

# MOBILE BAY

The lifestyle magazine for Mobile and Baldwin counties

March 2012

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# Rosemary Beach



## *Delight in the Details*

Creative planning and great care are evident everywhere  
in this new traditional Gulf Coast town.

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There is, of course, that magnificent shore: 2,500 feet of unblemished white sand, protected dunes and Gulf-green waters. Been there. Love that! But a return trip to Rosemary Beach – a stay in town this time – revealed even more subtleties. Away from the call of the waves, it's easier to pay attention to the custom amenities in this relaxed, well-thought-out, northwest Florida community.



**ABOVE** Balconies and Adirondack chairs are quintessential Rosemary Beach.

**TOP RIGHT** For those who need to take a break from the salty seas, private and public pools abound in the quaint town.

**RIGHT** The combination of white sandy beaches and clear blue water creates the perfect playground for novice sailors.



Take, for example, the 2.3-mile walking trail that winds through its 107 acres. The wooden boardwalks run north-south, making it easy, no matter where on site, to locate the beach, about five minutes from almost any point. Sandy, east-to-west footpaths meander past pocket parks, four community pools, a butterfly garden, playgrounds and fitness stations. There is something interesting to see or do at every turn. A slow walk offers the chance to admire carriage houses, cottages and lofts, reimagined from the architecture of Charleston, New Orleans, St. Augustine and the West Indies. The more than 600 light-filled living spaces feature wrap-around porches, vine-covered verandas, hushed courtyards and balconies with stunning views.

During a stroll it's hard to look away from the graceful homes. But the native plantings, such as abundant rosemary, beach roses, saw palmetto and live oaks,



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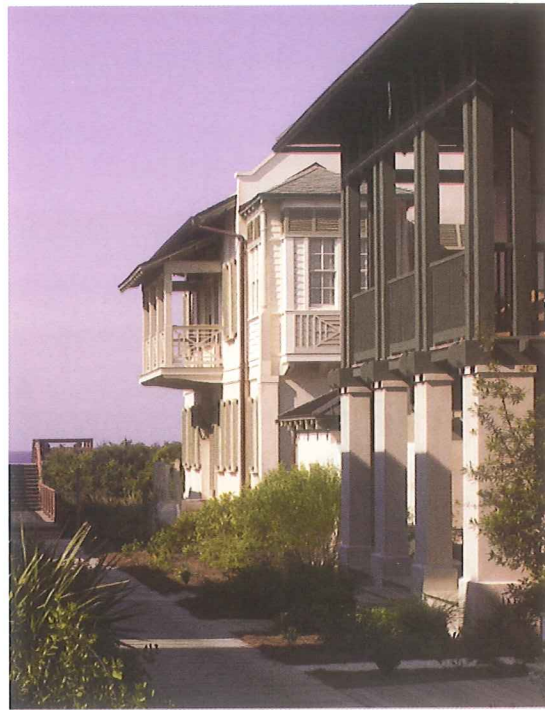
certainly deserve notice. It's also worth observing what's not there: grass lawns (public greens only), sprinkler systems and ugly concrete drainage pipes. The permeable pavers and natural landscaping ensure sustainable beauty.

Interiors mirror the harmony of the outdoors. From original art on the subtle-colored walls to handsome Adirondack chairs on the Creole-style balconies, from Aveda soaps in

the well-appointed bathrooms to stylish duvets on the cozy beds – all is simple luxuriousness.

“Will you look at this water bottle?” I ask my travel buddy when we check out the complimentary contents in the fridge in our loft. The clean, artful design of the recyclable bottle seems to exemplify Rosemary Beach.

“So perfect,” she says, holding it admiringly to the light.



**TOP LEFT** A boardwalk leads visitors from the western green to the Gulf while keeping the dunes and grasses unharmed.

**ABOVE** Pan-Caribbean details are encountered everywhere in the planned community's exquisite architecture.

**LEFT** While some of the beach is developed with rental properties, sea oats and other native plants and grasses are still well preserved along the shoreline.

## Wine and Dine

When effort is made over a thing as common as a water bottle, think what local establishments might do when something exceptional is in order. Each fall, the resort's eateries pull out the stops for Rosemary Beach Uncorked, a long afternoon to "Eat. Drink. Be Rosemary." Visitors from all over the country nibble and quaff their way along the town squares and

Main Street. Select samplings: dark chocolate with French grey sea salt, pinot noir, Bolivian organic coffee (Amavida Coffee); pulled pork enchiladas with red chili sauce, zinfandel (Cowgirl Kitchen); orange pork with caramelized onion, Shaya Verdojo (La Crema); braised short rib crostini, Chianti (Onano); lump crab-stuffed baked mushrooms with sherry goat cheese, Luna Pinot Grigio (Restau-

rant Paradis); Kobe sliders with white cheddar and chipotle ketchup, merlot (Summer Kitchen Café); shrimp ceviche, sauvignon blanc (Wild Olives Market-Deli-Bakery).

Everyday offerings are also outstanding. The emphasis is on fresh, local, homemade. Blueberry scones and just-ground coffee, or a big-as-Texas breakfast, perk up the mornings. At night, a variety of restaurants, more than a half-dozen in an area no bigger than a suburban street, serve entrees such as Northern Italian-style pasta, pan-seared free-range chicken, grass-fed beef, or light coastal fare, like line-caught grouper and tapas. At the end of an evening, diners often pop down the street to La Crema for a chocolate shot, espresso cookie sandwich, or its famous chocolate-dipped bacon. And, since bed is such a short walk away, after-dinner drinks at any of the convivial restaurant bars is a must.



**ABOVE** Bocce ball, the official sport of Rosemary Beach, is just one of the activities visitors can partake in during two annual tournaments.

**RIGHT** Town Hall and the post office, bordered by dozens of shops and restaurants, are centerpieces of this pedestrian-friendly community.



## Activities

Traditional water sports, such as surfing, kayaking, fishing or sailing, are readily available. Gaining in popularity is paddleboarding at nearby Western Lake, a wind-created dune lake where wildlife is abundant.

Biking, whether a leisurely cruise on an old-fashioned two-wheeler or a fast-paced spin over miles of trail, is a sure hit. Much appealing, too, are the state-of-the-art machines at the fitness center. A self-supervised workout is free for cottage guests. I treated myself

to a yoga class and a massage (see after-dinner drinks, previous page), each excellent and moderately priced.

It came as a surprise that the Italian game of bocce is the official sport of this beach town. On reflection, I realize how representative of RB this is. Beach and town have equal weight here. It's a community as much as a shore.

Someday soon I'd like to return for one of the twice-yearly bocce tournaments. I want to watch the little kids, teens and adults roll the colorful balls on the commons. I want to join them

in a toast to the unhurried players and to the good things they all strive to preserve.

"The exceptional democratic spirit of the game of 'bocce' is the basis on which its deeply peaceful character is founded," the tournament newsletter reads. "It is often the beginning of long friendships."

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*For more information:*  
[rosemarybeach.com](http://rosemarybeach.com),  
[rosemarybeachuncorked.com](http://rosemarybeachuncorked.com)