

ART ATTACK!

Experts sound off on art-buying trends from coast to coast.

Plus: Stylish carpets, light fixtures, chairs, and water features that dazzle with form *and* function.

OCEAN HOME

THE LUXURY COASTAL
LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

August - September 2013

TOP 10

The most fabulous coastal homes
for sale in the United States



CAROLINA COOL
Low-key luxury shines
along North Carolina's
Crystal Coast

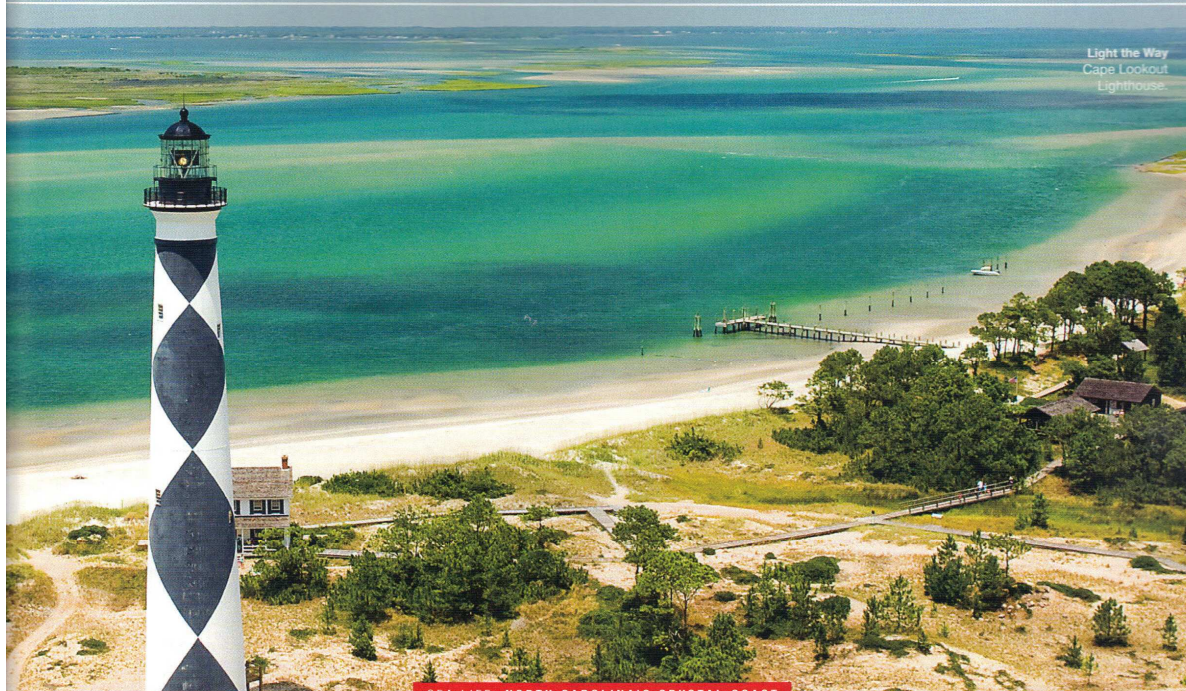
GRILL POWER
Unlocking the secrets
to preparing perfect
slow-cooked meat

SUMMER SOJOURNS
Where to stay in
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Light the Way
 Cape Lookout
 Lighthouse

SEA LIFE: NORTH CAROLINA'S CRYSTAL COAST

CAROLINA COOL

*Low-key luxury shines along
 North Carolina's Crystal Coast*

by Michael J. Solender

Experiencing North Carolina's Crystal Coast is like facing a string of endless Saturday mornings. Oceans of outdoor activities do their best to compete with the tug of a lazy day spent relaxing on the extra-wide beaches. No matter the choice, tomorrow offers another opportunity.

Devoid of even a single beachside hotel or resort development, Crystal Coast beaches are free from typical resort crowds and host more crabs and gulls most days than tourists. Miles of bike paths, shared marinas, and county-wide programs such as the Carteret Catch, a pledge by local restaurants to serve locally caught seafood, are just a few of the components that comprise this vast southern region off North Carolina's Pamlico Sound.

The interconnected beach communities that make up the area are more like siblings than distant relatives. While each shares its own personality and character, there is an underlying filial relationship that lets visitors know regional kinship is paramount.

Well south of their better-known Outer Banks cousins of Cape Hatteras and Ocracoke Island, the Crystal Coast communities framing Bogue Sound begin along scenic Highway 58. Here, Emerald Isle is the westerly anchor providing modern amenities and old-fashioned

beach town values. Families are the focus at this gem in the coastal crown, which boasts dozens of “sand castles”—oversized, family-friendly mansions fully equipped for weekly rental and typically situated right on the shoreline.

Four miles up the road are Indian Beach and Salter Path. Heavy concentrations of second-home owners grow the summertime population of these villages, though each retains a comforting, small-town feel. Lore has it that Salter Path got its name from the trail fishermen carved by carrying their catch from the beach to the sound just past Riley Salter’s mid-1800s home.

Salty tales are not restricted to 19th-century history, as one of the Crystal Coast’s most famous visitors—if not a temporary resident—was the most notorious pirate that ever sailed the seas, the feared and ruthless Blackbeard. His infamous ship, the *Queen Anne’s Revenge*, is one of hundreds of wrecks just off shore, scattered along this section of the Outer Banks known as the graveyard of the Atlantic.

Sunk in 1718, the ship shares a watery tomb with many other wrecks-turned-reefs, including German U-boat submarines used during WWII. Hosting a higher concentration of wrecks than any other locale in the world, the Crystal Coast was named the No. 1 wreck-diving destination in North America by *Scuba Diving* magazine.

Pine Knoll Shores, one of the most natural and untouched areas of Bogue Banks, is halfway between Atlantic Beach and Indian Beach and is home to one of three of North Carolina’s state aquariums, a remarkable destination housing the state’s largest saltwater tank that contains 900,000 gallons teeming with sharks and dozens of indigenous species.

Housed at the far end of this barrier island is Atlantic Beach, the Coast’s elder statesman. Atlantic Beach contributes cultural capital to the region with concerts, outdoor films, and special events all summer long. Some of the area’s best seafood restaurants reside here, serving up Atlantic triggerfish, North Carolina shrimp, and line-caught yellowfin tuna. Check out the casually chic Amos Mosquito’s (amosmosquitos.com), where an ambitious menu featuring dozens of seafood specialties is executed with expertise.

Separated by the Beaufort Inlet, Beaufort and Morehead

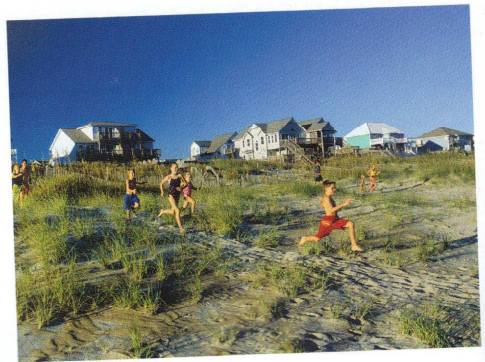


Coastal Elegance
Top to bottom, ponies on Shackleford Banks at Cape Lookout National Seashore; heading out on a fishing expedition; rental properties along the Crystal Coast, deemed “sand castles” by local residents.

City are sister towns of sorts, with Beaufort having undergone a renaissance of sorts. Beaufort’s townspeople recognized the historical significance of their community (an important port for both the Northern and Confederate armies during the Civil War) and had the foresight to begin preservation efforts in 1977 that eventually led to a full-blown revival. What stands today are lovingly restored Civil War-era homes fronted by a highly serviceable marina (situated on the Intercoastal Waterway), a tiny but funky shopping district, and two oceanographic research facilities—The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Center for Coastal Fisheries and a marine lab

run by Duke University.

Morehead City is more of a working-class town and is home to shipbuilding facilities and a large port that receives ships from as far away as China. The community is home to the annual Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament



each June (thebigrock.com). In this sport fishing Mecca, the meeting of the icy waters from Canada's Labrador Current collide offshore with the warmer Gulf Stream, creating a habitat second to none for trophy fish such as blue and white marlin, sailfish, and bigeye tuna, and superb eating fish like red drum, yellowfin tuna, and wahoo.

More than 56 miles along the Crystal Coast are dedicated to the wildly popular and permanently protected Cape Lookout National Seashore, home to the wild Banker Horses that have roamed free on Shackleford Banks for over a century. This destination represents one of the few natural barrier island systems in the world.

Carteret County, home to the Crystal Coast, boasts a population of 67,000. Many beachside homes feature a mashup of architectural styles from the Bahamas, Key West, and mainland Florida, showing off pastel colors like pistachio, peach, and lime green with white-on-white working shutters. Wraparound porches at both ground and second-story levels afford 360-degree views of rolling sand dunes, tall native grasses, and estuaries teeming with more than 100 species of water fowl.

Those fortunate to settle on the Crystal Coast have learned that the secret of this area rests somewhere between the ocean breeze and an it's-all-good state of mind.



FEATURE



Inn Style
Left, The Cedars Inn. Above, a guest room at the Pecan Tree Inn.

Charmed Living

CASTLES IN THE SAND AND ROOMS AT THE INN OFFER LUXE ACCOMMODATIONS BY THE SEA.

A VARIETY of seaside accommodations along the Crystal Coast—including rental properties, inns, and B&Bs—offer the comforts of home with a luxe style certain to spoil visitors.

Emerald Isle Realty has hosted visitors to the Crystal Coast

since 1962 and offers hundreds of rentals by the beach and sound. Open, airy floor plans at these properties are complemented by soft linens, fully equipped kitchens, saltwater pools, ensuite Jacuzzis, game rooms, high-speed Internet, gas fireplaces, and, of course,

direct beach access. Many of the larger "sand castles" (christened so by locals) comprise seven or eight bedrooms and frequently host family reunions, wedding parties, or group retreats. Personal chefs, daily maid service, and event planners are also available. emerald-islerealty.com

For more direct pampering, the Crystal Coast has many classic inns and B&Bs to choose from. One such option, originally con-

structed in 1768, **The Cedars Inn** was the home of William Borden, son of a Rhode Island shipwright and gracious host to visiting sea captains trading along the Eastern Seaboard. One of Fodor's "Great American Bed and Breakfasts," the Inn is situated in the heart of Historic Beaufort and charms guests with its Southern hospitality and Executive Chef Steve Smid's remarkable touch. cedarsinn.com.

Steps from Beaufort's historic harbor is the former Masonic Lodge, built in 1866 and now housing guests as the **Pecan Tree Inn**. A breezy wraparound porch affords the quintessential Southern experience, while finely tended English herb and flower gardens perfume the salt air and add to the elegant Victorian flavor of this lovely inn by the sea. pecantree.com



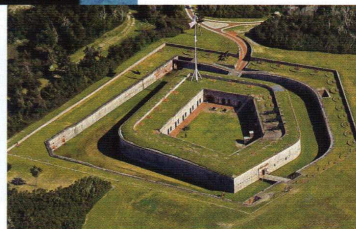
tions, with more than 1.2 million visitors annually. After the War of 1812, the U.S. government began building an improved chain of coastal forts for national defense along the vulnerable Eastern seaboard. Fort Macon became part of this chain and served strategic roles in guarding Beaufort inlet during the Civil War. History is brought alive here by thoughtful exhibits and tours. nc-parks.gov/Visit/parks/foma/main.php. Head out to **Harkers Island** to catch the **Local Yokel** (capelookoutferry.com) for the 25-minute ride across Bogue Sound and get up close and personal with the Diamond Lady herself, the **Cape Lookout Lighthouse**. Captain Yeomans is only too happy to sidle up close to the preserved shores of

Shakelford Banks, where you'll see the wild Banker horses that have roamed free for over 100 years. Cape Lookout National Park offers picnic areas and lighthouse tours and features a well-preserved keeper's house restored as a museum. nps.gov/cal/index.htm. The **North Carolina Aquarium** at Pine Knoll Shores follows a "mountains-to-the-sea" theme, tracing a drop of water all along the route through North Carolina's Appalachians, the Piedmont, and into the lower coastal swamps. Children are captivated by the interactive exhibits, es-

WHAT TO DO

ITEMS FOR YOUR CRYSTAL COAST ITINERARY

Divers should make **Olympus Dive Center** their first stop. Olympus offers daily half- and full-day charters and guides divers of all abilities to some of the most accessible and captivating wreck dives found anywhere. olympusdiving.com. Hankering for a trophy fish or just some tasty eating? Captain Dale Britt of **Sensation Sportfishing** knows just the right eddies and currents to find the jumbos. Be prepared to get up early, as the Captain and his mates set out before the sun. You'll have lunch onboard, as well as snacks, drinks, a blanket fishing license, and all the gear and support needed to land a big one. sensationsportfishing.com. **Fort Macon State Park** tops North Carolina's list of most-visited destina-



Wondrous Waters
From top, the North Carolina Aquarium, Fort Macon State Park, wreck diving off the Crystal Coast.

pecially those featuring sea turtles, and a mock diagnostic lab where they can try their hand at marine biology. ncaquariums.com/pine-knoll-shores. With more than 100 dining venues available along the Crystal Coast, no one goes hungry. When it comes to dining, **Ruddy Duck Tavern** in Morehead City packs in the locals and visitors alike with a seafood-studded menu that includes Cajun Mako Bite appetizers and the best Cioppino this side of San Francisco. facebook.com/RuddyDuckTavern. Serving visitors since 1905, **Clawson's** is known for its jumbo crab cakes and famous fried flounder and oysters. clawsonsrestaurant.com. If you're in Emerald Isle and need to fuel up for the day ahead, there is no better breakfast to be had than at the **Emerald Grill**. Order the "Happy Happy"—a delicious dish comprising hash browns, bacon, and cheese piled on top of an "egg-in-the-hole"—and you'll be ready for anything the day brings. 301 Mangrove Drive, 252-354-9700. **OH**

THE DETAILS

Area 85 miles of shoreline from the Cape Lookout National Seashore to the New River. **Domestic/regional airports** Coastal Carolina Regional (EWN), 44 miles; Albert Ellis (OAJ), 45 miles. **International airports** Wilmington (ILM), 83 miles; Raleigh-Durham (RDU), 167 miles. **Ferries** Cedar Island-

Ocracoke Ferry. **Median family income** Carteret County, \$57,000. **Average home sale price** \$208,380 (2012 MLS). **Famous residents** Curtis Strange, pro golfer; Hugh Shelton, retired four-star general and former chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff for Presidents Clinton and Bush. **Festivals** Beau-

fort Food & Wine Weekend (April); Beaufort National BoatBuilding Challenge (May); 4th of July Fish Fry, Harkers Island; NC Seafood Festival, Morehead City (October). **Social Media** Twitter: @CrystalCoast_NC; Facebook: facebook.com/CrystalCoast; Web: crystalcoastnc.org.