

A top-down photograph of a wooden table. In the upper left, a white ceramic plate holds four pan-fried dumplings with golden-brown tops. In the lower center, a blue ceramic plate holds several rectangular crackers topped with white sesame seeds and a dollop of light-colored hummus. On the far left edge, a portion of a wooden board with smoked salmon is visible. The text 'the bluff' is overlaid in white serif font across the top right, with 'Fall / Winter 2020' in a smaller italicized font below it.

the bluff

Fall / Winter 2020

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THE ART OF COLOR

Considered one of the most important painters of the Southern experience, artist Jonathan Green's bright paintings come entirely from his memories of Gardens Corner, a rural Gullah community in the Lowcountry of South Carolina. Follow his journey as told by writer Barry Kaufman.

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Chef Chris Hathcock of Husk in Savannah, Georgia, thinks more about Southern ingredients, rather than just Southern food. Raised in the South with family roots in Southeast Asia, he incorporates his experiences from his past and from his travels into his menu creation.

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HOSTESS WITH THE MOSTEST**

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A TALE OF TWO YULES

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Okay, maybe not quite the same type of conflict as Dickens writes about in *A Tale of Two Cities*, however, conflicting opinions still surround this strange symbol of the holiday season. Gather round the fire as writer Barry Kaufman explains the two different types of yule logs in this classic holiday tale.

{ CREATED BY  FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THIS SPECIAL LOWCOUNTRY IDYLL }

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THE ART OF COLOR

How Jonathan Green introduced the South Carolina Lowcountry to the world.

WRITTEN BY: **BARRY KAUFMAN** PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF: **JONATHAN GREEN**

His works are as instantly recognizable as they are blissfully approachable. The vivid colors, the way they capture a Lowcountry breeze as it billows a scarf or the hem of a hoop skirt, and, most important, the simple agrarian lifestyle they reflect mark each portrait as an unmistakable work of the Lowcountry's most celebrated artist Jonathan Green.

And while the skill behind each piece informs a body of work that has rightfully raised his profile around the world, it is the way that body of work has elevated a culture that is perhaps his biggest achievement.

"When Black people in rural communities started seeing themselves on walls, it totally changed their perspective. They felt more interested in where they came from," he said.

Hobcaw Barony Woman, 2013



Carrying the Harvest, 2005

For Green, knowing where he came from was just part of growing up Black in the South Carolina Lowcountry. “We were taught to know where you came from,” he said. “The average Black kid of my generation would know their family four generations back and which plantation they came from. It wasn’t a knowing of shame; it was a knowing of pride. It wasn’t about being owned; it’s what they did with the land.”

His mother, a seamstress, and his father, an educator, shared ownership of a nightclub in Gardens Corner where Green grew up, but looking back on his upbringing, he talks mostly about his grandparents—how they married young and raised six kids. His grandfather was a moonshiner and a sharecropper. His grandmother, perhaps most importantly, was one of the first to recognize the immeasurable talent brewing in young Jonathan.

“My career as an artist was almost preordained. Kids doodle when they have free time, but my grandmother recognized how much I liked drawing,” he said. His early works were crafted from scraps of coal snatched from the fireplace, but with his grandmother’s support, he was soon focusing on his craft. With success would come an early lesson in the uphill battle he would face as an African American artist.

“I won a county-wide contest for the 4-H Club in the fifth grade in segregated schools, based on drawing ability alone, because they didn’t know who submitted the artwork,” he said. That award-winning work showed a pair of Siamese kittens, his grandmother’s, batting around a ball of yarn. When it came to light that the young prodigy behind the work was Black, the response from the largely white powers that be was less than congratulatory. “At first, they did not want to recognize that a Black kid won a county-wide art contest. They refused to do interviews or feature my work in the paper.”

If young Jonathan Green had been handed a lesson in systemic racism, he chose instead to see a lesson in his own self-worth. “I didn’t focus on the fact that I didn’t get the prize. I realized then that I had enough talent to be on the level of any kid my age.”

Around this same time, he was also discovering the world beyond the bucolic borders of Gardens Corner. Green left South Carolina and lived in New York City for a few years with his mother. The bright lights and towering skyscrapers of New York City could not be any more different than the pastoral Lowcountry, but Green recalls his main impression being “I didn’t have to walk in the ditch during the day.”



Clam Diggers, 1997

“WE WERE TAUGHT TO KNOW WHERE YOU CAME FROM.”



End of the Harvest, 2005

“I didn’t have a culture shock. It was a moment of discovery,” he said. “I was fascinated by how well people looked. In the country, you dress for activity or comfort. In the city, people dressed for fashion. Sundays in Harlem were beautiful.”

Green eventually returned to South Carolina, where he graduated from Beaufort High School. With no specific career plans (except a love of art), he joined the US Air Force, serving as a cook. During this time, Green was encouraged to further pursue his talent and later enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago. It was here that he was introduced to the artistic community at large and, in turn, the artistic community was introduced to the then-obscure Gullah culture of the South Carolina Lowcountry.

“When I was in Chicago, I didn’t meet one student who knew anything about South Carolina.... People saw me as a cute country bumpkin,” he said, adding with a chuckle, “which was a mistake.”

His relentless drive and talent saw him taking part in his first gallery show while still a sophomore—attracting the attention of great artists of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) period including Jacob Lawrence. Created by President Roosevelt in 1935, the WPA was an American New Deal agency, employing millions of job seekers to carry out public works projects. In one project, Federal Project Number One, the WPA employed

musicians, artists, writers, actors, and directors in large arts, drama, media, and literacy projects. This laid the groundwork for an explosion of works by Black artists. Despite their progress, forty years later, Green saw a greater opportunity to express his love for his culture in the art world.

“You could drive up the Magnificent Mile and not see one painting of a person of color. All the Black artists who were well known were abstract,” he said. “My mentor, Jacob Lawrence, said, ‘Jon, sell your story. Don’t worry about what’s in vogue. If you know how to draw, you need to find your avenue.’”

He returned briefly to the Lowcountry to reconnect with the colors and the movement of the home he had left behind and also practice drawing the one bit of Southern scenery that had eluded him. “I remember thinking, ‘You mean I have to go to the Lowcountry and these tedious grasses?’” he said with a laugh. “The first time I drove back, I drove right into downtown Beaufort and sat on a marsh with a pencil trying to copy the grass.”

As you can probably see, he quickly got the hang of the wispy Spartina that signifies our little slice of the South. But, more important, he was finally able to truly inform his experiences living in and growing up among the unique indigenous culture of the Lowcountry with the keen eye of an artist he had developed under the tutelage of the greats of African American art. And the world took notice.

**“YOU COULD DRIVE UP
THE MAGNIFICENT MILE
AND NOT SEE ONE PAINTING
OF A PERSON OF COLOR.
ALL THE BLACK ARTISTS
WHO WERE WELL KNOWN
WERE ABSTRACT.”**





Communal, 2019

**“MY NICHE WAS TO
CREATE A STORYLINE
OF IMAGERY, NOT
JUST OF PEOPLE BUT
OF MY CULTURE OF
THE LOWCOUNTRY.”**

Soon, Jonathan Green's works were popping up at venues not just across the South but around the world. One of the first footholds he found was in Hilton Head Island's famed Red Piano Art Gallery. "Hilton Head was the powerhouse in promoting my work," he said. Capturing the attention of the island's wealthiest patrons saw not only the value of a Jonathan Green original soaring, but also the profile of the artist himself. And with each new exhibition, whether here or around the world, his status as one of the South's most important artists grew, as did the awareness of an often-overlooked culture.

"My niche was to create a storyline of imagery, not just of people but of my culture of the Lowcountry," he said. "I never became a painter to paint Black people but to paint the Lowcountry."

Green now lives in Charleston, where he serves as the city's Ambassador for the Arts and is co-chairing the city's 350th anniversary celebration. These days, he's found himself slipping into that mentorship role, helping African American artists find their voice and supporting them any way he can.

"Every artist needs people to support them and their work," he said. "As an artist, helping galleries understand the Black community and helping the Black community understand galleries, that's been my role."

And after traveling the world and serving as an ambassador for his art and his culture, he still makes his way to Gardens Corner for service at Huspah Baptist Church on the first Sunday of every month. ♦





SOUTH *by* SOUTHEAST

Written by: Lauren Ferguson / Photography courtesy of: Husk Savannah

If there's one thing that rings true about the Lowcountry, it's the alluring draw—that familiar feeling of home, the saltiness of the air, the hospitality that has no limits—that brings people back time and time again. For some, it's a return home after time spent away, and for others, it's a place that left such an indelible mark that it couldn't remain just a lasting memory.

For chef Chris Hathcock of Husk in Savannah, Georgia, it's a little bit of both.

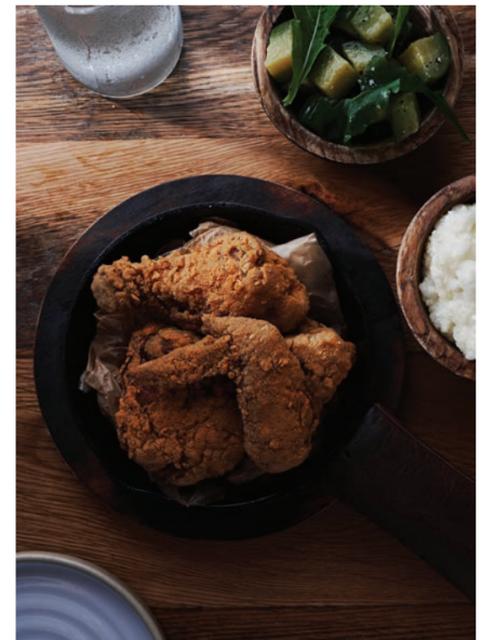
A Georgia native, Hathcock was born in Atlanta but spent the majority of his school-aged years—elementary to high school—in Savannah. After departing the coastal town to pursue his bachelor of science in forestry and natural resources at the University of Georgia, he found himself gravitating to the kitchens of Athens, Georgia, for side jobs fueled by the notion that food brings people together in the most experiential way.

“My interest in cooking started when I was young, growing up in Southern kitchens while being raised by women—my single mom, two aunts, and my grandmother,” Hathcock says. “I was always hanging out in the kitchen and helping out where I could. That's what piqued my interest at an early age.”

TOP
Fresh Georgia shrimp served with grits, farm eggs, spring peas, kale, and embered mushrooms.

MIDDLE
Like the décor that inhabits the historic building, the food is contemporary in style and interpretation.

BOTTOM
Husk's legendary fried chicken is fried in butter, chicken fat, bacon fat, canola oil, and rendered country ham fat.





After his time in college and various positions at local Athens establishments, including East West Bistro and The National, he moved around the Southeast, taking up residence in culinary-infused cities such as Atlanta, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; Asheville, North Carolina; and Greenville, South Carolina.

“I was really humbled when I left my college town, where I was a big fish in a small pond,” he says, reflecting back on his first job in Atlanta with chef and mentor Ryan Smith at Empire State South. “He taught me more in the first two months of working with him than I had learned over 10 years of cooking prior. It was one of those moments where I knew then that I had just scratched the surface of the culinary world, and I had so much more to learn.”

Hathcock first joined the newly opened Husk Greenville in 2017, and in 2018, he traded his views of the Upstate for the Lowcountry, joining the Husk Savannah team as executive chef.

“Many chefs are drawn to Savannah now. It feels a lot like Charleston did 15 years ago where the talent is there, and it’s just starting to gain traction,” reflects Hathcock, who doesn’t consider his return to the Lowcountry a true homecoming, since he no longer has family there. “I wanted to return to that slower lifestyle and a place that’s close to my heart.”

At Husk, Hathcock leads the menu creation and focuses on using only the highest-quality seasonal bounty from local farmers and purveyors to create dishes with a distinctly Southern, but more specifically, Coastal Georgia, identity. Hathcock is both passionate and expressive, conceptualizing dishes that showcase a depth of flavor, while also conveying a story and a deep sense of place.

When considering how Husk Savannah differentiates itself from other locations, Hathcock says, “I think more about Southern ingredients rather than just Southern food. I take my experiences from the past and from my travels and incorporate those with ingredients that are close to our door.”



PURVEYORS

OYSTERS

Barrier Island Oyster Co.
Charleston, South Carolina
barrierislandoysters.com

Barrier Island Oyster Co. grows every one of its oysters from seed to market size entirely in floating cages. This restorative growing method guarantees the highest-quality product and also helps to reduce the pressure on wild oyster reefs.

E.L. McIntosh & Son Seafood
Harris Neck, Georgia

This family business has evolved from harvesting wild oysters to a sustainable farming practice with consistent yields thanks to a partnership with the University of Georgia.

Outlaw Oyster Co.
Panacea, Florida
outlawoysters.com

Outlaw Oyster Co. hand raises and processes its oysters in the waters off the Gulf Coast. These salty oysters with a smooth finish are shipped all over the country to restaurants, caterers, and anyone else needing a salty fix. They’re also available to buy wholesale and retail at their storefront location.

FISH

Abundant Seafood
Charleston, South Carolina
abundantseafood.co

Abundant Seafood works both on and off the water to ensure that the populations of fish, and their habitat, are managed so there will be plenty of fish for generations. All fish are caught on a rod and reel system (no nets) and are then personally delivered to partner restaurants; it is literally boat-to-plate in just a few miles.

"I THINK MORE ABOUT SOUTHERN INGREDIENTS RATHER THAN JUST SOUTHERN FOOD."

Two recent trips to Southeast Asia and Mexico City have had a profound impact on his menu development.

"After visiting Mexico, I played a lot with high-acid and bright seafood preparations, making *aguachiles*," Hathcock says. "I also did riffs on classic Mexican dishes like *pulpo con patatas* using heirloom summer ingredients."

Following a trip to Thailand, Hathcock experimented in the kitchen with a variety of high-heat dishes and Thai sausage. He notes that the dishes have been well-received by guests, and there's a genuine appreciation for the restaurant's ability to balance the menu with dishes that are approachable and comfortable alongside those that are a little more adventurous and daring.

"I grew up eating a lot of classic dishes like casseroles and creamed vegetables as a kid," Hathcock explains. "That's probably why I cook lighter versions of Southern food now. I like to use the same great Southern ingredients, but less butter, less cream, less gluten, and more acid and texture to make the vegetables shine and speak for themselves."

Hathcock's menu development methodology includes taking notes on every way that an ingredient can be prepared, often manipulating it multiple times to explore the various ways it can be served, plated, and presented. In addition to traveling, he also draws inspiration from dining out locally to see what his peers are creating, staying

connected through social media, and turning to literature, which ranges from newly released books to educational pieces on fermentation.

Hathcock's passion for ingredients is not only evident through his cooking, but also through an intricate display of tattoos weaving up and down both his right and left arms.

"These have come up a lot over the course of my career, and people are always interested in them," he says. "One is a half sleeve of Southeast Asian vegetables, which includes daikon, shiso, and maitake mushrooms. The other arm is a full sleeve of Southeast American vegetables, like heirloom squash, different varieties of tomatoes, carrots, and ramps. The reason behind the two designs is my heritage—I was raised in the South, but also a nod to my [family's] Southeast Asian roots."

And when he's not cooking?

Having grown up in Savannah, Hathcock has always had a natural affinity toward water (something he credits to his Pisces astrological sign). He finds it calming to return to this city on the coast, where his "off days" include going out on the boat and casting fishing lines.

While the road for 2021 is still being paved, Hathcock has his sights set on new and inventive menu offerings at Husk Savannah and another culinary-focused trip. Destinations on the docket? Cambodia and Vietnam. ■



PURVEYORS

BEEF

Bear Creek Farm

Thompson's Station, Tennessee
bearcreekbeef.com

Bear Creek Farm, a sustainable grass-fed, grain-finished cattle farm, raises all-natural Angus beef in a responsible and humane way. Bear Creek Farm relies on outstanding genetics and certified humane practices to produce healthy, tasty beef without the use of hormones or antibiotics.

PORK

Grassroots Farms

St. Marys, Georgia
thegrassrootsfarm.com

Grassroots Farms is a family-owned farm that strives to farm in that old Lowcountry way. All the animals are raised outdoors on a pasture and are exclusively fed non-GMO grain without antibiotics. Grassroots offers heritage pork, pasture-raised chickens, eggs, and seasonal veggies.

Chef Hathcock works with Husk Savannah's in-house gardener, Ana, to grow edible herbs and flowers, as well as other vegetables, in the restaurant's garden. Ana and her husband also run a small aquaponic farm, where they grow vegetables for Husk. Find more info at billysbotanicals.com.



Written by: TIM WOOD
Photography by: DIANE DODD



S A V A N N A H ' S

Secret Garden

HOW A FINAL RESTING PLACE CAME TO LIFE
AS A SAVANNAH MUST-SEE



LAWTON FAMILY LOT

Alexander Lawton graduated from West Point and then studied law at Harvard. He went on to become president of the Augusta and Savannah Railroad and president of the American Bar Association. He was also a Confederate brigadier general in the Civil War, commanding Ewell's division at Antietam, where he was wounded. General Lawton returned to Savannah to recuperate and then became the second quartermaster of the Confederacy. After the war, he was foreign minister to Austria and Hungary.

The tomb has a beautiful Christ figure that was made by noted sculptor Romanelli in Florence in 1898. Also in the Lawton plot is Corinne Elliot Lawton who died of pneumonia before her wedding. She is depicted in sad repose by a statue made by the Civiletti studio in Palermo in 1879.

FROM THE BONAVENTURE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



ITS LAND AND INHABITANTS PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN MULTIPLE LINCHPINS OF AMERICAN HISTORY. IT WAS THE STAR OF A HARROWING AND FASCINATING TALE, A 1,000-MILE WALK. AND WHILE ITS BEGINNINGS ARE TRACED TO THE MID-1700S, IT WAS JUST 26 YEARS AGO THAT PUBLICATION OF A BOOK TRANSFORMED THIS 100-ACRE TRACT ALONG THE BANKS OF THE WILMINGTON RIVER FROM A LOCAL TREASURE INTO A GLOBAL PHENOMENON.

The inclusion of Bonaventure Cemetery and its infamous sculpture *Bird Girl* in the John Berendt novel *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* was the cornerstone of an explosion in the Savannah tourism industry. Nearly three decades later, the haunting real-life story—and the subsequent 1997 Clint Eastwood film—continues to draw fans from around the world to the cemetery.

Tour guide and vice chairman of the Bonaventure Historical Society Don Teuton said that while *Midnight* is the calling card for the vast majority of his clients, it is but a jumping-off point in the full tale of a cemetery whose name translates in French to “good fortune.”

“The history, the beauty, the setting, the stories, the draw is endless. The place sells itself,” Teuton said. “My parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were all buried here, so I have been coming here since I was a boy. But it’s not a task; it’s a privilege to be here. This is an outdoor museum—a living, breathing history lesson. People walk away with a whole new appreciation for life, and that’s a shock to most of the folks who know this place only for death.”

Since Bonaventure’s beginning in 1763, the land has changed ownership among some of the more famous families in Savannah history, the Tattnalls and Habershams, before it was bought in 1846 by hotelier Peter Wiltberger, owner of the famed Pulaski House. Wiltberger was the first to truly focus on the land as interment grounds for the wealthiest of the wealthy.

“He started the Evergreen Cemetery Company and marketed 70 acres as the swankiest of resting places, full of gorgeous sculptures and stunning landscapes. But he never saw a profit, as his wife died and was buried there in 1849, followed by Peter in 1853. His son took over the land, but they both missed a very important fact,” Teuton said. “While the 3-mile trek from the heart of Savannah to Bonaventure seems like nothing today, the journey in a horse-drawn hearse was far from easy. He didn’t make any real money off the cemetery until the invention of the car in the early 1900s.”

The Wiltberger family sold Evergreen Cemetery to the City of Savannah in 1909, at which time it was renamed Bonaventure.

Wiltberger was smart enough to understand a transformation in cemetery symbolism that began during the Victorian era. Before Victorian times, the imagery on display in cemeteries was largely centered on death and the darkness surrounding the dead. Thus, markers on graves had always been far more macabre, meant to scare people into living their best life or suffer a visit from the Grim Reaper.

During the Victorian era, death was rampant, but folks began to see cemeteries as more of a celebration of life, a place where the dead could rest in peace and the living



Sculptures crafted by some of the most famous sculptors of the 19th century serve as the custodians of Bonaventure.



PERLINSKI FAMILY LOT

Julius Perlinski was born in Prussia in 1836. He mustered in at Savannah as a musician with the 38th Georgia Infantry on April 29, 1862, and was later detailed to the medical department of that regiment.



"IT'S A PRIVILEGE TO BE HERE. THIS IS AN OUTDOOR MUSEUM—A LIVING, BREATHING HISTORY LESSON. PEOPLE WALK AWAY WITH A WHOLE NEW APPRECIATION FOR LIFE, AND THAT'S A SHOCK TO MOST OF THE FOLKS WHO KNOW THIS PLACE ONLY FOR DEATH."

could visit their dearly departed. It was during this time that cemeteries became seen more as parks, and the markers became honors.

And what better setting than Bonaventure, filled with Spanish moss, azaleas, camellias, and an assortment of wildlife?

"They are the most magnificent planted trees I have ever seen, about 50 feet high and perhaps 3 or 4 feet in diameter, with broad spreading leafy heads," famed naturalist and traveler John Muir said of the live oaks in his epic *A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf*. "Bonaventure to me is one of the most impressive assemblages of animal and plant creatures I ever met."

Artists had always admired the beauty of the land, but as the cemetery evolved into an outdoor museum, a one-upmanship of sculptured tributes began in earnest in the 1850s.

Some of the more well-known plots include those of beloved Savannah lyricist Johnny Mercer, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Conrad Potter Aiken (whose gravestone was fashioned as a bench to invite others to enjoy Bonaventure's beauty with him), famed philanthropist Mary Telfair, Confederate Army leader Alexander Robert Lawton, and 6-year-old Gracie Watson. (For more on her story, see page 26.)

Gracie's monument has fine examples of Victorian symbolism. The broken tree stump represents a life cut short, the ivy stands for eternal life, and the buds indicate innocence or purity.

FROM THE BONAVENTURE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



THE STORY OF LITTLE GRACIE

There are celebrities of their time, titans of business, war heroes, and 277 American Revolution soldiers interred at Bonaventure Cemetery. But one of the most visited sites is that of 6-year-old Gracie Watson.

Born in Savannah in 1883, Gracie was the daughter of the manager of the Pulaski House hotel and was loved by guests, often entertaining them in the hotel lobby with her unique song-and-dance show.

Gracie passed away two days before Easter in 1889 after a brief battle with pneumonia. Her grave was initially marked with a traditional gravestone until her family commissioned sculptor John Walz to produce a likeness of her in 1890.

The marble sculpture is said to bear a jaw-dropping resemblance to Gracie and is reportedly one of Georgia's only funerary monuments sculpted in such a life-size likeness.

"It draws your eye immediately, and the sculpture captures this innocence that makes it impossible not to be drawn to Gracie," said Don Teuton, cemetery aficionado and owner of the popular Bonaventure Don tour guide company. "It's truly a celebration of life and an embodiment of the beauty of Bonaventure."

Through the years, visitors began to leave small gifts, stuffed animals, and toys at Gracie's burial site, especially around Christmas and Easter. The site became so popular that the Bonaventure Historical Society eventually installed a wrought iron fence around the grave site after the sculpture's nose sustained some damage that needed repair.

Walz was also buried at Bonaventure, but it wasn't until a few years ago that he was properly honored.

"John died in November 1922. He was told he had cancer, so he reportedly spent his final months in his studio carving his own monument. But his wife took his last work and sold it, so it was never part of his grave," Teuton said. "Six years ago, the Bonaventure Historical Society gave Walz the proper headstone that his family never did."

Grave markers and memorials of all eras adorn the grounds of Bonaventure, coexisting in harmony with the timeless setting.



Teuton, who runs the popular Bonaventure Don walking tour, said that while every gravesite tells a fascinating story—far too plentiful to fit into his two-and-a-half-hour tour—one of his favorite historic nuggets is the resting spot of Henry Rootes Jackson.

“Henry claims to have performed the first act of war for the Confederacy,” Teuton said. “Fort Pulaski was held by the Union until January 1861. Everyone knew that to take Savannah, you had to control the fort. In the final week of 1860, Jackson got in a rowboat and paddled his way to the fort. He camped there for four days and reported back on the thin Union presence and their daily routines to Brigadier General Lawton. The Confederate Army proceeded to take Pulaski the first week of 1861 with no shots fired, thanks to Jackson.”

While the Jackson tale is one of his favorite little-known stories, Teuton concedes that 90 percent of the tour crowd has read *Midnight* and is there to be adjacent to the story.

“The *Bird Girl* sculpture that was on the cover of Berendt’s book and at the center of the marketing of the movie, it became so popular that it was actually moved to the Telfair Museum in Savannah to preserve it. Fans would try to chip off little pieces of the base for souvenirs,” Teuton said.

“The book, it has exposed so many more people to the beauty of Bonaventure. It’s made it the third-most-visited tourist spot in Savannah, so as twisted as the tale is, *Midnight* has made this place the star it deserves to be.”

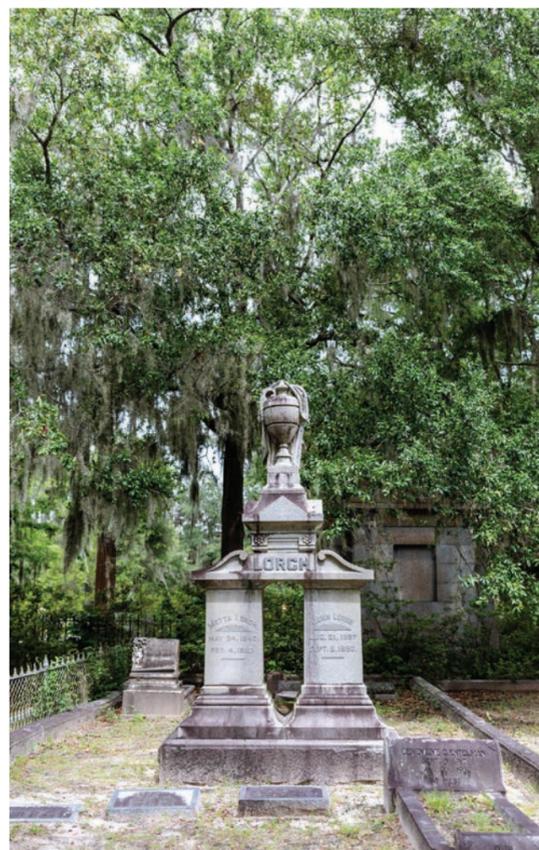
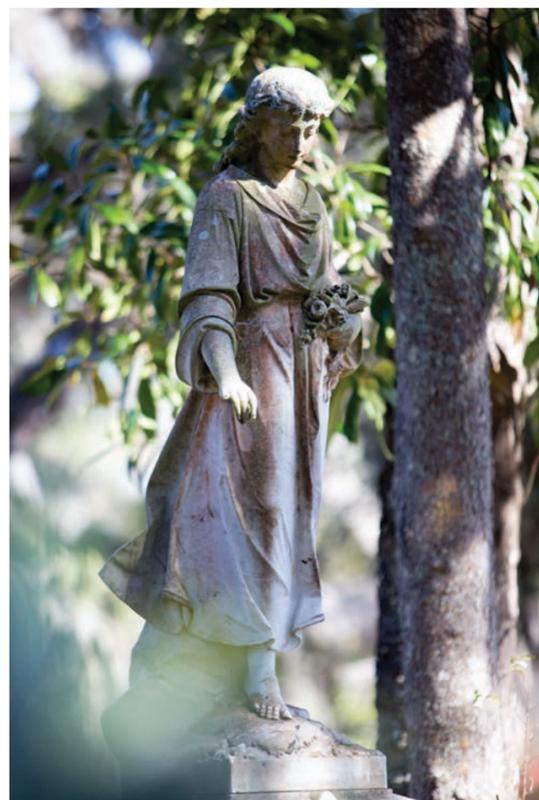
The society works to preserve the history of Bonaventure while ensuring its beauty endures. The site was hit especially hard during Hurricane Matthew in 2016. The cemetery was closed for five weeks as workers cleared 150 centuries-old trees toppled by the hurricane. Society volunteers have replanted more than 100 trees over the past year.

The COVID-19 pandemic ground much of the foot traffic and tours at Bonaventure to a halt, but Teuton said visitors are slowly returning.

“It’s a place that you can’t resist,” he said. “The serenity, the beauty, the honoring of so many lives, it’s just something folks don’t forget. We give tours on foot, by bus, by golf cart, Segway . . . folks are always finding new and creative ways to enjoy Bonaventure. We know that once you see this place once, you’ll be back time and again.” 🍷



For more information on hours and tour times, visit
BONAVENTUREHISTORICAL.ORG



Bonaventure features a collection of some of the country's earliest family monuments.





Roots Music

LOCAL SONGSTRESS DANIELLE HICKS TALKS LIFE ON THE FARM, FOLLOWING UP HER 2017 ALBUM, AND HER FAMILY HISTORY AT PALMETTO BLUFF.

Written by: **BARRY KAUFMAN** / Photography by: **BLAKE CROSBY**

If, by some miracle, you are not familiar with Danielle Hicks, the flame-haired siren who has captivated the Southeastern music scene and brought the house down at private parties all over Palmetto Bluff, introductions may be in order. If you are already familiar with her legendarily soulful sweet sound, feel free to skip ahead.

› Since becoming a mother to daughter, Revel, Savannah singer-songwriter Danielle Hicks has found a new source of inspiration for her music.



A

native of Tifton, Georgia, Hicks began performing Southern rock staples with her father's band, Mood Doc, at the age of 7. After high school, she made her move to New York City to pursue stardom but quickly found the South calling her home. We could tell you about that yearning for a simpler life, but you should probably just pour a drink and put on the track "Wide Open" from her debut album *Honey* and experience the raw emotion for yourself.

Returning to the South and ending up in Savannah, Hicks paired with guitarist Ben Keiser and formed Danielle Hicks and the Resistance, a band whose oeuvre gleefully dances between blues, rock, and R&B on the strengths of Keiser's masterful guitar work and Hicks's distinctive vocals. They toured the Southeast for years, returning regularly to

Savannah and the Lowcountry for festivals, bar shows, and parties, until the time came to record.

For her debut album, *Honey*, Hicks sought out famed producer Jim Scott of PLYRZ Studios (pronounced like "pliers"). Scott has worked the boards for acts ranging from Tom Petty to the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and under his supervision, *Honey* not only blew up on its Indiegogo campaign, but it masterfully captured Hicks's range. On "Walkin'," her sultry wail captures the fire of every spurned woman who has ever stormed out of a honky-tonk. On "Red Bird," her voice evokes the pure joy of simply sitting beneath a tree with the person you love.

(At this point, we'd like to welcome back everyone who was able to skip ahead.)

Danielle Hicks

› BABY BLUES

And now, Hicks is occupied with her latest masterpiece, an energetic 9-month-old girl by the name of Revel.

"The song that I wrote for Blake (her husband, celebrated photographer Blake Crosby) at our wedding had a line in it saying, 'Your love has set me free, now every day is a revelry,'" Hicks said. As we spoke on the phone, Revel provided a near-constant background hum of contented coos and joyful squeals, as if to prove that her mom isn't the only one with a powerful voice.

Having a child would normally spell "Game Over" for a performing singer-songwriter, but Hicks and her husband have adapted to parenting almost instantly. In fact, just 17 days after Revel was born, Hicks was back on stage opening for Sister Hazel. "She slept through the whole thing, so I guess she didn't find me that entertaining," Hicks said with a laugh.

She has hit the ground running since Revel was born, performing at venues around the Lowcountry. In fact, the only thing that was able to slow her down was the same pandemic that slowed pretty much everything down this past spring. "We had a full summer planned, it's just... everything kind of stopped."

She was able to take part in one of the many quarantine concerts held in Savannah, and with the lifting of restrictions, she's even started playing smaller venues. "We're doing Collins Quarter at Forsythe and Corks in Bluffton next weekend. We are still trying to be really, really careful, having a baby," she said, adding that she wears a mask and gloves when she's not performing. "This Sunday will be the first time I'm around people and singing. I've always been a hugger. It's going to be strange to navigate that. I'm still trying to follow social distancing. It's going to be a little strange."



“LOOKING FOR *wide open* SPACE IN THIS SMALL CROWDED CITY, A PLEASURE WITHOUT PAIN, NO LOSS WITHOUT GAIN.”



Montage
PALMETTO BLUFF

› **HOMEGROWN**

These days, a baby and socially distanced performances aren't the only things keeping Danielle Hicks busy. She and her husband, Blake, recently opened Crosby Gardens, a fully functional organic farm on a property owned by Blake's grandfather just off S. Okatie Highway between Palmetto Bluff and Savannah.

"The farm has really been great for our sanity through all this," she said. While many of us have spent time building up our own "crisis gardens," Crosby Farms was in the cards long before the pandemic. "This was a year and a half in the works. This was not a COVID rush job."

The couple spent that time cultivating the soil to organically grow everything from hakurei turnips to heirloom tromboncino squash. As we spoke, they were still getting their infrastructure up and running to sell their vegetables and cut flowers, but interest was high. Even if patrons may have a hard time finding it.

"We get so many calls from our friends, 'We think we're here. Where's the farm?' We may have to get a sign eventually," Hicks said.

The Crosby family isn't just a part of the land thanks to the acreage now supporting Crosby Gardens. Blake's father was a wildlife manager for Palmetto Bluff back when it was still a hunting ground for Union Camp. "They have a few pictures in their house of Palmetto Bluff before it became this gorgeous community," she said. "I get excited when I get that pass to go in. It's been a big part of Blake's family."

And just as the fields of the Crosby farm have nourished lush edibles, the experience of farming and being a new mom has proven fruitful for Hicks's songwriting.

"I'm still very driven to get this second record done or get some singles out this year," she said. Hicks says she has seven or eight songs that are

ready for an album, a selection that represents a more unified sound than *Honey*. "For one, something I'm excited about, they have more similarity, more of a common vibe," she said. "*Honey* was blues on this song, R&B on this song... These have a little more of a congruency."

While they wait for the sophomore album, fans of Danielle Hicks and the Resistance will simply have to enjoy their live shows from a safe distance and maybe pick up a few fresh veggies. If they can find the farm, that is. •



Listen to Danielle's first album, *Honey*, on iTunes, Spotify, and Amazon Music, and follow her on social media for updates on the release of her second album.

Celebrate Joyfully

This holiday season make time for adventure and celebration, laughter and reconnection, and most importantly the chance to once again be in a place that allows life's special moments to simply happen.

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DIRT CHURCH

WRITTEN BY: COURTNEY HAMPSON

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF: SOUTHWALL FARMS

As a young chef working at The Fearington House Restaurant outside Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the only thing Tyler Brown wanted to come through the kitchen door was perfect, clean vegetables, with no dirt. Fast-forward a couple decades, and playing in the dirt is exactly where Brown wants to be.

From Charleston to Chapel Hill to Nashville, Brown eventually realized—and accepted—that dirt was a part of the story. At the Hermitage Hotel in Nashville, where Brown was executive chef for 13 years, his small garden evolved into a partnership with the Land Trust, a bio-dynamic farm, and 250 acres with 150 head of cattle milling about. So, how did a chef convince the owners of a hotel that heritage-bred beef was the way to go? “Good PR, I guess?” he says with a shrug and a smirk. Nah, I suspect it was more than that.

Brown was raised in a home where food was always at the center. It did not matter where you were at 5:57 p.m., you were at the dinner table at 6:00 p.m. on the dot. No matter what. Brown remembers his father telling him, “It is because of your mother’s food that we have a community.” So, Brown grew up knowing that food could be a connector, and with food as a cornerstone of his upbringing, it is no wonder where he ended up, but it was not a direct path.

In high school, in Charleston, South Carolina, Brown admits, “Nothing was interesting to me.” His parents suggested Johnson & Wales University, which “seemed okay and certainly better than studying architecture,” he said. So, he gave it a whirl, and while his passion for food grew, it wasn’t a certainty.

Until he realized that food created the opportunity to travel. He spent an epic ski season in Vail as a pastry chef until spring came and “Vail was mud.” From there, he returned home and began a stint at Charleston Grill, which eventually led to The Fearington House Restaurant and, ultimately, the Hermitage Hotel, where he started to embrace dirt and realized over the course of his time there that he was much happier outside with dirty hands than in the kitchen.

Five years ago, as Brown mulled the inevitable question “What’s next?” he struggled with the answer. “I didn’t have a restaurant concept that I loved. . . . I knew I wanted a place to tell the farm story, but I also have a wife and two kids. I am passionate about food but didn’t want to be spread too thin.”



**“I DIDN’T HAVE A RESTAURANT
CONCEPT THAT I LOVED. I KNEW
I WANTED A PLACE TO TELL THE
FARM STORY.”**



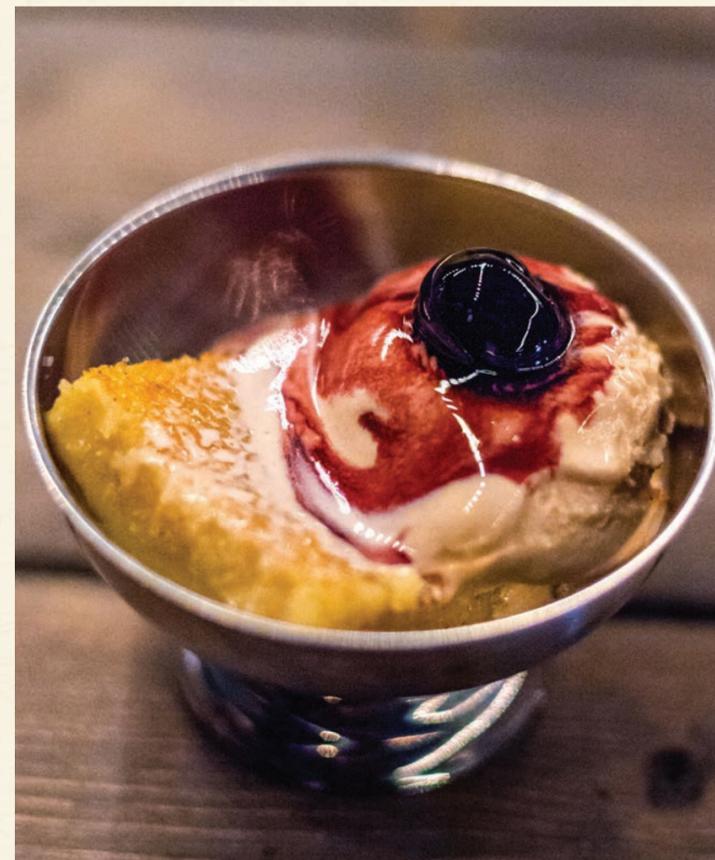


So, he found a partner, based in Chicago and Florida, who was looking to do something somewhere in the middle. And Southall Farms was born. Like anything good, it has taken time. Over 325 acres, in addition to the farm, they are building an inn and spa, cottages and luxury treehouses (sign me up!), and a restaurant focused on the experience around the farm. Brown has spent the last four-plus years thinking about how every seed placed in the ground can be a part of the story—on the menus, yes, but even in the spa treatments that will center on the healing powers of nature.

As Southall Farms slowly grows—the inn is scheduled to open in 2021, and wouldn't you know it, the builders broke ground right about the time stay-at-home orders emerged nationwide—Brown is anxious to share the process and give folks an opportunity to be a part of it. “We didn't have all the answers on day one, but we knew who we wanted to be. So, we're letting everyone share in the story—the failures and the successes. Everyone won't love what we're doing, but I love a strong opinion,” Brown said.



**“EVERYONE WON'T LOVE WHAT WE'RE DOING,
BUT I LOVE A STRONG OPINION.”**





“PEOPLE WERE HUNGRY FOR ANY CONNECTION TO NATURE AND THE CIRCLE OF LIFE, AND THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE CREATED A LOT OF JOY.”

THE RAMBLING

And from there, The Rambling was born. Content with the idea of growing slow, Brown did seek an interim opportunity to share his food with others. So, he gathered the necessary ingredients—a food truck, some shade, a huge grill, and a 110-year-old ice cream maker—and started to break bread with strangers.

Coined “The Rambling,” this dinner concept allows Brown to share a meal and the forthcoming plans for Southall Farms with 60 people a night. The menu is different each week, but the flow remains the same. Music, cornhole, bocce, and badminton kick things off along with a look at what’s cooking. When guests sit down, Brown encourages them to meet someone new and talk to their neighbor. The meal begins with a few “one-bite” starters—think roasted oysters, pickled shrimp, or mushroom and bacon fritters—to whet their appetite, then the bread (made in-house) and salad (grown within eyesight) hit the table before two proteins and three to four sides are passed family-style. Dinner is always capped off with homemade ice cream churned in that vintage ice cream maker and time spent in Adirondack chairs around a fire.

As the pandemic hit, The Rambling had to pause. But Brown’s desire and passion only continue to grow. “When we made the decision to cancel The Rambling on the front end of COVID-19, our urge to connect with people and serve the community at Southall didn’t wane. Our farm and culinary teams were deep into planning and planting, so we found

THE RAMBLING

6.7.2019

SOUR SAUSAGE FRITTER, GREEN TOMATO
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 BENNE ROLLS & HOUSE CULTURED BUTTER
 ROTISSERIE BAR-B-Q CHICKEN
 SMOKED PORK LOIN, WHISKEY SORGHUM GLAZE
 CHARRED SQUASH, SALSA ROSA, BENNE
 BREWED POTATO, MUSTARD, BACON
 CUCUMBER, FENNEL, GOAT FETA, PUFFED GRAINS
 PEACH ICE CREAM, BLUEBERRY, PECAN

∴

CHAR SIX PILL
 TOMATO, CUCUMBER, GOAT CHEESE, BULK WHEAT, D.
 CHARRED ZUCCHINI & SQUASH, SALSA ROSA, BENNE
 POTATO, CABBAGE, MUSTARD, PASTRAMI
 PEACH, BLUEBERRY, GINGER SNAP

9
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 T ROE
 CULTURED BUTTER
 UNY SEEDS

a temporary way to do all the things we set out to do this spring . . . just differently. What we found was that people were hungry for any connection to nature and the circle of life, and the whole experience created a lot of joy—not only for the community, but for us as well—amid really challenging circumstances.”

So, as stay-at-home orders became the norm, Southall Farms quickly pivoted to offer prepared meals and goodie boxes to folks on their mailing list. The boxes feature an assortment of produce from the farm and prepared products that can also be found in Southall’s online store, the Farm Stand, which features products from the farms and kitchens of their partners and friends—honey, pasta, cornbread mix, farm tools, and pottery made with clay from the farm.

Brown and his team have spent the summer in the dirt—planting and plotting and thinking about the what the next season will bring for the relationships and the soil they have been cultivating for years. Time spent that is sure to yield fantastic return.

Visit southallfarms.com to add your name to the mailing list for Southall’s farm and event updates.

SUMMER PLANTING

When we spoke in June, Brown had dozens of fruits and veggies in the ground...

ZEPHYR SQUASH

BRADFORD WATERMELON

CHARENTAIS MELON

GUARDSMARK BEET

CANDY STRIPE BEET

TOUCHSTONE GOLD BEET

DANVERS HALF LONG CARROT

PARIS MARKET CARROT

RAINBOW SWISS CHARD

LOLLA ROSSA LETTUCE

CARAFLEX CABBAGE

SAVOY CABBAGE

GARDEN PEACH TOMATOES

GREEN ZEBRA TOMATOES

CHEROKEE PURPLE TOMATOES

SAN MARZANO TOMATOES

SUNGOLD TOMATOES

BLACK CHERRY TOMATOES

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- ELIZABETH BARNWELL-GOUGH HOUSE -

Built in 1789, the Barnwell-Gough House, also known as "Old Barnwell House," is a noteworthy example of Adam style architecture adapted to local building materials. With exterior walls made of tabby (covered with stucco), this large two-story house was built for Elizabeth Barnwell Gough, whose grandfather Colonel John Barnwell built Fort King George on the Altamaha River in 1721 to protect the colony of South Carolina from Spanish encroachment. Located in the heart of Beaufort's historic district, the rescue and restoration of the Barnwell-Gough House can be attributed to long-time preservationist Colin Brooker. Known internationally for his expertise in tabby building methods, he has stabilized many of Beaufort County's tabby structures including the Edwards House on Spring Island, the Sams ruins on Dataw Island, tabby ruins on Callawassie Island, and the Chapel of Ease on St. Helena Island.

THE
ENDURING STORY
OF
TABBY

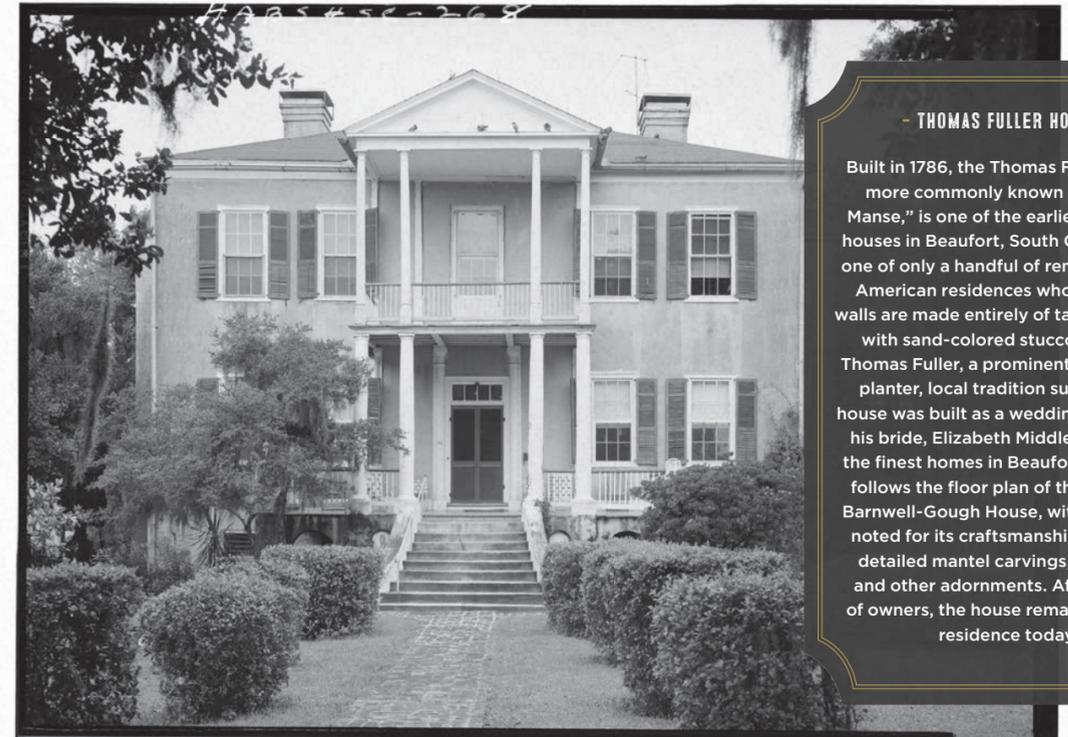
Written by: **TIM WOOD**

PHOTO: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, HABS SC,7-BEUF,34-



**- THE BOUNDARY AT -
MORELAND VILLAGE**

One of the predominant building materials incorporated throughout Moreland Village is tabby. Replicating original tabby, the final selection of tabby used in Moreland Village was based on a construction technique that uses a special blend of oyster shells of varying sizes combined with Portland cement and poured into forms to create "lifts," similar to the way it would have been created centuries ago.



- THOMAS FULLER HOUSE -

Built in 1786, the Thomas Fuller House, more commonly known as "Tabby Manse," is one of the earliest surviving houses in Beaufort, South Carolina, and one of only a handful of remaining early American residences whose exterior walls are made entirely of tabby (covered with sand-colored stucco). Built by Thomas Fuller, a prominent Lowcountry planter, local tradition suggests the house was built as a wedding present for his bride, Elizabeth Middleton. One of the finest homes in Beaufort, the house follows the floor plan of the Elizabeth Barnwell-Gough House, with an interior noted for its craftsmanship, including detailed mantel carvings, moldings, and other adornments. After a series of owners, the house remains a private residence today.

PHOTO: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, HABS SC, 7-BEAUF, 2-



IT WAS ONCE AS SYNONYMOUS WITH LOWCOUNTRY

culture as Spanish moss and a cornerstone in the history of Palmetto Bluff. And yet, the building material known as tabby seemingly disappeared rapidly from our landscape and our memory.

The mix of lime, water, sand, oyster shells, and ash went from a signature design feature of Lowcountry settlers in the 1700s and 1800s to an architectural mystery. Thanks to the efforts of archeological sleuths, we are only now beginning to realize the crucial role this material played in the evolution of Beaufort County communities.

"It is amazing how a material can go from plentiful just 250 years ago to eluding even the area's greatest historical scholars as recent as 40 years ago," said architect Colin Brooker, one of the "detectives" responsible for literally unearthing the origin story behind tabby—its ingenious anatomy and engineering as well as its inevitable limitations.

Brooker has become one of the world's leading experts on tabby design and history over the past three decades, but this career specialty began out of necessity.

He and his wife, fellow architect Jane, took on the rescue and restoration of Beaufort's storied **ELIZABETH BARNWELL-GOUGH HOUSE** in 1976 that Brooker and his team soon found to be full of tabby.

"We discovered this building material that I knew very little about, and I quickly realized very few others knew about tabby," Brooker said. *"If we were going to properly restore the magnificence of this house, I was going to need to know all I could uncover. That's what set me down this maddening path of discovery I have been on for the past three-plus decades. And what I have found is that the creation of tabby is brilliant, really. It's as simple as making the most of what those early settlers had available to them and turning it into a stunning design element."*

Brooker and others discovered that tabby was a recipe concocted out of convenience and abundance around the pre-Civil War Lowcountry in the early 1700s. All the materials were found in Beaufort and the coastal region. The lime was made by burning down oyster shells readily available thanks to acres upon acres of middens, piles of shells from Native American kitchen waste.

But who had the genius idea of combining these materials? Variations of the rammed-earth construction technique date back to Roman times, and tabby structures have been traced as far back as the 10th century and later to Spanish military installations in the late 1500s and to the Gullah culture of West Africa that migrated to the South Carolina coast.

Historians speculate that the science and specificity of Lowcountry tabby was discovered when the British stormed St. Augustine and stole it from the Spanish at the turn of the 18th century.

Tabby quickly became a go-to material and technique for area builders, as settlers discovered the mix to be more durable than wood, which deteriorated much quicker in the humid climate. Soon, tabby went from a fresh concept to a cultural mainstay and sociological status symbol of Charleston, Beaufort, and Bluffton homes of the 1700s. Researchers including Palmetto Bluff archeologist Dr. Mary Soggi have documented the rise and heyday of tabby at the Bluff, including **WILLIAM MCKIMMY'S OCTAGON HOUSE**, one of the newborn United States' first architectural marvels built in 1796.

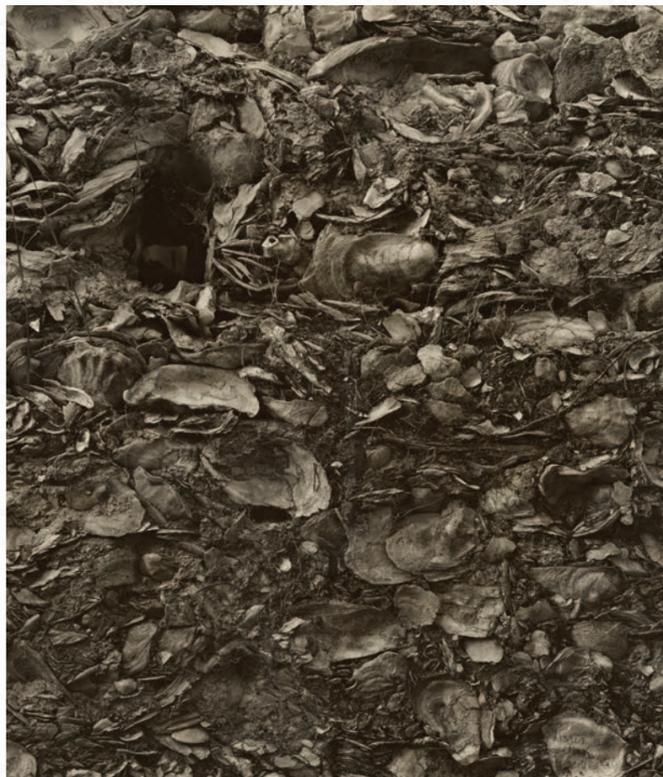
Whereas stone and brick were rare and expensive and the work of highly trained masons, making tabby was an arduous but simple enterprise. Enslaved people quickly picked up the process of mixing tabby and building tabby structures. Gathering materials took time, and while the recipe was difficult to perfect, the mixture was made quickly and in mass. Builders found it easy to work with and found multiple

PHOTOS: Courtesy of Palmetto Bluff and Dylan Sell



- WILLIAM MCKIMMY'S OCTAGON HOUSE -
 Located near the Inn cottages along the May River is a low, crumbling tabby wall. Part of the original foundation of the octagonal house built by William McKimmy, this wall is all that remains of the most unusual home ever built at the Bluff.

ORIGINAL



RE-CREATION



PHOTOS: Walker Evans and courtesy of Palmetto Bluff

uses in the construction process—molds were created for bricks, walls, columns, arches, floors, and even roofs.

“The early molds were 2 feet tall, so if you wanted height, that became labor intensive,” Brooker said. “And the floors became rough and wore quickly, so they needed replacing every 10 years. We’ve seen eight, nine layers of flooring in some ruins. To replace it, they just poured on top of the old layer.”

The hallmarks that made tabby so advantageous also led to its near extinction. Newly freed people dispersed around the Southeast after the Civil War, and as the once-abundant oyster shell middens were depleted, a newly manufactured material, Portland cement, became the go-to construction material by the 1870s.

That material was later added to the tabby recipe, creating a stronger, more moisture-resistant mixture that led to a tabby construction revival from the late 1800s through 1930.

But unlike the earlier styles named after legends such as Oglethorpe and Spalding, the later-period homes so prevalent along Georgia’s Golden Isles, Sea Islands, and the Lowcountry coast were often lacking in long-term durability, as Brooker and others have discovered.

“We found they were using a premade lime mix, often shipped in, and many of the ruins we’ve discovered used ocean shells. The builders did not wash the salt away from these shells, and that made the tabby a far-less-durable disaster waiting to happen,” said Brooker, whose latest tabby archeological endeavors are being detailed in his book, *The Shell Builders*, from the University of South Carolina Press.

After 1930, tabby went from a cultural staple to a relic.

“It wasn’t any one thing that made tabby construction go away,” Brooker said. *“It was just very labor intensive to*

PHOTOS: Courtesy of Palmetto Bluff and CS Thomas Construction



There are many adaptations of tabby still used today at Palmetto Bluff, which can be found within fireplaces, foundation walls, and other architectural elements.



do right and there was an exact science behind the recipe, and so newer technologies and mass-production methods became the norm. It has been stunning to see how little was historically documented about tabby, but that has made the hunt for knowledge and documenting that pursuit all the more of a preoccupation for folks like myself."

Today, Beaufort County is home to the most discovered tabby ruins in the world. Here at Palmetto Bluff, the forefather work of those such as McKimmy is honored throughout, especially in the homes of Moreland Village—where builders were able to replicate the original tabby effect for foundation walls and accent features such as fireplaces, porches, and bowling alley cladding.

As for detectives such as Socci and Brooker, the mystery continues to be pieced together, one discovery at a time. Brooker said his phone is ringing constantly with new discoveries, both statewide in coastal communities in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Texas and farther-flung locales such as the Bahamas and Morocco.

"It is a beautiful and mysterious material," Brooker said. "In my profession, it is told that architects don't retire, they just die. The work is never done, the fascination and that thirst for discovery never subsides, and truth be told, I'm no different when it comes to tabby." ♦



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Whiskey & Business

.....
How Mississippi-based
Cathead Distillery
brings heart & soul to
Southern spirits

WRITTEN BY:
KATELYN HUDSON
PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF:
CATHEAD DISTILLERY



While the craft *distilling* scene in the *South* continues to grow each year,

it can still come as a surprise to some that it accounts for nearly 30 percent of all US craft distilleries, including classic spirit states such as Texas, North Carolina, and Kentucky. While the region is known for ruling the brown liquor market, boasting some of the best domestic bourbons, American whiskeys, and ryes, Richard Patrick and Austin Evans, founders of Cathead Distillery in Jackson, Mississippi, chose a lighter, more versatile spirit on which to fill their glasses: vodka.

In 2010, longtime friends and spirits enthusiasts Patrick and Evans realized a shared, lifelong passion and dream by starting Cathead Distillery, Mississippi's first legal distillery. The pair met as undergraduates at the University of Alabama in 2001, where they bonded over mutual interests including live music and great cocktails, as well as similar backgrounds of being raised by entrepreneurial families who owned small businesses.

"We always knew we wanted to cut our own path in the world," said Patrick when reflecting on the decision to start the business. "We decided to go with what we knew and loved at the time, and that was the wine and spirits industry."

The men spent their postcollege years slinging drinks, working for other spirit brands and distributors and developing a collective knowledge of on-premise and off-premise beverage operations so that when the right opportunity presented itself, they would be ready.

"The stars aligned when we took a road trip for a blues music festival in my home state of Mississippi," Evans said. "There were no distilleries in the state at the time, as we were the last state to repeal prohibition in 1966, and it just made sense."

The name "Cathead," a term first coined by Mississippi blues musicians as a nod to respected artists, pays homage to both the state's rich musical heritage and the guys' personal passion for live music. Today, the words "Support live music" can be found on bottles of Cathead Vodka, as a portion of proceeds



Handmade and hand-selected, *Old Soul* is a precise blend of whiskey, with sweet notes of vanilla, reminiscent of bakery goods and sugar cookies, and hints of fresh leather. The *perfect metaphor* for our bourbon, Old Soul is thoughtfully crafted with a nod to both tradition and the future.



“*Honeysuckle* and *pecan* are flavors that are living all over the South. These are ingredients whose *smell* and *taste* were with me wherever I went.”

“It’s fun to substitute the flavored vodkas into a standard cocktail to add a bit of depth and complexity,” said Evans when asked about his favorite way to incorporate the unique flavor profiles into cocktails. “It’s surprising how versatile they actually become.”

Authenticity has served as a guiding principle for the brand since day one and is something Patrick and Evans reflect on as they celebrate a milestone this year: 10 years in business.

For those looking to take advantage of Cathead Pecan Vodka for the holidays, Patrick says the sky is the limit. “I’ve had everything from Pecan White Russians to a Pecan Old Fashioned to more mainstream stuff like Pecan Moscow Mules.”

For Evans, the people they have surrounded themselves with have made all the difference. “It’s been incredibly rewarding to assemble a team that reciprocates the same love and passion for the industry that we have sought out since the beginning.”

from every bottle sold is donated to like-minded organizations, such as Music Maker Relief Foundation, Southern Foodways Alliance, and the New Orleans Blues Society. While each non-profit supports a different cause—be it supporting young artists, preserving Southern culture, or reviving forgotten music, recipes, and stories—each contributes to the goal of preserving and celebrating the pair’s beloved Southern music and heritage. Each summer, the brand also hosts an annual music festival of their own, known as Cathead Jam.

As pioneers of the distilling industry in Mississippi, Patrick and Evans became well-versed in the state’s legislation around alcohol production and distribution, even amending several antiquated laws before they were allowed to legally open their doors for business. Once operational, the decision to start making vodka was an easy one.

“We’ve learned a lot,” said Patrick when asked about the business’s journey over the past decade. “Starting out as two 20-somethings in T-shirts and flip-flops to now having a team of more than 30 colleagues is really humbling. We’re always keeping our eyes on the road ahead.”

“I think selfishly that’s what we were drinking at the time—and it’s what we still drink,” said Evans when asked about the decision to make Cathead Vodka.

The world of “firsts” didn’t stop with honeysuckle and pecan vodka though. Cathead went on to create the first and only chicory liqueur made from 100 percent chicory root, an ingredient made famous by the home of voodoo: New Orleans, Louisiana. Bristow Gin, Bristow Gin Reserve, and Old Soul Bourbon bring the brand’s portfolio to seven craft distilled spirits.

As for what’s next for this dynamic duo and the quickly growing brand, the distillery is currently commissioning two pot stills, which will be used to distill different bourbons and whiskeys. The stills, which are set to be complete by end of year, foreshadow what fans can expect as far as new product offerings in the years to come.

“The flavors we’ve created over the years have come to us organically,” said Patrick of the slightly bitter, roasted flavored Hoodoo Chicory Liqueur. “We’ve never tried to chase trends, but our goal all along has been to remain authentic to who we are and where we’ve come from.”

“Austin and I have known each other for nearly 20 years, and we’re still figuring out who we want to be when we grow up,” Patrick said. “But what I do know is that, wherever we end up, it will be an exciting journey.” ✂

For Patrick, it had to be a lighter spirit: “It’s so hot in the South. We wanted something that’s versatile and you can drink all year long. Obviously, the South has a long-standing love and appreciation for bourbon, and we did too, but we just knew that was going to be later on down the road for us.”

After distilling the first vodka in Mississippi, Patrick and Evans went on to create the first honeysuckle- and pecan-flavored vodkas in the world.

“For us, it wasn’t just about being local; it was about nostalgia,” said Patrick when asked about the vision behind the two Southern-inspired brands. “Honeysuckle and pecan are flavors that are living all over the South. I grew up in Georgia, moved to Alabama for college, lived in South Carolina after that, and then moved to Mississippi. These are ingredients whose smell and taste were with me wherever I went.”

Meticulously sourcing ingredients from across the Southeast, Patrick and Evans aimed to create vodkas that not only convey a strong sense of place but also evoke a similar nostalgia in their fellow Southerners.




Southern Pecan Toddy

- 2 oz Cathead Pecan Vodka
- ½ oz Hoodoo Chicory Liqueur
- ½ oz Ceylon black tea syrup
- 1 dash of angostura bitters

Combine all ingredients in a coffee mug and add 3 oz hot water. Squeeze orange peel on top and discard. Garnish with cinnamon stick.



Native Drink

THE COMEBACK OF YAUPON

WRITTEN BY: **JUSTIN JARRETT**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: **PARKER STEWART**

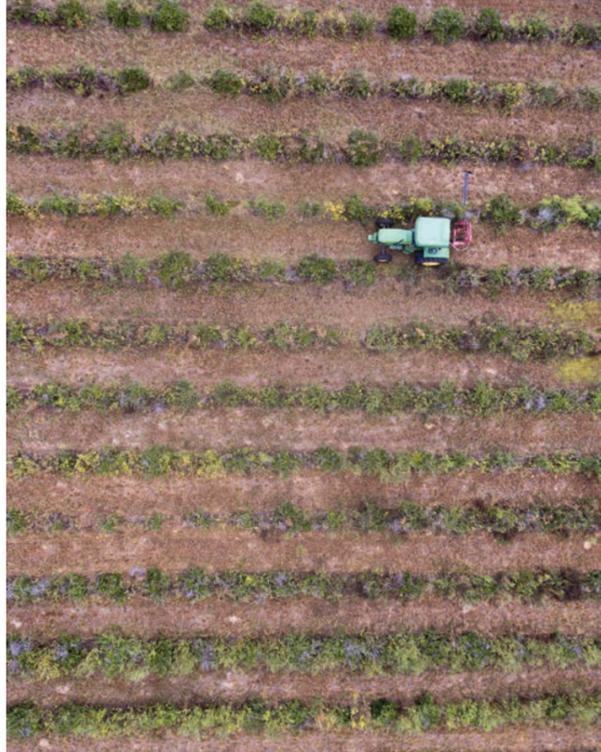
JOHN “CRAWFISH” CRAWFORD was holding court on Ossabaw Island about a decade ago, leading a nature retreat and talking about Yaupon holly, an ancient plant that native tribes in the Southeastern United States used as a stimulating beverage, medicinal plant, and ceremonial drink for centuries.

As Crawford clamored on about the history of the plant that grows wild all over Ossabaw—a barrier island near Savannah, Georgia, whose name literally translates to “land where the Yaupon grows” in the language of the island’s original

inhabitants—someone in the group suggested they brew some tea around the campfire later that night.

Lou Thomann was sitting around that campfire and sipping tea when he felt his dormant passion about Native American culture rekindling, perhaps with an assist from the natural stimulant.

“I felt the effects immediately, and it was really interesting,” Lou recalls. “As he was telling us about the tree, I just felt something about this tree was going to be my future. I kind of knew it immediately.”



When Lou got back to the mainland, he went into a deep dive researching what he now calls “North America’s forgotten medicinal plant.” Among the many interesting notes he learned was the notion that native medicine men were known to smoke Yaupon leaves to enhance their dream sequences and awaken inspired with a prescription for whatever ailed their patients.

It appears Lou was similarly inspired when he first sipped Yaupon tea all of those years ago on Ossabaw.

LOU’S FASCINATION WITH YAUPON (pronounced “yo-pawn”) started small enough, picking leaves from wild trees growing in the maritime forest surrounding the fish camp the family visits down the Georgia coast near Darien and serving the tea at charity events and social gatherings. He was working in construction at the time, but after a couple years of dabbling and deepening his interest in the plant, he decided to give it a go full time.

With his wife, Savannah real estate agent Lori Judge, supporting him, Lou launched into his newfound passion with both feet. The Yaupon Tea Company began packaging and selling tea leaves and ready-to-drink beverages, using Yaupon propagated from the wild trees growing at the fish camp and on Temples Farm in Metter, Georgia.

The company also owns a 270-acre longleaf pine farm in the Florida Panhandle, where wild Yaupon thrives in the shade beneath the pines. With distinctly different growing conditions at the two farms, Lou has been able to experiment, leading to a \$620,000 Phase II Small Business Innovation Research grant from the US Department of Agriculture to study the effects of different growing conditions on the plant’s chemistry and yields, which presents the prospect of creating an expanded line of natural health products from the plant, as well as scaling up the supply chain to support increased wholesaling nationwide.

The results, thus far, have been promising.

“Basically, the summary is this leaf wants to do big things,” Lou says. “It really wants to expand itself. Given the right cocktail of nutrients and shade and environment, the desirable compounds will dramatically increase. So now the challenge is creating a regenerative agricultural supply chain model for the wild crop, and that’s kind of what we’re doing.”

**This leaf wants
to do big things.**





FOR THE FIRST FEW YEARS, Yaupon was Lou's obsession. Lori was just there for moral support. But things took a turn when Lori's interest in holistic medicine and natural healing fueled an increased fascination with Yaupon.

Lori was diagnosed with Graves' disease in 2010, and she could not seem to kick the thyroid disorder until she abandoned Western medicine and opted for a regimen of herbal remedies, acupuncture, and a strict diet. Now fully healthy, she is determined to help others discover natural treatments for various ailments.

"I've been interested in holistic and natural healing for a long time," Lori recalls. "My grandfather was a chiropractor, so it's always kind of been in my blood, and then I got sick.... Long story short, I was able to heal myself naturally without Western medicine. And it kind of got me more interested in the natural medicine, which kind of coincided with what Lou was doing."

While opening a shop in Savannah has long been Lou's dream—one that came true in April 2019—it's Lori who has taken the lead in the Yaupon Teahouse and Apothecary's growing line of health and wellness products, ranging from skin care treatments to herbal smokes that blend Yaupon with CBD, lobelia, or even catnip, which Lori says provides instant relief for menstrual cramps with just a couple puffs.

"It's really what I like, that's really where I start, because I'm pretty picky," Lori says with a laugh. "I want everything organic. I want not a lot of ingredients in my skin care, as natural as possible. Very few essential oils, because I've learned that they are so powerful and they're not sustainable. There's an art to it, but there's also a science to it."

Benefits of Yaupon

Yaupon is known to be rich in a wide variety of bioactive compounds, mainly polyphenols and alkaloids, that play an essential role in its health benefits, which include antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, anticarcinogen, anti-obesity, antidiabetic, neuroprotective, and cardiovascular protective activities.

Polyphenols in Yaupon

Polyphenols are micronutrients that we get through certain plant-based foods. They're packed with antioxidants and potential health benefits. Polyphenols can improve or help treat digestive issues, weight management, diabetes, neurodegenerative disease, and cardiovascular disease.

Alkaloids in Yaupon

The magic is in how all of these compounds "stack together," making Yaupon the ideal beverage to accompany both mental and physical exercise.

- **Caffeine:** The caffeine content in the wild Yaupon leaf is relatively low, but the Yaupon Tea Company's research farm has increased caffeine levels in its fields of organic Yaupon, and the season of the harvest and climatic variations also influence caffeine levels.
- **Theobromine:** Stimulates the soft muscle tissues in the body, thus smoothing out the caffeine effect.
- **Theophylline:** Functions as a bronchial dilator of sorts, helping to dilate veins and blood vessels, improving circulation. Theophylline is known as a respiratory stimulant. Simply put, theophylline makes the caffeine and theobromine energy work more efficiently.
- **Theanine:** Acts like a time-release capsule for the energy, stretching it out.
- **Theacrine:** Adds stamina to the energy pathway. When your mind wants to stop the body, theacrine keeps you going.

Source: yauponteahouse.com





Yaupon at the Bluff

Given that Yaupon holly was used as an all-purpose medicinal plant by tribes native to the Southeastern United States, it should come as no surprise that the ancient herbal remedy grows abundantly at Palmetto Bluff.

A small native evergreen tree whose leaves can be brewed into a potent tea known as “black drink,” Yaupon is the only caffeinated plant species native to North America, and it flourishes in Palmetto Bluff’s maritime forests.

Yaupon’s red berries are inedible and, in fact, were used as an emetic to induce vomiting by early European settlers, but its leaves had many uses in Native American culture. Not only were they dried and steeped to produce the potent tea that is presently enjoying a resurgence in popularity, but they were also smoked and used in numerous ceremonies and rituals, many of which likely took place right here at the Bluff.

TO SAY THIS IS LOU’S CALLING would not be a stretch. Going back to that night on Ossabaw Island, the land where the Yaupon grows, something inside him stirred. Now the childhood fascination with Native American cultures that had fizzled out around age 10 or 11 is burning brightly.

In the decade since, Lou has become an expert—arguably *the* expert—on Yaupon. His mission has become as much about education as business. He rattles off one fact after another about the plant’s history, noting its uniqueness among medicinal plants native to North America. Yaupon was prized by a wide variety of tribes who traveled great distances to consume and trade the tea British colonists would later call “black drink.” It was even traded to the Mayans for cacao.

For years, it seemed like Lou was the only person in America who was talking about Yaupon, but articles about the ancient medicinal tree started popping up in regional publications a few years back and a handful of more widespread sources, including NPR and Discovery Channel, have reported on the plant in recent years.

Lou feels compelled to see this through, almost a self-appointed ambassador for a magical plant that has been hiding in plain sight. He wants to honor

Yaupon’s historical and cultural origins and reintroduce the world to the plant’s many uses and medicinal qualities.

The Yaupon Teahouse website includes a fairly extensive history of the plant, including its popularity around the globe during colonial times, when early European settlers marveled at the life span of Native Americans, who were living into their 70s while the average European life span was about 45—attributing the health and longevity to black drink.

Even the company logo pays tribute to the plant’s heritage, featuring a rendition of a dyed image that was found on a petrified piece of wood featuring Native American art. The bird is unidentified but is said to represent a warrior bird that protects its family.

“There is probably other symbolism with the bird,” Lori says, “but for us, it represents protection for health, wellness, and longevity.”

Fitting for a healing plant that is on the rise after being overlooked for so long. ●



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GAME ON

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY:

Justin Hardy



YOU NEVER FORGET YOUR FIRST SUCCESSFUL DEER HUNT.

Never. I remember every detail of mine. The story is not unique in any way. Hell, I'd bet the majority of hunters share a similar memory. It was a cold morning. Halloween. Daddy woke me up early. We threw on our camouflage, grabbed rifles, and headed for the box stand on the edge of a small, peanut-shaped food plot near the Ocmulgee River in Dodge County, Georgia. I was too short to see out of the blind, but we had a plan. If Dad saw something, he would reach over and tap on my knee to snap me out of whatever strange rabbit hole of thought I had slipped into. (Three hours in a box will take you places.) When the tap occurred, I had my doubts because he had jokingly tapped many times throughout the season. He undoubtedly got a kick from watching me perk up and fidget as my adrenaline and nerves began to take over. He wasn't kidding this time. When I looked up at him, his eyes were wide and locked on something still hidden from my view. He was pointing with his right hand in subtle motions to our 2 o'clock. I slowly rose from my seat and peered through the shooting slot on the blind, and there she was. A doe. My muscles tensed and shook. My breathing became rapid and shallow. I raised the rifle, found her in the scope, collected myself, took off the safety, and did what hunters do.

In my young mind, that first deer was a status symbol. I had done it. I was a man. I was a bonified, self-reliant, meat-eating savage! If you saw me fighting a bear, you ought to help the bear. I was 10 and I was damn proud.



Time raced ever forward. I got older and my outlook on things changed. I still hunt, but my motivations and tactics are far removed from those of my younger self. These days, I enter the woods with one thing on my mind. It is not the adrenaline rush. It is not the bragging rights. It is not the chance for a big ol' wall-hanger. It's meat! Meat is the motivation. Lean, red, organic, delicious meat. All the preparatory labors such as planting food plots, moving and cleaning out deer stands, late-night spotlight surveys, placing and checking trail cameras, and off-season obsessing are conducted with the smells and sounds of sizzling meat in mind. Everything, from shot placement to animal selection, revolves around what I envision on a plate. My "trophy" is not an impressive set of antlers. (They don't taste very good.) My "trophy" is a medium-rare backstrap.

White-tailed deer meat (and wild game in general) is second to none in my mind. Yes, I love a beef ribeye, pork ribs, smoked BBQ chicken, and all that farm-raised yummy goodness. I cook and enjoy it frequently. And yes, I do realize that farm-raised livestock feeds millions and millions of people every day, BUT . . . allow me to climb upon my trusty soapbox for a moment. Almost no one knows where their ribeye came from. Where in the world did it come from? What farm? Who is the farmer? What did the cow eat? Was it in good health? How did it come to be in this neatly packaged product before me? What part of the cow is the ribeye anyway? Joel Salatin, an author and farmer, was recently quoted saying, "The average fast-food burger contains meat from up to 600 different cows." You may already know where I'm going with this. Consumption of farm-raised meat has led to an extreme detachment from the food on our plates. There, I said it. When I pull a piece of venison out of the freezer, I know the answers to those questions. I know the deer because I chose it. I know where it came from; I was there. I know what it ate and how it lived, because I had a hand in the process. I know it is organic, free-ranging, cage-free, and not genetically altered.

**I KNOW THE DEER BECAUSE I CHOSE IT.
I KNOW WHERE IT CAME FROM;**

I WAS THERE.





BY BREAKING DOWN AND PROCESSING YOUR ANIMAL, YOU ARE GIVEN

THE FREEDOM TO SELECT YOUR OWN CUTS.

Not only is hunting for game meat a more personal way of protein procurement, but it can also be handled and prepared in more personal ways. By breaking down and processing your animal, you are given the freedom to select your own cuts. Sure, ground meat and sausage are great for quick recipes like burgers, spaghetti, and chili. This is, by far, the most common usage of deer meat, but how about something really freaking good? How about some venison shanks (the lower part of the legs) braised for hours in a rich broth then laid over a bowl of cheese grits? How about thick-cut, seared sirloin steaks with turnips and pickled radishes from the food plot? How about a deer heart cut into strips and deep-fried with the most American of all side dishes, the fried tater? How about smoked shoulder pulled apart then folded into an empanada and covered in fresh salsa? The possibilities are delectably endless. Producing food in this way has a tendency to create the warm and fuzzies. From start to finish, your hands have done it all. Kill, clean, cut, cook. I assure you: food tastes better when there are feelings and work involved.

Just in case the point has been missed: I love wild game meat, hunting, Palmetto Bluff, and my dad. The 10-year-old version of myself didn't realize it at the time, and maybe Daddy didn't realize it either, but those precious hours spent together in the deer woods would forever change my life. They were impactful. They shaped me. They sent me down a path that led me to becoming a land and wildlife manager. They influenced the words I'm writing at this very moment. They influence me at dinnertime. I am deeply grateful that he took the time and made the effort to get me out there. I am grateful to live in a country and work at a special place that has abundant wild game. A place where I am one of a few who gets to work in the wild and help produce something incredible.

And I am grateful for deep-fried deer hearts. ✂

Hunting at the Bluff

Conservation, boiled down to just a few words, is the maximization of natural resources to be utilized and enjoyed by humans. With this guiding principle in mind, the Palmetto Bluff Conservancy actively manages deer and hog herds with traditional hunting practices. Without hunting, deer and hog herds would quickly exceed the land's carrying capacity, which would result in a nutrient-starved ecosystem. Simply stated, fewer individuals within a herd results in a larger amount of resources per individual.

Ecological benefits aside, hunting fills freezers. Every year, the Conservancy donates an average of 1,100 pounds of organic, lean, hormone- and filler-free ground venison to charitable organizations across Beaufort County.



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OCTOBER 1995

The night was cold and wet.

The moon was full and had an eerie glow from the clouds hovering before it. Richard Levant, still a mountain of a man to this day and one of my best friends and mentors, had joined me on a coon hunt. We made our last “turnout” of the evening at 3:00 a.m. to no avail. All the night creatures were trying to stay warm and dry; the only fools left in the rain were Richard and me. We had to be at the Lodge to get hunters ready by 4:30 a.m., so Richard left me to feed and put Queen, his black Plott hound, in the kennel. Back in those days, it was not unusual to be out so late. At the time, I was not married and would often coon hunt all night with Richard before heading to our office, cleaning myself up, and going straight to the Lodge to pick up hunters.

But back to the story. On this October night, the rain fell. The full moon would show itself briefly from behind the ghostly, low-hanging clouds, setting a haunting scene across the dark landscape. I paid no attention to the moon, focusing on the fact that I had to be back at the Lodge in less than an hour. I fed Queen, got her in the kennel, took a much-needed bath, and rushed over to the Lodge where, upon arrival, I could see Richard’s truck. The rain was falling hard now, and I was ready to go inside for some coffee. In the broken moonlight, I looked toward our fish shed and saw Richard standing there with Queen. I knew straight away I was in trouble for not latching the kennel gate, and when I called out to Richard, I received no response. Knowing I was in for a good tongue lashing, I went inside for my morning coffee.

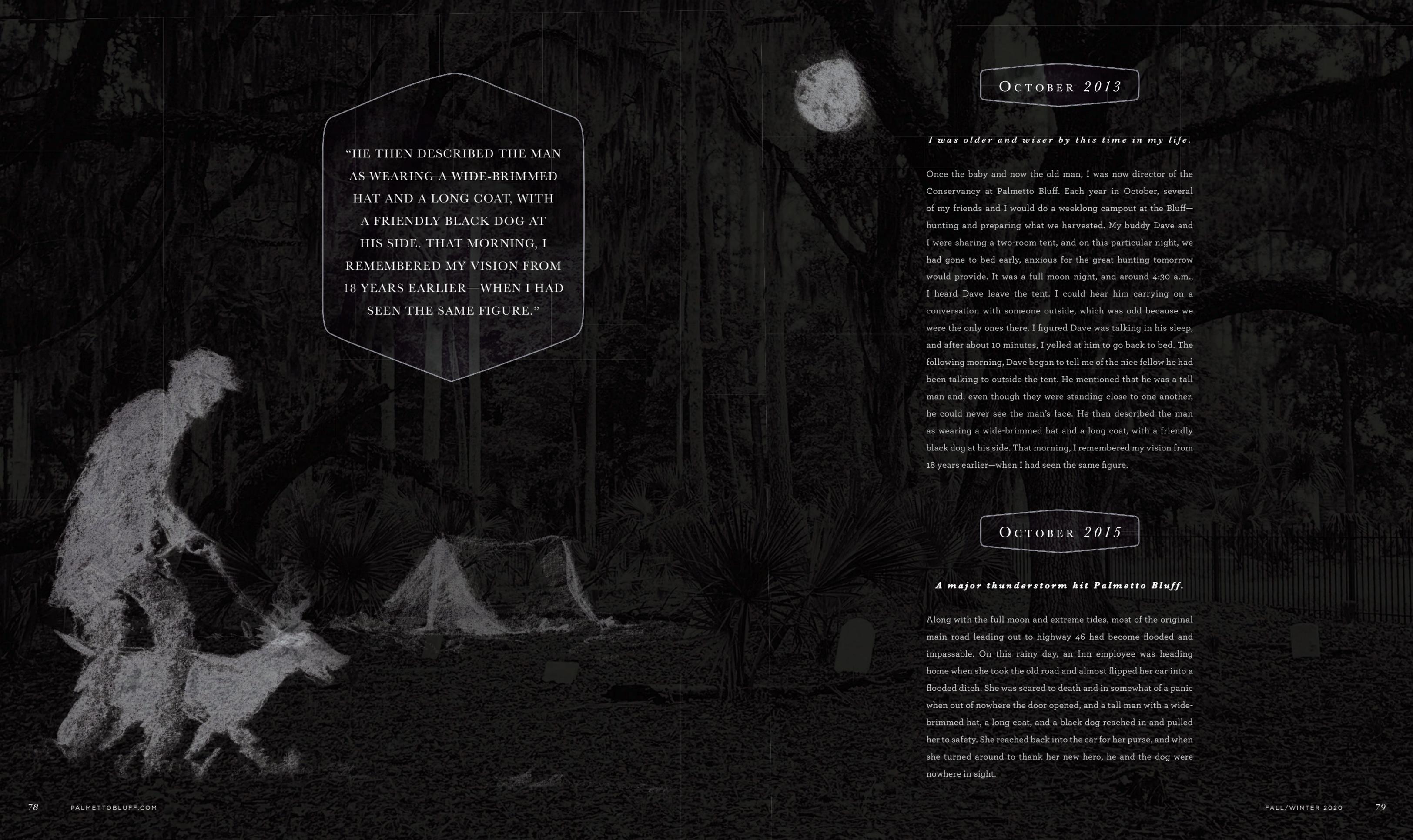
To my surprise, I walked into the Lodge and was greeted by Richard. Bewildered, I proceeded to tell him that I had just seen him by the fish shed with Queen. His response was that he had not left the Lodge since arriving earlier. Still puzzled, I told him that I was sure there was a tall man with a wide-brimmed hat and a long coat standing in the door of the fish shed, with Queen at his side. We immediately went outside into the rain and could not find a soul—man or dog. This was chalked up as just another weird happening at the Bluff.



A Haunted BLUFF

THE OAK ISLAND APPARITION

Written by: Jay Walea / Illustrated by: Amanda Davis



“HE THEN DESCRIBED THE MAN AS WEARING A WIDE-BRIMMED HAT AND A LONG COAT, WITH A FRIENDLY BLACK DOG AT HIS SIDE. THAT MORNING, I REMEMBERED MY VISION FROM 18 YEARS EARLIER—WHEN I HAD SEEN THE SAME FIGURE.”

OCTOBER 2013

I was older and wiser by this time in my life.

Once the baby and now the old man, I was now director of the Conservancy at Palmetto Bluff. Each year in October, several of my friends and I would do a weeklong campout at the Bluff—hunting and preparing what we harvested. My buddy Dave and I were sharing a two-room tent, and on this particular night, we had gone to bed early, anxious for the great hunting tomorrow would provide. It was a full moon night, and around 4:30 a.m., I heard Dave leave the tent. I could hear him carrying on a conversation with someone outside, which was odd because we were the only ones there. I figured Dave was talking in his sleep, and after about 10 minutes, I yelled at him to go back to bed. The following morning, Dave began to tell me of the nice fellow he had been talking to outside the tent. He mentioned that he was a tall man and, even though they were standing close to one another, he could never see the man's face. He then described the man as wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a long coat, with a friendly black dog at his side. That morning, I remembered my vision from 18 years earlier—when I had seen the same figure.

OCTOBER 2015

A major thunderstorm hit Palmetto Bluff.

Along with the full moon and extreme tides, most of the original main road leading out to highway 46 had become flooded and impassable. On this rainy day, an Inn employee was heading home when she took the old road and almost flipped her car into a flooded ditch. She was scared to death and in somewhat of a panic when out of nowhere the door opened, and a tall man with a wide-brimmed hat, a long coat, and a black dog reached in and pulled her to safety. She reached back into the car for her purse, and when she turned around to thank her new hero, he and the dog were nowhere in sight.

OCTOBER 2016

While preparing our annual Conservancy calendar, we came up with the idea of telling ghost stories as a spooky lecture to fit the season.

I was asked if I had any stories from my time spent at the Bluff, so I began to recall my encounters with the man wearing the wide-brimmed hat and long coat and accompanied by a black dog. I divulged the conversation between the man and my buddy Dave during our camping trip—how he asked what we were hunting and if we had any luck before he turned to walk up the moonlit road and out of sight. I also mentioned how Dave talked about how friendly the dog seemed, yet every time he would reach down to pet him, the dog would move to the other side of the man. Once Dr. Mary Socci, archaeologist for the Palmetto Bluff Conservancy, found out where we were camping, she gasped and said, “That’s Abram Grant!”

Abram Grant was enslaved on a plantation near Ridgeland, South Carolina, at the beginning of the Civil War. Once the Union troops took Hilton Head, Abram and his family fled to the island and to freedom. Soon after his arrival on Hilton Head, he enlisted in the Union Army and fought for the remainder of the war. After the Civil War, Abram came to Palmetto Bluff as a free man and rented land to farm at Oak Island (the very spot where Dave and I had camped). Abram was able to save enough money to eventually buy his own 40 acres on Oak Island where we believe he still resides today.

Legends, ghost stories, or tall tales, these are true accounts of events that happened. But what stands out the most about these encounters with Abram is he still seems to be, in one form or another, here at the Bluff looking after the land and its inhabitants.





THE *Giving* TREE

Written by: Kristen Constantineau / Photography by: Krisztian Lonyai / Illustrated by: Amanda Davis



Once THERE WAS A TREE...

Summertime in the Lowcountry. Not exactly the time of year when one starts thinking about Christmas and the holiday season. Yet, there I was in a sundress and knee-high rain boots waiting on my ride—Jay Walea, director of the Palmetto Bluff Conservancy and knower of all the secret places—to take me into the wilds of Palmetto Bluff to find the perfect Christmas tree.

No, we weren't scouting a tree to cut down for the annual tree lighting at Palmetto Bluff. We were looking for the

perfect tree for our annual Christmas card. A tree that would not only bring joy and warm wishes to our friends and neighbors via mail delivery but also a kind gesture (and a bit of winter sustenance) to those we hold most dear—the wild inhabitants at the Bluff.

At 20,000 acres—with habitats ranging from maritime forests and mixed pine hardwoods to evergreen wetlands and hardwood bottoms—Palmetto Bluff is a constant hive of activity for wildlife. Sprawling live oaks, southern

magnolias, eastern red cedars, and cabbage palmettos are home to white-tailed deer, eastern wild turkeys, opossums, raccoons, mink, coyotes, gray foxes, and bobcats. When the tide is high, look down low and you can see fiddler crabs and redfish. Look to the sky and you'll find wood storks, great egrets, snowy egrets, great blue herons, tricolored herons, summer tanagers, and painted buntings.

But back to Christmas. (And the very non winter-esque day riding around the marsh looking for the perfect tree.)

When the task was presented to me last summer, to find inspiration for the Palmetto Bluff Christmas card, the idea of giving a Christmas tree back to Mother Nature just seemed to make sense. So, with plenty of holiday spirit (and bug spray), Jay and I rode around, or rather bumped along, the backwoods of the Bluff looking for the perfect tree to present to our furry friends. And then we found it. Located on the New River marsh, about 100 yards from the dirt path we were on, was a 15-foot-tall cedar tree deep within our tidal wetland. This was it. We had found our "Wildlife Christmas Tree."



Edible ornaments included dried orange slices, birdseed, popcorn, and cranberries hung with twine that birds can use for their nests in the spring.



What came next was a week's worth of research on edible decorations followed by drying, mixing, baking, molding, popping, and stringing.

And then, it was time to trim the tree.

Gathering up the décor, I once again called on my trusty chauffeur to take me back to the woods and the marsh so we could trim our tree. (I may have also said a little prayer that it would be low tide, so carrying all the delicate ornaments would be a bit less cumbersome.) And although it was September, this particular day happened to be cool and overcast—helping just a bit to make it feel a little less like summer and more fitting of the task at hand.

Retracing our path from a few weeks prior, we made it safely to the tree (and yes, thank heavens, it was low tide), and we went to work.

Garlands of puffy white popcorn intertwined with shiny red cranberries were carefully draped on the cedar's prickly branches. Shimmering like stained glass, vivid orange slices danced in the breeze. And just like those handmade

ornaments from Christmas past that need just the right branch, the holiday-shaped birdseed ornaments were carefully placed on sturdier limbs—signaling that the buffet was now open.

That was it. Our work was done. We had taken a lonely cedar tree in the middle of the marsh, nearly inaccessible to most, and outfitted it with the most beautiful (and edible) ornaments for our furry and feathered friends (with the leftover twine used for nests in the spring).

And while last year was the inaugural year of the Palmetto Bluff Wildlife Tree, I have a strong feeling that with each passing year, the number of elves decorating the tree may grow, the ornaments may get more ornate, and, perhaps, the wildlife may get a bit plumper. •

AND THE TREE WAS *happy.*

To learn more about the Palmetto Bluff Wildlife Tree, including how to make edible ornaments for your own tree, visit: palmettobluff.com/discover/palmetto-bluff-wildlife-tree.





LOCAL CHARACTER

Chef Jae Newby



WRITTEN BY: KRISTEN CONSTANTINEAU PHOTOGRAPHY BY: KRISZTIAN LONYAI

When I sit down with JoVonia Newby, known simply as “Jae” to most, it’s after she’s just dropped off the most delicious and real-looking yule log (read: cake) you’ve ever seen for a photo shoot later that day. In addition to her obvious baking skills, she’s also one of the sweetest people I’ve ever interviewed. In between all the “ma’ams,” she’s full of subtle quips and candid anecdotes. She’s sugar and spice and, yes, everything nice. At once I know that I have chosen my subject wisely.

Born in Virginia and raised in Virginia, Georgia, and Texas, Chef Jae’s passion for baking started at the young age of 12, learning from her grandmother—a great baker, but also just an all-around great cook. Following her grandmother’s lead, Chef Jae began her professional baking career at Montage Palmetto Bluff in February 2013 as pastry cook for the River House, where she helped create the menu—including holiday menus—made desserts for Buffalo’s and The Canoe Club, and baked cookies for banquets and “porching.” Jae took a break from her work at the Bluff in March 2015; however, she made her way back in November 2016 as pastry cook I where, after honing her skills further, she now holds the title as the training specialist for the pastry department at Palmetto Bluff. In her current role, she trains all incoming pastry personnel, oversees banquet events and the menu creation for each dining outlet, and assists with making wedding and other special occasion cakes. She has also been instrumental in the opening of Palmetto Bluff’s newest—and sweetest—culinary adventure, Melt.

It should come as no surprise then that we decided to meet Jae at her favorite spot at the Bluff for this sweet chef’s time in the spotlight.

WHAT GOES THROUGH YOUR MIND AS YOU DRIVE INTO PALMETTO BLUFF? How relaxing it is . . . to see the May River. It’s the most relaxing part of my day.

WHAT ABOUT ON YOUR WAY HOME? I don’t think of anything.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT? My kids.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MARKED CHARACTERISTIC? I’m creative.

WHAT WAS THE LAST BOOK YOU READ? *Immigrant Girl, Radical Woman: A Memoir from the Early Twentieth Century.*

IF YOU COULD HAVE ONE SUPERPOWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE? Telekinesis.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WHEN YOU AREN’T AT PALMETTO BLUFF? Baking. And for relaxation, I hand letter. I hand letter everything—invitations, cards, everything.

WHAT MAKES YOU LAUGH? Everything makes me laugh.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SPOT AT THE BLUFF? Melt. I made the pastries—the giant chocolate chip and M&M cookies, the pralines, and the macarons. I also made the ice cream they use in the s’mores sundae. It’s a smoked white chocolate with fudge and chocolate chunks.



I love to pick something that is not ice cream and make it into ice cream.

I'M GLAD YOU BROUGHT UP MACARONS. IS IT PRONOUNCED MACK-A-ROHN OR MACK-A-ROON? It's macaron. Macaroons are coconut. I prefer macarons. . . . I do not like macaroons. They are too sweet.

FAVORITE PALMETTO BLUFF EVENT? My favorite event is Music to Your Mouth. It's a culmination of what we've done all year. It showcases everyone's talent and creativity. I love the entire event.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DESSERT TO MAKE? EAT? Ice cream. To make and eat. My favorite flavor is butter pecan. I also love to pick something that is not ice cream and make it into ice cream.

FAVORITE FLAVOR COMBINATIONS? I like a lot of herbs in desserts. It adds a dimension that is unexpected. Octagon has a cardamom crème brûlée with lavender shortbread—subtle but intense at the same time.

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD HAVE BECOME IF NOT A CHEF? A lawyer. I have a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

WHEN YOU'RE NOT AT PALMETTO BLUFF, WHERE DO YOU GO FOR DESSERT? My kitchen.

TELL ME ABOUT ANY PINTEREST FAILS. A Mickey Mouse-shaped cake.

SPEAKING OF FAILS, HAVE YOU SEEN THE NETFLIX SHOW NAILED IT? I've never seen it. I like *Sugar Rush*. It's probably my favorite Netflix baking binge show. You have to be able to do everything to make it in that show.

FAVORITE DESSERT FROM A PLASTIC PACKAGE? Murray Old-Fashioned Ginger Snaps. I would eat an entire bag.

MUST-HAVE PIECE OF PASTRY EQUIPMENT FOR NEW CHEFS STARTING OUT? A mini offset spatula.

FAVORITE INGREDIENT TO WORK WITH? Cocoa powder.

BIGGEST GUILTY PLEASURE? Grilled cheese. My favorite grilled cheese sandwich I just made had strawberry jam, Granny Smith apple slices, arugula, and two types of cheese.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT WORKING IN A HOTEL RESTAURANT ENVIRONMENT? I like being able to be creative. Here, especially, we are encouraged to try new things and develop new skills.

CAKE OR PIE? Cake.

CHOCOLATE OR VANILLA? Chocolate.

SWEET OR SAVORY? Both.

WHAT'S THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED? Chef Drew Dzejak, executive chef at Alys Beach, who used to be the executive chef at Palmetto Bluff, told me "never put yourself in a box."



We couldn't agree more. Unless it's a box full of macarons, then sign us up. ❖



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HOSTESS *with the* **MOST TEST**

Written by: Kristen Constantineau | Photography by: Photography by Anne, Inc.

It's safe to say that we love a good party. Spring, summer, fall, winter . . . dinner parties, wedding showers, birthday celebrations, holiday soirees, book clubs, or just a simple brunch with friends, filling our homes with the company and the laughter of friends is good for the soul. And while building up a fully stocked collection of entertaining pieces takes time, there are a few essentials that will always come in handy and help make hosting much more relaxing and fun.

As Dorothy Draper, American interior designer and author of several DIY guides, wrote in *Entertaining is Fun! How to*

Be a Popular Hostess, "Take what you've got; mix well with imagination, courage, a dash of humor and the desire to enjoy life. The result is guaranteed to please."

From monogrammed linens, pitchers, and serving platters to crystal glasses, marble cheese boards, and luxe animal hide coasters, we've followed Dorothy's lead and rounded up some of our favorite "must-have" entertaining essentials for any type of soiree. And just remember—focus on the essentials and making living fun. Because "if a hostess has fun, her guests will too!"

**MONOGRAMMED
ROUND MAPLE
CUTTING BOARD
WITH HANDLES***

*Emily McCarthy, \$188
(available in other sizes
and wood grains)*

**GOLDBUG
NAPKIN RING**

*Scout Southern Market,
\$32 each*

**MONOGRAMMED
LINEN DINNER
NAPKIN SET***

*Emily McCarthy,
\$148 for a set of 4*

**DEER BOTTLE
OPENER**

Retail Therapy, \$20

CRYSTAL COUPETTE

*Scout Southern Market,
\$15 each*

VASE

J. Banks Design, \$115



*Available to monogram with any of Emily McCarthy's signature monograms and couture monograms.

SLATE/MARBLE
CHEESE BOARD
J. Banks Design, \$218

CANDLE HOLDER
J. Banks Design, \$290

THE ART OF THE
CHEESE PLATE BOOK
J. Banks Design, \$35

GOLD PLATED
KNIFE SET
Emily McCarthy, \$56

“W” COCKTAIL
NAPKINS*
*Emily McCarthy,
\$12 for a set of 20
(\$42 for a personalized
set of 50)*

RATTAN ICE BUCKET
Emily McCarthy, \$58



*Available to monogram with any of Emily McCarthy's signature monograms and couture monograms.



GOLD RIMMED
SPORTING LUXE
LOWBALL SET*
Emily McCarthy, \$58

GIN GAME
Emily McCarthy, \$38

WOODEN CHEESE
BOARD
J. Banks Design, \$150

CHEESE KNIVES
*J. Banks Design,
\$95 for a set of 4*

SMALL REVERE
PEWTER BOWL
*Scout Southern Market,
\$19*

SPRINGBOK HIDE
COASTER SET
*Scout Southern Market,
\$60*



MONOGRAMMED
PITCHER*
Emily McCarthy, \$58

“W” WINE GLASSES*
Emily McCarthy, \$15 each
(\$58 for a personalized set of 4)

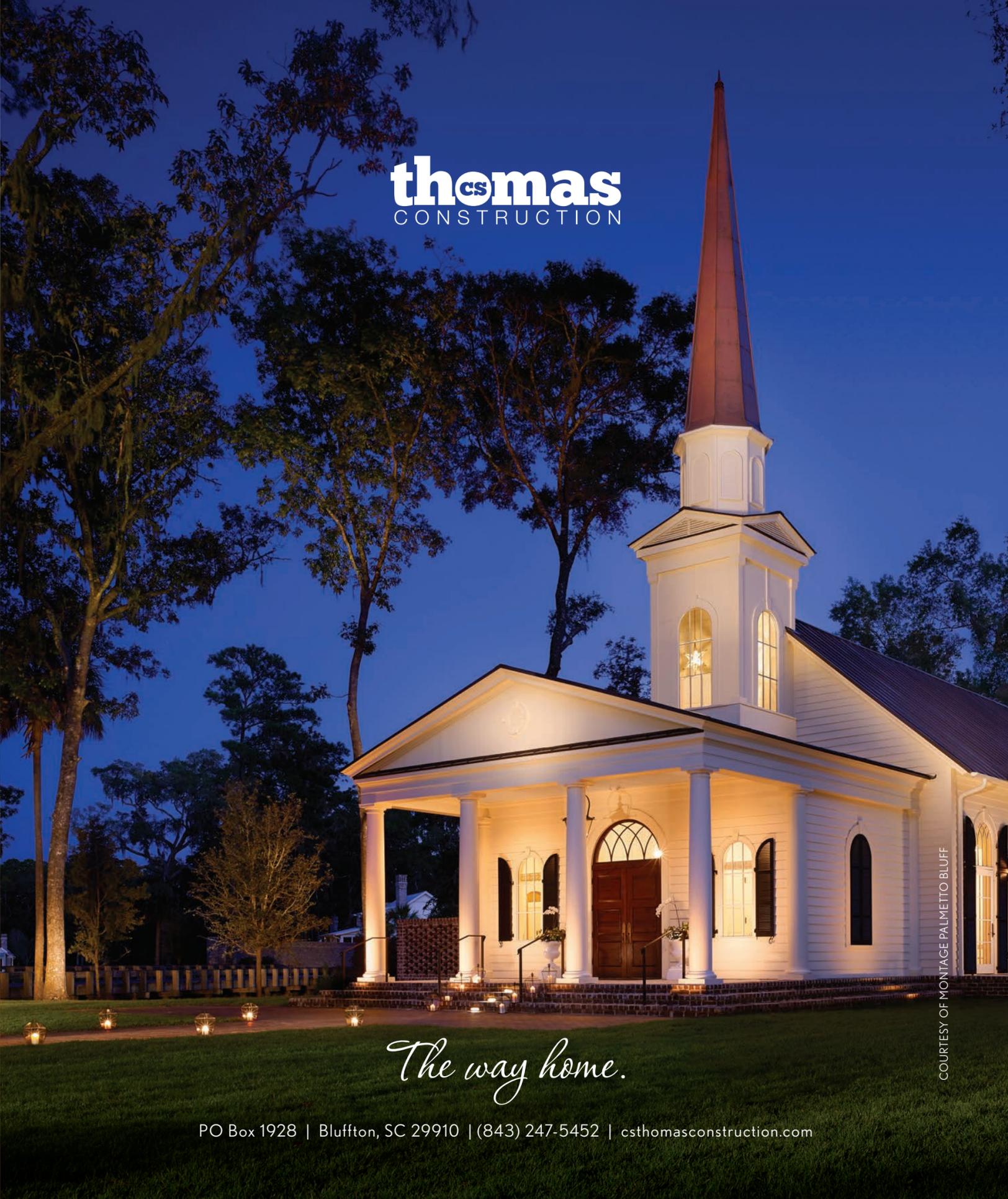
TAN TURKISH
DINNER NAPKIN
Emily McCarthy, \$8 each

RATTAN
SERVING TRAY
J. Banks Design, \$98

PINEAPPLE
BOTTLE OPENER
Emily McCarthy, \$20

*Available to monogram with any of Emily McCarthy's signature monograms and couture monograms.

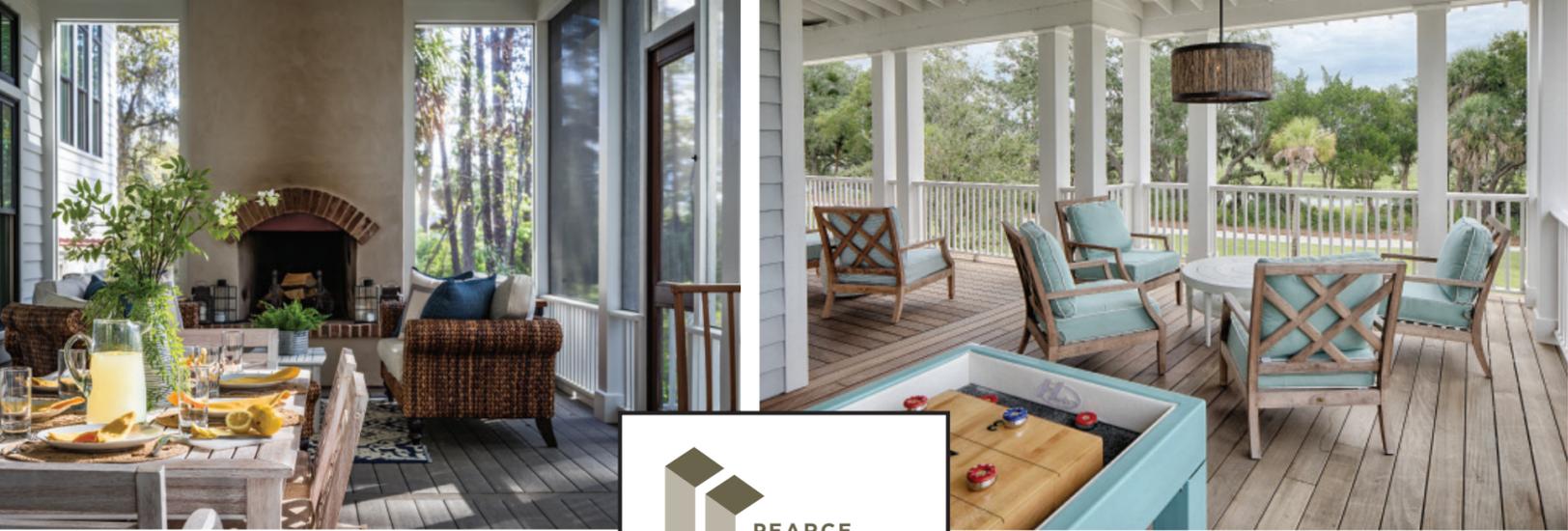
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A Very Citrus Christmas

Written by: Anna Jones | Photography by: Photography by Anne, Inc.

Florals by: Lizzy Lancaster, The Woodsman's Wife and Co.



The Christmas season is filled with special traditions,

each tied to a poignant memory or prick of nostalgia from festive seasons of old. Getting into the Christmas spirit is often best achieved through practicing these traditions in the hopes of sparking a little joy. Picking out the perfect Christmas tree with family and then bringing the prized possession to position just so in your home. Trimming said tree with lights and ornaments and crowning the top with a star or an angel (or a big bow if you're my mother). Baking a whole host of sweets, from coffee cakes and spiced muffins, to pecan pies and red velvet cakes, to simple Christmas sugar cookies dusted in red and green sprinkles (if you're my mother-in-law). Everyone has their own special traditions, giving us each a sense of comfort and sentimentality for the perfect dose of Christmas cheer. Just a spoonful of Christmas cheer drowns out the family fighting... Isn't that how the rhyme goes?

But have you ever considered some of the stranger, less obvious traditions that we practice at Christmas? Let's say, hanging a bit of mistletoe in a doorway to sneak a Christmas kiss beneath. Mistletoe actually grows in large round bunches high in the treetops of the Lowcountry, which, if you're my uncle, is a great sport to shoot down with a shotgun; however, it's not necessarily the most tranquil activity to celebrate a holiday synonymous with peace. Or putting cookies and milk out for Santa next to the fireplace. Doesn't this seem like the ideal spot from which Fido can get his midnight snack? And aren't dogs not supposed to eat the chocolate in those chocolate chip cookies? Also, I'm not sure if you've seen a photo of Santa lately, but I'd say he could swap the cookies for veggies or perhaps practice some intermittent fasting.





And now that we're on the topic, Christmas trees used to be adorned with actual candles, lit on Christmas Eve, making a bucket of water nearby an absolute must for those clumsy guests who, after a few too many eggnogs, might stumble into your picture-perfect Christmas tree tableau. And eggnog. Do not even get me started on this noxious drink.

Among the most perplexing, however, is the tradition of putting an orange in a Christmas stocking. Why, of all the mouthwatering treats associated with Christmas, do we put a ball of orange citrus in the toe of a loved one's stocking? Certainly, a black box with a diamond ring as Eartha Kitt sings in "Santa Baby" would be more fitting?

So, why is this? The lore of putting oranges in Christmas stockings has ties to a few different origins, each with its own unique narrative. According to *Smithsonian* magazine, oranges in stockings came about in the 19th century, around the same time that the tradition of hanging stockings on the mantel came to pass, as documented in the famous "Twas the Night Before Christmas" poem.¹





Once a treasured treat hidden inside a stocking, oranges are now in plain sight, used in Christmas décor throughout the home.



Oranges were undoubtedly valuable luxuries saved for special occasions.

“The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, in hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.”

This tricky St. Nicholas, with his ability to squeeze down any size chimney with the flick of the wrist, was once an actual saint in the 3rd century—he looks great for his age, doesn't he?—and the story goes that he helped a poor man by giving him gold to use as dowries for his three daughters. Because women could not marry without a sizable dowry, dear St. Nicholas apparently tossed a bag of gold through the poor fellow's window to help marry off his daughters. The oranges placed in stockings were symbolic of this giving gesture.

Even though oranges are certainly more budget-friendly than a sack of gold, they were still a rare and treasured item in the 19th century, and those on the receiving end were more than delighted to accept this nearly forbidden fruit as a Christmas gift, which may also explain their odd appearances in Christmas stockings.¹ Fast-forward to the early 20th century as the toll of the Great Depression reverberated throughout the world, and oranges took on a new yet ironically familiar role: that of the more affordable gift.¹ Oranges were still undoubtedly valuable luxuries saved for special occasions, but many families could still manage to afford to toss an orange or two in their stockings as gifts for Christmas morning.

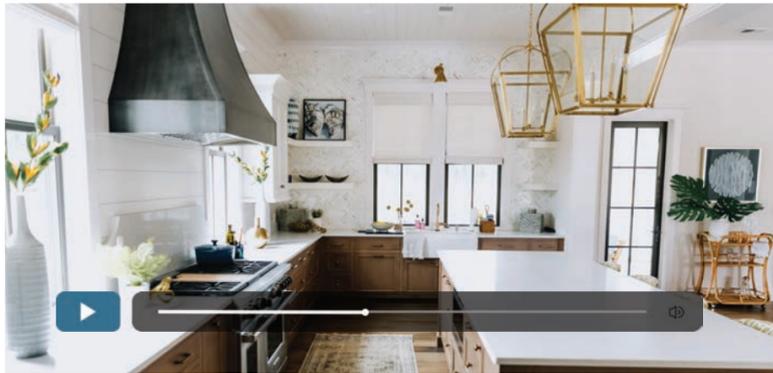
Looking at today's Christmas traditions, oranges have transitioned again. Once a treasured treat hidden inside a stocking, they are now in plain sight, used in Christmas décor throughout the home: simple wreaths encircling a hurricane lantern, floral centerpieces used in elegant tablescapes, rustic displays with cloves for a hint of spice, dried orange slices woven into a delicate garland that will keep all December long. Yes, oranges have made quite the holiday comeback. (I'm personally partial to the addition of oranges in a spirited Christmas cocktail, adding not only a bit of color but also bright flavors that pack a holiday punch.)



Still a bit of a mystery, I like to think that oranges present at Christmastime today symbolize simpler times, happy moments of Christmas past, and those gone-by good ol' days. Long before kids asked for every Apple product available on their Christmas list or collected expensive treasures like we used to do with baseball cards, we were all just happy with a beautiful orange—a sweet-smelling surprise at the end of our stocking and a token of the holiday spirit. Maybe I'm

getting old, or maybe I'm just getting nostalgic, but either way, I think this tradition sounds like a nice way to celebrate Christmas. And with that, my Christmas shopping is done. 🍊

¹<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/why-we-should-bring-back-tradition-christmas-orange-180971101/>



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A TALE OF TWO YULES



{ Whether felled from the forest or formed from flour and eggs, the yule log endures as a symbol of the holiday season. }

Written by: **Barry Kaufman** / Photography by: **Photography by Anne, Inc.**

* IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY ENOUGH AT HOLIDAY TRADITIONS,

you'll find that many are pretty strange. Why do we paint eggs at Easter? Why do we carve pumpkins at Halloween? Why do we set out cranberry sauce at Thanksgiving when no one will ever actually eat it?

And more to the point of this story, why do we put a log on display during the Christmas season? And how on earth did we decide to make a cake out of it?

As with most holiday traditions, the closer you look at it, the stranger it becomes. Let's start with the original yule log that traces its roots back to pre-Christian pagan celebrations. The celebration that birthed the yule log was the winter solstice when ancient Nordic people would mark the end of the year with a 12-day festival they called "Yule."

While the deepest point of winter might seem an odd thing to celebrate, according to Forever Conscious, "The winter solstice celebrates the longest hours of darkness or the rebirth of the sun and is believed to hold a powerful energy for regeneration, renewal, and self-reflection."

Legend has it that the first yule logs were entire trees carefully chosen and cut down and then dragged into the house, the largest



end placed in the fireplace. The tree would be lit using what was left of last year's log, and throughout the 12 days of Yule, the log would be burned night by night, with each night's relighting adding to the ceremony.

From there, the tradition spread (appropriately enough) like wildfire, with each country putting their own stamp on this festive holiday celebration. In France, they would burn a little bit of the log each night, sprinkling it with wine, because in France, even the logs drink wine. In the Netherlands, the leftover bit of the log was kept under a bed to protect against house fires and lightning. (Oh, the irony.)

In addition to putting their own spin on tradition, each country would celebrate their native flora as they adopted the yule log. In England, they would burn oak for 12 days while the Scots burned a birch tree. In France, they would burn a cherry tree. In some parts of the UK, the yule log was swapped out in favor of a bundle of ash twigs as a nod to the twigs burned by Mary and Joseph to keep the infant Jesus warm. Regardless of the type of tree, part of the tradition that endured was gathering up the ashes to sprinkle on plants. Maybe it was the yuletide spirit, maybe it was the nutritive power of potash, but these plants always seemed to endure winter with a little more greenery.





As the family home and hearth grew smaller over the years, and as more families began celebrating the season in the close quarters of towns and cities, burning a whole tree over 12 days became less and less feasible. As such, the yule log evolved into more of an ornamental centerpiece, elaborately decorated and lit only by candlelight. In this way, a tradition dating back centuries was able to survive even as the world around it changed.

For all the various ways that cultures have reinterpreted the yule log, leave it to the French to turn it into a delectable dessert. The Bûche de Noël, as they call it, is a classic European holiday dessert involving a cake rolled up tightly and frosted to look like something that would go in the fireplace. Consisting of a rolled-up

center of genoise (European sponge cake) and buttercream filling, it's then coated in chocolate icing or ganache and decorated with everything from marzipan to sprinkles. While its exact origins are obscure, dessert historians (yes, they exist) note that the use of sponge cake suggests a 17th century origin. What is known for sure is that the tradition really took off in the 19th century as Parisian bakeries made them a hot commodity around the Christmas table.

Christmas is a time of traditions, both the sacred and the somewhat strange. The yule log is a little bit of each. Its roots may have been nourished by the soil of pagan tradition, but its branches spread throughout Christianity in ways that reflected each culture and brought warmth and sweetness to the season. ✨



YULE MAKE YOUR OWN BÛCHE

Chocolate Yule Log:

- 240 g all-purpose flour
- 42 g cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 8 eggs
- 100 g oil
- 298 g sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp vanilla

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Sift flour, cocoa powder, and baking powder, and set aside. In a stand mixer with whisk attachment, whip eggs, oil, sugar, salt, and vanilla until ribbons form. Add the dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Pour batter into prepared half sheet or jelly roll pan. Bake for 10-12 minutes.

Cream Cheese Buttercream:

- 1 ½ lbs butter
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 2 lbs powdered sugar

Cream butter and cream cheese until smooth. Add powdered sugar and mix on low until combined. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and beat until fluffy.

Dark Chocolate Ganache:

- 282 g heavy cream
- 400 g dark chocolate (chopped or coins)

Heat heavy cream over medium heat until steamy. (You can use a microwave, but do it in 30-second intervals.) Pour over chocolate and allow to sit a few minutes. Stir until combined and emulsified (should be smooth). Allow to cool to thick and creamy before using on the cake.

To Assemble the Yule Log:

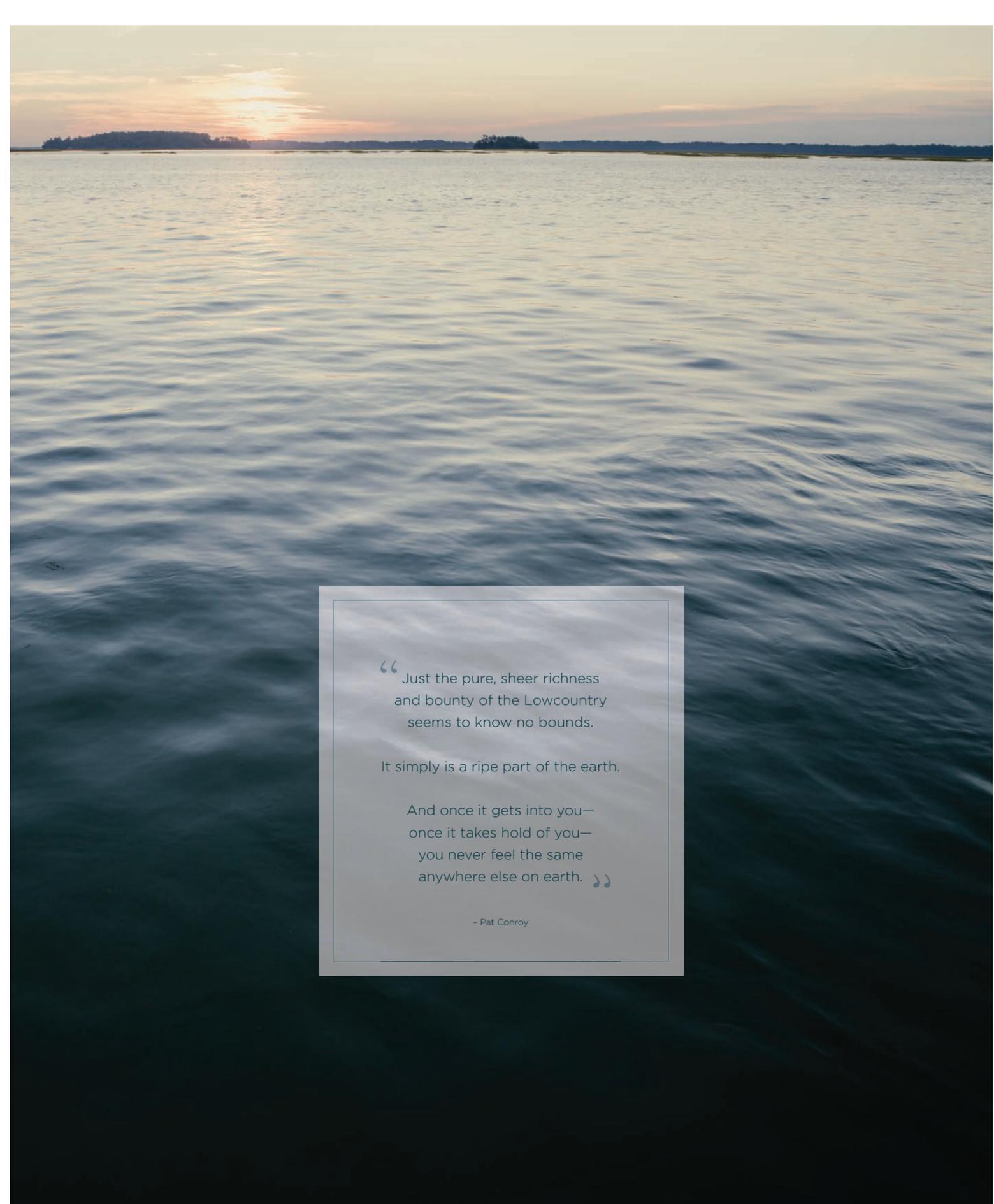
Spread the buttercream on the chocolate cake roll. Starting on the short side, roll the cake into a tight yule log. Ensure there are no air gaps in the roll. Allow the cake to set in the refrigerator or freezer. Ice the cake with the chocolate ganache. Allow ganache to set in the refrigerator or freezer. Cut the yule log and assemble pieces to make desired tree design—using the cut pieces to resemble limbs and adhering the cut pieces with ganache. Decorate with sugared fruit or flowers.

If you're like most of us, we need more yule in our lives. And we're not talking about the tree-chopping, fireplace-burning, woody kind. However, not being expert bakers, we turned to Chef Jae Newby, training specialist for the pastry department at Palmetto Bluff and our Local Character featured on page 88

Break out your saw knife, because to the right is her recipe for a heavenly Bûche de Noël. (Trust us, we tried it. Twice.)



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when you can have
extraordinary?**



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and bounty of the Lowcountry
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once it takes hold of you—
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anywhere else on earth. ”

- Pat Conroy



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