

BocaLife

CAN DON KING SAVE AMERICA?

IF NOT, HE PROBABLY
KNOWS SOMEONE
WHO CAN

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INTERIOR
DESIGN
EXCLUSIVES
KITCHEN &
BATH IDEAS

INSIDE: WHO'S
WHO IN SOUTH
FLORIDA LAW

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PLUS:
THE SECRETS TO BEING
A WINE EXPERT

SOUTHERN SOJOURN

SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY IS AT ITS BEST
AT *THE INN AT PALMETTO BLUFF*

South Carolina's picturesque Southern Lowcountry is front and center at The Inn at Palmetto Bluff. A 30-minute drive from the Savannah airport transported us to a secluded 20,000-acre paradise surrounded by two miles of frontage on three rivers extending from the headwaters of the May River near the town of Bluffton. Opened in 2004, this five-star inn is managed by world-renowned Auberge Resorts, and is its only East Coast property.

As we walked passed the Jasmine flowers surrounding the front door of our cottage (one of 50 on the property), we were impressed by the gas fireplace, screened-in porch, plush Italian linens, and gifts of spiced pecans and sweet wine. Our new abode was certainly luxurious, but still maintained a low-key Southern ambience, complete with personal bicycles next to each cottage. This peaceful retreat will pamper you with lush resort lodging accommodations, distinctive cuisine, stimulating adventure possibilities and a world-class spa.

Once the home of pre-Civil War plantation owners, this gorgeous property eventually became the private estate of R.T. Wilson, a successful Wall Street financier, whose children married Astors and Vanderbilts. The Wilson family built a 72-room Gilded Age mansion on the property to entertain friends from New York, Savannah and Charleston.

Although the mansion burned in 1926, ruins of the estate still exist, romantically incorporated into the center of Wilson Landing, a village square encompassing an art gallery, post office, bistro café and an adorable non-denominational chapel. The Inn's River House is the village centerpiece with its signature restaurant, 4,000-bottle wine cellar and banquet area. On the veranda every afternoon, pitchers of lemonade, iced tea and freshly baked cookies are served, another reflection of classic Southern hospitality.

Comfortably settled into the tufted pillows and lounge chairs on our porch, temptation to do nothing was overridden by the opportunity to play a round at the Jack Nicklaus-designed May River Golf Club.

With its surrounding marshes and forests, nature is the dominant theme. This private, wildlife-friendly golf course is woven seamlessly through the natural landscape with some of the greens located right on the banks of the river. And yes, I lost just a few – OK, maybe a bunch of golf balls along the way. Golfers can enjoy this secluded club's peace and serenity, interrupted only by the sights and sounds of nature.

No worries if you're not a golfer – The Inn also boasts a canoe and kayak club, lawn and racquet club, equestrian facility, scenic nature trails, inshore/offshore fishing and dolphin encounters. Another "must-do" is a visit to its 9,500-square-foot spa, definitely a retreat for the body, mind and soul.

Palmetto Bluff's guiding principal is "to preserve and protect one of America's most unique and treasured landscapes while creating an exceptional human settlement within it." It is a special place kept wild and unspoiled by the Palmetto Bluff Conservancy, a not-for-profit organization



Romantic and charming, The Inn at Palmetto Bluff is located along the May River.



The Inn at Palmetto Bluff
476 Mount Pelia Road
Bluffton, SC 29910

For more information, contact
The Inn at 843.706.6500, or visit
www.palmettobluffresort.com.



protecting its wetlands, diverse maritime forest, miles of marsh and river edge.

As the sun sets over the marshes, we sipped our wine while enjoying the view of Spanish moss dripping from the massive live oaks along the May River, celebrating our fabulous day and the Lowcountry's ethereal beauty.

Contact Travel Editor Gloria Stuart at gloria@gulfstreammediagroup.com.

Palmetto Bluff at a Glance

- Best place to watch a spectacular Southern sunset: Take a cruise on Palmetto Bluff's antique yacht, Grace, named to honor the wife of Cornelius "Neely" Vanderbilt III
- Desire to get off property? Guests are provided a complimentary Mercedes-Benz vehicle
- Dogs are welcomed guests at Palmetto Bluff
- Best after-sunset treat: Enjoy S'mores around bonfire pits along the river (kits provided by The Inn's cheerful staff)
- Wildlife lovers? Don't miss the Palmetto Bluff Conservancy's exclusive "Owl Prowl" – a night to be remembered