



**EYE ON THE PRIZE**  
Steve Hein is a consultant for Sea Island's raptor and falconry programs.

## Bird's-Eye View

**Discover five-star falconry at Sea Island's Broadfield sporting club.**

| By Katie Kelly Bell |

Standing in a broad expanse of brush rimmed by a magnificent oak canopy, the corner of my eye catches sight of our peregrine falcon, torpedoing through the air at 250 mph. She's after the pheasant we just flushed out, and, with her wicked talon grip, she's successful, returning the bird in exchange for a treat from her handler. I am hunting with the team at Sea Island's Broadfield sporting club,

a 5,800-acre preserve set aside for exclusive use by Sea Island guests and members. A mere 30 minutes from the Cloister, the landscape is unspoiled and fertile with habitats. In fact, this particular property was once the private hunting land of former Sea Island Chairman and CEO Bill Jones III.

Today, Sea Island's director of outdoor pursuits, Jon Kent, loves introducing people to Broadfield. "What we have at Broadfield is rare for this part of the country... more oak hammock than pine stand, which is something all the game benefit from," he says. "It's also been precisely managed for 12 years, encouraging game habitats in the most natural way possible."

Taking the whole business to another level is The Falconer's Retreat experience. Notes Kent, "Other places have falconry 'shows,' where guests can watch the birds; here you get to participate in the hunting experience with the bird." Indeed, it's a rare and intimate opportunity to work with one of nature's finest predators. Drawing from their stable of about six to 12 birds, the hunt is a three-tiered experience with three different raptors. It typically begins with squirrel-hawking using Harris hawks, followed by quail hunting with a goshawk and concluding with a high-speed grand-finale pheasant hunt with a peregrine falcon. "Your role," explains Kent,



**IDYLIC RETREAT**  
Sea Island Cloister's main entrance



"is to stir up the prey down below. Your bird will be up above, soaring at anywhere from 300 to 1,000 feet, waiting on you to do your part." But, hey, no pressure.

The property also offers traditional setups, including quail hunts (complete with custom bird buggy and trained dogs) and a competitive five stand with 10 blinds for fast and furious action. At the end of the hunt, Broadfield's multitasking chef/farmer Jordan Poteat serves up dishes from a gorgeous seasonally inspired low-country menu for lunch. When he's not cooking, he's usually tending the property's bees or chicken coop, or running the smokehouse (where he smokes ham, bacon and sausage).

All the high-flying action is unforgettable, but the most breathtaking moment comes at the hunt's close. Here, visitors are offered the chance to call the bird down (she works a second shift, scanning the shoreline as a natural deterrent to the resort's nuisance birds). Protected by a glove, the falconer calls the bird, and she comes in a blaze of predatory glory—regal and magnificent—giving me a new and impressive appreciation for the term "winging it." 855.714.9201, [seaisland.com](http://seaisland.com) ■



**THE TIE THAT BINDS** Above and below: The Falconer's Retreat makes for the perfect guy getaway.

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