

TAMPA BAY BUSINESS & WEALTH

# TBRW

HOLIDAYS AT THE WESTIN HILTON HEAD  
ISLAND RESORT & SPA ARE EASY

ST. PETE POWERBOAT GRAND PRIX  
DEBUTS IN SEPTEMBER

THE EVOLUTION OF LUXURY REAL  
ESTATE MARKETING

WHAT NIL COULD MEAN FOR USF  
ATHLETES

TONY DIBENEDETTO

AUGUST 2021 | TBBWMAG.COM | \$7.95

**IT TAKES A VILLAGE**  
THE STORY BEHIND HIS  
PASSION PROJECT  
**THINK BIG FOR KIDS**



## LOWCOUNTRY

# High life

Summertime holidays are easy and close by at Hilton Head Island, the Palmetto State's favorite playground

BY MICHAEL J. SOLENDER

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY WESTIN HILTON HEAD ISLAND RESORT & SPA



Some say it's South Carolina's Lowcountry sultry, salt air and hazy sun-filled afternoons that captivate holiday goers. Others claim the magic of indigenous Gullah cultural and culinary charms as a primary draw for visitors. Still others point to an almost endless string of sporting pursuits from kayaking, fishing and sailing to golf, tennis and cycling as magnets for vacationers.

Remarkably, they're all correct. After a year's worth of "blursdays" in the collective rear-view mirror, vacation is back and Carolina is calling. No holiday siren is louder than the magnetic pull at the Palmetto State's beachside crown jewel, Hilton Head Island. Here's what not to miss:

### STAY

Westin Hilton Head Island Resort & Spa is destination central here, with decades of experience accommodating families, girlfriend getaways, buddy trips and couple escapes. The resort delivers approachable luxury and attention to memory making details, leaving visitors just a bit pampered and recharged—and that's what vacation is all about.

Situated on the northeast corner of the fabled island the Westin, a AAA four-diamond property, offers exclusive access to one of the country's top-10 ranked, family-friendly beaches by TripAdvisor, with uninterrupted stretches for strolls, runs and ocean-exploring for miles in either direction. The pet-friendly property welcomes four-legged guests and sports an adjacent dog park for Fido to get in on

the fun.

Three oceanfront pools host loungers, cabanas, shade umbrellas, palm trees, a giant koi pond, afternoon DJs, early evening live music and cold drinks at the ready to impart the year-round summer vibe. Daily programming from the resort's wellness and family activities staff offers fun-in-the-sun pursuits from beach yoga, beach runs and bracelet making to beach soccer, volleyball and pingpong. Children and adults alike learn about the resort's extensive sea turtle conservation efforts – the Westin holds a five-star turtle certification and invites guests to help in conservation and protection efforts, leading turtle talk adventures, turtle patrol scavenger hunts and turtle-protecting beach sweeps.

### PLAY

Pristine pickleball and tennis courts are a quick shuttle ride away at the Port Royal Plantation Golf & Racquet Club. Golfers can tee it up here at two of the islands' favorite courses. The Barony and Robber's Row, each a traditional design by renowned course architect George Cobb, test players at all skill levels.

Soft adventurers connect with outfitter and tour operator, Outside Hilton Head, for dolphin-eco tours, backwater boat excursions, charter fishing. Lowcountry shrimping, paddle boarding, kayaking, surf camp and electric bike tours around the island.

Spirit seekers wet their whistle in nearby Bluffton at the Burnt Church Distillery. Small batch, flavorful artisanal spirits are lovingly crafted here in this historic space open for tours, tasting and, of course, a bottle (or two) to take home. Look for Bluffton Whiskey, made with Carolina Gold rice and aged gently in charred white oak barrels, this sipping whiskey is one of the distillery's signature spirits.

Hop on the Breeze Trolley (there's a stop at the Westin) and explore the island

### DESTINATION

#### CENTRAL

The Westin is a AAA four-diamond property.





on HHI's free, and favorite, form of public transport. A fun way to get a feel for the varied retail and restaurant offerings on the island, the Breeze runs every 30 minutes during its scheduled service hours. Check out Coligny, aka downtown HHI, where there's plenty of shopping, dining and exploring to be found.

## DINE

Four on-property dining options are available at the Westin with the Carolina Room, the resort's signature

restaurant and their local emphasis on "farm and sea to table," making menu choices the most difficult decision of the day. Chefs here take advantage of Lowcountry bounty from local dairies, farmers and fish mongers adding their own touch a flare to the likes of Beaufort-style crab cake served with Creole spicy mustard aioli atop local arugula and grains. Traditional Brunswick stew, a hearty pleaser, is packed with coastal shrimp, local snapper, smoked ham, sweet corn, potatoes, butter beans and

okra. Fresh day catches can include Atlantic halibut, grouper or mahi which the crew will gladly blacken, or pan sauté, to order. Beef lovers are tempted by braised oxtail, Angus ribeye and traditional New York strips.

Casual is always in vogue here as the poolside View 32 offers seaside fare, crafted cocktails and cold beers, all day long, overlooking the surf. The she-crab soup is piquant, velvety and just the right start to a meal that might include a southern fried chicken sandwich, crispy grouper fish tacos or a Lowcountry shrimp basket.

Two island institutions are musts for lunch or dinner. Hudson's Seafood House on the Docks' killer views are only topped by the fresh oysters—roasted or raw, gumbo, crab legs or the famed combination platters with clams, shrimp, oysters and all the sides you can handle. Fishcamp on Broad Creek will blow up any notion you have of a traditional Carolina fish camp with an upscale/Lowcountry menu that includes surprises like an ahi tuna poke bowl and crab cakes atop smoked cheddar cheese grits. Kick back with a cold one on their patio and make some new friends, the crowds here make for great people watching.

Hilton Head Island is more than ready for its vacation closeup. Summertime in Carolina is always easy on the island. ♦

