

# SOUTHPARK

THE ART & SOUL OF CHARLOTTE

July 2022

## hello, SUMMER!

*From coastal escapes to local watering holes, ideas to help you keep your cool*



Inside the doggie day-care boom  
Turning side hustles into full-time gigs  
Charlotte Poet Laureate Jay Ward

# FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to July in Charlotte, when the best ideas involve sipping slushy drinks, finding somewhere to get wet, or actually heading *out* of town. My family didn't travel much when I was growing up, so I looked forward all year to our summer vacation at what's now called The Crystal Coast. To us, back then, it was just "the beach." Living two hours from the beach had its perks — day trips were doable and, before coastal real estate skyrocketed, lots of families had second homes there. I'm also a Gen Xer, so in high school and college that meant plenty of unchaperoned trips involving boats (Shackleford Banks, described in Michael's story on page 98, was definitely a hangout), Coppertone SPF 6 — if we wore any sunscreen at all — and, possibly, wine coolers. I spent one summer in college working at a sailing camp on Bogue Sound, where the counselors had as much fun as the campers, and another in Wilmington, just a skip away from Wrightsville Beach.

Since I've lived in Charlotte, I've noticed more people here actually frequent South Carolina beaches (and who doesn't love Charleston)? But I sometimes get nostalgic for the simplicity of the North Carolina coast — tiny towns that swell with tourists from June-August, where the pace is slower, the seafood is always fresh, and flip-flops are acceptable

footwear wherever you go.

Perhaps that's what led us to Beaufort (BOW-fert), North Carolina, for our cover feature this month. We know the other Beaufort (BEW-fert) in South Carolina gets plenty of well-deserved attention, but the tiny seaside town — the third-oldest in the state — that started as a fishing village made the perfect backdrop for this month's style feature.

Elsewhere in this issue, we look at the explosion of doggie day cares in Charlotte. Since reading Katie's story (page 74), it's really got me thinking: My 6-month-old puppy is doing great at home, but I can't help but wonder how happy she'd be spending one day a week romping around, wild and free, with other pups.

With that in mind, we asked our staff and contributors, where do you like to take your dogs to let them unleash some of that boundless canine energy? Ella and I recently explored dog parks at William R. Davie Park in south Charlotte and Frazier Park near uptown, along with Anne Springs Close Greenway in Fort Mill, S.C., where you can walk for miles and reward yourself afterward with a cold beverage (and get a frozen treat for your pup) at the Gateway Canteen. See what others had to say, right. And stay cool out there! **SP**

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## This month we asked: Where do you like to walk your dog in and around Charlotte?

**Jennings Cool Roddey** walks Kota on the Riverwalk trails in Rock Hill.


**Sarah Fligel:** We love the greenway that runs behind Myers Park High School, so shaded and nice with the creek that runs alongside. It's the only place Moose will walk when it's hot outside!

**Whitley Adkins:** I like taking Cutie Pie anywhere she can run — our family farm in Fort Mill, Anne Springs Close Greenway and the Whitewater Center, to name a few. We walk every morning and evening around our neighborhood, but beyond that Cutie Pie really seems to prefer lounging!

**Dave Mildenberg** walks Maggie around the park at Mint Museum Randolph.

**Michelle Boudin:** Lexie and I are at Freedom Park a few times a week. She loves being around dogs and kids, and there are always a ton of both.

**Amanda Lea:** We love to take our Australian Shepherd, Murphy, to different parts of the greenway. The new entrance at Pineville and the one at Tyvola are our favorites. We also take her to Big Rock Nature Preserve and walk in the shade by the creek, and to Squirrel Lake Park in Matthews to walk on Four Mile Creek Greenway.



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# COASTAL slowdown

A RELAXING VISIT TO BEAUFORT, A BEACHSIDE VILLAGE GEM ALONG NORTH CAROLINA'S SOUTHERN OUTER BANKS, REVEALS THE RESTORATIVE POWER OF A CRYSTAL COAST SLOW-CATION.

by **Michael J. Solender**



**C**locks and calendars meet their nemesis in the oceanside hamlet of Beaufort, N.C. Salty sea breezes waft year round here, where every day feels like Saturday and timepieces run a bit slower. Get here fast, then take it slow is more than a suggestion from a Beach Boys song when visiting this storied town perched along the coast of North Carolina's Southern Outer Banks. Here's a slow-go primer:

## From ballast stones to Blackbeard

Nods to Beaufort's past abound and are best explored by making the **Robert W. and Elva Faison Safrit Historical Center** an early stop when visiting. Operated by the seasoned team of the Beaufort Historical Association, the center is a resource-packed starting point for exploration and spontaneous adventures. Here, newcomers learn that Beaufort, established as a fishing village in

the early 1700s, is the third-oldest town in North Carolina.

The historical association offers a free walking guide for a self-guided tour and lists 30 unique sites on and surrounding Front Street, the town's main retail promenade and front doorway to **Taylor's Creek**. The inland waterway flows between Beaufort and **Carrot Island**, with a walk along the adjacent boardwalk likely to yield a view of the island's fabled wild horses.

Aboard the **Double-Decker Bus Tour**, docents pack a fun-filled history lesson into a two-hour scenic whirl around town. Traverse the historic district dotted with distinctive zigzag fences and Queen Anne-style homes, many lovingly restored and bearing coveted historical plaques (more than 350) honoring their original owners. "Some of our historic structures show evidence of sailing ship's masts used as beams to hold up porches," says tour guide Sandy Treadway, "and notably many stone foundations here were constructed with





ballast stones from centuries-ago British sailing ships.”

Tourgoers learn about notorious pirates, including the infamous Blackbeard, who once used Beaufort as a port for caching his booty. At one of Beaufort’s most visited historic sites, the **Old Burying Ground**, weathered tombstones chronicle stories from townsfolk laid to rest in this hallowed ground as far back as the early 18th century. One captivating tale is that of a young girl from a British family that came to Beaufort in the early 1700s as an infant. Years later, she wished to accompany her father on a voyage to her homeland. Her mother acquiesced only after the father promised he would bring her back safely to Beaufort. The young girl perished on the return sailing, and the father was able to forgo a burial at sea only by preserving the girl’s body in a barrel of rum aboard the ship, purchased from the captain. Upon returning to port, having fulfilled his promise, the father laid the girl to rest in the Old Burying Ground, with the rum barrel serving as her casket.

“Visitors to her grave leave toys, flowers and cards,” Treadway says, noting the grave is the most-visited at the site. All the markers face east at the Old Burying Ground to illuminate the graves at sunrise on “Judgment Day.”

## Seafaring fun

A ferry ride from nearby **Harkers Island** to **Shackleford Banks** and **Cape Lookout** offers a splendid way to while away the better part of a day. It’s a great way to get out on the open water, spy more wild horses and maybe even a dolphin or two. At the Instagram-worthy **Cape Lookout Lighthouse**, visitors can tour the keeper’s quarters and learn about ships’ navigation and the historic role of this iconic landmark. A National Park, Cape Lookout allows for overnight camping, fishing and even offers UTV rental for self-paced navigation along the Cape’s wide beach fronts.

Visitors can easily spend an hour or two at the **NC Maritime Museum**, which delivers both historical reflection and artifacts as well as hands-on exhibits and workshops. More than 300 items from Blackbeard’s most notorious ship, the Queen Anne’s Revenge, that wrecked off Beaufort’s shores are on display at the museum and anchor a fascinating collection of other notable links to the region’s history. **The Harvey B. Smith Watercraft Center**, a sister museum and workshop located across Front Street, hosts classes and demonstrations in shipbuilding. It’s always free to come in and observe the time-honored tradition of wooden boatbuilding.

## Fuel up

Slow-cationing can work up a thirst and an appetite. Beaufort has all the bases covered, starting with **Fishtowne Brewhouse**. Tip back some of the freshest craft-made porters, ales and lagers at their Turner Street taproom. The friendly crew behind the bar pulls drafts like the popular Munden Fog, a New England-style hazy IPA with pineapple, guava and pink grapefruit aromas, or a Black Cat stout, a creamy brew with hints of roasted coffee, chocolate and toffee.

At the nearby **Beaufort Creamery**, the refreshments are hand-dipped. It's not unusual to see a line outside the door of this favored Front Street mainstay, but the people-watching is superb, and the line moves quickly. Made fresh every day, the ice cream is top notch with some unexpected flavors. S'mores, Chai tea, Blueberry Cheesecake and Key Lime Pie are some of the specialties. There are even gluten-free choices — and the scoops are ginormous.

There are more than 100 independent restaurants in Carteret County, and half of them specialize in local seafood. Most participate in the Carteret Catch program — a sustainability initiative to support the area's fishing industry through buying direct and featuring the freshest catch on their menus.

The Beaufort Hotel's **34° North** surrounds guests in a stunning space with reclaimed wood floors and giant picture windows overlooking Taylor's Creek and the Rachel Carson Reserve, a scenic collection of islands that's home to countless species of seabirds and wild horses. Seafood is the top draw here. Fresh mahi-mahi is grilled Mediterranean-style with spicy harissa, coconut sticky rice and a strawberry pico. The Southern Cioppino is another standout, with grouper, shrimp, mussels, black-eyed peas, onions and peppers in a white wine broth. The Painkillers here are noteworthy — these tasty cocktails serve up a kick with Cruzan rum, Coco Lopez, pineapple and orange juice, floated with a shot of Sailor Jerry Rum.

**Front Street Grill at Stillwater** is a Beaufort classic. This casual eatery on the water offers a welcoming vibe, cold local beer and the day's fresh catch. In season, get the soft shell crab, lightly battered and fried, or try the Day Boat Flounder, parmesan-crusted with herb beurre blanc, mushrooms, onions, tomatoes and jasmine rice. Pro tip: Go with a crowd and share everything.

Certain vacation philosophies declare that at least one breakfast should be a special treat. At the Crystal Coast, many make that morning eye-opener **The Banks Grill** in nearby Morehead City. With Mission-style breakfast burritos, fluffy pancakes and yeasty cinnamon rolls the size of soccer balls, breakfast here promises to be the most important and delicious meal of the day.

## Luxe-casual accommodations

Vacation rental homes and quaint bed-and-breakfasts dot the area. But those looking for a little more pampering find the **Beaufort Hotel** a favored base for their stay. Opened in 2019, the casual-yet-elegant property has 133 rooms and is staffed by locals who work to make each stay special. Golf-cart rentals, bicycles, a nearby boat ramp, marina and access to local guided experiences make for turnkey vacation fun. For guests looking for fun ways to explore — the staff will see to it, and even pack a picnic for you.

Beaufort is all about relaxing and being comfortable. Visitors to this corner of the Carolina coast can leave their Sunday best at home — flip-flops and shorts are the uniform of choice. And that's just the way everyone likes it. **SP**

