

# Meet Charleston SC

It's said that people first visit Charleston, S.C., to experience its rich heritage. No question, this Grand Dame deserves the motto "where history lives." Spanning more than three centuries, the city's history lives in the swaying palmettos and towering mansions along Battery Row. It lives in the grand antebellum plantations and in the circa-1800 City Market, one of the nation's oldest. →

**Porticos & Palmettos**  
Nothing says "Charleston" like  
East Bay Street in The Battery.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS M. ROGERS

→ But history alone is not why 4 million visitors flock to the Charleston area year after year. The city is an artists' enclave, boasting around 70 galleries. It's a family destination, bursting with beaches and kid-friendly attractions. And it's a foodie fascinator, attracting gastronomes to sample farm-to-fork Lowcountry cuisine. As the Southern saying goes, Charleston is a "pat of butter in a sea of grits"—but these are special heirloom grits, topped with succulent Carolina shrimp. And we guarantee you can't get enough!

# The Siren Call of Charleston

**W**HAT IS IT ABOUT the Charleston area... the salt breezes, the garden gates of swirling iron, the vivid pastel homes along Rainbow Row? Whatever it is, this Southern gem beguiles guests, luring them with her historic charms and then having them stay for afternoon tea—or maybe longer. Almost at the midway point along the warm South Carolina coast, this iconic area is world-renowned for its culture (an exotic blend of English, French, and West African accents), architecture (from antebellum to Art Deco), food (Lowcountry favorites like she-crab soup), and color (a vibrant arts community).

At the Charleston area's heart lies a three-mile by two-mile tip of a peninsula lined with historic houses, garden paths, parks, narrow alleys, and cobblestone streets. Even including the tri-county residents of greater Charleston—the nearby river and forest-edged towns, the Sea Islands, and beaches—the total popu-

lation is a pleasant 650,000. Yet the Lowcountry—where church steeples, not skyscrapers, dot the skyline—is a mecca for entrepreneurs, designers, artists, foodies, and families.

But this is nothing new: For more than three centuries, fortune-seekers have made their way to these shores. English settlers founded Charles Towne in 1670 along the Ashley River. Ever since, the city has played a distinct role in history—as a Colonial port built on a plantation-based economy, as the site of important Revolutionary War battles and Civil War turmoil, and as a key player in the 20th-century New South.

While evidence of the city's history permeates every aspect of living, life in the Charleston area certainly isn't static. "We're the real deal... not a re-creation of a point in history," says Helen Hill, executive director of the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). "We're making history today."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY (CLOCKWISE) KEIR BOLOTIN, CHRIS M. ROGERS AND PETER FRANK EDWARDS/COURTESY OF HOMINY GRILL

**Belt It Out!** (Clockwise) *The Gospel at Colonus* at Spoleto Festival USA, East Bay Street, and shrimp and grits at Hominy Grill.



## First Dates

From the significant to the surprising, Charleston boasts more of the nation's firsts than any other city.

- **1700**—The first public library opens on St. Philip's Street.
- **1735**—The first opera performance, Colley Cibber's *Flora; or, Hob in the Well* trills in a Charles Towne courtroom.
- **1736**—The New Theatre (now the Dock Street Theatre) opens as the first permanent playhouse.
- **1762**—The first musical society, St. Cecilia Society, is established.
- **1764**—London's Custom House receives a shipment of eight bales of cotton from Charles Towne (the first cotton exported to England).
- **1773**—The Charleston Museum (on Meeting Street) becomes the first public museum.
- **1776**—Col. Moultrie's troops defeat a British fleet, winning the first military victory at the Battle of Sullivan's Island.
- **1780**—The first prescription drug-store opens in Charles Towne.
- **1786**—Scottish immigrants found South Carolina Golf Club, the first golf club.
- **1789**—Frances Ramage (a planter's widow) starts the first cotton mill on James Island.
- **1802**—A French botanist plants the first tea at Middleton Place.
- **1823**—John G. Spindle builds the first fireproof building to house state records. (Today it accommodates the South Carolina Historical Society, at the corner of Meeting and Chalmers streets.)
- **1830**—The first scheduled passenger train service begins along a six-mile route within Charleston.
- **1851**—John Gorrie makes the first artificial ice (thank him for your refrigerator and air conditioner).
- **1861**—Confederate troops fire the first shots of the Civil War on Union forces at Fort Sumter.
- **1864**—The Confederate *H.L. Hunley* becomes the first submarine to sink a warship, the Union *Housatonic*, in Charleston Harbor.



Inner courtyard and garden touring in the South Battery (right).



*At Charleston's heart lies a three-mile by two-mile tip of a peninsula lined with historic houses, garden paths, parks, narrow alleys, and cobblestone streets.*

Along this slice of coastline, the old continually blends with the new. Residents pull out paintbrushes and

turn defunct shoe-repair shops into bright graphic-design houses, and gas stations get second lives as cafes.

And flavor is everywhere. The restaurant scene is one of the hottest in the country, with three Charleston chefs winning the James Beard Foundation Award for "Best Chef in the Southeast" for three consecutive years.

Chef Robert Stehling opened the Hominy Grill in a tin-ceilinged, mid-1800s building on Rutledge Avenue in 1996, and cooked up a menu based on local produce like butter beans and collard greens, along with plates of chicken country captain and buttermilk pie. By 2008, his cooking of "everyday Southern food" had earned him a prestigious James Beard award, a feat since repeated by chefs Mike Lata at FIG on Meeting Street and Sean Brock of McCrady's and the new Husk on Queen Street.

The business climate also is exceptionally bright. Not only is inventiveness welcome here, it's officially cultivated. The City of Charleston and its mayor, Joseph P. Riley Jr. (in office since 1975), support design and the arts through public galleries and performance spaces, arts festivals like the annual Spoleto Festival USA, and city departments

## Where Shopping Is King

Chic, one-of-a-kind boutiques line King Street, where shoppers delight in finding all kinds of treasures for every budget.

Take Upper King's Butterfly Consignments. Named in the book *True Prep* as one of the nation's best places for fashionable consignments, the shop features women's clothing and accessories from J.Crew to Prada.

Other favorites include Croghan's Jewel Box, a family-owned repository of estate pieces and eye-popping baubles. Souvenir seekers love Croghan's Charleston Rice Spoon, an iconic serving utensil that has adorned Lowcountry tables since the plantation age. And shoe collectors indulge at Bob Ellis, another locally owned store featuring designer footwear (can you say Louboutin?).

Lower King's George C. Birlant and Co. makes the handsome Charleston Battery Bench (the quintessential Lowcountry garden decoration), and antique lovers bask in the glow of the store's 19th-century English silver, china, crystal, and brass.

For a taste of Gullah crafts and cuisine—including sweetgrass baskets and benne wafers—seasoned shoppers head one block east to the newly renovated City Market, dating to 1841. They also mark their calendars for Second Sundays on King Street, when



they rule one of the nation's most iconic "Main Streets" while it's closed to traffic. A festive atmosphere stretches from the venerable antiques district to the vibrant blocks surrounding the College of Charleston. Expect cooking demos, book signings, and live music—and, of course, plenty of shopping! [ExploreCharleston.com](http://ExploreCharleston.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) LEIGH HANDAL AND RON ROZ/COURTESY OF HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION, AND COURTESY OF JILDOR.COM

# Charleston Place Hotel



## THIS IS CHARLESTON'S GRAND AMBASSADOR.



A classic southern city known for its charm and gentility, Charleston Place Hotel represents its very best. The hotel sits in the very heart of historic Charleston, South Carolina, and offers luxurious rooms and suites, a full-service spa with infinity pool, the Mobil Four-Star Charleston Grill and more than 30 world-famous shops. What's more, the elegant hotel is steps away from Rainbow Row, art galleries, museums and East Bay's vibrant nightlife.

RATES FROM \$215 PER NIGHT | [CHARLESTONPLACE.COM](http://CHARLESTONPLACE.COM) | 800.704.1559

Calendar of Events

- SEPTEMBER**
- 35th Annual Fall Tours of Homes and Gardens, September 22–October 23, [preservationsociety.org](http://preservationsociety.org)
  - Moja Arts Festival, September 29–October 9, [mojafestival.com](http://mojafestival.com)
- OCTOBER**
- Southern Living Taste of Charleston, October 8–9, [charlestonrestaurantassociation.com](http://charlestonrestaurantassociation.com)
- NOVEMBER**
- Holiday Festival of Lights, November 11, 2011–January 1, 2012, [holidayfestivaloflights.com](http://holidayfestivaloflights.com)
- DECEMBER**
- Christmas in Charleston, December 1–31, [christmasincharleston.com](http://christmasincharleston.com)
- JANUARY**
- Lowcountry Oyster Festival, January 29, 2012, [charlestonrestaurantassociation.com](http://charlestonrestaurantassociation.com)
- FEBRUARY**
- Southeastern Wildlife Exposition, February 17–19, 2012, [sewe.com](http://sewe.com)



BB&T Charleston Wine + Food Festival

- MARCH**
- BB&T Charleston Wine + Food Festival, March 1–4, 2012, [charlestonwineandfood.com](http://charlestonwineandfood.com)
  - Festival of Houses and Gardens, mid-March through mid-April 2012, [historiccharleston.org](http://historiccharleston.org)
  - Charleston Fashion Week, March 20–24, 2012, [charlestonfashionweek.com](http://charlestonfashionweek.com)
  - Cooper River Bridge Run, March 31, 2012, [bridgerun.com](http://bridgerun.com)
- APRIL**
- Family Circle Cup tennis tournament, April 4–8, 2012, [familycirclecup.com](http://familycirclecup.com)
- MAY**
- Annual Blessing of the Fleet, April 29, 2012, [townofmtpleasant.com](http://townofmtpleasant.com)
  - North Charleston Arts Festival, May 4–12, 2012, [northcharleston.org](http://northcharleston.org)
  - Charleston Harbor Fest, May 2012, [charlestonharborfest.org](http://charlestonharborfest.org)
  - Spoleto Festival USA, May 25–June 10, 2012, [spoletousa.org](http://spoletousa.org)
  - Piccolo Spoleto Festival, May 25–June 10, 2012, [piccolospoleto.com](http://piccolospoleto.com)
- For a complete listing of events, visit [ExploreCharleston.com](http://ExploreCharleston.com).



The City of Charleston and its mayor support design and the arts through public galleries, performance spaces, and arts festivals like the annual Spoleto Festival USA.

for cultural affairs and civic design. “In the past, economic development was about inexpensive land, inexpensive labor, and incentives,” says Steve Warner, vice president of the Charleston Regional Development Alliance, “but today talent is the key driver for companies. An

educated, skilled work force is the number-one consideration for business and a critical component of our economic development strategy.” Such talent includes a fast-growing software development and IT community. Highly skilled workers find positions at the new Boeing assembly

plant next to the Charleston International Airport, and at the Clemson University Restoration Institute, where a nearly \$100 million wind-turbine testing center is in the works. Then there are colorful entrepreneurs, such as Jonathan Sanchez, a well-known published writer and

owner of Blue Bicycle Books on King Street. Voted Charleston’s best used bookstore, Blue Bicycle offers 50,000 used, rare, and new books on architecture, military history, gardening, poetry, classics, and more. The whole front of the store focuses on local authors such as Pat Conroy, whose recent best-seller *South of Broad* is based in Charleston.

During the summer, Sanchez leads the ever-popular Write of Summer camp, which is dedicated to helping kids find their writing voice through poetry. In each session, kids receive guidance from professional writers to create works that are “serious, sweet, funny, and weird.”



All Natural (From left) Famous Angel Tree live oak, sweetgrass basket weaving, and sailing class at the College of Charleston.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) ANDREW STEPHEN CEBULKA/CHARLESTON WINE + FOOD FESTIVAL, WILLIAM STRUHS/COURTESY OF SPOLETO FESTIVAL USA, COURTESY OF COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON, BY ELLISPHOTOS/ALAMY, AND PHILIP SCALIA/ALAMY



Explore one of the nation’s most historic campuses – and South Carolina’s premier public liberal arts and sciences university.

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON

[go.cofc.edu/visit](http://go.cofc.edu/visit)



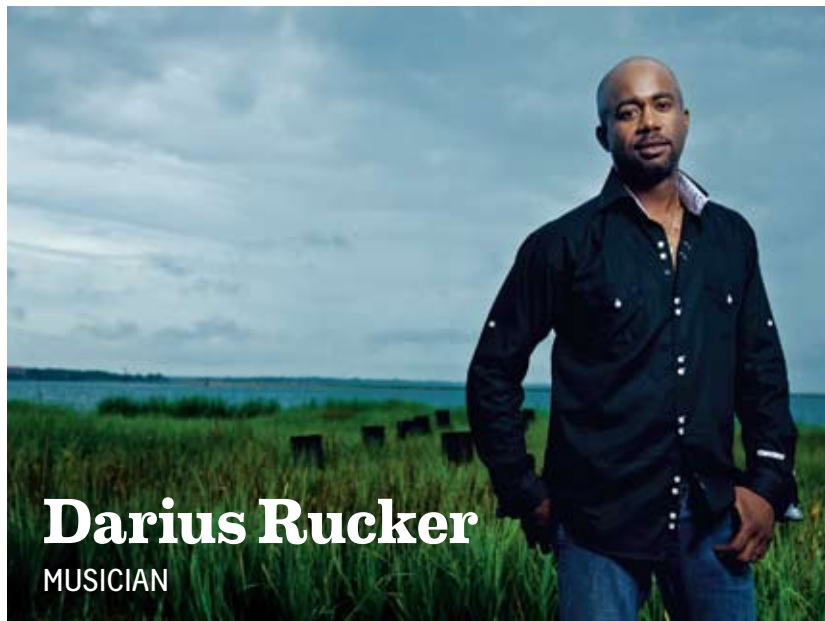
# Southeastern Wildlife Exposition

February 17-19, 2012  
Charleston, SC



Fine Art  
Conservation  
Outdoor Sporting

[sewe.com](http://sewe.com)  
843.723.1748



**Darius Rucker**  
MUSICIAN

Most everyone knows his deep Southern drawl and “Hootie” nickname, but they may not know that Darius Rucker is a Charleston native who can’t stop singing the praises of his hometown. “I was born here,” Rucker says proudly. “Charleston is embedded in who I am.”

As the frontman for Hootie and the Blowfish in the ‘90s, Rucker hit international airwaves with songs like “Hold My Hand” and “Only Wanna Be With You” topping the rock charts. The band’s 1995 album *Cracked Rear View* is the 12th best-selling album of all time. As a solo artist, Rucker has released two country CDs, *Learn to Live* and last year’s *Charleston, SC 1966*, revealing his longtime love affair with country music—and Charleston.

In the CD liner notes for *Charleston, SC 1966*, Rucker says, “I was born, raised, and live in the greatest city in the world . . . You should definitely visit.” The CD’s name is a tribute to an album titled *Del Rio, Texas 1959* by Radney Foster, which convinced Rucker to pursue country music. “I’d always liked country music, but that album was the first time I thought I could sing it,” Rucker says.

He still lives in Charleston, and says some of his favorite things about the city are the people, history, beaches, and weather. “I also like to go out and eat—a lot,” Rucker adds, citing FIG, Oak Steakhouse, Peninsula Grill, Red Drum, and 17 North Roadside Kitchen as his current favorites. He also makes time to head back to local live music venues. “I see bands at The Windjammer all the time,” Rucker says. “Music Farm also has great bands.”

Fans might also catch him out on the greens. This self-proclaimed golf addict hits the links at Patriots Point, Wild Dunes Resort, and Dunes West. His love affair with golf has led to even more charitable endeavors for the already generous star. During the past two decades, The Hootie and the Blowfish Foundation has donated more than \$5 million to 180 causes, including the South Carolina Junior Golf Foundation. Rucker also sometimes performs at the annual Bulls Bay Golf Challenge in Awendaw benefiting the Medical University of South Carolina Children’s Hospital.

Recently, he released a song, “Together, Anything’s Possible,” to raise money for the PGA TOUR charities. All proceeds from this year’s downloads will help causes including The First Tee, an organization dedicated to impacting young lives through golf. And what could be better than golf, music, and a good cause?

Speaking of kids, the region is widely known for its kid-friendly attractions—from beachfront resorts to boat rides to a fire museum. The North Charleston and American LaFrance Fire Museum and Educational Center lets kids experience the life of a firefighter with a hands-on hose and hydrant, and also teaches fire safety at the Home Fire Hazard Theater. Don’t miss the antique firetrucks, such as the 1785 Richard Mason Hand Fire “Enjin.”

The Charleston Area CVB just bolstered the family experience by starting the Charleston Explorers Club ([charlestonfamilyfun.com](http://charlestonfamilyfun.com)). To join, children pick up “passport” books at area visitor centers, and earn “stamps” when they visit historic plantations, the aircraft carrier at Patriots Point, the Center for Birds of Prey in Awendaw, downtown museums on Museum Mile, and other attractions. Back at home, kids log passport codes online and earn



**Waterfront Dining** The sun sets over the restaurants on Shem Creek in Mount Pleasant.

Charleston-oriented prizes that will be sent by mail—even more reason for the young and the young at heart to plan return visits.

What makes Charleston special? The connection of the past and the present. “You’re not coming to a place that’s been preserved with mothballs,” says George McDaniel,

executive director of Drayton Hall, widely considered the finest example of Georgian Palladian architecture in America. “You’re seeing a level of authenticity you don’t see other places. Charleston is unique from other cities because so much of our history has been preserved, but it’s still a living city.”

High marks for hospitality.

Low fares on Southwest Airlines®.

Plan a memorable meeting in Charleston.

*Charleston*  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
where history lives

800.774.0006  
[MeetCharleston.com](http://MeetCharleston.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM WRIGHT AND (OPPOSITE PAGE) PLANETPIX/ALAMY

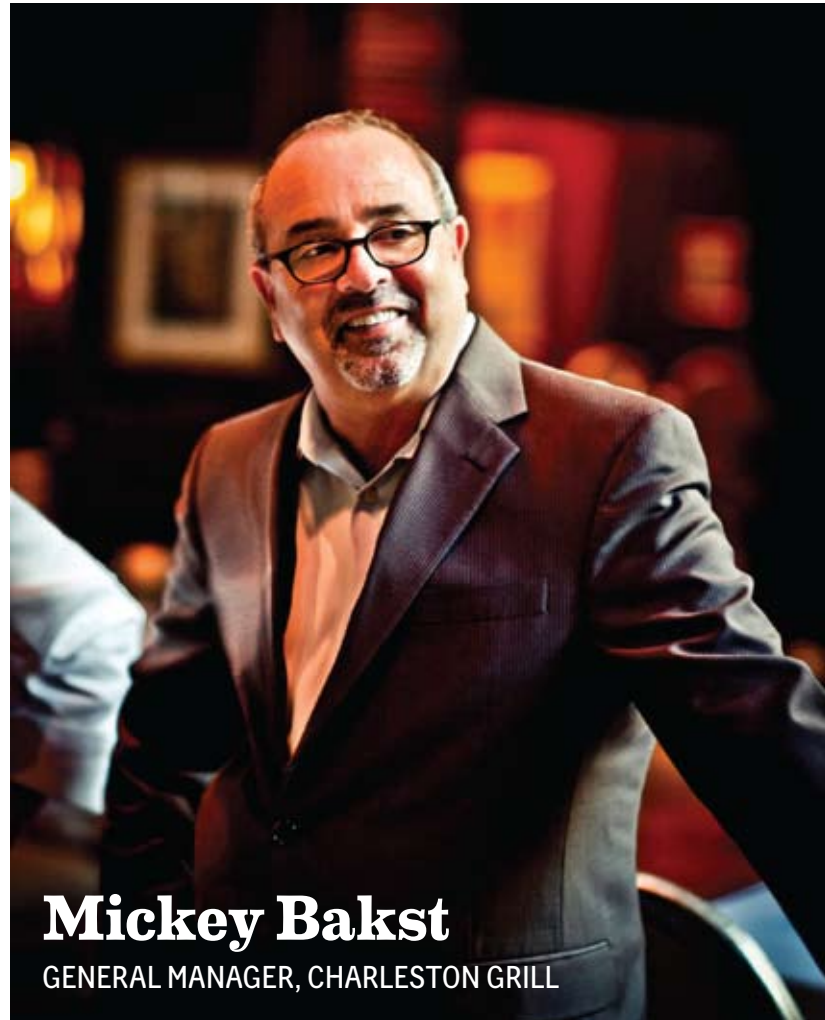
WELCOME TO  
*Charleston!*



*Delicious. Versatile. Healthy.*

Available in Garlic, Red Wine  
& Sugar Free Citrus.

Toll Free 866.403.0099  
www.neitasvinaigrettes.com



**Mickey Bakst**  
GENERAL MANAGER, CHARLESTON GRILL

**W**hen Mickey Bakst came to Charleston Place to interview for the job of general manager at the hotel's Charleston Grill, he woke up early one morning and walked to The Battery. As he looked back over the city, bathed in the light of the rising sun, the Michigan native and veteran restaurateur thought to himself: "This is home."

Seven years later, he has become an ardent advocate for his adopted city, which he touts as a welcoming place. And if there's one word that's key to Bakst's work philosophy, it's "welcome." His role, as he sees it, is to carry on Charleston's long tradition of making visitors feel at home.

"I think of myself as a symphony conductor," Bakst says. "I have incredibly talented partners in the form of our dedicated service staff; our brilliant chef, Michelle Weaver; and the Quentin Baxter [jazz] Ensemble." Bakst orchestrates the restaurant's ambiance, ensuring that each guest delights in the performance.

It's a task that is its own reward. "My job is to make people smile," he says. "And my favorite part of what I do is seeing the simple joy on people's faces when they leave the restaurant."

Surrounded by friendly people, terrific cultural opportunities, and a restaurant scene that has recently exploded with new chefs and flavors, Bakst is quick to claim, "I have the greatest life you could imagine."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOE VAUGHN/COURTESY OF CHARLESTON PLACE

843.723.0500 | 225 East Bay Street | Charleston, SC 29401 | [marketpavilion.com](http://marketpavilion.com)



*Let's do Charleston tonight!*



## MARKET PAVILION HOTEL

*Pavilion Bar*  
Infinite Celebrations

*Grill 225*  
The truth in beef®

facebook

[facebook.com/MarketPavilionHotel](https://facebook.com/MarketPavilionHotel)  
[facebook.com/ThePavilionBar](https://facebook.com/ThePavilionBar)  
[facebook.com/Grill225](https://facebook.com/Grill225)

Experience our unique facebook offer downloads, announcements and events.



**Mobile Reservations**

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to receive our special gift with your Market Pavilion Hotel, Grill 225 or Pavilion Bar reservation.