

Robb Report

LUXURY RESORTS

PREMIERE ISSUE

THE 100 BEST
PLACES TO STAY IN 2006

SUMMER 2006



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THE MOST EXCLUSIVE ACCOMMODATIONS IN ANGUILLA • ASPEN • COSTA RICA
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PORTOFINO • SANTA BARBARA • SANTORINI • ST. MORITZ • TANZANIA & MORE



Low Down Easy

South Carolina's Lowcountry is perhaps best viewed from a canoe, and the Inn at Palmetto Bluff, an Auberge resort set at the crossroads of the May, Cooper, and New Rivers near the Georgia state line, offers just such a platform on its paddling tours of the surrounding salt marshes. The inn's river guides prove to be indispensable on the water, as the undeveloped terrain contains few landmarks other than plants with names like horse nettle and bull thistle. The experts' knowledge of the area also stands to improve the views, increasing your odds of spotting an osprey soaring overhead or one of the bottlenose dolphins that venture into these marshes from the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

Back on land, bicycles (provided free of charge to all Inn at Palmetto Bluff guests) are the vehicles of choice for exploring estuaries, salt marshes, and other sites on the 20,000-acre Palmetto Bluff property. The resort, which shares the expansive tract with a golf club, a small village, and a nascent residential

development, consists of a collection of hipped metal-roof cottages scattered throughout a Southern Gothic landscape of manicured grasses and moss-draped oaks. Adjacent to the remains of the historic Palmetto Lodge, the resort's manor house features a screened-in veranda that runs the length of the building and overlooks a lawn dotted with Adirondack chairs. The spacious and decadently Southern guest cottages include vaulted ceilings, wide-plank pine floors, and freestanding cast-iron soaking tubs.

Cast-iron bathtubs also can be found on the private verandas at the Inn at Palmetto Bluff's spa, which is located on its own island in a pond. Nearby, a lap pool and whirlpool sit on a rise to maximize the vistas of the three rivers and, across the Intracoastal Waterway, the distant and bustling tourist island of Hilton Head.

The Inn at Palmetto Bluff, an Auberge Resort,
866.706.6565, www.palmettobluffresort.com

LOCATION

At the crossroads of the May, Cooper, and New Rivers in the South Carolina Lowcountry, northeast of Savannah, Ga.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Ranging from 1,140 to 1,340 square feet, the 42 cottages and eight cottage suites feature screened-in porches, fireplaces, and ample living space.

RECREATION

The Jack Nicklaus-designed May River Golf Club cuts unobtrusively through the Lowcountry's wetlands and centuries-old oak trees. River sports at the resort include kayaking, canoeing, and fishing; a 9,500-square-foot spa sits on its own tiny island within a bird sanctuary.

DINING

The excellent 90-seat River House (serving breakfast and dinner) specializes in seafood and Lowcountry dishes. The golf club's May River Grill serves breakfast and lunch, and Buffalo's in the village square offers country-casual breakfast, lunch, and weekend dinner during the high season.

WORTHY DIVERSION

An excursion to the Gullah island of Daufuskie includes stops at the First Union African Baptist Church and the Mary Field School, where author Pat Conroy (*The Prince of Tides*) spent a year teaching before recounting his experiences in *The Water Is Wide*.

RATES

From \$450 to \$650 during the winter and summer low seasons; high seasons from \$600 to \$800. Two- to four-bedroom homes begin at \$800 per night.

