

GEAR
REPORT:

3MM
WETSUITS

A SPACE-AGE
SUIT FOR
DEEP DIVING

CARIBBEAN
DIVES THAT
THRILL

FIJI: SHARKS,
SOFT CORALS
AND ROMANCE

THE SECRET
LIFE OF
MORAY EELS

SportDiver



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE PADI DIVING SOCIETY

**THE
COOLEST
DIVE SPOT**
YOU'VE NEVER
HEARD OF

P. 10

**BEST GETAWAYS
CLOSE TO
HOME**

the / **zimmerman** / agency

(continued)



ALL-AMERICAN WEEKEND DIVE TRIPS PACK IN PLENTY OF ADVENTURE, RIGHT IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

STORY BY BROOKE MORTON

The long weekend: It's a staple of American 9-to-5 culture, tiding us over until our next mega vacation. All that's needed is three or four days, a roomy dive bag, some sunscreen, a beach towel and a fun-loving, ignore-the-emails attitude. As for the rewards, the close-to-home getaways that follow – from sharky wrecks in North Carolina to the hidden creatures of California's kelp forests – will rejuvenate the spirit and serve as a reminder of what hooked us on diving in the first place.

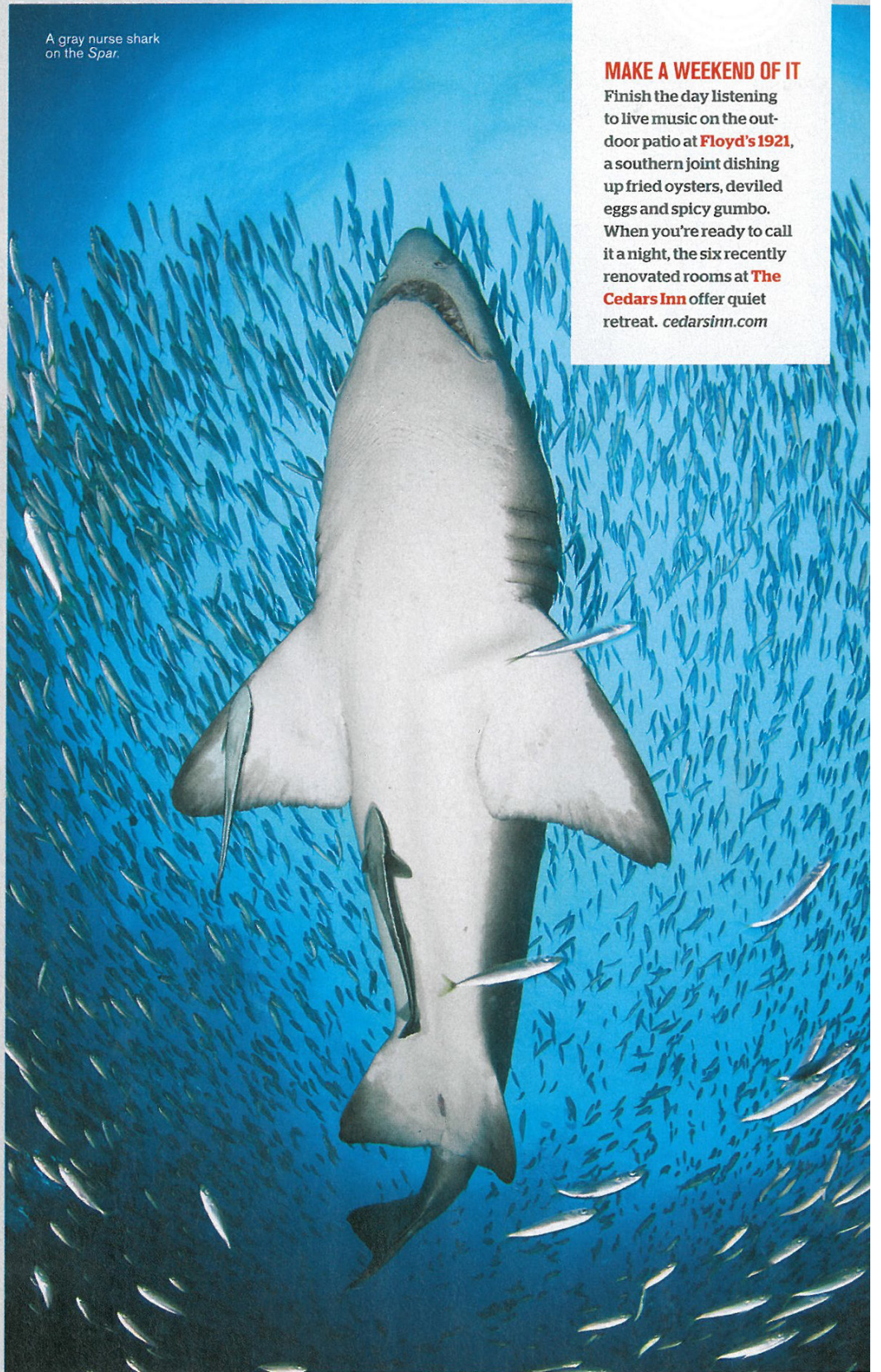
CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: JENNIFER PENNER; ALLISON VITSKY SALLMON; MICHAEL PATRICK O'NEILL; ALLISON VITSKY SALLMON

TALE OF THE TIGERS BEAUFORT, NC

Spring Break in North Carolina's Outer Banks looks nothing like the packed-sand scenes in neighboring Virginia and South Carolina hot spots. For starters, the small town of Beaufort has just one hotel. The seafront is dotted with what the locals call sandcastles: quaint mansions turned bed-and-breakfasts. Beyond the beach, the attractions here still feel as if you've discovered them, from the wild Spanish mustangs roaming Shackleford Banks to paddle boarding Bogue Sound. Olympus Dive Center services the area and is based in Morehead City. Divers can come with a short list of sites — the most popular picks are the German WWII submarine, *U-352*, and artificial reefs such as the *Spar* and *Aeolus*, where sand tiger sharks prowl — but know that with most sites lying 20 to 25 miles outside the harbor, the daily charter destination is largely weather dependent. If you've come with a certain wreck in mind, Nema Triplett, manager of Olympus Dive Center, recommends that you book at least three dive days. If facing a surfeit of time, go stake real estate at the beach. It's plenty roomy during prime tanning hours, and even more so come dusk. Sure, the sun sets on the opposite coast, but at this hour, sharks surf the incoming waves — dark shadows skimming through turquoise furls. It's a show that'll make you wish you had more neighbors to share the moment with.

olympusdiving.com

A gray nurse shark
on the *Spar*.



MAKE A WEEKEND OF IT

Finish the day listening to live music on the outdoor patio at **Floyd's 1921**, a southern joint dishing up fried oysters, deviled eggs and spicy gumbo. When you're ready to call it a night, the six recently renovated rooms at **The Cedars Inn** offer quiet retreat. cedarsinn.com