

# EPICUREAN

CHARLOTTE

Food & Wine Magazine

take a look  
at adagio vineyards

coast your way around  
the crystal coast

watch selwyn  
pub evolve  
around you!

the / **zimmerman** / agency  
(continued)

## contents

14

slowly... and with passion a look at organic vineyards



18 coast your way through the crystal coast



26 always pub wisdom around you!

## in each issue

06 ripe for the picking  
beer, wine and product picks  
for the busy summer months

08 juicy morsels  
how to throw the best party  
of the summer

10 seats & eats  
a slice of local delight at home

12 profiles of quoniam  
hearing the solutions 17 organizations  
and initiatives helping to save beer

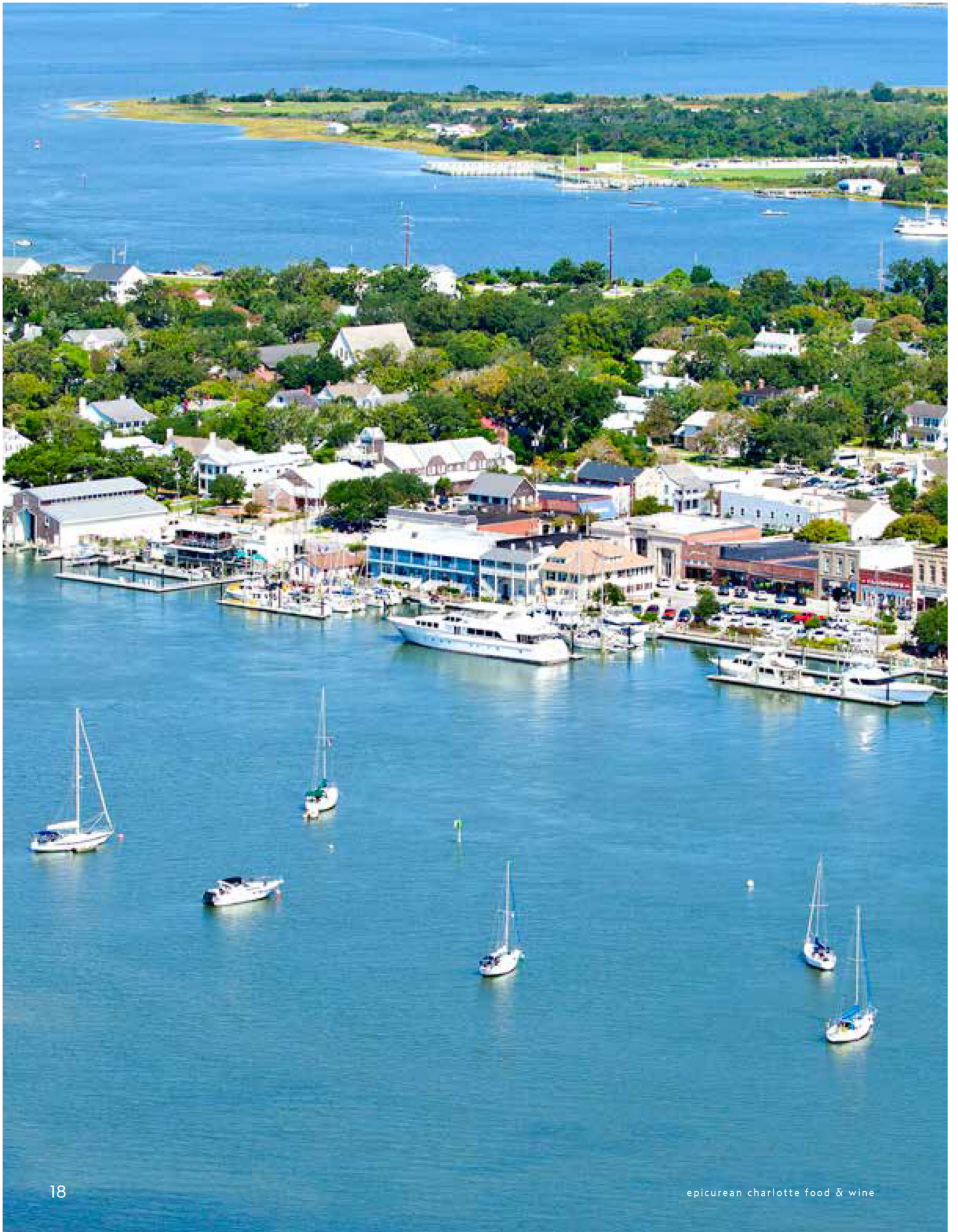
33 places to go, people to see  
a calendar of local events

34 scene around town  
check out which beers  
are out and about

36 local flavor  
light and easy entertaining  
essentials

37 the juice  
best spots to and around town









# coast your way through the crystal coast

by jennifer agress  
images courtesy the crystal coast tourism authority

**d**ripping in all of the beauty and adventure one would expect from a traditional seaside escape, the Crystal Coast has something more: a respite from reality. The result of 85 miles of glistening coastline, scattered islands, tranquil sea breezes and the crystal blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean, the Crystal Coast, part of North Carolina's Southern Outer Banks, is the epitome of a true "coastal experience."

Based on a history of legendary pirate adventures and ghostly encounters, the area combines its mythical history with a touch of good ole' Southern charm. In the Crystal Coast, there is something for everyone. The area's quaint maritime villages, award-winning local fare, perfect beaches, famed lighthouse and coastal manors are all a part of its familiar charm. With Atlantic Beach's historic Fort Macon, the eco-friendly Pine Knoll Shores, Emerald Isle's lush greenery or Morehead City's annual Big Rock Blue Marlin Fishing Tournament, the islands of the Crystal Coast are as different as they are popular. Their commonality is evident in the understated elegance they share—making the Crystal Coast a perfect escape for all travelers, both young and old, in search of a relaxing, but upscale, vacation.

**if you're going to live in a castle, you should sleep like a king**

While the Crystal Coast is home to a variety of accommodations that suit every lifestyle and budget, they all have one thing in common: the beauty of their natural surroundings. In the Southern Outer Banks, Mother Nature comes first—and the hotels and mansions fit into the coastal landscape almost effortlessly.

**The Beaufort Harbor Suites**, for one, offers elegant and spacious accommodations at a more economical price. Boasting waterfront views from its large terraces, this hotel is the perfect place to stay for a taste of downtown Beaufort—or as we know it, "America's Coolest Small Town." For more familiar accommodations, try the only chain hotel in the destination, **Double-**





## Of all of the housing available in the Crystal Coast, the most popular is its astounding collection of oceanfront cottages and estates.

[Tree Atlantic Beach Oceanfront Hotel](#), the largest full-service hotel on the coast of North Carolina with immediate beach access.

Of all of the housing available in the Crystal Coast, the most popular is its astounding collection of oceanfront cottages and estates. Sitting right on the sand, the Crystal Coast offers visitors the chance to wake up each morning and take in spectacular views of the Atlantic Ocean and Bogue Sound. Ranging from cozy beach cottages to majestic villas—or “sand castles,” as the locals call it—these homes offer no shortage of quiet, but luxurious, amenities included in your stay. One such sand castle, Emerald Isle’s classic-Carolina, three-story [Casa Bianco](#), can house nearly 20 guests, and comes with spacious outdoor decks on each level, a lavish pool and Jacuzzi, a base-level game room and in-home theater, top-of-the-line technology, an elevator, elegant bedrooms with en-suite master bathrooms and more.

Used primarily as vacation rentals, guests can contact one of the area’s several realty agencies, like [Emerald Isle Realty](#), and reserve a seaside mansion, by the week or month, for family reunions, wedding weekends, birthday celebrations or even just a family vacation. The catch? There is none. Unless you’re looking for anything less than the vacation of your dreams.

playtime? all the time.

From running with wild Spanish mustangs on [Shackleford Banks](#), to wreck-diving with [Olympus Dive Center](#) for a glimpse of Blackbeard’s famous ships, kayaking with Hot Wax Surf Shop on the quiet rivers of the [Croatan National Forest](#), the Crystal Coast has no shortage of activities for adults and children alike. The perfect destination for active travelers in need of a cultural escape, visitors can wake up and watch the sun rise over [Cape Lookout Lighthouse](#), go bird watching for Tundra Swans and Sharp-shinned Hawks or take a walk on the white sand beaches of [Pine Knoll Shores](#). And with one of the longest fishing seasons on the Atlantic—giving visitors a chance to fish for false albacore, red drum, blue fin tuna or cobia all year long—there are many opportunities to go on private chartered fishing excursions or more affordable, family friendly, head-boat fishing tours for 50 to 100 people.

Considering its location in the historic South, it should come as no surprise that the Crystal Coast has as much history as it does shoreline. Originally built to guard Beaufort Inlet and Beaufort Harbor, [Fort Macon State Park](#) was once a bargaining tool between the Union and the Confederate forces during the Civil War. Today, visitors can still cross its moat and roam the grounds to see its recently-restored casemates, once used as shelter, kitchen space or prison cells for soldiers. Officially joining the state park system in 1934, Fort Macon is now home to a seaside bathhouse, sunny nature trails, family friendly picnic facilities and a rich supply of fish—all part of its government-protected beach. Feeling a little daring? Visit it at night; guided ghost tours of the property fuse its haunting history with its









modern-day majesty.

While you're at it, scope out the mystery and quote-laden gravestones of Beaufort's **Old Burying Grounds**, one of the oldest cemeteries in North Carolina. The salty-sweet smells of an ancient maritime heritage wafting in from the Atlantic permeate the painstakingly preserved Federal period buildings at the **Beaufort Historic Site**. Personal guided tours showcase the collection of 10 historic buildings, including a jail, courthouse, apothecary and doctor's office. In addition to guided walking tours, explorations of the Historic districts are available aboard a vintage 1948 English double-decker bus. But before you do, spend the earlier part of the day exploring the **North Carolina Maritime Museum**, **The History Place**—detailing the rich cultural history of the Crystal Coast—or the **North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores**.

For a sneak peak into the historic luxury of "America's Coolest Town," Beaufort, NC, head downtown and experience the town's **Hungry Town Bike Tours**, where groups can hop on retro-chic bicycles and peddle their way through a handful of unique guided tours. Opt for the "Beaufort Lunchbox Tour" if you're in the mood for a picnic wine and cheese lunch on the waterfront; or, if you're a Nicholas Sparks fan, his career-

inspired "A Ride to Remember" tour will take you to all the significant spots from his most popular novels. After your three-hour excursion, wander through boutique shops, or head over to **Morehead Waterfront** with your family and friends, grab a local fishing yacht, like the Bill Collector or Sensation, and end your day with a private wine and cheese cruise amidst a breathtaking Carolina sunset.

#### grub to grandeur: crystal coast dining has it all

After a long day of fishing, paddle boarding, wreck diving, exploring the North Carolina Aquarium or roaming through the historic ruins of Fort Macon State Park, visitors to the Crystal Coast have a range of casual eateries, seaside bistros and fine-dining favorites suited to whet their appetite. Driven by the area's unique "Carteret Catch" program—which guarantees fresh seasonal catches, caught daily by local fishermen off the Carolina Coast—the Crystal Coast's 85 locally-owned restaurants are the product of passionate chefs, treasured family recipes and local favorites fused with interesting new flavors that are sure to leave your taste buds begging for more. So whether you're in the mood for a fun-in-the-sun family lunch, plates piled high with oysters caught that morning, hearty Southern grub or a romantic candlelit dinner for two at a restaurant touted for having the "best sunset view," head to the Southern Outer Banks and let the chefs of the Crystal Coast bring your "foodie" dreams to life.

For a taste of true coastal fare, head to the glistening shores

**The salty-sweet smells of an ancient maritime village warmly greet you in Historic Beaufort.**



of the Crystal Coast and try one of our top 10 favorite local haunts, in no particular order:

Set in the historic heart of downtown Beaufort, **Blue Moon Bistro** is the perfect place for an upscale meal in a calm coastal setting. Voted one of the “Top 25 Great Restaurants from the Triangle to the Coast” in *Raleigh Metro* magazine’s *Gourmet Food & Wine Guide*, this quirky café boasts a counter culture menu of farm-to-table dishes like Simpson Farm sliced tomato-fresh mozzarella napoleon, “au poivre” seared scallops and “mille-feuille” roasted potatoes. To complete the experience, pick your poison: a Belgian dark chocolate crème brûlée with pecan blondies or an aperitif from their extensive wine list—or if you’re smart, both.

For a casual dining experience that satiates your palate and offers an authentic taste of the Crystal Coast, **Clawson’s 1905 Restaurant and Pub** has been a landmark restaurant in downtown Beaufort since it first opened in 1905. Recommended by *Frommer’s* and *Fodor’s* travel guides, visitors and locals alike rave about Clawson’s eccentric menu of Southern favorites, like its spicy shrimp and grits, famous pulled pork quesadillas with Southern-style pimiento cheese and the ever-popular “Dirigibles,” a large potato stuffed with broccoli, red peppers, onions and mushrooms. Frequently featured in *Coaster Magazine*, the Crystal Coast’s premiere vacation guide, for its acclaimed beer selection, Clawson’s menu of imported specialties and small-town delights—from Jamaican Red Stripe and Abita Turbo Dog to Duck Rabbitt and Mash House—makes it the ideal place for

a cold “brewsky” on a Saturday or (who’s judging?) Tuesday afternoon.

Since its establishment at the foot of the Atlantic Causeway Bridge in 1981, the historic **Channel Marker Restaurant** has become a staple in the minds of locals of tourists alike, offering a fresh spin on traditional seafood dishes. The she-crab soup and ahi tuna are staples on their menu, with delectable daily specials. Diners can watch the sunset and sip a cocktail on the boardwalk.

With eclectic plates inspired by Spanish tapas fare, **Aqua’s** “small plates, BIG wines” menu gives coastal dining an international flare. Boasting flavorful dishes designed for tasting in two or three, Aqua gives guests an exciting array of tastes in ‘just right’ portions, including a daily local catch, fried green tomatoes, sautéed Salter Path shrimp with French green lentils and a grilled pork tenderloin with red wine pears. Thirsty? You should be. Pair it with Aqua’s signature Sweet Summer Martini—a tantalizing combination of vodka, Barrett’s ginger beer and pink grapefruit juice—and call it a day.

If the name wasn’t colorful enough, head to **Amos Mosquito’s Swampside Café** on Atlantic Beach for a dine-in experience that is sure to add a few more shades. Set in a roadside shack with marsh-like décor, this low-key, fine-dining locale fixes a menu of Southern grub with a twist, like fried dill pickles with a Cajun remoulade, lump crab cakes with roasted corn and scallions and “The Big Bad Skeeter” plate of three fried local catches. There after dark? Grab a drink from the bar and



lube your vocal chords for a night of carefree karaoke. Rumor has it that Prince is on the playlist.

Ready to indulge? **Loughry's Landing** is the place for you. With its delectable dishes—craving a Charcoal Grilled Wahoo covered with a pepper mélange, perhaps?—and fresh clams, oysters, crab legs and shrimp by the pound, this casual hotspot was recognized by *Coaster Magazine* for having the best seafood and best creative dishes. Want a side of ambiance with your dinner? You're in luck. Its list of accolades also included "best sunset view," which isn't surprising, considering its prime real estate on the beautiful Atlantic Beach.

After a morning spent catching waves with **Hot Wax Surf Shop** in Emerald Isle, visitors have worked up an appetite, and **The Village Market**, gourmet sandwich shop, offers a delectable food selection, unique artwork and gifts, local microbrews and wine selection. The neighboring bait shop can help prepare visitors for some fishing action the afternoon and evening.

For a real gem on Emerald Isle, **Kathryn's Bistro and Martini Bar** pairs mouthwatering martinis with only the best local sea fare for an intimate dining experience that's sure to please even the most discerning palates. Owned by Maryland transplants Ken and Kitch Ayre, this fine-dining favorite boasts a creative cuisine that includes Tempura Soft Shell Crab stuffed with spinach and Asiago cheese, Seared Ahi Tuna filet with soy glazed shiitake mushrooms and wasabi and the "Carolina Classic"—sautéed shrimp with smoked applewood bacon and crimini mushrooms tossed in garlic and lemon. For Kitch, the real catch is their martinis. So be sure to stay for an after-dinner drink on one of 30 devilish cocktails, like a flirty "007" or their rich "Chocolate Kiss."



Coined the "best seafood restaurant on Harkers Island with the best hushpuppies," how can you not drop by **Captain's Choice Restaurant** for some 'Down East' cooking? Chef Faye Moore, a local celebrity who has been whipping up her family favorites for more than three generations, fries, bakes, boils and roasts everything herself as if restaurant guests were sitting down at her own dining room table. Ate all the hushpuppies? Follow it up with something sweet; visitors from up and down East Coast are clamoring for a taste of her delicious coconut cake.

As the oldest seafood restaurant in Morehead City, **Sanitary Fish Market and Restaurant** has been a landmark in the Crystal Coast since it first opened in 1938. Known for its family-friendly atmosphere and popular "deluxe shore dinner"—a cold cocktail sampler of boiled shrimp, shrimp salad and tuna salad; a fried seafood platter of fish, shrimp, oysters, scallops and soft shell crab; and sides of tossed salad and clam chowder—visitors need to stop by with a large appetite and a hankering for an infamous 'Sanitary' souvenir tee.

Also located in Morehead City, the New-York chic **Bistro by the Sea** offers guests a fresh seasonal menu amongst an elegant, Mediterranean décor. Always striving to make dinner an experience, and not just a meal, Bistro by the Sea carefully prepares a wealth of exquisite dishes, including their famous Atlantic Blue Crab Bisque prime rib slow-roasted in herbs, mac and cheese with chèvre, smoked gouda and cheddar, and a delectable dessert menu that changes daily. Top off the evening with a glass of one of their recommended wines, or if you're in the mood, maybe even one of their special summer libations—like the "Bangin' Bistro Babe Berry Mojito," a devilish concoction of berries, mint leaves, sugar, club soda and rum.

For dinner that is equal parts exquisite and eclectic, head to Morehead City's **Circa 81** and try Chef Clarke Merrells' curious menu of interesting tapas, like a bowl of his Covington Sweet Potato Bisque with goat cheese marshmallow, crispy potato, candied walnut and his own **Beaufort Olive Oil Co.**'s Harissa Olive Oil, or the Confit Pork Jowl and parmesan fingerling potatoes, golden chanterelles and pork demi. If you're still hungry for more—and trust us, you will be—try Clarke's signature "Circa 81 Martini" and his savory Olive Oil Cake: a tantalizing combination of white chocolate and blackberry ginger mousse, beet sorbet, vanilla and maple spiced tuille, carrot coulis.

Nestled amid the downtown strip of Morehead City is a narrow, rustic building that houses the **Arendell Room**, a craft cocktail bar that would at home in any major city. The design is modern and cosmopolitan and is known for mastering the classics, so whether you're looking for a night cap or wanting to experience a night out on the town, Arendell Room offers that speakeasy feel of intimacy that keep tourists and locals alike returning for more.

For more information about the Crystal Coast, or to start booking your reservations today, contact the Crystal Coast Tourism Authority ([www.CrystalCoastNC.org](http://www.CrystalCoastNC.org)) and Emerald Isle Realty ([www.EmeraldIsleRealty.com](http://www.EmeraldIsleRealty.com)) and make your vacation dreams a reality. 🍷



