

The SoWal Insider

Bridging the gap from “city to sand” for Nashvillians’ favorite Florida beach destination

THIS IS THE SECOND installment in our series, giving you the inside scoop on what you need to know from a local’s perspective. SoWal.com is the premier “Beachzine” and authority on the hottest events, new restaurants, fashion trends and the overall latest buzz on the beach along Scenic Highway 30A in South Walton County, Florida.

We’ll deliver the scoop so you can prepare to “beach like a local”—all before you take that Southwest Airlines direct flight or load up the SUV and hit 65 South (in the meantime you can check our new site SoWal.com for nine live BeachCams if you’re stuck at work.)

So if you’re headed back to the beach this August, read on and check out SoWal.com for more.



NEW KIDS ON THE BEACH

Grayton Beer—Jamey Price has blended the perfect brew—it’s local and ready to be enjoyed, so kick back with a cold one on your vacation. Visit Stinky’s, Red Bar, Bud and Alley’s, FIRE, Modica Market, Wine World and most any SoWal establishment for an IPA or a Pale Ale. Be sure to pack up a cooler-full of Grayton Beer before you leave the beach. You’ll be the envy of all your friends back at home.

Duckies—The ultimate new kids’ spot in Seaside. Think FAO Schwartz, but better (in our opinion). Toys, kids clothing, gifts, art supplies and more abound in this happening spot.



Blue Mountain Beach Creamery—Nestled in an unassuming little yellow house in Blue Mountain Beach on the corner of 30A and 83 (across from Redfish Village), you’ll find a line of people streaming out the door and down the street. What’s all the fuss about? Handmade ice

cream, sorbet and yogurts, prepared daily on site is what the fuss is. Try a nectarine sorbet or banana pudding ice cream in a sugar cone and stroll down to the public beach access to properly enjoy.

BEACH FAVORITES REINVENTED

The Shops of Ruskin—Did you know that Seaside has a shady neighborhood? It’s true. Not only is it shady, it also happens to be where the cool people hang out. Tucked behind Central Square, protectively guarded by sand live oak trees is Seaside’s hidden jewel—the artist’s colony in Seaside. Here you’ll find art galleries, boutique clothing, jewelry stores and collections of hard-to-find home goods. Pop into the fun photo booth at Carletta Watkin’s studio, peruse the eclectic array of home accessories and art in the Art of Simple and take in some music and culture on the first Friday of every month during First Friday Artwalk.

Sunset Deck at Fish Out of Water—Take in the breathtaking views of the Gulf of Mexico while enjoying drinks and appetizers at the hottest happy hour in town, adjacent to the Watercolor Inn.

Tarpon Club Deck—Bud and Alley’s Tarpon Club has expanded and is now open for your first sunset in SoWal. Twice the space is twice as nice when rubbing elbows with the locals and ringing the bell at sunset at this SoWal institution.

TRIED AND TRUE—AND LOCAL-APPROVED

La Vie Est Belle—Wendy Mignot and her husband Jean-Noel’s fine pearl and leather jewelry collection for 2011 has just been released. Bringing their distinctive style of jewelry to Seaside for seven years now, stop by and see them as the store itself celebrates its third anniversary.



Sunburst Beach Vacations—Won the “best vacation rental company” for the area in the Emerald Coast’s Finest annual survey conducted by the *Northwest Florida Daily News*. Check them out for fantastic rental properties in SoWal.

Patchouli’s—Head back from the beach smelling like a blend of coconut, lavender and beach (or whatever combination you can dream up). Your custom-scented lotions and potions will make you the envy of all your Nashville girlfriends. Be sure to order up a custom scent roller perfume stick for your purse. Note, they will personalize the labels if you are gifting.

SHHH ... IT’S A SECRET

Crabby Steve’s Beach Bar—Only the locals know this best kept secret and undoubtedly it is the coolest bar on the beach—literally *on* the beach and accessible between Rosemary and Alys. If you are staying at Highpoint, it is also accessible through this gated rental community in Seacrest.

La Loba’s Bakery—The best cinnamon rolls, oatmeal chocolate chip cookies and fresh gluten-free bread and pizzas in Blue Mountain Beach.

OUT AND ABOUT

August 11—Yolo 2011 Race Series at WaterColor Boathouse