

MedallionClass Magic With Princess Cruises PAGE 74

Travel

WINTER 2020

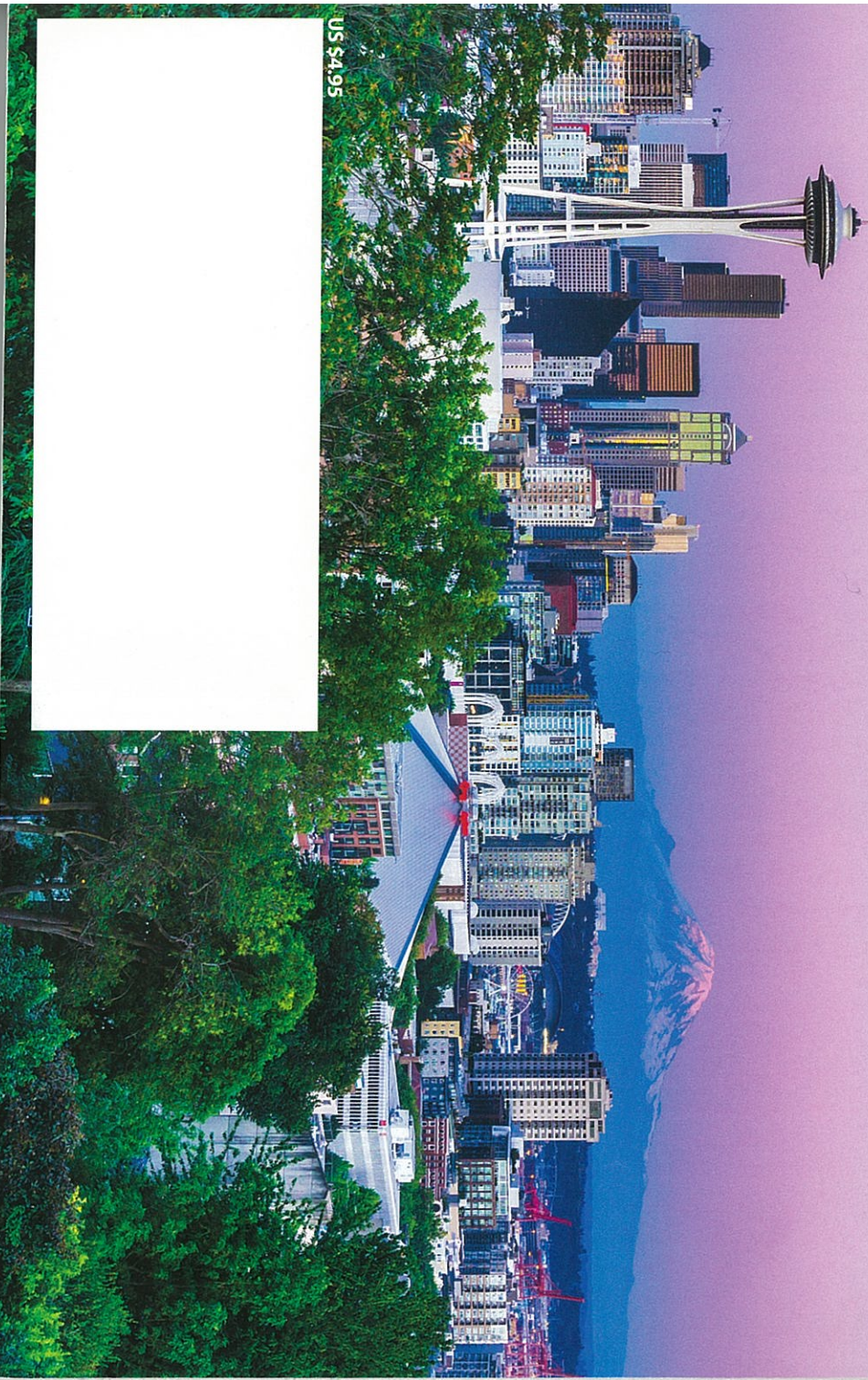
DISPLAY UNTIL MARCH 17

50 & Beyond

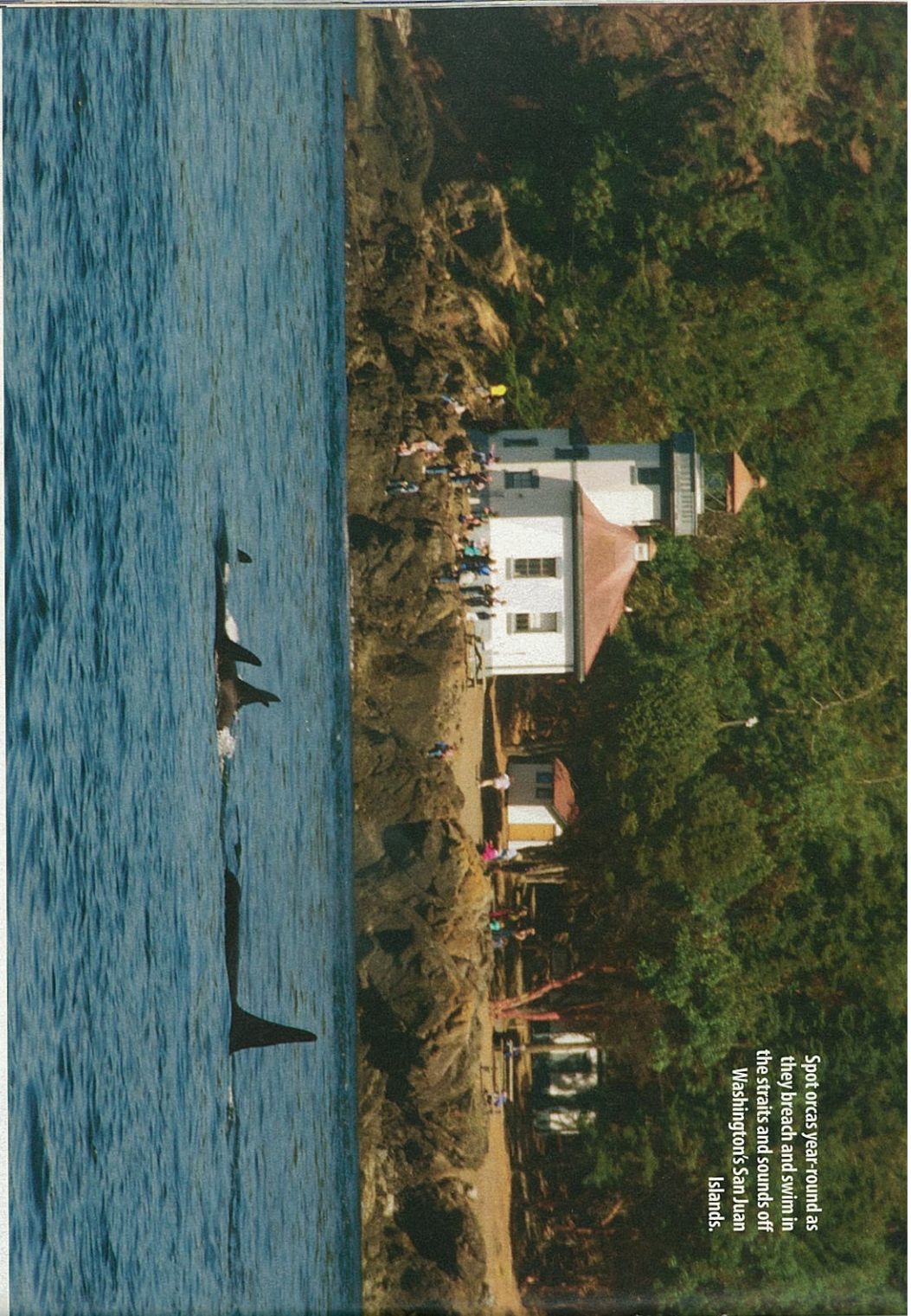
THE WEEKENDER ISSUE

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US \$4.95



Spot orcas year-round as they breach and swim in the straits and sounds off Washington's San Juan Islands.



Charming Spots for a Coastal Stay

These U.S. shores have prepped the perfect beachside getaway

> BY REBECCA MATHESON ORTIZ

A SOUTH TEXAS NATIVE, I grew up ranting or stores, my family would stop course, eateries featuring fresh-caught

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Land tours are a popular way to explore Santa Catalina Island, from scenic drives around Avalon to interior expeditions.

two spots you won't want to miss.

Around the isles: On San Juan, the most populated island, walkable Friday Harbor entices visitors with restaurants, boutique shopping and museums dedicated to whales, aviation and local history. Stop by Orcas Island Artworks, a co-op of more than 45 local craftspeople creating pottery, jewelry, paintings, fiber art and more in a renovated strawberry-packing plant.

The great outdoors: South Beach offers a perfect place for summer whale-watching on San Juan with its two-mile stretch of pebbles and sand adorned with sun-bleached driftwood. On Orcas, the 5,424-acre Moran State Park has five lakes, 38 miles of trails and access to the archipelago's highest point, the 2,409-foot Mount Constitution. www.VisitSanJuans.com

SANTA CATALINA ISLAND, CA

Twenty-two miles off the California coast, Catalina is part of the Channel Islands chain, touting a Mediterranean climate and an abundance of unspoiled land juxtaposed with the ritzy digs in the resort town of Avalon.

Around the isle: The 1929 Catalina Casino isn't for gambling — *casino* also is an Italian word for "gathering place" — but it is an art deco masterpiece that's home to the Avalon Theatre, one of the first built for talkies. See it and its hand-painted murals on a tour,

and take your guide's advice to step out on the casino's Romance Promenade for island panoramas.

The great outdoors:

Peek into a thriving marine environment via glass-bottom boat or Catalina Tours' Undersea Expedition, with adventurers boarding a semisubmersible vehicle for porthole sightings of sea urchins, bat rays and more. Get acquainted with unique flora and fauna, like a herd of 150 bison freely roaming the island's interior or the displays at the Wrigley Memorial and Botanic Garden, which showcases the rare Catalina ironwood and other endemic plants. Descanso Beach Club, meanwhile, offers cabanas and

lounges for relaxing beach time. www.VisitCatalinaIsland.com

PORT ARANSAS, TX

Sugar-fine sands powder the 18 miles of shoreline on Mustang Island, a barrier isle capped by the Fishing Capital of Texas: Port Aransas. Though Hurricane Harvey caused extensive damage here in 2017, Port A (as the locals call it) pulled together and once again is ready for tourists.

Around town:

Rent a golf cart and zip to eclectic shops or drop in for classes like painting and basket colling at the local arts center. Enjoy world-class cuisine with a side of local curiosities at Roosevelt's at the Tarpon Inn, where lobby walls are "papered" in giant tarpon scales signed by former guests, including Franklin D. Roosevelt. For a waterfront experience, opt for the fresh seafood at Virginia's on the Bay. ▶



Flashy pink wings and flat, rounded beaks are hallmarks of Port Aransas' official bird: the aptly named roseate spoonbill.



While on Florida's Paradise Coast, join a ranger-led discovery hike or paddle through Big Cypress National Preserve.

The great outdoors: Anglers cast from sandbars, tail redfish with a kayak or head out on the Gulf for deep-sea catches. At the beach, bright kites fleck the sky; sharp eyes also might spot roseate spoonbills and endangered whooping cranes, as this region boasts six points along the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail. www.PortAvansasa.org

FLORIDA'S PARADISE COAST

The Paradise Coast edges the Gulf on Florida's southwestern side, encompassing 30 miles of white-sand beaches from Naples down to Everglades National Park, the continent's only subtropical reserve.

Around town: In Naples, Third Street South is a shopper's delight, with designer boutiques and a gallery row. You also can catch one of more than 300 annual performances and exhibitions at Artis-Naples, home to The Baker Museum and the Naples Philharmonic, after dining at one of many restaurants featuring locally sourced ingredients.

The great outdoors: Visitors enjoy navigating the Everglades by foot,

airboat and kayak to spy manatees, alligators, endangered Florida panthers, bald eagles and more amid sawgrass, mangroves and rare orchids. The wild waters of Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge teem with game fish, and Marco Island calls to beachcombers with swirling whelk shells, sand dollars and other treasures from the sea. www.ParadiseCoast.com

BRUNSWICK AND

THE GOLDEN ISLES, GA

Georgia's Golden Isles, consisting of St. Simons, Sea, Jekyll and Little St. Simons Islands, flaunt beaches and lush mangrove forests sheltering wildlife like fiddler crabs and the graceful wading ibis.

Around the towns: See the "cottages" that once belonged to the likes of the Rockefeller and Goodyear families in the 240-acre Jekyll Island National Historic Landmark District or, on St. Simons, climb 129 steps to the top of an 1872 lighthouse. Back on the mainland in Brunswick, see Queen Anne and Gothic Revival architecture as you stroll downtown toward antiques stores, surf shops and outdoor markets boasting handicrafts and fresh produce.

The great outdoors: Follow Brunswick's Earth Day Nature Trail as it

wends over salt marshes and past tidal ponds or photograph Jekyll's iconic Driftwood Beach, where gnarled trees from a bygone maritime forest adorn the sand. On St. Simons, spot heaps of shells known as middens dating to 2500 B.C. at the 608-acre Cannon's Point Preserve and explore ruins from the 1700s at Fort Frederica National Monument. www.GoldenIsles.com

THE OUTER BANKS, NC

The Outer Banks, another span of Atlantic barrier islands, have a few claims to fame: Here you will find Cape Hatteras, America's first national seashore, and the site of the Wright brothers' first flight on Dec. 17, 1903.

Around the towns: In Kill Devil Hills, take a gander at a replica of the famed siblings' plane at the Wright Brothers National Memorial. Grandkids will love visiting Roanoke Island Festival Park, a living history attraction in Manteo celebrating the early English settlement, where they can clamber aboard a replica of a 1585 Roanoke Voyage ship to try their hand at setting sails, swabbing decks and more. ►



About 20 handcarved "tree spirits" trim the oaks of St. Simons Island, GA, making for a unique scavenger hunt opportunity.



Beachgoers can soak up sun amid windswept dunes and waving grasses on Cape Cod's idyllic strands.

The great outdoors: In Nags


Head, watch the sun set over the East Coast's tallest sand dune at Jockey's Ridge State Park or cast a line off the 1,000-foot-long Jennette's Pier. The 24,470-acre Cape Hatteras National Seashore also is worth a daytrip for

its 70 miles of shoreline where nearly 400 bird species and five types of turtles have been spotted. www.OuterBanks.org

CAPE COD, MA

Wild cranberry bogs, museums, gardens, the 40-mile stretch of Cape Cod National Seashore and more await on Cape Cod, a peninsula dotted by 15 distinct towns.

Around the towns: Attractions trace America's history, including the heritage of the indigenous people documented at the Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Museum. It's joined by the Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum, marking the location where the Mayflower first made landfall in 1620, and the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum, showcasing the former president's life and times on the Cape. After a day among their exhibitions, fill up on buttery lobster rolls, fried clams and scoops of ice cream.

The great outdoors: A lavender farm in Harwich sprouts fragrant purple fields in summer, and the 100-acre Heritage Museums and Gardens in Sandwich wows with its showy display of rhododendrons each May. For a trip to the shore, sample Marconi Beach in Wellfleet, which often looks like a tapestry of bright umbrellas and towels, or bike the region's 114 miles of paths through postcard-worthy towns and seascapes. www.CapeCodChamber.org 

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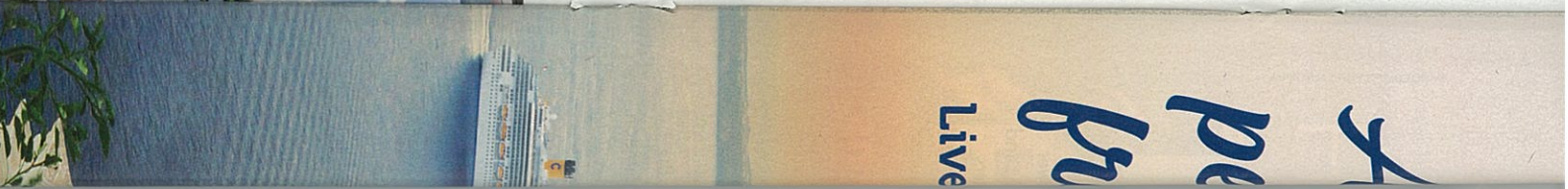
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