PALM BEACH

THE INNOVATION ISSUE

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Road Trip!

Ready for a fun summer getaway? Rev the engine and hit the road to one of these destinations not far from home

ANDREW CEBULKA

SMOKED OYSTERS AT THE ORDINARY

CHARLESTON GRILL

The Charleston Chew

MILES FROM PALM BEACH: 523

With a penchant for low-country decadence, chef-driven ingenuity, and a citywide reverence for all things delicious, Charleston's secret recipe for experiential gastronomy unfolds at its top restaurants. Here, a trio of restaurants and a superb, foodie-steeped hotel to anchor a pilgrimage across state lines.

EAT: THE ORDINARY

James Beard winner and *Iron Chef* competitor Mike Lata's new oyster bar and seafood hall, The Ordinary, is the sequel to his wildly popular FIG (Food Is Good) restaurant, which still commands many days' advance reservations 12 years after debuting. Set in a bank constructed during the roaring twenties, Lata's latest endeavor dishes out seafood-centric delights and raises the bar on shellfish and everything raw. The Ordinary's most popular menu item is the smoked oysters with saltines and hot sauce: Fresh South Carolina oysters are smoldered in the bank's former vault at 150 degrees for 15 minutes, then dressed with olive oil and peppers and served with toasted crackers and house-made hot sauce. Another can't-miss item is the razor clams ceviche, served in a marinade of green apple, jalapeño, and cilantro. Beyond the raw tapas fare, the hearty mains also wow, underscored by a list of "The Ordinaries"—dishes such as baked stuffed lobster and fish schnitzel, served as daily specials on the same day each week. (*eatattheordinary.com*)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: THE ORDINARY; CHARLESTON GRILL; CRAB CAKES FROM CHARLESTON GRILL; CHEF MIKE LATA OF THE ORDINARY.

Summer

tips

EAT: CHARLESTON GRILL

Charleston Grill, the signature restaurant at Belmond Charleston Place, was instrumental in catalyzing the city's culinary renaissance when it opened in 1990, and it hasn't lost its hot-topic status. Helmed by acclaimed chef Michelle Weaver, the restaurant continues to push the envelope on culinary creativity to present a seasonally inspired menu of "Pure," "Lush," "Cosmopolitan," and "Southern" offerings complemented by one of the nation's best wine lists. Dishes that are Pure err on the side of simplicity, while Lush carries a heavy French flair, Cosmopolitan is more eclectic, and Southern honors the low country. Summer standouts include the Cosmopolitan sea scallops with chili-chorizo vinaigrette over a pea purée and the Southern Charleston Grill crab cake, made with local crab, served alongside butterflied creek shrimp, accessorized with cherry tomatoes and yellow peppers, and topped with a lime-tomato-dill vinaigrette. *(charlestongrill.com)*

EAT: HOMINY GRILL

Another James Beard award winner, chef Robert Stehling embraces the apex of low-country cuisine at his diner-style Hominy Grill, serving arguably the best shrimp and grits in the South. Stehling's take on the dish includes a heaping plate of rich, cheesy grits topped with garlic sautéed shrimp, mushrooms, scallions, and bacon. You might want to loosen your belt for the Charleston Nasty Biscuit: a deep-fried chicken breast, cheddar cheese, and sausage gravy on a buttery, fluffy biscuit. And though there's no room for dessert after a meal at Hominy Grill, squeeze in a slice of the sweet potato layer cake—similar to a carrot cake but with a sweet potato base and stacked with Bavarian chocolate frosting. *(hominygrill.com)*

SLEEP & EAT: PLANTERS INN

Whether traveling to Charleston for foodie indulgence or to experience the other reasons for its endless string of "America's Best" accolades, the 64-room Relais and Chateaux Planters Inn provides the ultimate in comfort and Southern charm. At the geographical and culinary center of Charleston's historic district, the boutique property features stately rooms, stellar service, and amenities including a romantic courtyard strewn with date palms and crepe myrtle trees—an idyllic setting for a good read or a glass of wine. The hotel also houses not one but three headlining restaurants: the fine-dining Peninsula Grill, the Paris-style Brasserie Gigi, and Hank's Seafood Restaurant, a boisterous and fun seafood hall serving fruits of the sea bursting with creamy, buttery, and deep-fried Southern charm. *(plantersinn.com)* —Paul Rubio

CHEF ROBERT STEHLING AT HOMINY GRILL

SQUIRE FOX

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHEF MICHELLE WEAVER OF THE CHARLESTON GRILL; BITES FROM PENINSULA GRILL; A SUITE AND BALCONY VIEW FROM PLANTERS INN.

SQUIRE FOX

HOMINY GRILL (LEFT) FAVORITES: SHRIMP AND GRITS (ABOVE LEFT) AND THE CHARLESTON NASTY BISCUIT (ABOVE).