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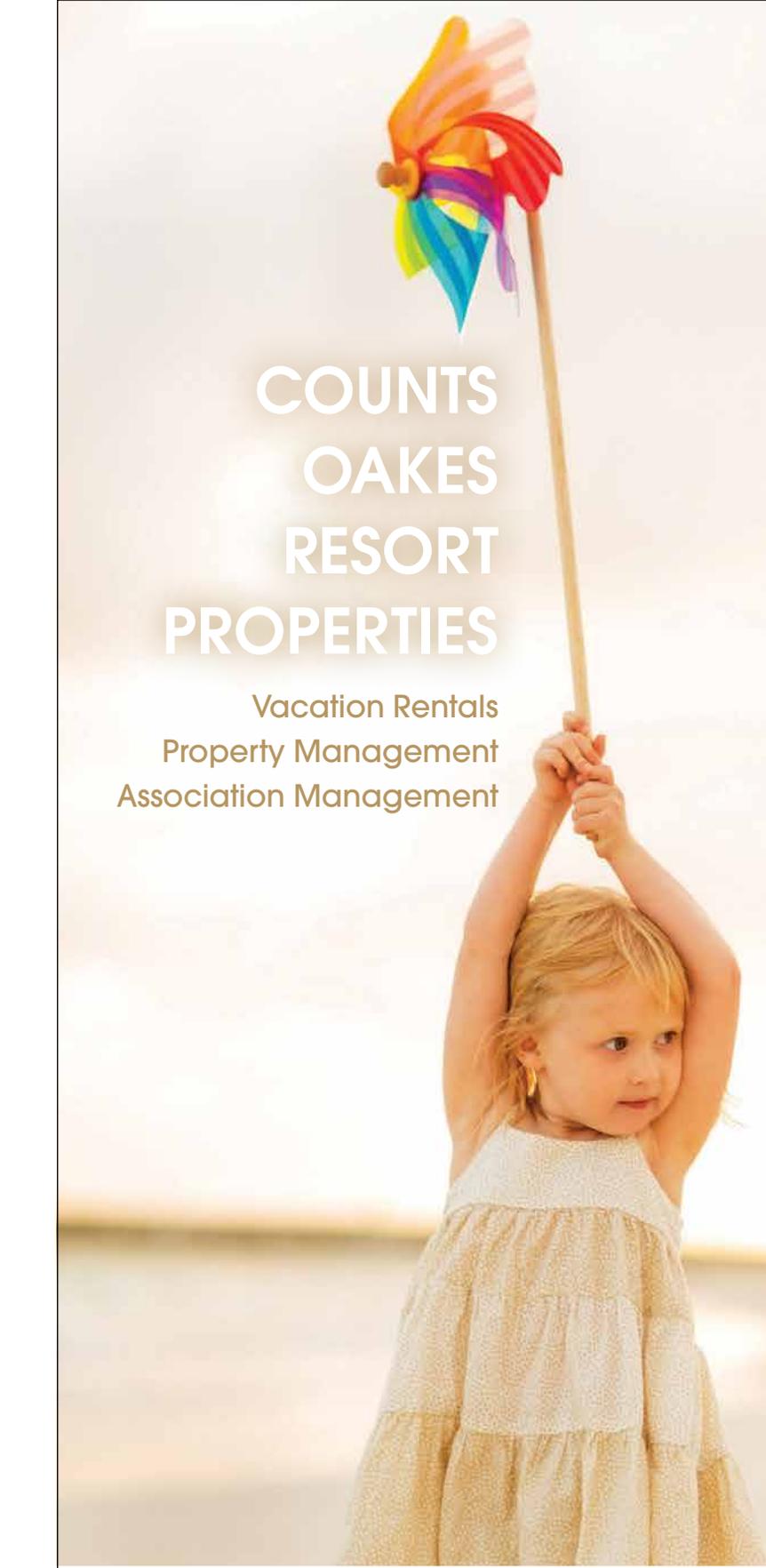
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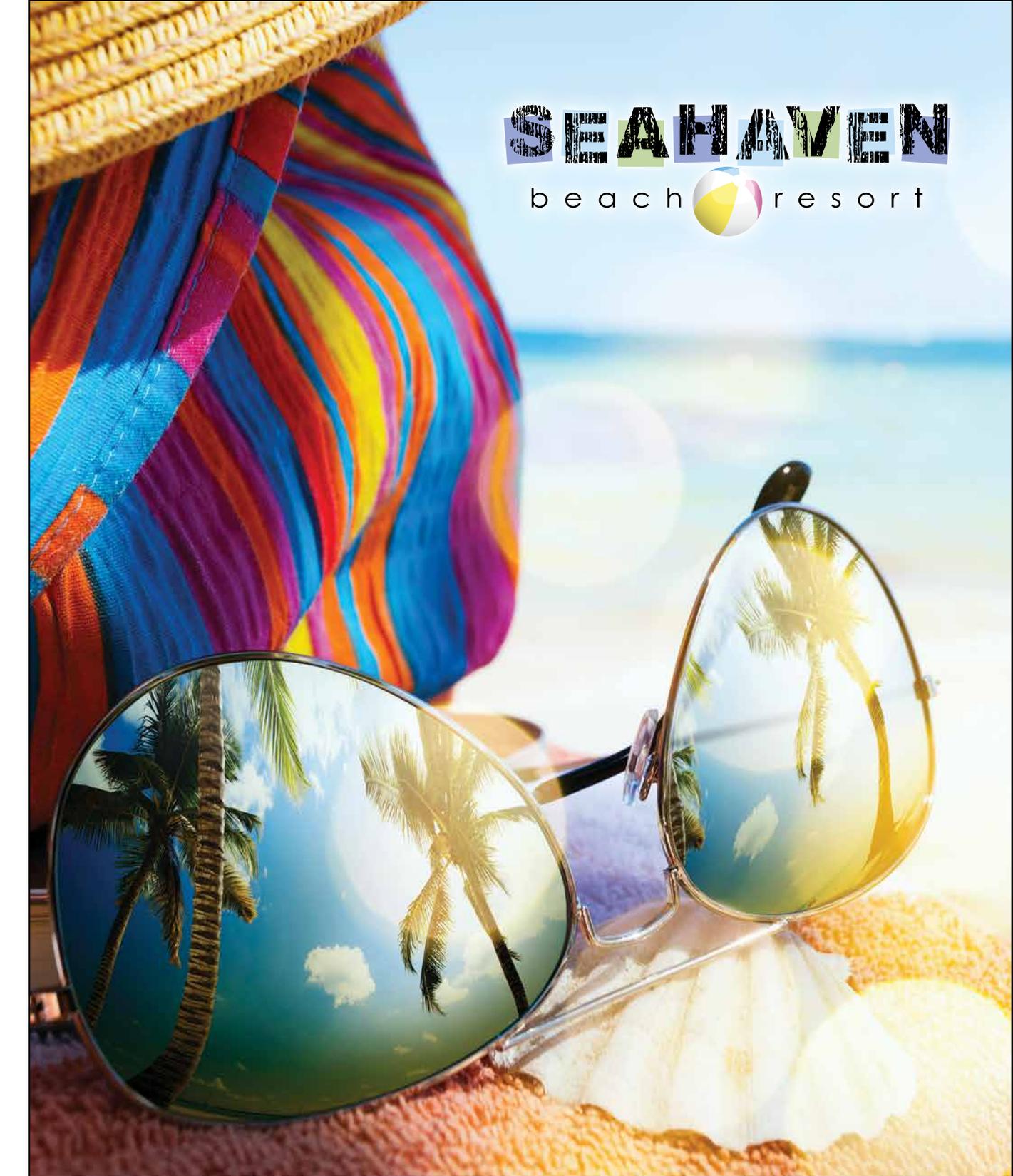
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76 CHEFS What do you get when you pluck a chef from the Black Forest of Germany and place him at Schooners in Panama City Beach? Unbelievably delicious food, that's what. Learn more about Chef Konrad Jochum in this mouth-watering Q&A.

80 PCB PIES Whether you crave crusts that are thin and crispy, deep dish or stuffed, and toppings that are heavy on the meats, veggies or boiled eggs (that's right — boiled eggs!), these six Panama City Beach pizza joints are sure to satisfy!

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SPRING IS A TIME FOR RENEWAL,

and in Panama City Beach we're proud of the many new events and opportunities coming to our area and excited for the warming weather to bring another season of families to our Real. Fun. Beach.

In the pages of this issue, you'll learn about the UNwineD food and wine festival — joining our spring lineup for the first time — as well as other new spring additions, like the Emerald Coast Boat & Lifestyle Show, adding to established events like the Pepsi SpringJam, the Seabreeze Jazz Festival, the Jeep Beach Jam and more!



We'll explain why the 100 public beach accesses in Panama City Beach are so special and share some great aerial photography that literally gives you a bird's eye view of our beautiful landscape (and seascape).

You'll learn more about fishing, diving, jet skiing and even top pizza picks in this issue and get to know Chef Konrad Jochum. As the head chef at Schooner's Beach Club, Konrad is almost as much of a fixture in Panama City Beach as the delicious dishes he serves.

There's so much for you to discover in Panama City Beach, we're just scratching the surface! Have a look, and I'm sure you'll enjoy tales of the characters, events and scenery that have made Panama City Beach one of America's favorite places to live and play for over 80 years.

Sunny Regards,

Dan Rowe, President and CEO

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Even if you can't be here in person, you can catch a glimpse of Panama City Beach from anywhere in the world! Check out the white sand, emerald green water or last night's sunset!

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Waxing Poetic



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*Shimmering
Seas*

Pier Park - Boardwalk Area



Panama City Beach

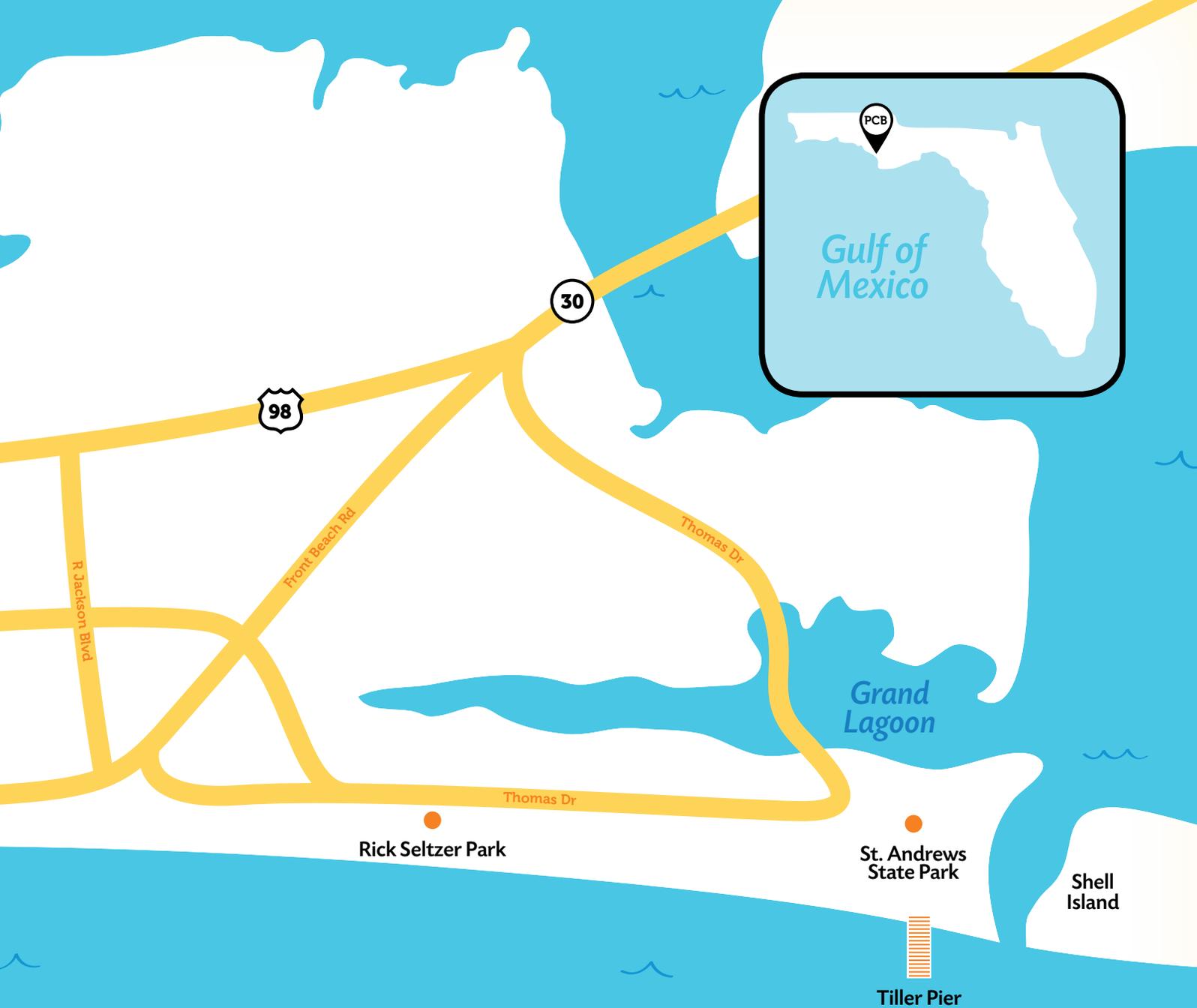
Talk Like a Local

- "Back Beach Road" Panama City Beach Parkway
- "Middle Beach Road" Hutchison Boulevard
- "City Pier" Russell-Fields Pier
- "County Pier" M.B. Miller Pier

**NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

Major Road

Bike Path



Distance Chart

Atlanta, GA	297 mi	470 km
Birmingham, AL	280 mi	440 km
Dallas, TX	751 mi	1,310 km
Houston, TX	639 mi	1,034 km
Montgomery, AL	186 mi	206 km
Nashville, TN	476 mi	744 km
New Orleans, LA	305 mi	513 km
Orlando, FL	340 mi	617 km
St. Louis, MO	745 mi	1,243 km
Tallahassee, FL	98 mi	171 km
Tampa, FL	339 mi	546 km

Natural Treasures

By land and by sea, animals enrich the Gulf of Mexico experience

BY STEVE BORNHOFT
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN RUSSO

DESERTS CAN BE made to bloom. Just add water. Doubt that? Consider, then, the sands of Panama City Beach, its surf line and the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico extending to the horizon.

Those environments attract and host myriad life forms, a mere small sample of which are represented in the drawing before you. Some, at the bottom of food chains, are so small as to go unseen; others are too big to be reeled in.

To be sure, all add to the experience of visiting the beach. It is possible to enjoy each on a surface level, but you may also be inclined to go granular — see what we did there? — and seek answers to the questions they invite: How do sand dollars eat? Of what advantage to snowy egrets are yellow feet? All groupers mature first as females! What's that all about?

And, hey, we haven't even gotten around to marine mammals, including that bottlenose leaper who elicits oohs and aahs whenever it takes to the air.



Laughing Gull



Great Blue Heron



Sandpiper

Flounder



Speckled Sea Trout



Redfish



Whiting



Fighting Conch



Callico Scallop



Coquina Shells

Osprey



Brown Pelican



Snowy Egret



Mahi Mahi



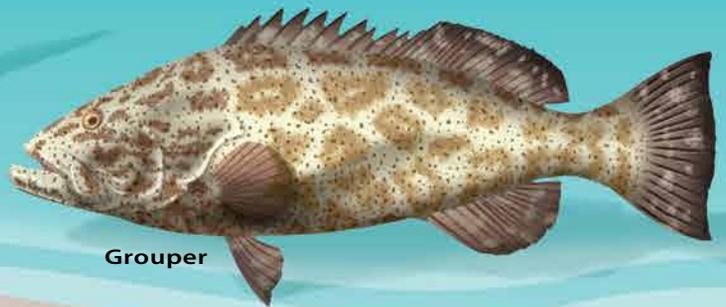
Pompano



Red Snapper



Grouper



Common Nutmeg



Florida Augers



Olive Shell



Alphabet Cone

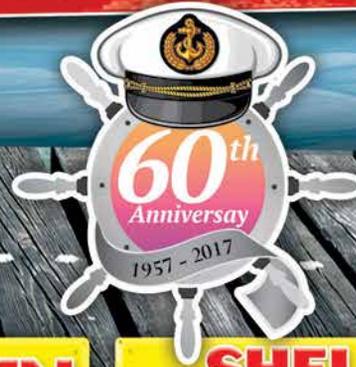


Sand Dollar



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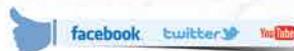
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Golfers' Paradise

FOR THE SERIOUS GOLFER — or the lucky beginner — there could be no Panama City Beach souvenir more precious than a hole-in-one. Courses here offer easy-to-reach par 3s that make such an achievement possible. There are plenty of driving holes, too, that will tempt you to take the big stick out of the bag. And, hey, if your sand wedge is a little rusty, there's no better way to sharpen your sand play than to practice at the beach before hitting the links.

Panama City Beach's eight-course golf menu includes:

BAY POINT, offering two layouts, the only Nicklaus Design course in the region and a more subtle Walter Byrd layout.

HOLIDAY GOLF, home to both a regulation 18-hole layout and a lighted par-3 executive course.

HOMBRE, three courses each provide a distinctive challenge and lots of water.

SIGNAL HILL, delivering a varied 18 holes, open on the front side but dicier on the back.



HOME ON THE RANGE

A beginning golfer at the Experience Better Golf Academy (this page) takes aim at a tennis ball. At the Dew Sweepers Golf program at Bay Point (opposite), enrollment has grown steadily.

Grooming Young Golfers

Courses host programs for juniors

BY MATT ALGARIN

GOLF IS ONE OF THE EMERALD COAST'S most popular sports and, with our warm weather and coastal breezes, even junior golfers may feel the urge to get outside and improve their game. If your youngster needs a little extra help, take advantage of the clinics, lessons and academies offered by club pros in Panama City Beach. Here's a look at what Dewswepers Golf at Bay Point, Holiday Golf Club and the Experience Better Golf Academy at Hombre have to offer:



Dewswepers Golf at Bay Point

For Amy Willmon, a successful junior-golfer-turned-PGA-professional, junior golf is a passion. She is the director of the Dewswepers Golf program, which is held at Bay Point Golf & Tennis Club.

"My job as a PGA pro is to grow the game," she says. "Our program is designed a little differently though. We organized it by skill level, not age."

Dewswepers uses the latest in technology to help students understand the fundamentals of their swing, helping them apply what they learn faster. Dewswepers utilizes the Swing Catalyst, a biomechanical feedback system that measures rotational force, weight shift, timing and rhythm through the use of a high-speed video camera, the Trackman data-capture system and a BodiTrak force-sensing mat.

"We are not messing around," Willmon says. "If you are here, you are going to learn golf."

But it's not all graphs and data points. Willmon, who played Division I golf at the University of Texas-El Paso, knows the importance of having fun while teaching younger players the fundamentals of the game. "If the younger players don't fall in love with golf, then



Students at an academy operated by Adam Brack stretch, below, before they swing.

the game is going to die out, so it's my job to keep them interested," she says.

And kids certainly are interested, as is evidenced by the growth of the program. Fourteen kids enrolled on the day of the program's kick-off; now the enrollment is up to 42. In fact, Willmon says that she will have to add a new level to adjust for the growth.

To learn more about the DewswEEPers program, visit dewswEEPersgolf.com.

Holiday Golf Club

Liz Kasey is a Panama City native, a Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Class A member and teaching professional. She has worked at Holiday Golf Club since 2005 and explains that the club works with Frank Brown Park to hold juniors' summer camps each July. The camps accommodate 10-15 students, and campers' ages range from 8-18.

According to Kasey, the club is also in the process of ramping up its First Tee program, a youth golf academy whose mission is to "positively impact the lives of young people by promoting character development and life-enhancing values through First Tee's 'Life Skills Learning Experience' and the game of golf."

In regard to working with the juniors, Kasey says the experience is rewarding. "I think watching them have fun and enjoy the game is the biggest thrill for me. ...

It's great to hear about how they played in a tournament or even won a tournament."

For more information about Holiday Golf Club and its programs, visit holidaygolfclub.com.

The Experience Better Golf Academy at Hombre Golf

Adam Brack is a familiar face in the Emerald Coast golf community. Brack moved to Panama City Beach in 1999, and he now owns the Experience Better Golf Academy, which is hosted at Hombre Golf Club. The academy combines instruction, golf fitness, junior golf development and custom club fitting. The Academy also offers everything from an after-school program, where junior players are trained as golfers and as athletes, to summer camps, which focus not only on athletic training, but also on the game of golf itself: how to play it and how to exhibit proper etiquette and manners on and off the course.

One junior program, the "Experience Better Junior Golf Tour," is particularly popular. This fun, nine-hole tournament-style event is designed to introduce juniors to competitive golf. The reasonable entry fee provides players with lunch and a trophy.

"Our junior programs are growing and gaining more attention," Brack says. "It's all about creating experiences and memories for our players."



ADAM BRACK GOLF ACADEMY

Brack has always known he wanted to teach golf and work with juniors. He began his teaching career at the Sweetwater Country Club in Texas at the age of 16. "One of the cool things is that I've been doing this long enough to where juniors I taught when they were 5-8 years old are now at the academy teaching our juniors and my own two daughters," he says. "We have a really good team around me, so they are able to run the junior program with me. ... Anika Story runs our Junior Golf Development Program and is a certified TPI instructor."

To learn more about the Experience Better Golf Academy at Hombre Golf, visit hombregolfclub.com/our-facilities/academy. ●



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**ATTRACTIONS
SPOTLIGHT**

Instant Attractions

FOR THOSE LOOKING FOR ATTRACTIONS GALORE, PANAMA CITY BEACH IS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

“FUN IN THE SUN” may be one of Panama City Beach’s unofficial mantras, but this booming beach town has a lot more to offer than simply world-class natural amenities. Sure, the 27 miles of pristine coastline are what draw people in. But once visitors arrive in this vacationers’ wonderland, there are a million reasons to stay.

Sightseers in need of a reprieve from the sunshine will have an array of adventures to choose from in Panama City Beach.

On the agenda? Well, for starters how about partaking in a round of mini-golf, getting into a laser tag shootout with loved ones or making friends with a stingray? As a true, All-American seaside retreat, this beach is chock-full of fun attractions.

HOLLY GARDNER



SEABREEZE JAZZ FESTIVAL

EMERALD COAST BOAT
& LIFESTYLE SHOW



SPRING INTO ACTION

There's a festival to tickle everyone's fancy

BY MARIA KNIGHT

EVERYONE KNOWS THERE'S nothing quite like springtime in Florida: warm, sunny days and cool, breezy nights. But there's something special about springtime in Panama City Beach in particular. Here, simplicity and relaxation meet amazing entertainment — springtime means feeling the sand between your toes and the salty air on your skin while you dance, dine and discover at one of the city's many festivals.

EMERALD COAST BOAT & LIFESTYLE SHOW

Coming to Panama City Beach for the first time this spring, the Emerald Coast Boat & Lifestyle Show will feature a wide range of boats on display, from all major

manufacturers. From March 3–5, boating enthusiasts will get a taste of what's new and what's next in the recreational maritime world. The show will also feature accessories to help you get the most out of Gulf Coast living — everything from paddleboards and kayaks, to active wear and beach cruiser bicycles.

EMERALD COAST CRUZIN'

Take a trip through time with the whole family at Emerald Coast Cruzin'. From March 8–11, guests will be able to check out thousands of classic cars, trucks and hot rods at Aaron Bessant Park. There will also be cash prizes for the best beach cruiser, Chevy or GMC truck.

If you're looking to start your auto collection or add to it, there will be a classic car auction at the event. Guests can also register their vehicles to be put on display. Live music will keep the festival rolling, so mark your calendars for this blast from the past!

UNWINE D

Wine, stein and dine your way through Aaron Bessant Park this spring. UNwineD is partnering with *Garden & Gun* magazine to bring guests the opportunity to enjoy libations and live music while raising money for a good cause: Portions of the proceeds will go toward the Science and Discovery Center of Northwest Florida and the Panama City Beach Chamber Education, which provides students with scholarships to attend college.

Guests will mingle with winemakers and sample selections of wine and craft beer, as well as trying out specialty drinks created by local and visiting mixologists as they vie for bragging rights in a friendly competition.

SEABREEZE JAZZ FESTIVAL

Jazz lovers from around the world never miss out on the Seabreeze Jazz Festival. This event is expected to again sell out in the festival's 19th year. The Oasis Smooth Jazz Awards recently nominated the festival as "Best Jazz Festival" — which comes as no surprise with the line-up of amazing jazz legends.

Ticket are on sale now for the festival, which will be held April 19-23 at Aaron Bessant Park — just steps away from the beach's sugar sands. Your festival ticket and wallet will be conveniently wrapped into one wristband which will function both as your access to the festival and as your cash, making your transactions quicker and more secure. Before you go to the festival, you will be able to load Jazz Bucks onto your wristband and then you're ready to groove!

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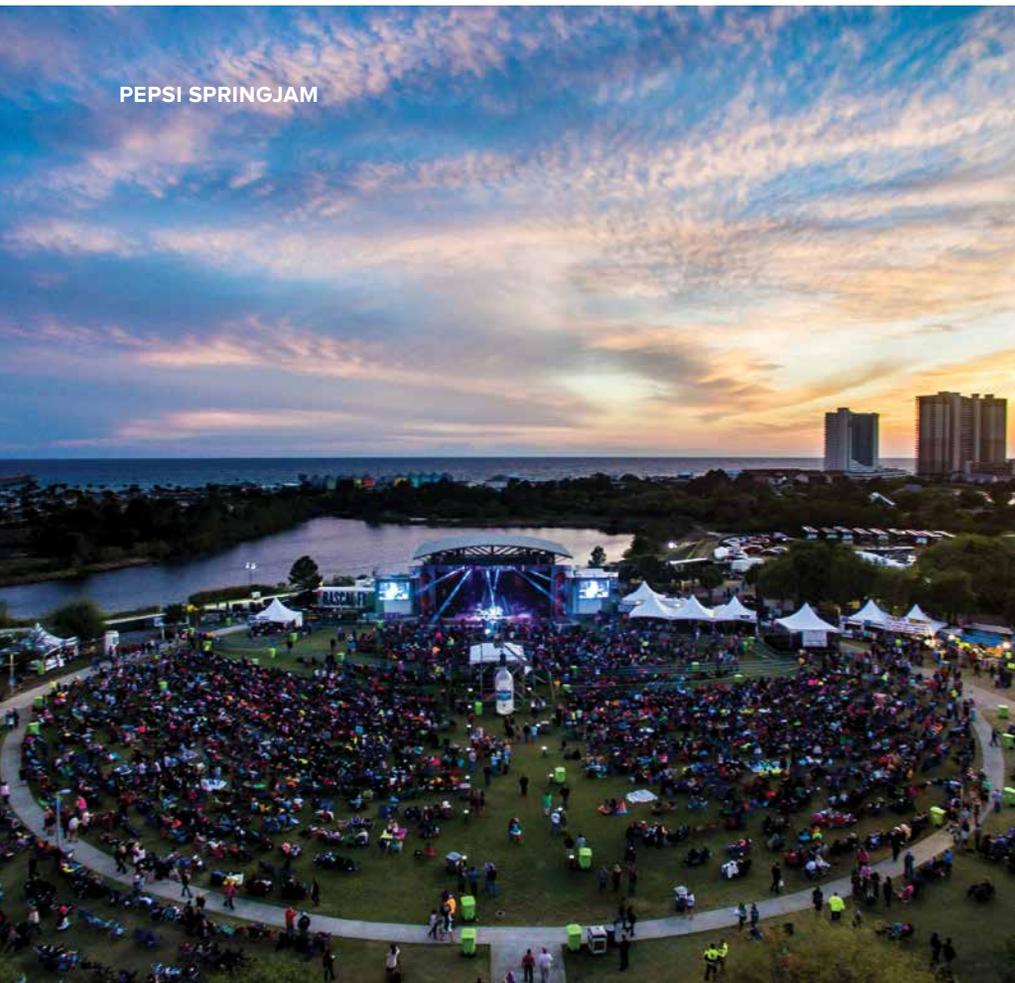
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PEPSI SPRINGJAM



PEPSI SPRINGJAM

Enjoy two full days of live country and pop music as the Pepsi SpringJam returns in 2017, drawing guests from around the world. With the inaugural year bringing great acts like Rascal Flatts and Thomas Rhett, it's easy to see why crowds have flocked to this festival. This year's star-studded lineup includes Sheryl Crow and Darius Rucker.

The second annual Pepsi SpringJam will take place April 28–29 at the Aaron Bessant Park Amphitheater. Tickets start at \$20. Want to make sure you get the up-close-and-personal experience? The VIP ticket option guarantees all the benefits of general admission tickets as well as access to the area directly in front of the main stage and an exclusive entry line to the festival.



JEEPIN' BEACH JAM

SCHOONERS' CAJUN FEST

Experience Cajun music, food and fun on the sandy beach at Schooners during the 11th annual Cajun Festival, held April 28–30. With treats like duck gumbo and bananas foster bread pudding on hand, you'll definitely need to leave the tight pants at home.

Sun up or sun down, Schooners' Cajun Fest will definitely add a little spice to your life and a little soul to your step.

JEEP BEACH JAM

Come join thousands of other Jeep enthusiasts for a five-day, family-friendly event. The second annual Jeep Beach Jam will take place at Frank Brown Park, where the official Vendor Village will be located. The Vendor Village will host industry-leading Jeep-related companies as they showcase new merchandise.

Young attendees visiting with their parents will have their very own space to play and explore at the official Jeep Kids' Zone. Here, they'll play with remote-controlled Jeeps, bounce on giant inflatables and even drive two-seat electric Jeeps through safe obstacle courses.

Want to test your Jeep's skills? The festival will have an official Low Level Playground, with obstacles and climbing. There will also be an excursion for extreme Jeeps.

Guests will be able to wind down at night with a drive-in movie or a bonfire with live music. The last day of the event will feature the official Jeep Tribute Parade, celebrating Jeep's 76th birthday. ●



The Gulf of Mexico off Panama City Beach is dotted with wrecks and other artificial reefs. Many are at depths that the beginning open-water diver can comfortably reach.

Diving Panama City Beach

THE NO. 1

destination for scuba diving in the Southeast is right here, or to be more precise, offshore in the calm waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

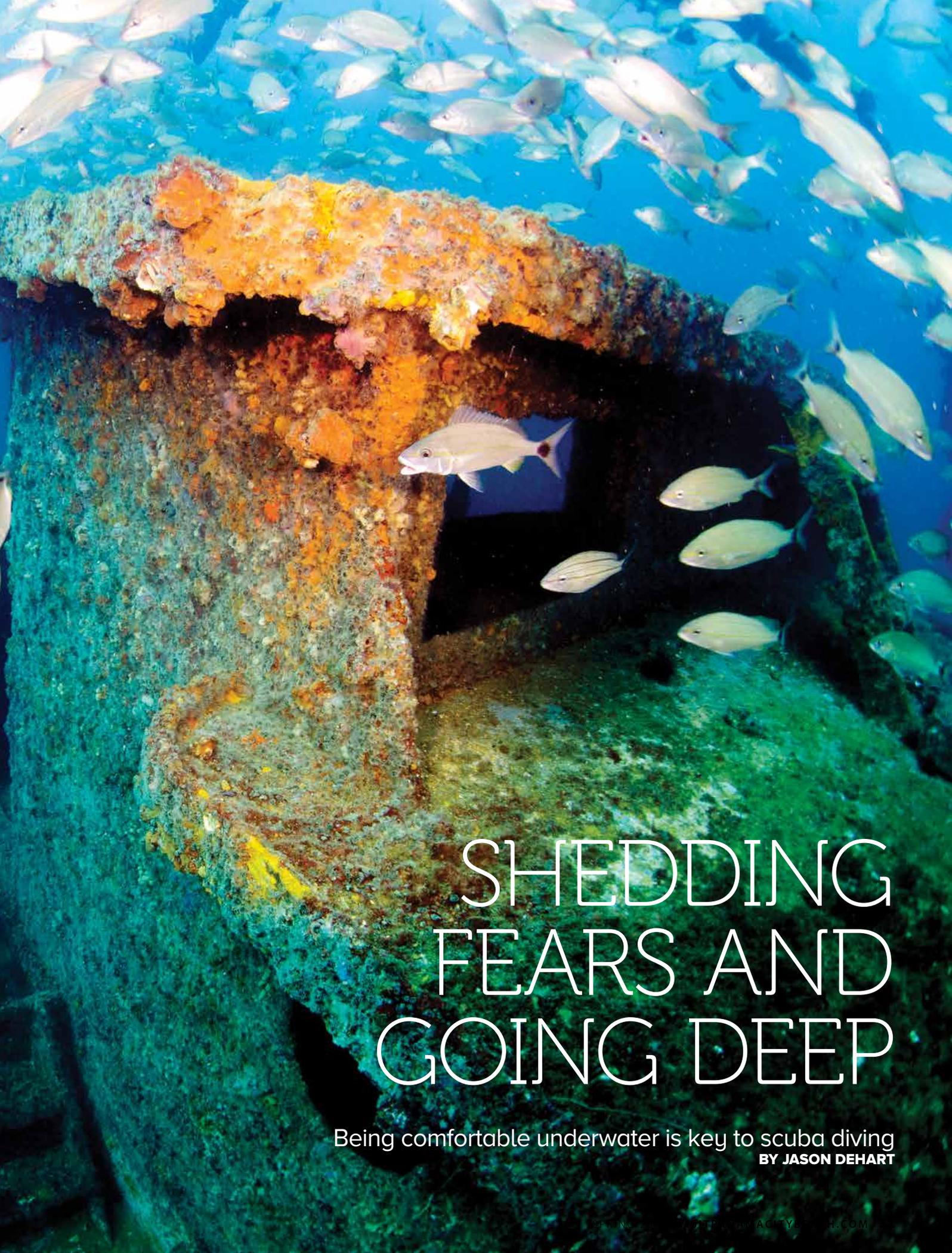
There are six dive shops in the area and a number of independent dive charters, a testament to the world-class diving that can be found in Panama City Beach.

Artificial reefs, made from decommissioned ships, old bridge spans and other structures give divers from all over the world a chance to see a wide variety of undersea wildlife.

An artificial reef off Panama City Beach is like an oasis in a desert, because this part of the Gulf sea floor is 98 percent sand and the wrecks help attract and support sea life. The wrecks themselves can be found at depths starting at 60 feet and as far down as 110 feet, providing opportunities for novices and experts alike.

DAVID BENZ





SHEDDING FEARS AND GOING DEEP

Being comfortable underwater is key to scuba diving
BY JASON DEHART

Gear Up Like the Pros



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FEET FIRST

Dive instructor Reid Coley prepares to lead a class in their first open water dive. Structures on the bottom attract fish including snapper, grouper and amberjack.

COOL GEAR

ONE OF THE COOL THINGS

experienced recreational divers are using today is an air mixture called Nitrox, which is referred to as “oxygen-enriched air.” As its name implies, the oxygen level in Nitrox is higher than what’s found in “normal” air. This also means the nitrogen percentage is lower, which is a good thing. According to Scubadiving.com, this mixture can give you more time at depth and provide a safety buffer against “the bends,” or decompression sickness.

Speaking of air, a high-tech apparatus slowly making its way into recreational diving is the rebreather. This device removes carbon dioxide and replaces the consumed oxygen. Rebreathers have been used in technical diving for years but in time could be readily available to recreational divers as well. Rebreathers offer many advantages, such as diving deeper, staying down longer and eliminating bubbles that might scare off marine life. However, the cost for rerebreathers is higher and there is additional training required.

WHERE TO GO

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DIVER'S DEN

3120 Thomas Drive
Panama City Beach
(850) 234-8717

DIVE LOCKER

106 Thomas Drive
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(850) 230-8006

LET'S FACE IT. Humans aren't built for living underwater. We can adapt to this alien environment by using diving gear, but we still have to learn to be comfortable in the water — for some, that means conquering fears. It's a pre-requisite, like knowing how to swim.

“They need to be comfortable in the water. That's ultimate. You can be a rocket scientist. You can be an athlete. But if you're not comfortable in the water, you'll be close to panic,” says Mike Gomez, owner-instructor at Panama City Dive Center. “You don't have to be in great shape. You can be in okay shape, (but) you've got to be comfortable in the water. That's the key. When you're not comfortable and you panic, you revert to land-based animalistic survival skills.”

Gomez has been a scuba instructor for a long time and has some sage wisdom for the prospective scuba student. For example, to become a scuba diver, you have to retrain your land-animal brain to believe that you can, indeed, breathe underwater; that is, with the help of air tanks and regulators. This reprogramming gets more difficult the older we get.

“As you get older, you get more and more conservative,” he says. “You're more careful on your bicycle, more careful when you drive. And we are land animals. We can't breathe underwater. So the older the person gets, the louder that voice gets

that says, nope, you don't want to do this. You have to talk yourself through it. At one point it'll be like a light switch goes on. But until that happens, you hear that voice. You have to retrain yourself.”

Gomez cites one 74-year-old student as a prime example of this.

“I had a guy who was 74 and wanted to learn to dive.

We went to the pool and as soon as he was in the pool with the regulator, he said, ‘No, can't do this.’ But within an hour he was doing it, no problem,” he said. “Then we tried it without the mask. He had to force himself to overcome that voice, to retrain that voice. From then on, it's easy.”

Conversely, the younger you are, the easier it is to put that instinct in a box.

“The younger you are, the less conservative you are; the less experience you have, it comes quite easy,” he says. “Someone who is older may take more time, but it can be overcome. And if you're older you have to have more discipline not to give up.”

Understanding this bit of human nature is important, but so, too, is how you select your diving school. Gomez says schools today focus on compressed “three-day courses” comprising online academic study, a final exam (with a review of items that were missed) and actual in-the-water training that involves a pool followed by open water dives. While this might be the accepted norm, Gomez thinks there should be less time spent online and more time devoted to being in the water with an instructor.

“Fast learners” may get what they need in three days, but Gomez prefers to provide students with more practice time than a short course provides so that they can better develop essential muscle memory. ●



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ALIE BLOCK

For the Thrill of It

The Pro Watercross National Tour returns to Panama City Beach

BY MATT ALGARIN

IF YOU'VE EVER TAKEN CONTROL of a personal watercraft, you know the adrenaline rush of hitting the throttle and skimming along the water. It's a sensation that's unforgettable.

Imagine that sensation magnified by 100. Imagine lining up at the starting line with up to 20 competitors as you prepare to race for glory and prize money.

On May 13 and 14, Boardwalk Beach Resort in Panama City Beach will play host to riders from all over the globe who will do just that.

These adrenaline junkies, some of whom hail from locations as far-flung as Kuwait and

South Africa, are part of the Pro Watercross National Tour.

According to Nick Handler, managing director for the event's organizing body, Pro Watercross has been showcasing the sport to Panama City Beach's locals and visitors for over seven years. "The best way to think about (Watercross) is motocross on the water," he says. "It's fast-action racing, bumper-to-bumper competition."

Riders in Panama City Beach will navigate through a half- to three-quarter-mile track lined with buoys. This means the action will be tight, fierce and "up close and personal" with the

ALIE BLOCK



JESSICA WATERS/WATERS EDGE PHOTOGRAPHY

CLASSES OF WATERCROSS

PRO RUNABOUT GP Features the fastest watercraft in the world competing in shoulder-to-shoulder competition. Riders in the Runabout (sit-down watercraft) GP class can compete at their own level, with the highest level of modifications and performance reaching speeds of up to 85 mph.

PRO RUNABOUT BOX STOCK Limited modifications keep the playing field level and the competition fierce in this class. Also considered the manufacturers' class, the Runabout Box Stock class is meant to keep equipment and maintenance costs low. These are the watercraft you see racing on the weekend that you can go buy on Monday.

PRO FREESTYLE As the freestyle competitors take to the water, spectators can expect to witness some unbelievable tricks. Competitors use stand-up watercraft to do aerial barrel rolls, no-handed back flips and sometimes 15 back flips in a row. Each competitor has a two-minute time limit in which to complete as many tricks as possible, after which the rider is judged on a scale of 1-10.

PRO SKI GP The best stand-up watercross racers reach speeds of up to 75 mph on the water. The competitors test their skill, balance and physical endurance on lightweight crafts that have been fine-tuned for maximum performance. It's up to each racer to determine whether he or she will use a two-stroke or four-stroke engine to push across the finish line ahead of the competition.

crowds. "Since it's a closed course, there are left and right turns, as well as a front and back straightaway," Handler says. "There's a lot of carving and turning."

Watercross riders can reach speeds of more than 85 mph on flat water. Given these high speeds, Handler says the riders have to not only manage the course, but also rely on technique and skill because the choppy waters won't let a rider rely on speed alone.

When the Pro Watercross National Tour arrives in Panama City Beach, there will be a pro show as part of the event. The pro show, scheduled for 11 a.m.–2 p.m., will be a freestyle competition, where the competitors will be rated on a variety of tricks and the cleanliness of their overall routines. Attendees will see the athletes performing back flips, barrel rolls and 360s.

To achieve these feats, freestyle competitors will ride high-powered

stand-up watercraft made from carbon fiber. "They ideally make them as light as possible with as much power as possible," Handler says. "They can launch into the air and go pretty high off of the water."

Sound intense? Handler says, "It takes a unique person to be able to put yourself in that situation, because it's not like the other sports. We don't have breaks. You have to commit to it and you have to have faith in yourself, your ability and the people around you. These guys are going to push each other, but they want to feel safe out there."

Spectators who come out to the Boardwalk Beach Resort for the event will not leave disappointed. "It's an exciting time to come down to the beach," Handler says. "You can catch some sun, go to the beach ... but you can also catch some race action and freestyle."

For more information about Pro Watercross, visit prowatercross.com. ●

UNwineD

PANAMA CITY BEACH
CELEBRATING CRAFT BEER,
SPIRITS & WINE



MARCH 24-25

Panama City Beach, Florida

EVENT SCHEDULE

Aaron Bessant Park

FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2017

Garden & Gun Kickoff Party

Featuring Southern Fare and Craft Cocktails

6-8pm

SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2017

Grand Afternoon Tasting and Cocktail Competition

1-4:30pm

Picnic in the Park and Concert

Featuring The Avett Brothers

5-7pm



Panama City Beach

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We're located on Grand Lagoon at the Lighthouse Marina. Open March through October!





SAVOR A MATTER OF TASTE

UNwineD is on the Move

BY CHRIS CHAMBERLAIN



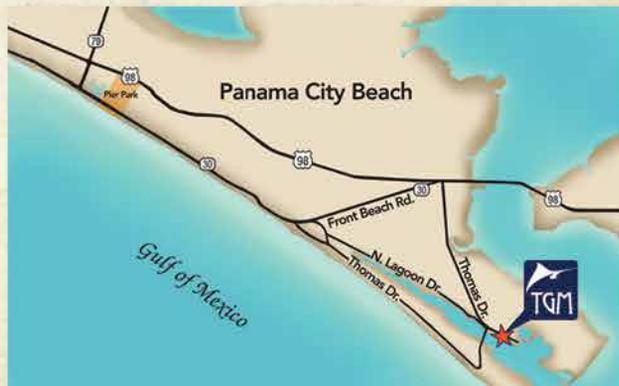
Just in time for the return of gentle spring weather, Visit Panama City Beach is partnering with *Garden & Gun* magazine to revamp and move a signature tasting event, UNwineD, to the spring. In previous years UNwineD has been celebrated as an autumnal event, but with spring of 2017 the event itself will be reborn and reach heights previously unimagined.



Think fresh oysters, fresh seafood & cool island cocktails.
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Fresh local seafood, island cocktails and a relaxed atmosphere...welcome to The Grand Marlin! Pull up a seat at our fantastic oyster bar or join us upstairs at The North Drop Bar for a more casual, laid back waterfront setting! Enjoy a succulent meal of fresh seafood, perfectly grilled steaks, decadent desserts and, of course, the view. Come by land, come by sea, but definitely come as you are!



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FRUIT OF THE VINE

For aficionados, the fruits of winemakers' craftsmanship is an art form to be sipped, savored and even studied. But for others, there is nothing wrong with a casual relationship with reds and whites. The UNwineD tasting event also includes spirits and craft beers.

Scheduled for Friday and Saturday March 24-25, this year's event is titled "UNwineD: Celebrating Craft Beer, Spirits & Wine," and has all sorts of new surprises in store for attendees.

On Friday, *Garden & Gun* kicks off UNwineD with the ultimate VIP experience, teaming up some of their favorite Southern culinary experts to cook up — and mix up — the finest dishes and cocktails served south of the Mason-Dixon line. This ticketed VIP experience will offer 250 attendees a chance to taste and sip spirited cocktails and unique food pairings while enjoying live music and lively conversation.

Saturday, the Grand Tasting at UNwineD will start things off with a delightful afternoon of food, drink and fun while offering sample products from invited wineries, breweries and distilleries. This, however, is merely prelude to the "Picnic in the Park & Concert," with headlining musical act the Avett Brothers, who will take the stage at the Aaron Bessant Park Amphitheater. The Grammy-nominated band's style has been described as folk, Americana and American roots music, and their albums have reached the No. 1 position on Billboard's Americana/Folks Albums chart, as well as No. 1 positions on Top Rock Albums, Alternative Albums and Top Album Sales.

The appropriately named "Picnic in the Park & Concert" begins at 5 p.m. Saturday and will offer food and beverages for sale, including select bottles of wine from the Grand Tasting to enjoy on-site.

More than 1,000 attendees are expected to join the fun at Aaron Bessant Park — adjacent to the Pier Park entertainment and shopping complex — for a weekend of tasting wines from



Rain or shine, a large and enthusiastic crowd is sure to UNwineD and enjoy libations and conversation scheduled for spring for the first time this year.



around the globe; regional, national and international craft beers; and an assortment of fine spirits. Local restaurants and caterers will also provide small bites of coastal cuisine to accompany the tastings.

Since 2011, UNwineD has traditionally been held in the fall, but by moving to the spring, UNwineD becomes a lovely way to welcome the advent of warmer weather while at the same time allowing more notable wineries to be involved in the festival.

Jayna Leach, the Vice President of Marketing for Visit Panama City Beach, is very enthusiastic about the change. “What better way to ring in spring than by throwing an event that’s like a two-day Southern garden party with amazing wines, beers and spirits?”

This year’s inclusion and emphasis on spirits is also new to UNwineD and is quite appropriate considering how popular craft cocktails and spirits have become on the national food and drink scene. If you discover some new favorites, full bottles of wine and spirits will be available for purchase to take home at a special retail tent set up at the festival.

UNwineD will be held rain or shine and is, of course, limited to patrons of legal drinking age, so remember to bring your ID. Festival attendees are advised to plan ahead for alternate transportation after the tasting sessions, and taxis will be available on-site to assist in safe rides home. More information is available at the event website at VisitPanamaCityBeach.com/UNwineD.

Tickets are on sale now. VIP, Grand Tasting and single day concert passes are available until they sell out. Make your plans early so you don’t miss out on this fun-filled weekend of food, drink and music set in the beautiful environs of Panama City Beach! ●

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CHASIN'

Outdoors program showcases fishing and more

BY STEVE BORNHOFT

Capt. Justin Leake, like other fishing guides operating out of Panama City Beach, maintains two boats: one for fishing “skinny water” and the other capable of running many miles offshore.

The necessity for two vessels speaks to the diversity of fishing opportunities that Panama City Beach has to offer, and it is that variety which Leake, the host of the Chasin’ the Sun fishing show, sought to emphasize in the program’s debut season.

“In season one, we knew basically that this was our opportunity to introduce Panama City Beach to the fishing world,” Leake says. “Most destinations are known for a specific fishery. Southeast Florida, their fishery is sailfish: Fort Lauderdale, Miami, they are the sailfish capital of the world. But if you visit the west coast of Florida in the Tampa area, it’s all about backcountry fishing in shallow water for redfish and snook.

“In Panama City Beach, we are all of the above.”



THE SUN

SEASON II



JUSTIN ON SHOW BOAT WITH
SHELL ISLAND IN BACKGROUND

Year one episodes, which aired on Sportsman Channel, touched on offshore fishing, inshore fishing and spearfishing, to name a few topics.

“We covered all of the different fishing zones, from six inches of water to a couple hundred feet of water,” Leake says.

J. Michael Brown of Visit Panama City Beach — the organization behind producing the show — stresses that Chasin’ the Sun also promotes the coastal lifestyle.

“In addition to fishing, we showcase restaurants with hook-and-cook options where anglers can take their catches to be prepared,” Brown says. “We want people to know that there are lots of opportunities to have a good time here in addition to relaxing on our beautiful beaches: kayaking, riding bikes on Gayle’s Trails and visiting attractions.”

For Leake, season one presented a learning curve as far as production is concerned.

“The show was a lot more involved: than I anticipated in terms of the volume of footage that needs to be taken and the number of shots required,” Leake says. “I had done some video in the past, but typically we just fished with a camera running. My guests and I had to get used to having people filming from multiple boats.”

Generally, two boats were involved: the boat from which Leake and his guests fished and a “chase” boat, with a videographer on each. One of the boats often used — a Boston Whaler 240 Dauntless — was provided by MarineMax, a sponsor of the show. Bay County Outdoors, the show’s production company, boasts considerable experience creating outdoor programming for national audiences. Sophisticated underwater shots are a highlight of the show, and professional graphics add visual polish above



TARPON HOOKED ON FLY



and beyond standard hunting and fishing shows.

In year two, Chasin' the Sun has moved from Sportsman Channel to two new networks — Destination America (a Discovery Channel property) and NBC Sports Network — thereby quadrupling its audience from a viewership of 35 million to 140 million U.S. television households.

“It would be fair to say that Chasin' the Sun is going big time,” Brown says. “We feel good about having a product that meets the high programming standards of our networks for 2017.” Chasin' the Sun is scheduled to run on Destination America from January through June and will air on NBC Sports Network during June.

Further validation of the show's quality has come in the form of new sponsors: Sperry, a clothing brand certainly associated with being on or near the water, and an accommodations sponsor, ResortQuest by Wyndham Vacation Rentals. They join existing sponsors Costa, YETI, Shimano, Yo-Zuri, Jackson Kayak and AFTCO to round out an impressive list of partners.

“Having national brands wanting to be part of our show certainly speaks well of the reputation of our destination and the value of reaching the audience that we can deliver,” Brown said.

Visit Panama City Beach will continue to integrate sponsors into the show and share content across respective media platforms.

“Television is evolving into an on-demand medium and we want to take advantage of the opportunities we will have from a digital standpoint to target market segments of mutual interest to us and our sponsors,” Brown notes.

But, back to fishing.

Year two will feature nationally known personalities, who will join Leake aboard either his technical poling skiff or his 43-foot center

console to share their particular expertise. As to production, drone and slow-motion capabilities have been added to enhance the viewer's experience.

“In season two, we again visit the various fishing zones, but we go into greater depth by letting people know when they need to be here to catch a particular species and what type of tackle is required for that type of fishing,” Leake says.

“Again, we will address redfish, sailfish and everything in between. Everything we covered last year we have expanded upon with more instructional, detailed information.”

On the show, Leake is seen as a host versus a fishing guide — although he has had several trips booked on his charter service as a result of Chasin' the Sun episodes broadcast. But even more so, guest guides who participated in the show have seen “many, many trips” booked as a result of the program, Leake says.

“We can't necessarily link watching the show with a decision to reserve a condo,” Brown adds. “But, based on the anecdotal evidence we have, we feel very good about what the show is doing for our destination.”

Leake found that viewers watched several episodes of the show and then picked out what they wanted to do from the variety of trips Panama City Beach has to offer.

Some picked sight fishing for redfish, others picked reef fishing and some wanted offshore trolling.

“That's what inspired me to supply more information in Season Two about what times during the year the different types of fishing are available,” Leake explains.

He recognized that viewers might assume that you can catch and keep red snapper all year long or that pompano are always running along the beach. But the reality, of course, is that some of these activities are seasonal in nature and some are limited by regulations.

“People called to book trips as they were actually watching the show,” Leake says. “From California to the Carolinas, coast to coast. All of the guides who appeared in season one had calls from people who said, ‘We just saw you on the show fishing with Justin and we want to do that.’”

To view episodes of the show online, visit ChasinTheSunTV.com. ●

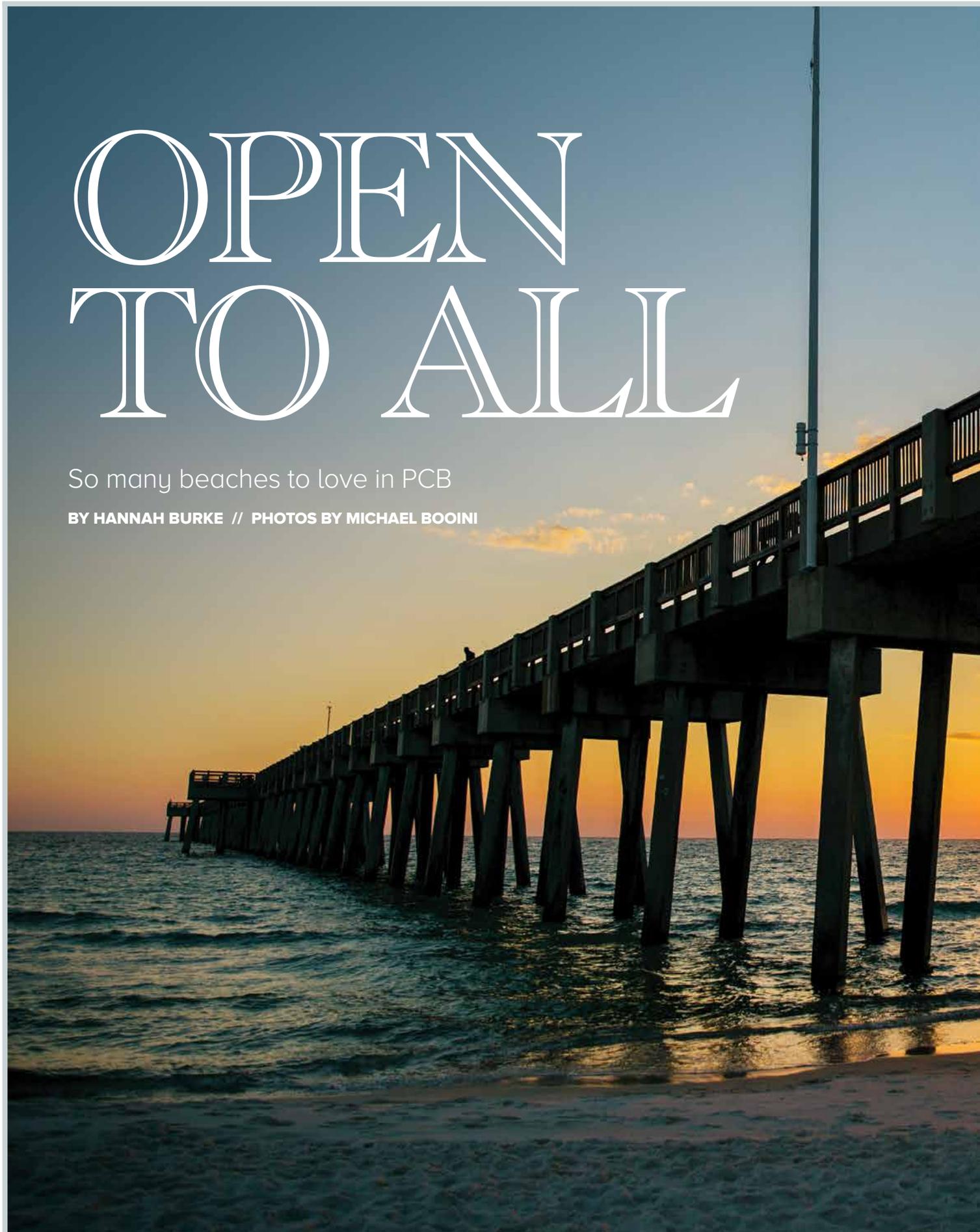


**JUSTIN SHOWS OFF
A-NICE GROUPEE.**

OPEN TO ALL

So many beaches to love in PCB

BY HANNAH BURKE // PHOTOS BY MICHAEL BOONIN





The problem isn't finding a beach, it's choosing which beach to go to! Panama City Beach is home to more than 100 public beach access points and two state parks, which means there's a slice of coast to suit each and every taste. Here's a sampling of some of Panama City Beach's beach access points, loved by locals and tourists alike:

SPYGLASS *(Public Beach Access 1)*

What better place to start than Beach Access Point 1? The easternmost beach access is located on Spyglass Drive, where beachfront homes, rentals and condominiums abound. Tucked just one block south of Thomas Drive, Spyglass offers a retreat to the beachgoer who seeks a more private spot to soak up the sun. While there is no public parking lot adjacent to the boardwalk, Spyglass does offer walkover amenities that grant entrance to the beach. Access Points 2 and 3 are also found further west along Spyglass Drive, and each has its own boardwalk.

SCHOONERS BEACH *(Next to Public Beach Access 4)*

Referred to as "The Last Local Beach Club," Schooners offers an experience reminiscent of vintage Panama City Beach — a carefree beach restaurant specializing in fresh seafood and double helpings of fun. Keeping the tradition alive, Schooners on Gulf Drive is for those who are looking for the full experience of a day at the beach. Lounge or play volleyball, socialize with friends, grab a beer, a burger or some oysters, or just lie back on your beach blanket and enjoy the events of the day. For a sneak peek at what's going on at Schooners right now, check out the 24/7 Schooners





Public access points along Panama City Beach lead to piers, include two parks and feature a pooches-permitted stretch of sand. The access points total more than 100 in number.



beach cam broadcast at Schooners.com/multimedia/beachcam.htm.

DOG BEACH

(Public Beach accesses 56, 57 & 58)

Who says only humans should enjoy beachside living? The Dog Beach on the west side of the City Pier at Pier Park offers a unique departure from the conventional dog park. Here, man’s best friend can frolic and romp with plenty of furry playmates along 400 feet of sand and surf (with human supervision, of course).

87’ERS *(Public Beach Access 87)*

Everyone seems to have a favorite stretch of beach, and at least one group has made it Facebook official. Beach Access 87 has been adopted by a group of beach lovers who call themselves the “87’ers.” While 87’ers largely consist of neighborhood residents, a quick glance at the 87’ers Facebook page reveals “favorited” hangout spots as well as striking snapshots of the beach. Have a favorite beach access of your own? Maybe it’s time you built a little community into your beach tradition!

PIERS *(City Pier: Public Beach Accesses 53-58; County Pier: Not numbered)*

Plenty of parking, easy beach access and identical 1,500-foot-long piers are what await visitors to what locals call the “City Pier” and the “County Pier.”

The Russell Fields Pier (City Pier) sits in front of Pier Park off Front Beach Road, while the M.B. Miller Pier (County Pier) is a little over 3 miles to the east, close to Shipwreck Island. Both locations have separate fees for those who just want to walk out on the pier and those who’d like to fish, so if the view doesn’t sell you, maybe the fish-filled waters beneath you will.

RICHARD SELTZER PARK

Another local favorite, Richard Seltzer Park on Thomas Drive, is a nearly 5-acre haven of coastline. With plenty of parking available, visitors can easily enter the park for no fee. Before setting up chairs and umbrellas, you’ll notice picnicking pavilions, public restrooms and shower stations, should you need them during your stay. Aside from a front row seat to the emerald waters, visitors love knowing that they’re just a crosswalk away from beachside restaurants and shopping. Mostly, however, you’ll want to keep your toes buried in the sand and enjoy the ultimate form of relaxation. The park is open from sunrise to sunset.

ST. ANDREWS STATE PARK

Within one of Panama City Beach’s most historic state parks are a variety of different beach experiences. St. Andrews State Park hosts over 1 1/2 miles of beach, offering the luxury of being steeped in natural

Florida. While St. Andrews State Park offers gorgeous trails and campsites, many visitors flock to the park’s beaches for watersports and boating adventures. Since the park is located on a peninsula between the Gulf of Mexico and the Grand lagoon, visitors can enjoy long stretches of Gulf side beach, the protected “Kiddie Pool” behind the jetties, fishing along Deepwater Point, or strolling along the sand watching boats leave the calm of the Grand Lagoon. The park entry fee is \$8 per vehicle — a terrific value for one of Florida’s most popular state parks.

CAMP HELEN STATE PARK

At the very edge of Panama City Beach, past even public beach access 98, you’ll discover beautiful Camp Helen State Park — a site rich in history just west of the Phillips Inlet Bridge. Taking a walk through the past is just part of why visitors love the secluded beach at Camp Helen. Upon parking in the main lot, visitors take a stunning half-mile hike past a historic log cabin-style lodge, the colorful row of the Rainbow Cottages and down over a small bridge as you follow a path winding through sand dunes and along Lake Powell to a secluded beach. You’ll find the photo-friendly remains of the “hidden pier” here, which was recently featured in the Luke Bryan music video, “Rollercoaster.” ●

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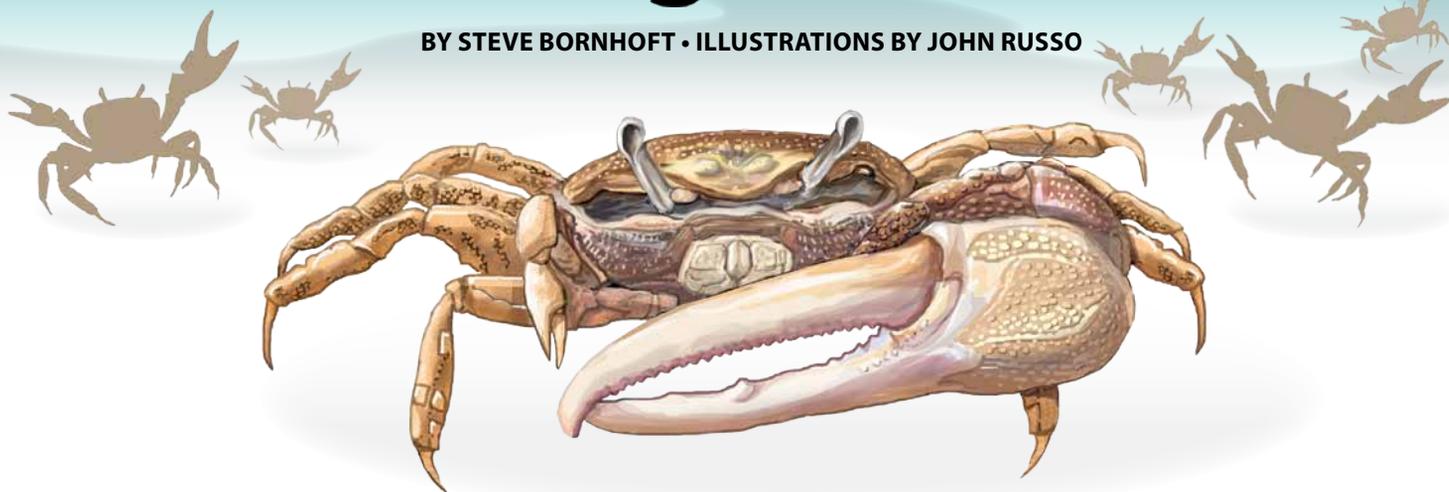
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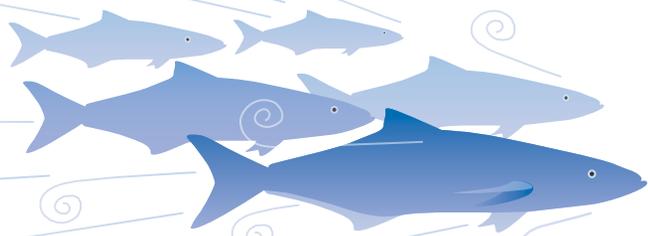
Fascinating Fauna Facts

BY STEVE BORNHOFT • ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN RUSSO



WHY DOES THE MALE FIDDLER CRAB HAVE ONE LARGE CLAW?

The outsized major claw is waved to attract the attention of females. And, as it happens, the big appendage helps the crab be cool – and stay cool. Heat is transferred from the body to the claw and dissipated into the air.



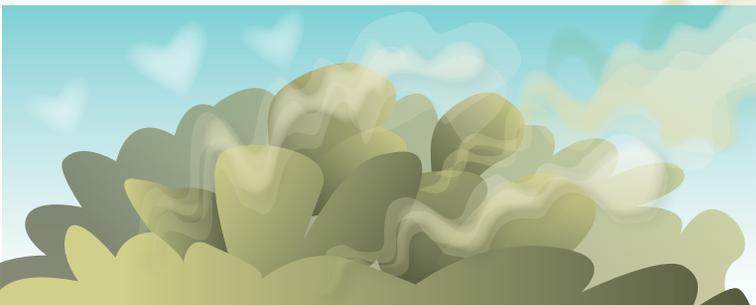
WHY DO COBIA MIGRATE?

Cobia movements are driven by temperature. When the water begins to warm in the fish's South Florida winter grounds, they begin their northward migration, preferring water temperatures of 67 to 70 degrees. They show up along Panama City Beach just off the sand in March and April and later move offshore to spawn.



WHY DO MULLET JUMP?

Theories suggest that they are attempting to shake off parasites, break open eggs during spawning season or avoid predators. Biologists also speculate that mullet, because they spend much of their time in water with low oxygen levels, may jump to clear water from the gills and increase exposure to higher levels of oxygen.



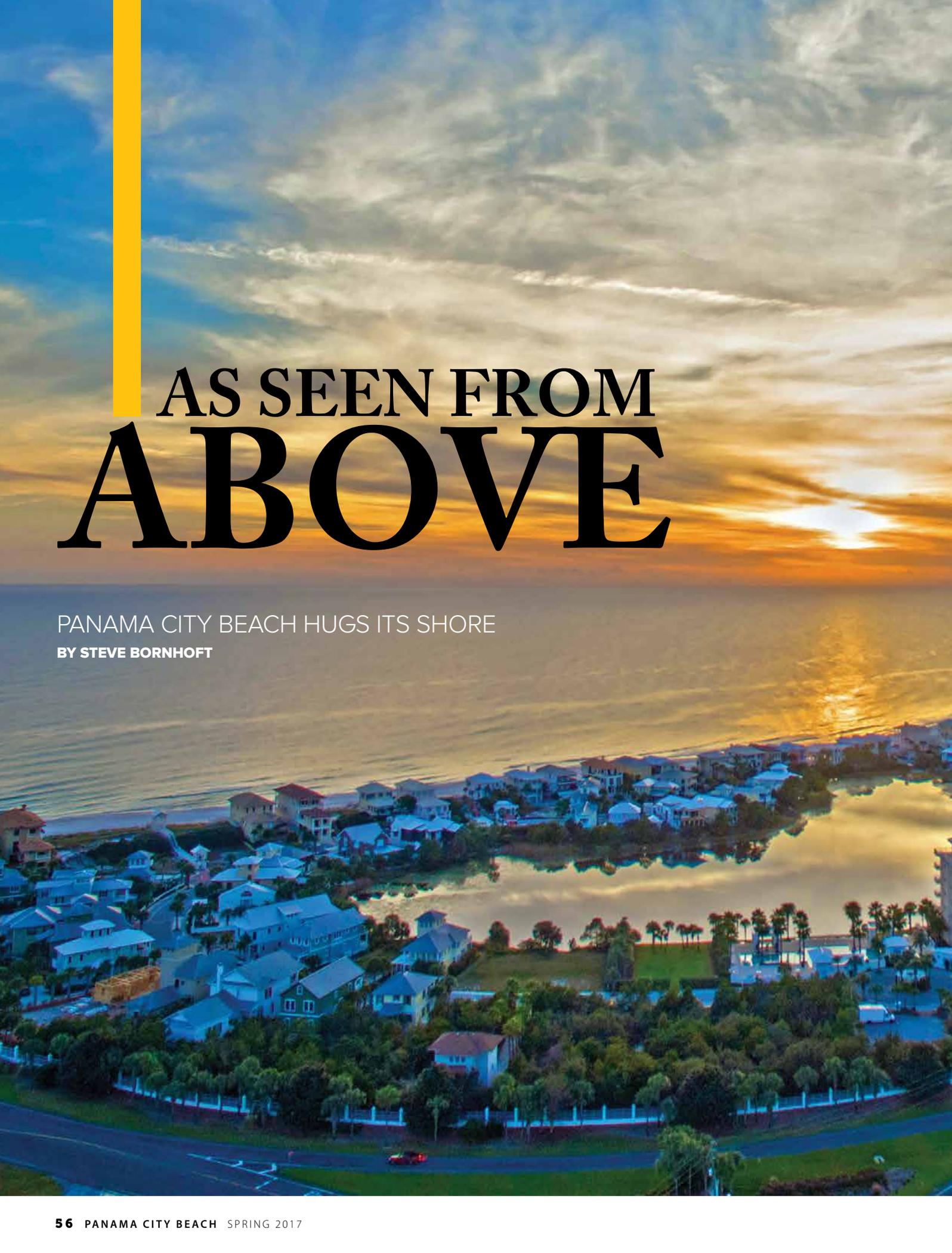
HOW DO OYSTERS REPRODUCE?

It only takes one to get it all started. If a single male oyster starts to spawn, oysters surrounding him will be triggered to spawn, as well. The fertilized eggs drift away from the spawning grounds in the water currents.



WHAT IS A SAND FLEA?

The sand flea is a small crustacean of about an inch in length that lives on sand beaches near the high-tide mark, remaining buried during daytime and emerging at night to forage for food, typically bits of organic debris. It is the preferred live bait for surf fishermen targeting pompano. Tackle shops sell “rakes,” used to sift fleas from the sand.

An aerial photograph of Panama City Beach, Florida, taken from an elevated perspective. The image shows a dense residential area with numerous houses and buildings, interspersed with palm trees and greenery. A large body of water, likely a lagoon or bay, is visible in the middle ground, reflecting the golden light of the setting sun. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the entire scene. A prominent yellow vertical bar is located on the left side of the image, partially overlapping the text.

AS SEEN FROM ABOVE

PANAMA CITY BEACH HUGS ITS SHORE

BY STEVE BORNHOFT



Some folks refer to Panama City Beach as “the island” and not without good reason. Seen from the air, mere ribbons of sandy earth separate salt water from fresh. A pier, inching across shallows and sandbars on many legs, stretches far into the seemingly endless Gulf of Mexico. But, always, people have gravitated from prairies and hills and woodlands to the shore and, especially, the Gulf of Mexico, whose countless moods and engrossing vistas lead people to come for a stay and then another, for a season, for the rest of their lives. ●



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Cigar minnows, sold by the scoop, are Capt. Jack Conzelman's stock in trade. From the fisherman's standpoint, the friskier they are, the better.

Capt. Jack, THE BAIT MAN

Snapper season keeps business afloat

BY STEVE BORNHOFT
PHOTOS BY MICHAEL BOONIN

As a seller of cigars, Capt. Jack Conzelman deals with an unusual set of occupational hazards.

Porpoises are often a problem.

There was the time that he found himself dealing with a 10-foot hammerhead shark and, on another occasion, with 63 hardhead catfish and their poisonous pectoral and dorsal fins.

And never will he forget the Jonah moment when a whale shark passed beneath his boat.

Mind you, we're not talking about crossings from Cuba to Key West.

Conzelman's cigars are waterproof.

They swim.

And they are sold alive.

Conzelman, for 24 years, has dealt in cigar minnows. And, at 62, he has no plans to retire from his business, conducted from a familiar orange barge — a floating bait shop, really — positioned throughout most of the year in the Grand Lagoon near Deep Water Point off St. Andrews State Park.

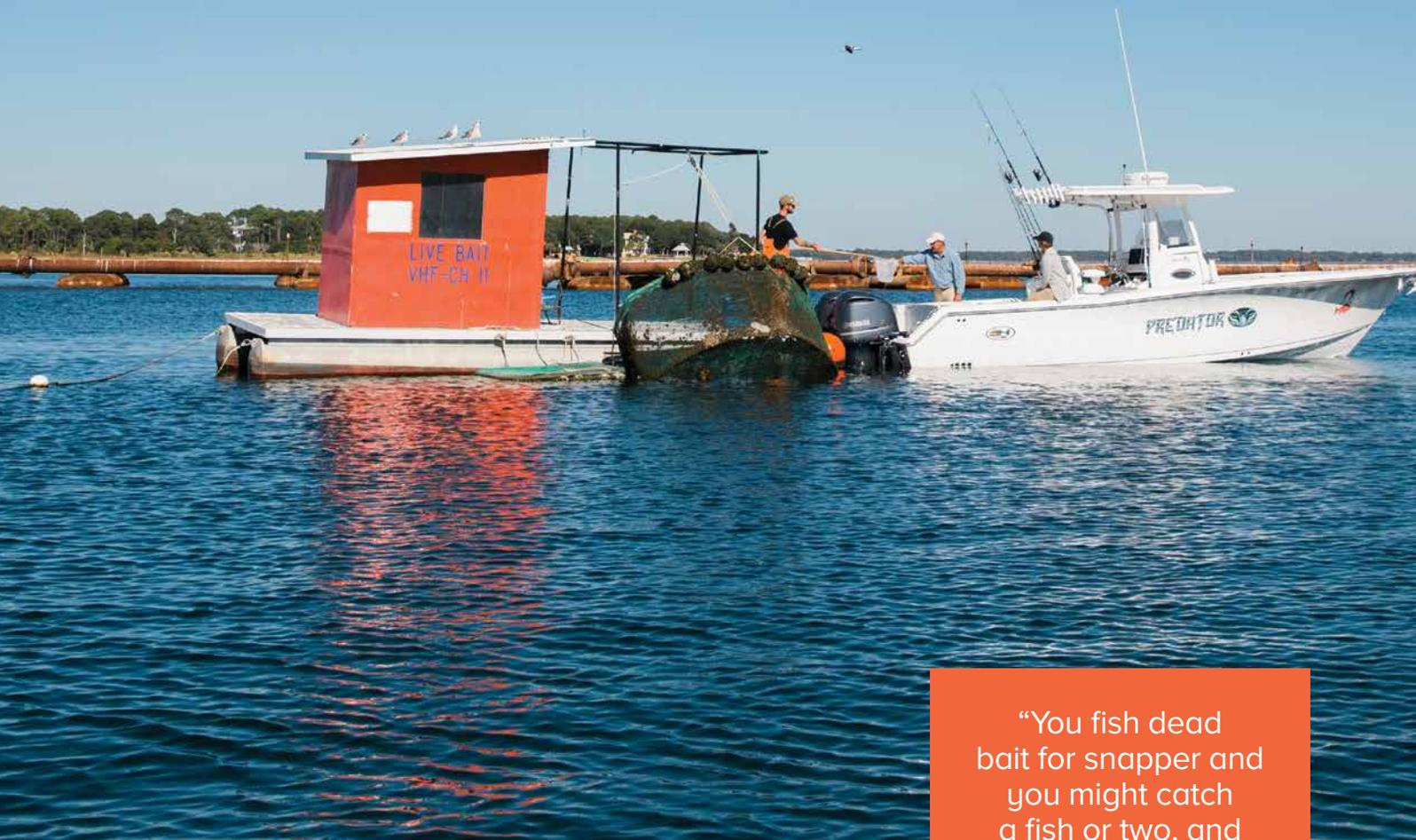
"I first went fishing with my dad when I was in diapers," Conzelman says. "I started working on a charter boat when I was 13. Made two dollars a day plus tips. And, if I was lucky, I got to clean the fish because you got 10 cents a pound. A catch of 200 pounds of grouper was good for 20 bucks. That's where the money was."

When Conzelman was young, a number of Panama City Beach charter boats extended their seasons by spending winters in Fort Myers Beach, where Conzelman grew up. His father was a



When Conzelman left behind his career as a private boat captain to become a bait seller, skeptics told him he would starve to death. "And they were darn near right," he concedes.

A recreational fisherman backs up to Jack Conzelman's bait barge. A dip net is used to exchange currency and cigar minnows.



visionary, real estate broker, architect and carpenter.

"He developed a lot of Fort Myers Beach in the 1950s and '60s," his son says. "I wish I had that property today. But I would probably still be selling bait."

Conzelman is a slave to what he loves to do, so much so that even as he has become less able to throw a cast net, he is developing new ways to catch cigar minnows.

"I have a special activities permit from the state and I'm working on a new method," Conzelman says, evasively. "I can't say what it is right now, but it will be environmentally friendly, I can tell you that."

Conzelman was 16 when he left Southwest Florida to work on a charter boat in Panama City Beach for the summer. He was surprised his father let him go, "but the captain I worked for was a good guy and Dad trusted him."

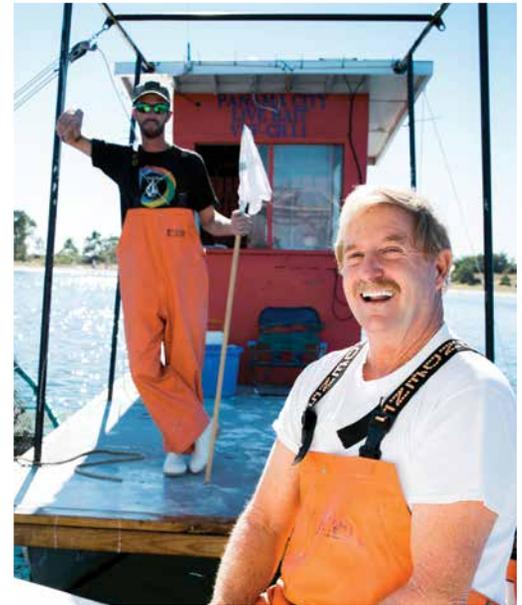
After graduating high school, Conzelman moved permanently to Panama City Beach and worked as a mate on a charter boat owned by Norman Vick, who worked for the Department of the Interior and is credited with having pioneered blue marlin fishing in the Gulf of Mexico.

Conzelman would take up where Vick left off, developing trolling lures for blue

"You fish dead bait for snapper and you might catch a fish or two, and then things will shut down. You think the bite is over. Then you put on a live bait and you'll resume catching fish."

— CAPT. JACK CONZELMAN

marlin, and, in 1978, boated his crowning angling achievement, a 688.5-pound blue that held up as the Florida state record for 10 years. Conzelman caught the behemoth while fishing from a boat named the Low



Bidder, owned by Dothan, Alabama, roadbuilder Bobby Hollis. The Treasure Ship Restaurant had just been built, and Conzelman weighed his marlin in at the Treasure Island Marina.

"It was a fiasco," Conzelman recalls. "We didn't have the right tackle. The rod broke and we had to touch the rod, so the fish didn't qualify as an IGFA (International Game Fish Association) record."

Conzelman next caught on with a boat owner out of Philadelphia. He captained a 40-foot, custom-built Whitaker sportfishing yacht before the

owner graduated to a 56-footer called the Buck-a-Lot.

"We moved around a lot," Conzelman says. "We won tournaments as far north as Martha's Vineyard. Fished one out of Trump Plaza. We would be in the Keys and the islands in the winter and Panama City Beach in the summer."

Meanwhile, Conzelman had married and had two daughters old enough to miss Daddy when he was away.

"One time, I was getting ready to leave for the Bahamas for five weeks and one of my girls was asleep at the back door and the other at the front," Conzelman says. "I drove all the way to Key Largo and told the man I've got to go home and raise my kids. I offered to stay with him until he found another captain, but he sold the boat instead."

Conzelman had a real estate license, but much preferred hanging out at the fish house with a bunch of watermen to sipping coffee with realtors. He had experimented with selling live bait in the Keys while captain of the Buck-a-lot and decided to convert a net boat to a bait boat.

"People told me I would starve to death, and they were darn near right," Conzelman concedes, but one customer led to another.

His first bait boat maxed out at 200 cigar minnows. These days, he catches up to 2,000 baits from two boats, one 27 feet long and the other 25, for delivery to the barge, which resembles a floating shack like those found in Hong Kong harbor.

"We transfer the baits from the Gulf-going boats to the barge between 3 and 4 in the morning and start selling at 5," Conzelman says.

Conzelman typically catches bait in 30 feet of water over a sand bottom in the Gulf just off the beach. Starting out, he would leave at dusk, fish for bait until dawn and then begin selling his catch. But, after studying tides and other variables for decades, he learned more precisely when to depart the dock. As a result, he gets a lot more sleep these days.

Live baits, Conzelman preaches, catch more fish and bigger fish provided that they are lively and in good condition. His business peaks during the federal red snapper season.

"You can fish dead bait or cut baits for snapper and you might catch a fish or two, and then things will shut down," Conzelman says. "You think the bite is over. Then you can put on a live bait and you'll resume catching fish."

Large snappers "didn't get that way being stupid," but, like a fat cat tempted by a premium Cohiba cigar, big reds have a hard time laying off a frisky minnow.

Conzelman was still new to the bait business when he spied an old piece of plywood and a can of orange spray paint in his garage.

Explains Conzelman, "I painted 'LIVE' on one side of the board and 'BAIT' on the other and when boats would come by, I'd flash that sign. LIVE. BAIT. LIVE. BAIT."

Seems it worked. He's been painting his bait barges orange ever since. ●

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Winter Resident Senior Prom

Feb. 7 Now in its fourth installment, the Senior Prom is a fun opportunity for winter residents to get out their dancing shoes. Held at Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort, the 2017 theme is Mardi Gras.

Spring 2017

Music, Food and Fun for Everyone

Panama City Beach Mardi Gras & Music Festival **Feb. 24–25** The two-day festival and parade takes place in and around Pier Park and is one of the most fun Mardi Gras events anywhere. The event is perfect for the whole family and includes a Mardi Gras Kids Zone, float tours, street fair and live music.

Emerald Coast Boat & Lifestyle Show **March 3–5** Aaron Bessent

Park in Panama City Beach will host the inaugural Emerald Coast Boat & Lifestyle Show March 3–5. The event is more than a boat show, as it will feature fishing, boat exhibits, cycling, kayaking, paddleboarding, personal watercrafts and seminars. Adults: \$10, kids (12 and under): free, military: (active and retired) \$5. For more information about the event, visit GulfBoatShow.com.

Panama City Scottish Festival **March 4** The festival and games return to Frank Brown Park for 2017. The Northwest Florida Renaissance Faire will present a Renaissance Village with entertainment and activities; Red Creek Farm will show border collies herding sheep and ducks and Seven Nations will perform Celtic music. Tickets for adults are \$8 in advance, \$15 at the gate. Visit pcscotfestival.com for additional information.

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Emerald Coast Cruizin March 8–11

This monstrous car show takes place at Aaron Bessant Park and features some of the most babied vehicles on the planet: hot rods, classic cars and much more. Events within the event include a swap meet and a competition for cash awards, including prizes for the best beach cruiser and the best Chevy or GMC truck. Consult EmeraldCoastCruizin.com for further information.

UNwined March 24–25 Visit Panama City Beach partners with *Garden & Gun* magazine to present a spectacular weekend celebration of vines, steins and palate-pleasing food. Enjoy perfectly paired wine, craft beer and appetizers at Aaron Bessant Park.

Seabreeze Jazz Festival April 19–23 Named a “Top 10 Jazz Festival in the USA” by JazzIZ Magazine and recently nominated as “Best Jazz Festival” at the Oasis Smooth Jazz Awards, the Seabreeze Jazz Festival combines top national smooth jazz artists with a full weekend of fun, sun, great beaches and good times — all on the west end of Panama City Beach. The event attracts

thousands of fans from the U.S., Canada and Europe for the ultimate performance-packed weekend of jazz.

Pepsi SpringJam April 28–29 Get ready to join a few thousand of your closest friends as the Pepsi SpringJam returns to Panama City Beach and Aaron Bessant Park, April 28–29, featuring Grammy-award winning singers Sheryl Crow and Darius Rucker. VIP Pit tickets: \$199 (plus taxes and fees), General Admission: \$69 (plus taxes and fees). For more information about the event, visit SpringJamPCB.com.

Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally May 3–7 & Oct. 25–29 Known as “The Most Biker Friendly FREE Rally in the United States,” Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally is held twice yearly in Panama City Beach during the first weekend in May and mid-October. Bikers from around the country enjoy scenic rides along the Emerald Coast, live entertainment and local cuisine.

IRONMAN 70.3 Gulf Coast May 13 This newly rebranded endurance event, previously known

as the Gulf Coast Triathlon, begins with a 1.2-mile, open water swim in the Gulf of Mexico. Competitors then bike 56 miles on an out-and-back course through rural Bay County and Panama City Beach. The final leg, a 13.1-mile run, concludes with a spectacular finish at the Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort. Because the on-land courses are fast and flat, the race provides a great opportunity for athletes seeking personal best times. IRONMAN 70.3 Gulf Coast will offer 50 slots to the 2017 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship taking place in September in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Visit Ironman.com for details.

Jeep Beach Jam May 17–21 Jeep enthusiasts from throughout the United States travel to Frank Brown Park for this five-day event dedicated to all things Jeep. Industry leading companies will be present with information, seminars and merchandise. This family-friendly event includes bounce houses, obstacle courses, live music, bonfires, a parade and much more!

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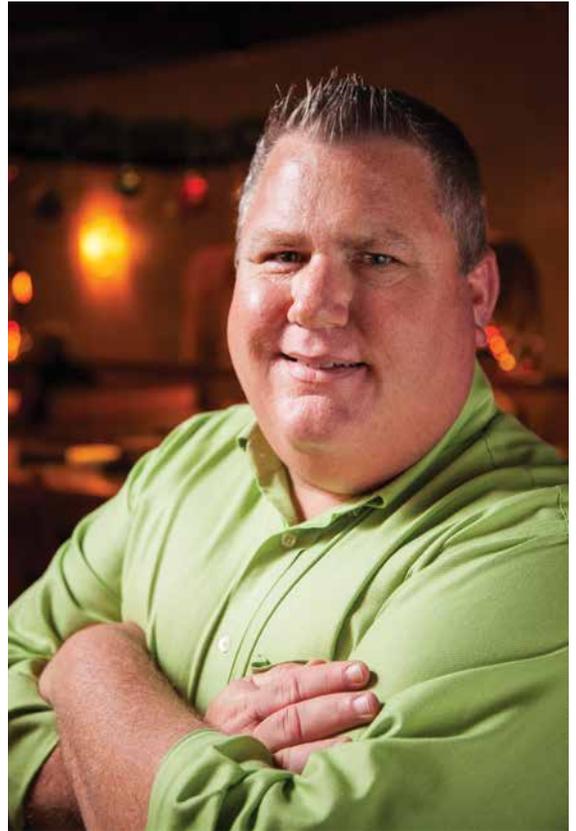


DOLCE ITALIANO

A place where ingredients shine

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT // PHOTOS BY CHASE YAKABOSKI





Mike Howe, the manager and co-owner of Dolce Italiano, is committed to supplying his customers with a flawless food-and-drink experience and using the freshest, best ingredients.

THERE'S SWEET SATISFACTION

in knowing that you've created a tasty meal and fed someone well with food that has been prepared with love. That's the essence of "dolce," an Italian word that means "sweet." And while the dishes served at Dolce Italiano in Panama City Beach are, for the most part, savory, the passion poured into every item on the menu flavors them with a sweetness that could only be created at the hands of a master chef who appreciates subtlety and nuance and understands the beauty that comes from allowing ingredients to shine.

For Chef Paul Stellato, a 25-year veteran of the restaurant scene, cooking is second nature — something that he could do in his sleep. But nothing he produces is, by any means, done by rote. He demands excellence, not only of himself, but also of his staff. And as he constructs elegant dishes inspired by the time-honored traditions of Italy, Chef Paul presents his own works of art, offering up plates that transport the senses to a place where time is savored and food truly feeds the soul.

Ownership of Dolce Italiano, which opened in June of 2016, is shared between Chef Paul and the restaurant's manager, Mike Howe. Although the restaurant represents Howe's first venture into the world of high-end cuisine, he and his partner had a clear vision of what they wanted to bring to the table when they decided to take on the challenge of creating an Italian-flavored dining destination.

"The concept behind Dolce was to provide a fine dining menu filled with Italian fare that uses only the freshest, highest quality ingredients and offer our guests the chance to enjoy those beautiful flavors in an upscale setting," says Howe.

Offering refined versions of the cuisine of this nation that speaks the language of love, Dolce Italiano utters its own words of affection, presenting them in dishes like Seafood Manicotti: a hand-rolled pasta-embrace of ricotta cheese topped with plump Gulf shrimp and succulent jumbo lump crab meat, finished in a fresh tomato and cream sauce. Handcrafted potato gnocchi are a daily labor of love here. Each



pillowy pasta is poached to seal in moisture before being flash-fried for a crust that envelops the pasta's tender center. Served on their own or as an accompaniment to a flaky fillet of fresh Grouper Francaise, these bites are a testament to the skill of those in the kitchen.

So, too, is the Purse and Pear, combining gorgonzola cheese with the sweetness of poached pear in purses of freshly made pasta sauced with gorgonzola cream and finely-chopped parsley. These are flavors that dance on the tongue — a fine display of the marriage of savory and sweet.

Guests to the new restaurant dive into dishes like Scallop Risotto: a plate of seared jumbo scallops served atop a creamy bed of tomato-and-herb-butter risotto and finished with freshly grated Romano cheese and a spicy-sweet kick of honey chipotle glaze. The Pork Chop Picatta serves up a tender hand-cut pork chop,

breaded and pan-fried to a golden crunch and bursting with life in its tangy, house-made lemon butter caper sauce.

Topping the list of the chef's personal favorites are Lobster Cioppino and the restaurant's veal chop. The Lobster Cioppino pays homage to the bounty of seafood this area is known for by offering lobster tails, clams, mussels and shrimp. The seafood is cooked in white wine and garlic to highlight and release the individual flavors, and is then served in herbed tomato broth. "It's one of the greatest representations of our local seafood and really introduces (guests) to what makes this area so special," says Chef Paul.

"The (veal) chop is such a beautiful cut of meat," he says. "Really, one of the very best you'll find." Served bone-in, this sampling is pan-seared and topped with a sweet Marsala wine sauce and rich, savory mushrooms.

Pasta is, of course, an affair to remember at Dolce Italiano. The classics are highlighted: Spaghetti with meatballs, linguini and lasagna are all created with care. Layers of fresh ingredients build flavors that make an impression and a memory.

With a name that means "sweet," it's no surprise that desserts are a house specialty. Tiramisu Cheesecake is a match made in heaven: The espresso, cream cheese and mascarpone of traditional tiramisu is combined with cheesecake to achieve a unique reinvention of two well-loved classics. For those who melt for chocolate, the Chocolate Panna Cotta is sure to please: This smooth-and-creamy, dark delight is topped with drunken cherries glazed in balsamic vinegar and port.

At Dolce Italiano, life (and dinner) is an experience to be savored, sipped and tasted with abandon. Course after course, each plate is a kiss on the cheek and a welcome to the feast. ●

STUFFED BELL PEPPERS (serves 8) *Adapted recipe courtesy of Dolce Italiano*

INGREDIENTS

8 large green bell peppers
1 large yellow onion, chopped
¼ cup garlic, chopped
1 lb. ground beef
½ lb. Italian sausage
1 cup marinara sauce
½ cup cream sherry
¾ cup white rice
Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

In a pot, combine rice with 1 ½ cups water and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to simmer and cook until rice is tender and water is absorbed (roughly 20 minutes). Meanwhile, place onion, ground beef and sausage in a large sauté pan and cook over medium heat, adding chopped garlic as the meat browns. Cut tops from bell peppers and remove all seeds and membranes from

peppers' interiors. Place all peppers cut side up in a large baking pan; set aside.

Add cooked rice, marinara sauce and sherry to meat mixture, stirring until fully combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste and stuff equal amounts of mixture into peppers. Cover peppers with lid or aluminum foil and bake at 375 degrees until peppers start to soften.

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HOLLY GARDNER



Not Just for Locals

Schooners' Chef Konrad Jochum serves up a party

BY REBECCA PADGETT

A BREEZE RIPPLES in and the sun sets, casting a rosy glow on the faces of smiling guests who take bites of fresh grouper and sips of frozen margaritas. The live band begins to play, and their sound reverberates off the sand and mingles with the scent of gumbo. The night at Schooners is just beginning, as many will dine, drink and dance until the wee hours. It's no wonder Chef Konrad Jochum claims his job is like a party.

Natives refer to Schooners as, "The Last Local Beach Club," which stems from its original moniker, "The Beach Party." It's a haven for relaxing, unwinding and enjoying the atmosphere. It doesn't claim to be fancy, but it does promise your food will always be fresh, flavorful and prepared with culinary expertise. Chef Konrad spoke with Visit Panama City Beach about his favorite dishes to cook, his culinary education and his inspirations.



MICHAEL BOGINI

At Schooner's, Chef Konrad Jochum serves up seafood with attitude, including succulent lobster tails, in a kicked-back setting favoring locals and everyone who wishes he was one.

for these events. People plan their vacations around these festivals. We like parties here, and when we party, people show up. We are the party kings of Panama City Beach.

What led you to Panama City Beach and to Schooners, in particular?

That's a long story. From Germany, I came to the Keys, to Tampa, Atlanta, New York City, Chicago, Palm Beach, back to the Keys, and then here, to PCB.

What inspires the menu?

We have a plethora of fresh seafood right out our backdoor: shrimp and local fish, which we use to our advantage. Our grouper sandwich, Schooners burger and shrimp and grits are raved about.

What is your favorite dish to cook and why?

Shrimp and grits! It's indigenous and a typical Southern dish. It's like spaghetti sauce: Everybody has a recipe and everyone does it better. but ours is the freshest.

What menu items are most popular with customers?

Shrimp. Anything shrimp. Any which way and form. Grouper is also popular. If you don't eat seafood, it's the Schooners burger.

What do you hope that customers gain from an experience at Schooners?

They will gain a beautiful waterfront atmosphere, wonderful food, great service and popular entertainment. We are one of

What made you want to become a chef?

I just kind of fell into it. It started with my love of food, and I followed it. I went to school, and I became a chef.

Tell us a bit about your training.

I'm from the Black Forest area of Germany. I went to Villingen cooking school. From there, I was an apprentice in the oldest inn in Germany. I worked my way through restaurants in

Europe and then made my way to the United States. I had a job offer in the U.S. — a six-month contract — and I never went back.

How would you describe the atmosphere at Schooners?

It's a local beach club. No fuss, no mess. It's relaxed, but we do seafood with attitude and character. It's come as you wish. You can be on the beach and then come in for lunch or dinner. It's a local

hotspot for that reason. There is always live entertainment, which is a lot of fun. It's a great team and a big, happy family that I'm grateful to work with on a daily basis.

What are some of the events that Schooners holds?

We have three major events: the Christmas party and two charity events, the Lobster Fest and the Cajun Fest. Thousands of people come here every year just

/ CHEF

the most people-friendly restaurants. Every time is like a party.

What inspires you when you're in the kitchen?

Seeing happy people and serving happy people. Our fresh ingredients, my wonderful staff, a fresh supply of local seafood and the wonderful environment. What's not to love?

If you could pick only five key ingredients, what would they be?

I need at least 50! But if I have to, garlic, olive oil, herbs, fresh seafood and a killer dessert.

What do you like about living in Panama City Beach?

I like the beach and the people. It's a small, laidback community.

What are some of your hobbies outside of the kitchen?

I scuba dive a lot. I enjoy gardening. Socializing is the main one.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm a happy person and a joker. I'm a funny guy and I love to make customers laugh. I'm a quick thinker, which is good in this business.

What is your motto?

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Food makes people happy, and we like happy people. It's that simple.

LOBSTER OF THE ANGELS

Angel-hair pasta tossed with Maine lobster, garlic olive oil, white wine, assorted peppers and herbs

Recipe courtesy of Chef Konrad Jochum

SAUCE INGREDIENTS

4 cups olive oil
4 oz. garlic puree
1 bunch parsley, chopped
1 bunch basil, chopped
1 bunch scallions, chopped
1 cup clam or chicken broth
4 oz. lobster base

DIRECTIONS

In a small pot, heat clam or chicken broth and lobster base until hot and set aside. In a larger pot, heat olive oil to a smoking point and add garlic puree (it will foam.). Add all chopped herbs to extract flavors, then add broth. This will be your basic sauce for the dish.

Steam whole lobster for 6 minutes; chill in ice bath, then break lobster out of the shell.

Cook angel-hair pasta to al dente.

In a sauté pan, heat assorted peppers in 6 ounces of the sauce. Add the lobster and the pasta. Toss quickly and serve "decorated": sprinkled with parmesan and romano cheeses.

Bon Appétit!

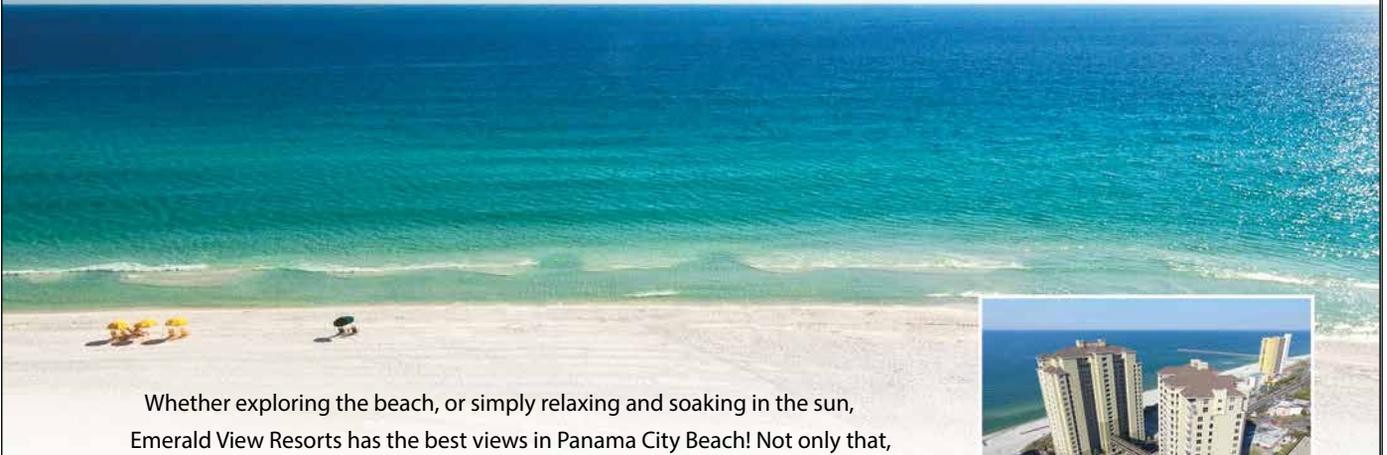


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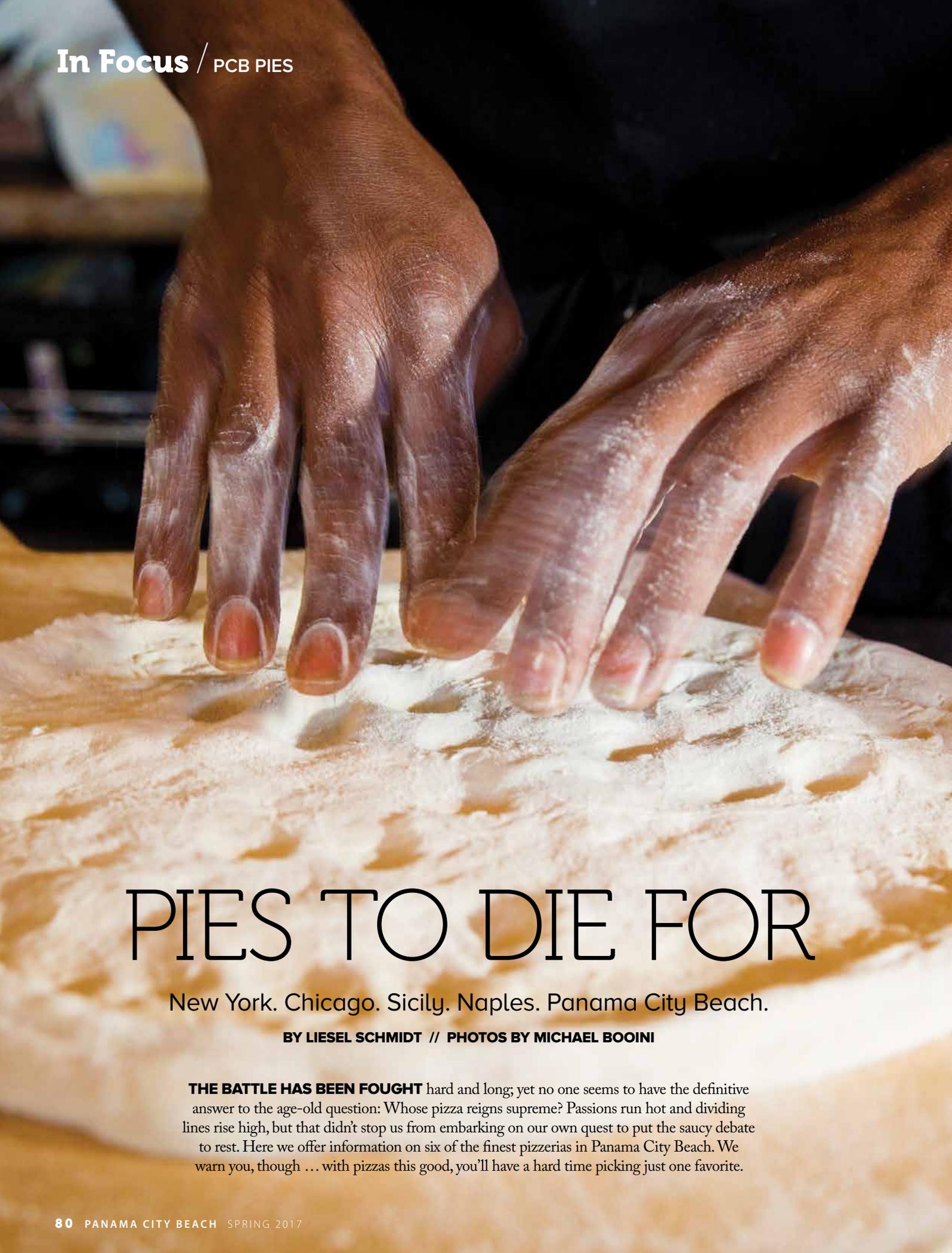


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PIES TO DIE FOR

New York. Chicago. Sicily. Naples. Panama City Beach.

BY LIESEL SCHMIDT // PHOTOS BY MICHAEL BOINI

THE BATTLE HAS BEEN FOUGHT hard and long; yet no one seems to have the definitive answer to the age-old question: Whose pizza reigns supreme? Passions run hot and dividing lines rise high, but that didn't stop us from embarking on our own quest to put the saucy debate to rest. Here we offer information on six of the finest pizzerias in Panama City Beach. We warn you, though ... with pizzas this good, you'll have a hard time picking just one favorite.



Panama Pizzeria

Panama Pizzeria owner Jason GaNung is a proud native New Yorker whose dedication to offering his diners nothing less than perfection runs as deep as the marinara in his veins.

In addition to making classic pizzas that are loved by pie purists, GaNung and co-owner Darla Sapone prove that Panama Pizzeria isn't afraid to toss things up by offering creative creations like the ricotta-loaded Lasagna Pizza and the inventively twisted take on tradition that is the Eggplant Pizza. The seriously stacked Panama Supreme wins the pie popularity contest, while the monstrously meaty Meat Monster runs close behind. No matter which pizza you order, every hot-and-cheesy bite is sure to come packed with delicious flavor.

By the way, Panama Pizzeria doesn't rely solely on the popularity of their pies to keep their customers satisfied: They serve up a full menu of Italian bistro classics, like scratch-made gnocchi and eggplant Parmesan, too.

Panama Pizzeria is located at 17140 Front Beach Road in Panama City Beach. Call (850) 249-7437 or visit PanamaPizzeria.com.



RedBrick Pizza Kitchen Café

RedBrick Pizza Kitchen Café in Pier Park may be part of a franchise, but the pride and care that owners Jim Sickler and JP Marshall take in making their fresh doughs and creating their tasty pies, calzones, Fhazani flatbread sandwiches and salads matches the most authentic of Italian pizzerias.

With built-in televisions at every booth to keep you tuned into the game or to keep the little ones content, RedBrick's family-friendly atmosphere makes the restaurant a local favorite for pie lovers of all ages. Of course, the biggest reason to visit RedBrick is the pizza, each of which is fire-roasted in RedBrick's massive stone oven. It's the perfect way to achieve that crisp bottom crust!

RedBrick Pizza Kitchen Café is located at 801 Pier Park Drive, Suite A100 in Panama City Beach. Call (850) 236-1413 or visit RedBrickPizza.com.

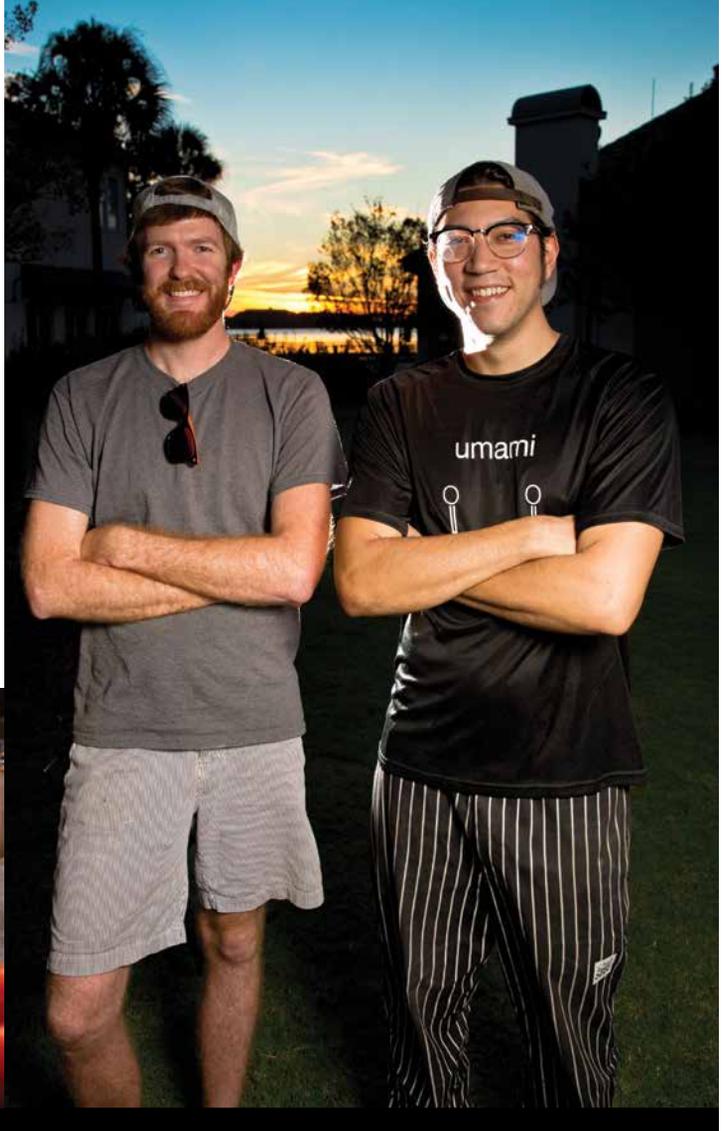
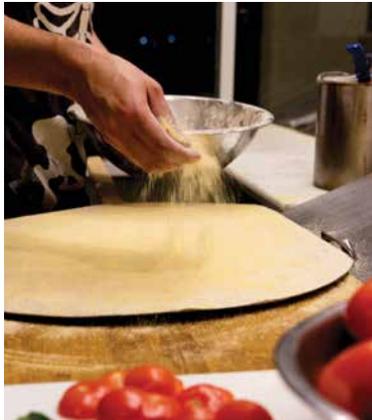


Bricks & Barley Pizza

With unexpected ingredients like dairy-free cheese and tofu, Bricks & Barley Pizza is a pizzeria with an alternative vibe. Since opening Bricks & Barley in mid-2016, Phillip Mercer and Rayvon Griggs have been welcoming guests with their relaxed and casual, café-style approach to pie making. The place is spacious enough to host local musicians who serenade diners as they munch on the restaurant's brick-fired specialty pies and sip down bottles of craft brew.

Each "Southern gourmet"-style pizza is topped with Boar's Head meats and cheeses. And while the chefs love to toss caution to the wind with some of their more offbeat ingredients, pepperoni and cheese are the top two ingredients on their hit-list. Bricks & Barley's hand-tossed creations are so tasty you'll be tossing your own hands up in wonder.

Bricks & Barley Pizza is located at 3900 Marriott Drive in Panama City. Call (850) 775-1677.



Marcus' Gulf Pizza

Offering every kind of topping imaginable, from pepperoni to rum raisins and pickled eggs, Marcus' Gulf Pizza is certainly a pizza parlor that thinks outside of the box. Each of their thin-and-crispy specialty pizzas is piled high with flavor, or you can choose to make your own pie.

The Super Deluxe pizza tops Marcus' list of hot sellers, but it isn't the only big cheese; other popular pizzas include the Vegetarian, Gulf Deluxe and BBQ Cracked, each of which is layered with housemade sauces, fresh veggies and premium meats.

Marcus' has been making their doughs, sauces and legendary lasagna from scratch on a daily basis for more than 30 years. When the original owner, Mark "Marco" Shiekh decided to hang up his apron in 2005, current owner Marcus Haines carried on the tradition and put his practiced hand and his deep passion for keeping things authentic to work.

In addition to their tempting slices, Marcus' specializes in scratch-made favorites, such as spaghetti and lasagna. Other menu hits include their oven-baked subs, chicken wings and fresh salads.



Marcus' Gulf Pizza is located at 7010 Thomas Drive in Panama City Beach. Call (850) 234-5000 or visit MarcusGulfPizza.com.



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Salvatore's Pizza & Wings

Salvatore's Pizza & Wings is a true mom-and-pop operation, built from the raw ideas and passion of Jan and Ken Sifers, who named the restaurant for Jan's Italian grandfather. Offering a menu packed with their own recipes, this New York-style pie parlor may not be much to look at from the outside; but the flavors of their freshly baked, hand-tossed pizzas are as massive as the slices they serve.

Salvatore's Meaty and Supreme pizzas top the popularity charts, but their garlic knots and deep-fried Buffalo wings (so authentic in flavor you might start talking with a New York accent) are some of the restaurant's other claims to fame. From their spaghetti sauce to their pizza doughs, everything is made in-house - and that's a taste that'll make you feel right at home.

Salvatore's Pizza & Wings is located at 14658 Front Beach Road in Panama City Beach. Call (850) 249-0407.



NICK'S SLICE OF BROOKLYN PIZZERIA & BAR

Nick's Slice of Brooklyn Pizzeria & Bar

Brooklyn native Nick D. (last name undisclosed) got his start in the restaurant business back home in Bensonhurst, where he learned traditional Italian cooking before migrating South to open

his own place in Nashville. Just this year, Nick and his wife made Panama City Beach their new home, bringing signature dishes that customers won't soon "fuhgeddabout."

Nick's offers a menu packed with pizzas like The Godfather and The Mama Mia — a respect-demanding pair of pies made from two layers of crust stuffed with enough cheese and toppings in each slice to put a hit on your hunger. With top-selling Stromboli rolls like the Eggplant Parm and authentic New York-style pizzas, stopping in for a hot slice at Nick's is an offer you can't refuse.

Nick's Slice of Brooklyn Pizzeria & Bar is located at 13528 Front Beach Road in Panama City Beach. Call (850) 708-3177 or visit NicksSliceofBrooklyn.com.

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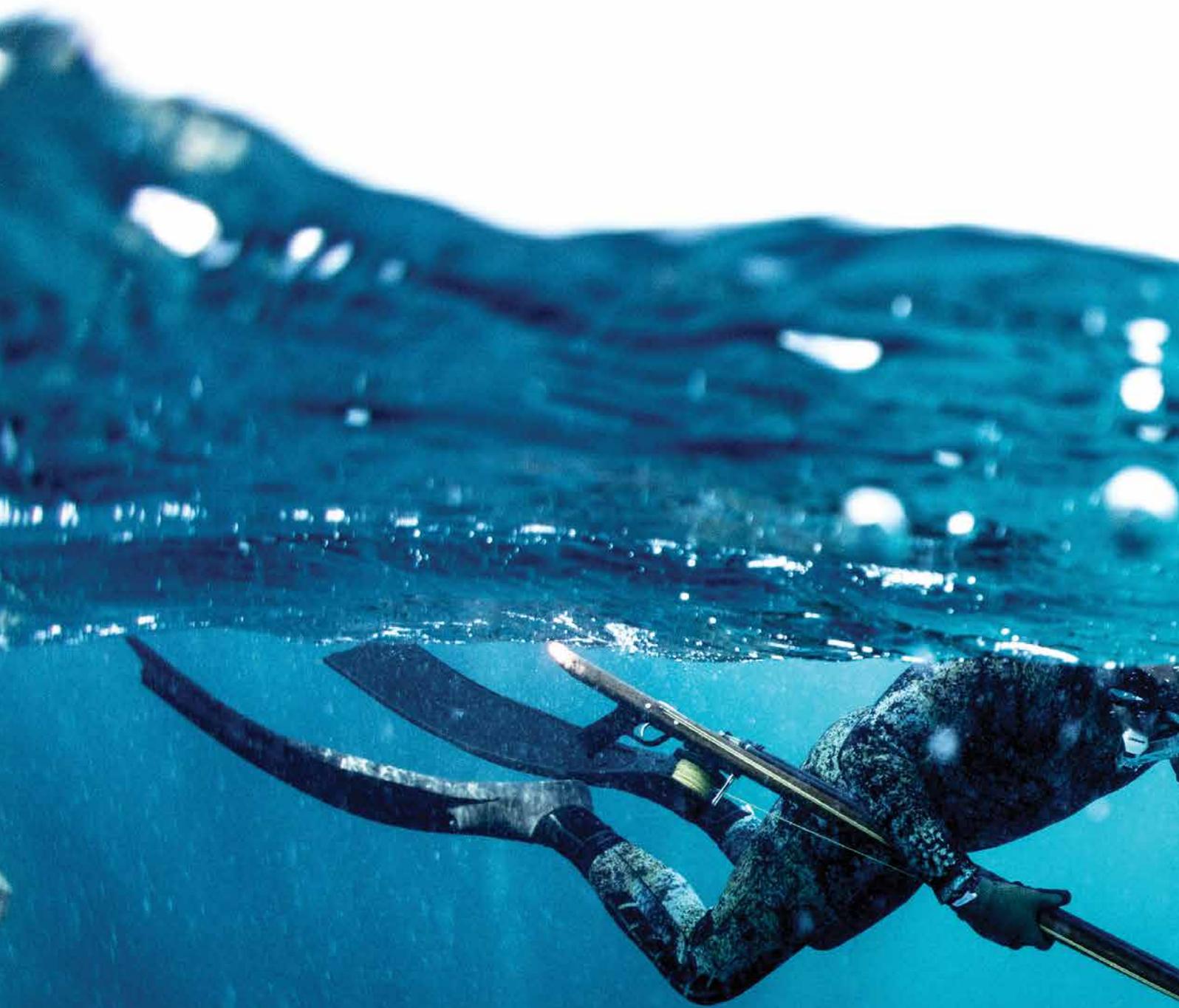
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CUSTOMIZE YOUR VACATION

Adventure travelers choose an action-packed itinerary

BY HANNAH BURKE



PANAMA CITY BEACH is known far and wide for its sugar white sand beaches and the beautiful water of the Gulf of Mexico. For generations, it's been a destination for beach fun and sun, but many of today's travelers are looking for a little more excitement than simply relaxing on the sand, watching the waves roll by.

For the adventure-minded traveler, read on! Panama City Beach has plenty of excitement to pique your interest and provide you with the ultimate vacation.

Spearfishing

When you're ready to combine your love of scuba diving with your love of hunting, spearfishing lets you test your most primal skills with spear guns: harpoon-like devices for targeting fish while you SCUBA — or free-dive. "Spearos" — that's what many spearfishers call themselves — will tell you that there's nothing more exciting than the underwater hunt. This is not an activity of leisure for the laid-back vacationer, but one for the ultimate thrill seeker.

For more information, visit PCDiveCenter.com, PanamaCityDiving.com, DiversDenPCB.com and DiveLocker.net.

Kite Surfing

Cutting through the water and reaching new heights of exhilaration; launching into the air and feeling as weightless as a seagull. Sound like your idea of a good time? Then kite surfing in Panama City Beach is for you. If you're new to the sport, experts at Emerald Coast Kite Surfing provide lessons. These lessons are offered year-round in the more protected waters of St. Andrew Bay, but experts may take their kites out into the open water of the Gulf of Mexico.

Rates and information on lessons and prime kite surfing locations can be found at PCBKiteSurf.com.

SCUBA Diving

It's possible that your ideal adventure takes place underwater, where you can get a firsthand look at native marine life and shipwrecks resting on the Gulf floor. Did you know that Panama City Beach is where the U.S. military's divers learn their trade? Or that there are dozens of artificial reefs waiting to be discovered offshore? Everything from ships to tanks or even fighter jets can be explored by scuba divers who venture out. If you've never dived before, check into lessons at a local dive shop; if you're a seasoned diver, hop aboard a trip and see why Panama City Beach is considered one of the best destinations for scuba in the Southeast.

AUSTIN POWELL



Stand-Up Paddleboarding

Prefer to stay above the surface? There's a way to get out on the water and witness marine life without swimming alongside it. Paddleboarding provides a great view into the water while you stand on what looks like an extra-large surfboard.

Paddleboarders propel themselves over the water while standing up, using a single paddle. The balance required makes this sport a great workout and rewards participants with not only a toned core, but also the amazing scenery you'll find while cruising along local waterways.

Learn more at HopaBoardPCB.com, IntoTheBluePCB.com and WowPaddleboards.com.

Jet Skiing

If you want to feel the wind in your hair while you race through waves, leaving nothing but salty mist in your wake, it's hard to beat jet skiing. Jet Ski rentals can be found all over Panama City Beach. The experiences include renting straight off the beach to explore the Gulf of Mexico or joining a guided expedition to Shell Island, where you're sure to spot dolphins and see the best parts of the island to explore or snorkel.

Parasailing

Parasailing services take visitors up, up and away to experience a bird's eye view of Panama City Beach. Vacationers ages 5 and up can enjoy an unforgettable view of paradise while gently floating along, tethered to a tow boat and held aloft by the cushion of air captured by what resembles a giant parachute.

For more information, visit ParasailingPanamaCityBeach.com, FlyPanamaCityParasail.com and PanhandleParasail.com.



Sport Fishing

In the spring, Panama City Beach anglers are focused on one fish above all others: cobia. Anglers take up position on a charter boat tower for a little "sight fishing." Boats can be seen cruising a few hundred yards off the beach, running parallel to the shore as they search for the migration of cobia doing the same. From atop the tower of these boats, anglers spot the cobia and cast at them, rather than just throwing out a line and hoping for the best.

Find a charter at VisitPanamaCityBeach.com.

Ironman

The premier athletic event in Florida takes place right here in Panama City Beach: the Ironman Triathlon. What began as a challenge between Navy Seals has grown to an athletic event that draws participants from around the world and all walks of life. The race begins with a 2.4 mile swim through the Gulf waters, followed by a 112-mile bike race and finishes only after a full marathon — a 26-mile trek across Panama City Beach. Are you game? Whether participating, volunteering or just cheering on the athletes, the Florida Ironman is an event that must be experienced.

More information, including registration and a list of volunteer opportunities for the 2017 season, is available at Ironman.com/triathlon/events/americas/ironman/florida.aspx.



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TURN IT UP

Will Thompson's music springs from deep local roots

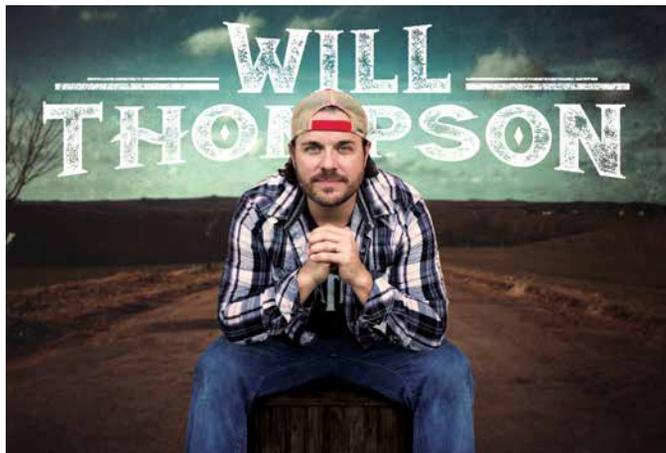
BY THOMAS J. MONIGAN

WILL THOMPSON knows that springtime on the Gulf Coast is special, and this one will be extra special for him.

Born and raised in Panama City, Thompson is a fifth-generation musician whose CD, "Turn It Up," was recently released by First Note Entertainment. And in what could be his big break, he will open for Sheryl Crow on April 28 when Pepsi SpringJam comes to Panama City Beach's Aaron Bessant Park.

Though he's getting a taste of the national spotlight, Thompson is no stranger to local audiences, often performing in support of a good cause. He was among the performers at Stars and Guitars at the Marina Civic Center, an event benefiting the Gulf Coast Children's Advocacy Center. He also played the Whiskey's Saloon benefit concert and the Panama City's Artist Showcase at the Martin Theatre, both of which supported the Bay Youth Music Association.

Thompson says he started playing instruments "so early I can't remember." A lot of that had to do with the fact that his parents, Mary Kay



COURTESY WILL THOMPSON

and Bill, both worked as music teachers in the local public school system.

"They had the instruments at home, and I just had this knack of picking up the instrument and playing it," Thompson recalls. "My parents set me up with lessons when I was 6. It started there, and they kept the lessons all the way to high school." Thompson played trumpet well enough in high school to earn a scholarship to college.

As a teenager, Thompson enjoyed opportunities to learn music while spending summers in Los Angeles with his uncle, trumpeter Gary Grant. Grant's credits as a session musician cover nearly 40 years; he played with artists ranging from

Frank Sinatra and Natalie Cole to Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney.

"It really turned me on to doing music professionally," Thompson says.

Tommy Jackson, who founded First Note in 2010, designated Thompson as the music director at his full-service recording studio.

"Will can play anything," Jackson says. "There's plenty of songs where he played every instrument and sang every harmony part on the song, including lead. We don't have to outsource anything if we don't want to. The key to him is getting him to not work so hard."

Jackson refers to Thompson's musical style as "Current Country."

THIS TIME OF YEAR

Will Thompson, Ashe Watson & Tim Jackson

*All day song playing on the radio
Up and down along the Gulf of Mexico
Gonna live it up
I won't be any younger than I am right now*

*All night long gotta keep 'em coming
We're driven by the night and the beat of the drummer
Gonna live it up
I won't be any younger than I am right now*

CHORUS:

*Go, go, lay it on back
Got time to take it easy
So come on and stay with me*

*Well there's nothing like the summer
Bringing out the suntans
And those rock and roll bands starting to play
Nights a little hotter
The neighbors start to party
We all get a little rowdy
'Bout this time of year*

*Time flies by
The clocks are even buzzing
Half-baked half-shell cheaper by the dozen
Doing this well
Can't feel any better than it does right now*

*Storm rolls in
Doesn't really matter
Won't last long cause right after
We'll crank it back up to another level
We ain't coming down*

CHORUS

COURTESY WILL THOMPSON



“The music is upbeat,” Jackson explains, “but it still has a tremendous amount of substance to it.”

According to Jackson, Thompson has written more than 150 songs with top names in the industry over the past year. “The respect is there, Jackson says, “and it’s getting a lot of artists to come down here. Everything kind of runs through him.”

Thompson’s wife, Lindsey, plays the piano and sings and has released a CD of her own, entitled, “Inside Out.”

“We try to support each other without overstepping our boundaries,” Lindsey says. “It’s a balance, for sure.”

But there’s even more music in the Thompson family, thanks to Will and Lindsey’s son, Leader, 9, and daughter, Lyrica, 5. Leader writes his own songs,

records them and plays the drums and piano. Lyrica plays the piano and sings.

“(Will and I) always said from the beginning, we would do everything as a family,” Lindsey says. “Pretty much when he’s got stuff going on, I’ve got stuff going on. I do everything with him, if it’s just doing backup vocals or playing piano from time to time, and the kids are always

with us. The best part is just being able to be together and do things we love.”

Thompson says that music is a key element in his family’s everyday life. “Many times, if we hear somebody else singing, we all start singing the same parts,” he says with a smile. “What’s scary is when we’ve been apart for the day, when we come back, we start singing the same song.” ●



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Together, we can keep our beaches pristine

PANAMA CITY BEACH is known for having the “World’s Most Beautiful Beaches,” and we would like to keep it that way for the enjoyment of locals and tourists alike! For this reason, the “Leave No Trace” ordinance was adopted in 2012. Anything you brought to the beach should also leave the beach with you. Anything left on the beach overnight could be cleared off the beach by the time you return in the morning. Our goal is to protect our pristine beaches and the natural wildlife, such as nesting sea turtles, by leaving no trace of personal items on the beaches overnight. Please do your part in maintaining our beautiful beaches!

The Leave No Trace ordinance states that all personal items will be removed and disposed of if left on the beach

between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. These items include, but are not limited to, tents, chairs, toys, umbrellas and coolers. On public beaches or with the upland landowner’s permission, beachgoers may store personal belongings overnight at the toe of the dune. The toe of the dune is the area of the beach immediately seaward of the dune and beach vegetation. To be specific, it is the area of the beach that is furthest from the water that is not in a sand dune or beach access point.

Those who store their personal items overnight do so at their own risk. The county, the city, the Tourist Development Council and the beach maintenance contractor do not assume any liability for any items left on the beach.



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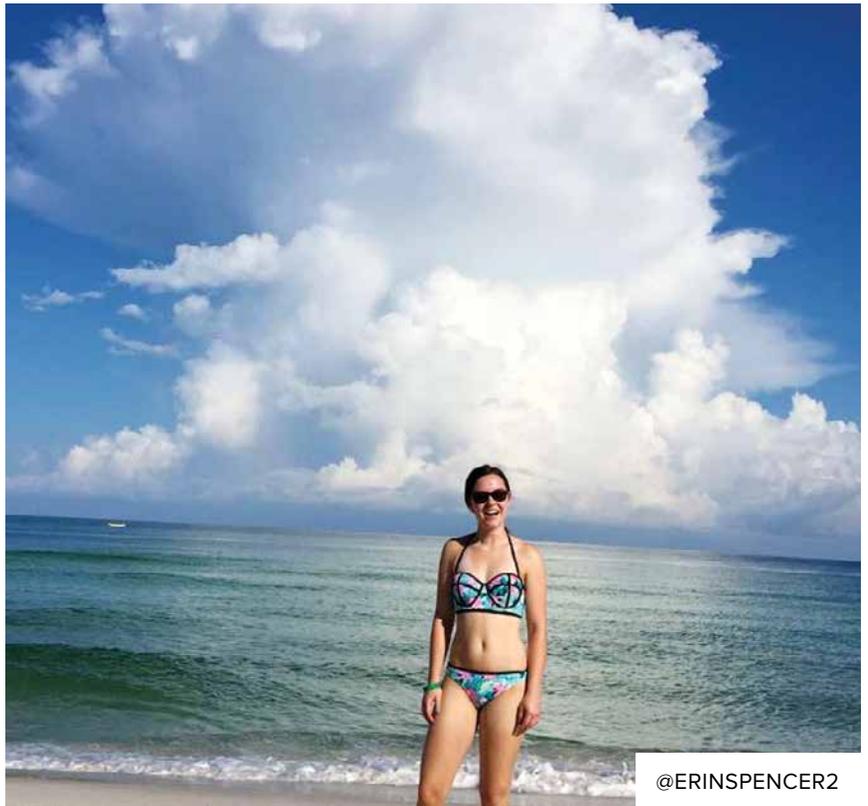
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Sand & Surf

PANAMA CITY BEACH

sets the stage for great memories and spectacular photos as well. Visitors often share their breathtaking “you had to be there”-types of photos with us on social media, so we thought we might pick a few and show them off here in the non-digital space of our magazine. We think you’ll agree, they look great in any format!

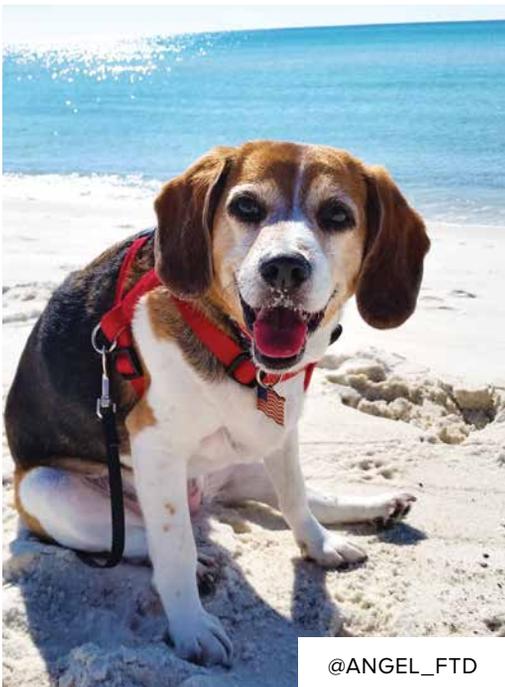
Post your Panama City Beach photos on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook with the hashtag #RealFunBeach, and they might just end up featured here in the next issue! (We’ll contact you to ask permission first, of course!)



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