

INNOVO



20
years



Andy
Dixon
Punk Rocker to Art Darling

HOOKED
ON ARCHITECTURE
Todd Saunders

—
VISIT THE *TITANIC*
A Submarine Dive
off Newfoundland's Coast

—
EXPLORING EAST AFRICA
On Safari with andBeyond

Relaxation Through Recreation

Palmetto Bluff, South Carolina.

Palmetto Bluff, a residential community and resort in South Carolina, riffs on the joyful nostalgia of summer camp, yet elevates the sentimentality for those beyond their tender years with world-class lodging of refined living, including a Montage property, a roster of outdoor activities, and a 20,000-acre nature preserve within which to play.

Located along the May River about a 40-minute drive northeast of Savannah, Georgia, Palmetto Bluff is a dreamy, Spanish moss-swathed destination for those who prefer to take a more active approach to vacationing; the theme here is relaxation through recreation. You would be remiss not to explore the recreational preserve, with its lush maritime forests, tidal estuaries, and undulating wetlands, all of which have been carefully managed for the past 81 years.

This stewardship of the land began in 1937 with the Union Bag and Paper Company (later known as Union Camp Corporation), which purchased the property for its timber resources. Upon realizing its ecological significance, however, the company repurposed Palmetto Bluff as a hunting retreat. Today, the non-profit Palmetto Bluff Conservancy carries on this legacy. According to its director, Jay Walea, “Our main goal is to make sure that the developed areas and our wild spaces can coincide in harmony.” Walea first came to Palmetto Bluff when he was 10 accompanying his father on a hunting trip, and by 13, he knew he wanted to devote his life to the tract



of land. “When you come here, you can’t help but almost become one with nature,” he says. “Palmetto Bluff gets in your blood.”

Indeed, it doesn’t take long to feel at home. Though this may be a testament to southern hospitality, the comforts of a five-star resort certainly help. In 2016, the Montage Palmetto Bluff completed a \$100-million (U.S.) expansion, unveiling a 74-key hotel and 35 residences, along with a renovation of the property’s 50 existing cottages, which formerly served as the main accommodations (along with a few other guest houses, there are 200 rooms and suites). The hotel, referred to simply as “the Inn”, takes design cues from the mansion of Richard T. Wilson Jr., a banker who hosted lavish parties at his Palmetto Bluff estate during the early 1900s until his home was lost in a fire. The ruins of the Wilson mansion are preserved in situ.

Southern charm permeates the resort: there are wraparound porches with swinging daybeds where you can sip “sweet tea” (sweetened iced tea) and languor—a common pastime known as “porching” in these parts. With a 13,000-square-foot spa, two fitness centres, a salon, and seven dining options within walking distance, Palmetto Bluff leaves little to be desired. The sophisticated Octagon bar is a highlight, serving meat-focused dishes and craft cocktails such as the Artillery Punch, reminiscent of a Long Island Iced Tea. Come sunset, the casual lagoon-side Fore & Aft serves as an excellent vantage point for nibbling May River oysters on the half shell and watching flocks of egrets return home to the lagoon. **Jessica Wong**

Photo: Palmetto Bluff’s River House with the ruins of R.T. Wilson’s mansion in the foreground.

Charity Wine Auctions

The 2018 Lots.

There are wine auctions, and then there are *wine auctions*. Some auctions are held by well-known or little-known auction houses that sell fine wines to collectors and dealers. Others, which tend to put less expensive bottles on the block, are held to raise money for specific organizations. Then there are the auctions that attract participants from close by and—thanks to online bidding—all over the world.

Some auctions focus on specific wines. On May 23, the 2015 Ornellaia, a Super Tuscan, will be celebrated with a gala dinner and auction in London. Its 30th vintage is widely regarded as a perfect one and special lots will be sold off, the proceeds benefiting the Victoria and Albert Museum, where the event will be held.

As for North America, easily the most prestigious wine auction is Auction Napa Valley, which is approaching its 40th year. The brainchild of Robert and Margrit Mondavi, it has grown from a local charity auction into a three-day event that attracts thousands of people and has contributed more than \$180-million (U.S.) to charities over the past 38 years. In addition to the auctions, wineries throughout Napa Valley host parties and dinners. The auctions themselves include a barrel auction (held this year at the historic Charles Krug winery) and an auction of rare wines held at Meadowood Napa Valley, the Relais & Châteaux resort co-owned by Bill Harlan of Harlan Estate. In addition to wine, the lots on offer include once-in-a-lifetime experiences with winemakers in Napa Valley and abroad.

This year’s Auction Napa Valley runs from May 31 to June 2. **Rod Phillips**

