

STYLE

THE WINTER BOOK



Photo: The Crystal Coast Tourism Authority

MY CRYSTAL COAST



10 REASONS TO VISIT THE SOUTHERN OUTER BANKS

You don't have to wait for warmer weather to visit North Carolina's Crystal Coast. There is more to do than just the beach – in fact, there are at least 10 fun activities. If you follow our Editor in Chief on Instagram (@ItsBrieW) you know she recently had the time of her life during a September trip to the Southern Outer Banks, spending three days and nights touring various historical sites, local fun destinations and of course delicious eateries. Here, Bridgette shares a bit of her itinerary during her off-season excursion.



Pictured from left to right: Jason Frye, Karyn Repinski, Jonathan Fredin, Eva Fedderly, Meagan Chestnut, Steve Milburg, Taylor Newsome, Samantha Mellone

REASON #1:

Sunset Libations at The Barnacle

While waiting for our table at Amos Mosquito's, one of the first things we did was head out to the beach for sunset libations at The Barnacle. It's a boardwalk destination for cocktails nearly 1,000 feet out into the Atlantic Ocean. While there, we had a toast with the four-term Mayor of Atlantic Beach Trace Cooper. We also listened to live music and watched the locals fish for dinner.

REASON #2:

Fried Pickle Pops and S'mores at Amos Mosquito's Restaurant & Bar

After libations at The Barnacle we walked across the way to Amos Mosquito's Restaurant & Bar, one of the docks-to-dish restaurants in the area. With a colorful name comes an eclectic selection of traditional fried seafood dishes to sushi and Thai dipping sauces. After a huge platter of fried shrimp, clams and scallops I also tried my hand at making s'mores for the very first time – right at the table. Oh, and did I mention the fried pickle pops were....well, you have to visit and try for yourself.

REASON #3:

Lunch at Village Market

Locally owned gourmet deli and sandwich shop, The Village Market is a great destination for a quick bite for breakfast or lunch. The artisan-style sandwiches are built with premium breads, fresh vegetables and homemade dressing. In addition to trying the chunky chicken salad, stop in for some of the most unique, fun and innovative artwork and gifts supporting local artists.

REASON #4:

See the Wild Horses via Island Express Ferry Services

Hop onto the Island Express Ferry and take a boat ride around Shackleford Banks to visit one of the historical

destinations in the area: the island of the wild Spanish horses. That's right, wild horses. These "Banker Ponies" have taken care of their young, frolicked on pristine deserted beaches and foraged for over 400 years, sans a saddle or fence. The horses are protected by the Cape Lookout National Seashore in cooperation with the Foundation for Shackleford Horses. Scientists and historians speculate that the Banker Ponies swam ashore after a Spanish ship exploring the new world met with tragic fate off of North Carolina's shores – after all, Blackbeard the pirate's ship sank in this area.

“What I love about The Arendell Room is the craftsmanship that goes into making a cocktail.”

REASON #5:

Climb Cape Lookout Lighthouse and Visit the Keepers Quarters

Standing 163 feet tall, the Cape Lookout Lighthouse is painted with a distinctive black and white diagonal checkered pattern to distinguish it from other North Carolina light houses and is open to visitors to climb a few weekends each year. Built in the 1800's to warn passing ships of the dangerous coastal waters, the lighthouse climb is a series of spiral stairs intermittent with windows that look out onto the Crystal Coast. Once at the top, you'll feel like Rocky Balboa, on top of the world. The panoramic views were absolutely breathtaking and you'll definitely want to use the pano feature on your iPhone. Cape Lookout National Seashore is open 24 hours and 365 days a year. Operating hours for visitor centers and other services will vary throughout the year.

REASON #6:

Hand Crafted Cocktails at Arendell Room

What I love about The Arendell Room is the craftsmanship that goes into making a cocktail. Before this experience, I thought the art of great bartending included a hot guy throwing a shaker in the air, entertaining his guests as much as the hibachi chefs at a Japanese Steakhouse. Wow, was I mistaken (but not the part about the hot guys). The attention to detail that goes into making one of these specialty drinks will spoil you – you won't want another rushed cocktail thrown at you again. You'll find this craft cocktail bar amid the downtown strip of Morehead City. The Arendell room is a clever mix of modern cosmopolitan with a nod to the South, backlit with mason jars lining the wall behind the bar. This cocktail bar is also the brainchild of lawyer, businessman, developer and four-term Mayor of Atlantic Beach, Trace Cooper.

REASON #7:

The Hungry Town Bike Tours

Can I tell you, this was the part of the weekend I couldn't wait to experience? Owned and operated by husband and wife duo Betsy and David Cartier, the hospitality veterans created Hungry Town Bike Tours, a casual exploration through downtown Beaufort, NC. The company, titled after the early name of Beaufort, includes various tours to fit your schedule and budget. First, select your tour and your chariot of choice. Then follow Betsy or David through Hungry Town sampling several of Beaufort's best local restaurants (on my tour, we stopped at Clawson's 1905 Restaurant & Pub, Finz Grill, The Spouter Inn Restaurant & Bakery and an impromptu stop at Beaufort Olive Oil). Biking not your thing? The Cartier's are soon offering Walking Tours.



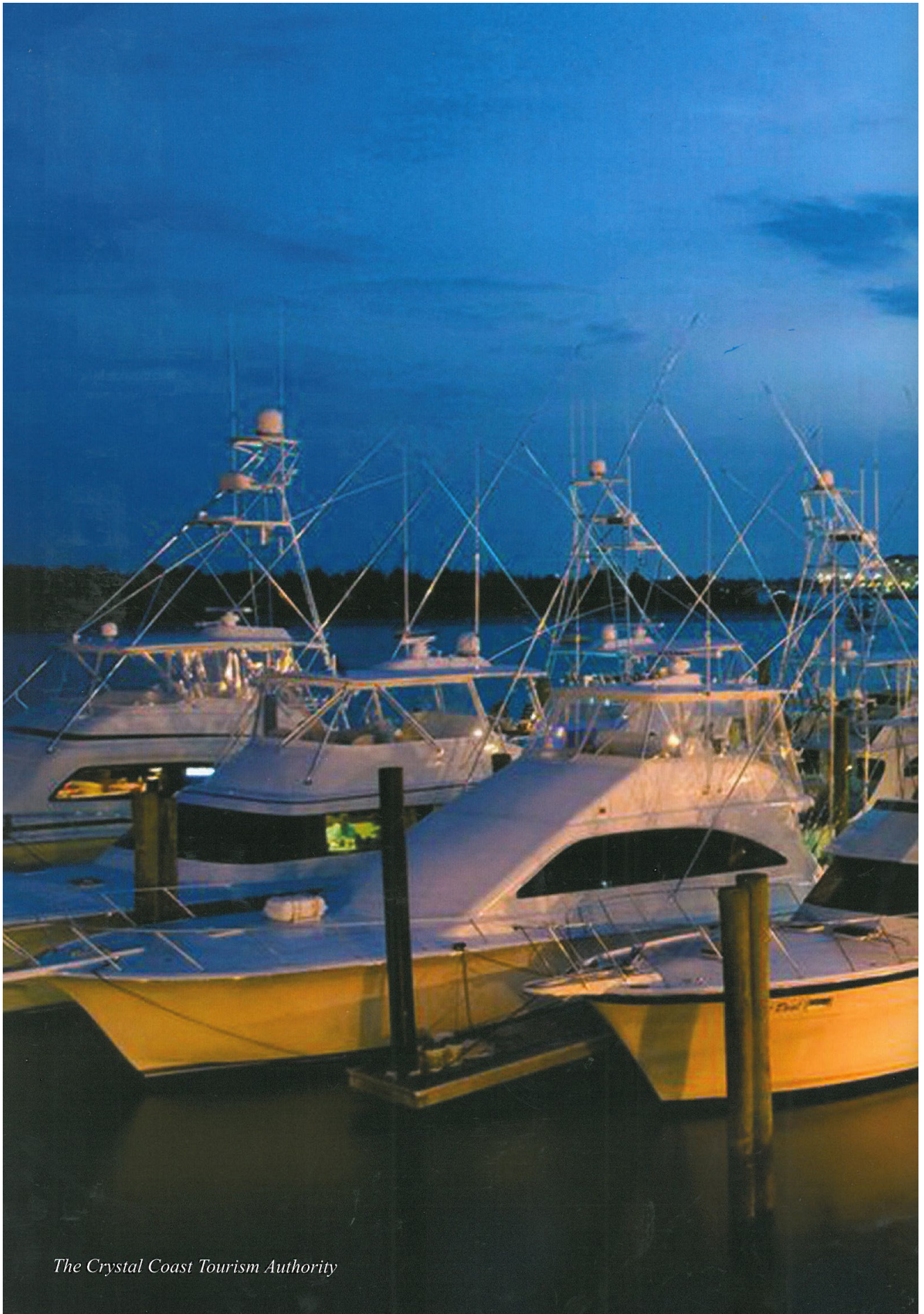
*Bridgette captures the Cape Lookout Lighthouse
and Keepers Quarters from her Ferry Boat*



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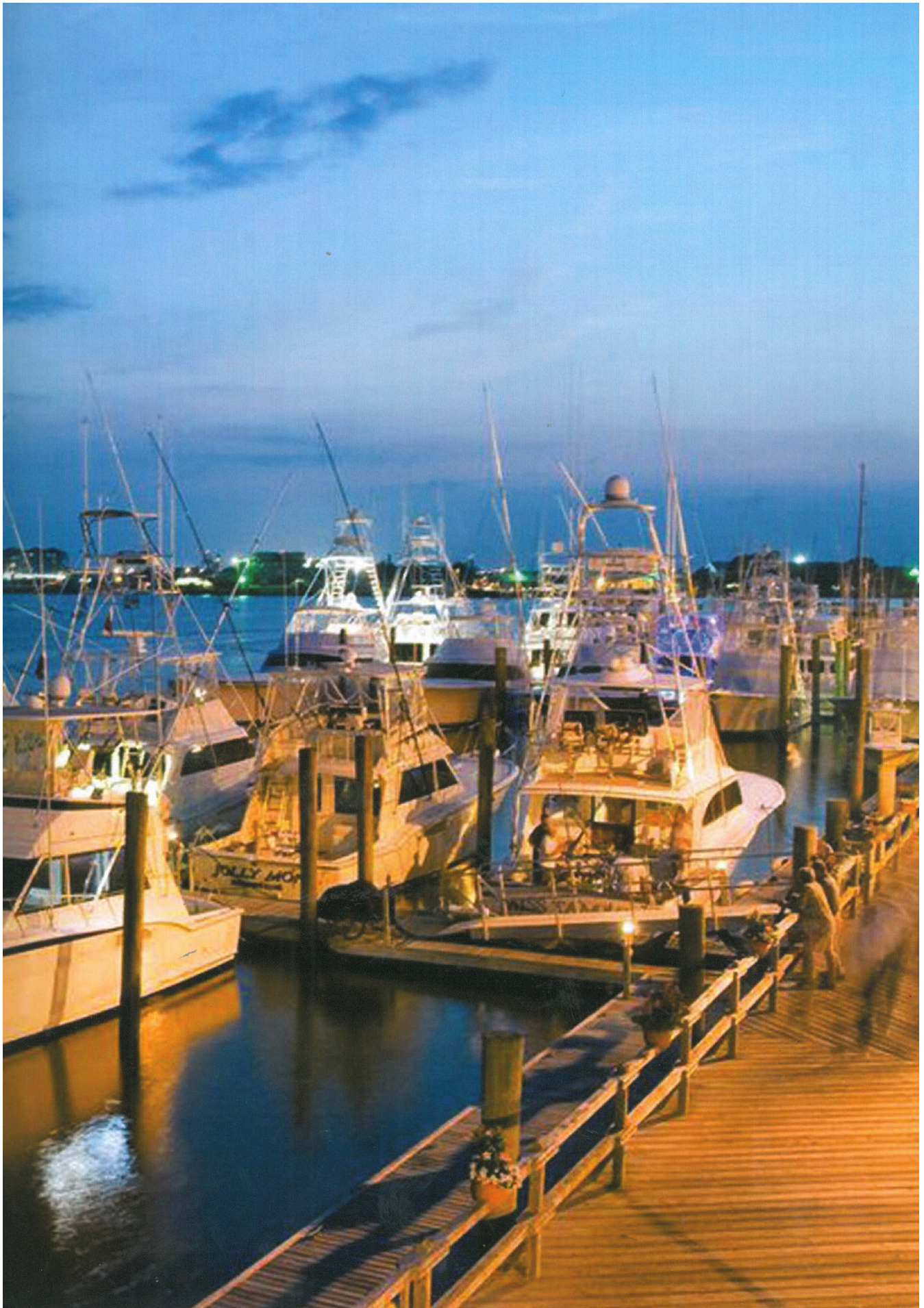
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A sample of the bikes available during the Hungry Town Bike Tours



REASON#8:

Beaufort Double Decker Bus Tour

History junkies, this one is for you! On the Beaufort Double Decker Bus Tour, narrators dressed in costume tell tales of Beaufort's rich past of pirates, star-crossed lovers and confederate spies, all aboard a 1967 British double-decker bus. The tour takes you past the North Carolina Maritime Museum, historic buildings and old burying grounds.

REASON #9:

Charter the Mullet Line Trolley and the Sensation for a Night Out

Don't have a boat? No worries, you don't need one to sail the Atlantic Ocean. We chartered the Mullet Line Trolley to take us to The Sensation, a 53 foot custom built Jarrett Bay for an evening wine and cheese cruise. For those who prefer to catch a "big one", you can charter this same boat for a private fishing excursion with five of your friends. Mate Big Country and Captain Dale will take great care of you - and they may even let you try your hand at sailing (I did and it was a blast).

REASON #10:

Too tired to cook? Call Over a Personal Chef!

Because who wants to cook after all of the activities of the day? Closing out our weekend, we enjoyed many courses of delicious food right in our Emerald Isle Realty beachfront "sandcastle". Prepared by Chef Patrick Hogan of Carlton's Catering Company, the night began with a toast of bubbly and a Charcuterie Board, a sample of various meats (Genoa, Prosciutto, Capocollo), pâtés (smoked trout & smoked salmon) and cheeses (chèvre, parmesan, gorgonzola and sharp cheddar). Once seated at the table, we started with (my favorite) a Caprese salad. Then the real fun began. Chef Hogan served a pasta course (linguini, wild mushrooms, chives, roasted garlic, parsley and thyme), a fish course (Mahi-Mahi, tomato butter, creamy polenta, fried collards and grilled butternut squash with honey and thyme) and a meat course (roasted chicken, fennel and carrot hash, Rosemary butter).

Ready to plan your adventure? Visit www.CrystalCoastNC.org. Follow @CrysalCoast_NC on Twitter and @TheCrystalCoast on Instagram. You can also find them at www.Facebook.com/CrystalCoast. Once you visit, share your photos using the hashtag #MyCrystalCoast.

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Crab cakes are one of the tapas served on the Hungry Town Bike Tour from Finz Grill