over a menu that unites traditional Hungarian cuisine with the style of modern Europe. Service is white-glove traditional. The wine list has interesting Austrian and Hungarian bottles.

LUNCH AND DINNER WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY, RÁDAY UTCA 4, +36.1.219.0696, WWW.COSTES.HU

SINGAPORE

[ALL THE RAGE] Restaurant André is the first solo venture for acclaimed chef André Chiang, who made his reputation at Jaan in Swissôtel, The Stamford. Chiang's own restaurant is smaller—about 30 seats—and more intimate. His 10-course degustation menu takes you on a memorable French-Asian journey through dishes with names like Pure, South, Texture, Memory, and Terroir. Food and service are impeccable. Restaurant André was the most anticipated restaurant opening of last year in Singapore.

41 BUKIT PASOH RD., +65.6534.8880, WWW.RESTAURANTANDRE.COM

SAN FRANCISCO

[JUST ABOUT PERFECT] Benu was opened last year to great acclaim by French Laundry alum Cory Lee. Lee offers both à la carte and tasting menus. His California-meets-Asia cooking is actually influenced by Asia to a degree unusual among western chefs—maybe sea urchin with cucumber, almond and dark chocolate or lobster porridge with flavors of green curry. Both the food and the service are frequently described as flawless.

DINNER TUESDAY-SATURDAY, 22 HAWTHORNE ST., 415.685.4860, WWW.BENUSF.COM



[DISCERNING TRAVELER]

Adventure Camera Extraordinaire Whether skiing or on safari, the Pentax K-5 might be the consummate advanced DSLR camera for adventurers. One of the smallest and lightest, the magnesium alloy body is built to take a beating. Seventy-seven weather seals keep elements at bay while an ISO 12800 (80-51800) ensures high resolutions in dusty conditions. At seven frames per second, it's possible to capture the thundering hooves of migrating wildebeest, with the fast 11-point SAFOX IX+ autofocus making sure you don't miss your shot. Among other features: 77 segment metering system (excellent exposure in tough lighting), 16.3 megapixel sensor (quality enlargements), and 1080p HD Video (cinematic). \$1,599.95 body only. WWW.PENTAXIMAGING.COM



Why so serious? Yes, the controversial new x-ray machines leave little to the imagination, making women in particular want to forgo traveling altogether. Need something to put a smile back on your face? Tote a Tepper Jackson weekend bag for your next getaway. The whimsical, waterproof canvas carry-ons burst with colorful floral designs. Yet pretty is as pretty does. Pretty does? Fits under the passenger seat or in the overhead compartment. Handy front pouch for stashing books or magazines. Outer zipper and inner zippered pocket secures valuables. \$99. WWW.TEPPERJACKSONONLINE.COM

BRIEFCASE

Bang for your buck: \$3.99 buys the FlightBoard app on iTunes, an arrivals and departures board for more than 4,000 international airports; check real-time flight status and gate number. >> Also on iTunes: *Salk International's Airport Transit Guide*, covering ground transportation at 460 airports worldwide, has replaced the print edition with a new app; \$9.99, including free updates. >> King Kong? Cathay Pacific will start daily roundtrips between Chicago O'Hare and Hong Kong September 1, as well as increase the number of flights to China's gateway from JFK and Toronto. >> Cost of La Dolce Vita. Rome's new hotel room tax, as much as three euros per person per night in addition to 10% VAT, took effect January 1.

FAST TRACKS

Technological Wizard: 2012 BMW 650i Convertible

The 2012 BMW 650i Convertible is destined to fly out of showrooms come spring 2011. Not only does it marry the company's signature sporty but smooth engineering with the styling of a Jaguar XK or Mercedes CL-Class, but it is also a technological wizard.

Tip of the iceberg features: Integral Active Steering, promoting greater high-speed stability and enhanced maneuverability. Driving Dynamic Control, allowing the driver to choose comfort, normal, sport and sport+ settings for more precise handling by tuning the throttle response, power steering, shock absorbers and roll stabilization. ConnectedDrive, featuring auto high-beam control, lane departure warning system, and auto blindspot detection to name a few.

Peppy and potent, the 4.4 liter, V-8 direct injection, twin-turbocharged, reverse-flow engine produces instantaneous and sustained power. Max 400 horsepower from 5,500 to 6,400 rpm. Max peak torque of 450 lb-ft between 1,750 and 4,500 rpm. 0 to 60 in 4.9 seconds using either the 6-speed manual or new 8-speed automatic transmission. Top speed is electronically capped at 155 mph.

Expect decent fuel efficiency due to the aluminum chassis, aerodynamic refinements and brake energy regeneration, but EPA figures are pending. Pricing TBD. WWW.BMW.COM



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