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Date: 3/1/2016 10:05:16 AM
Subject: Spotlighting: Pinehurst, Grand Strand, Antique Trail, Charleston, Columbia, Wilmington

March 1, 2016

Below: Bordellos and more, romance for the soul, Express yourself, blooming beauties, buffet golf, spots and more, really, really old, ah, chocolate, get moving and more.

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Carolina Adventures

Food Tours | Columbia, SC **Two Gals and a Fork**

Bordellos, vendettas, old “medicine” bottles, and lots of good times. Jeff Payne, a volunteer with Historic Columbia and lead storyteller of our food tour through the Congaree Vista Entertainment District, is on a mission. He’s aiming to rid the capital city of its minor inferiority complex. “This is a great town, filled with history and great stories,” he said as our group gathered one cool fall evening. And so it began.

I’ve been in Columbia for 40 years and never heard these tales. This tour combines a short walk with a short talk, followed by a small libation and a tasty treat. Listen, walk, tippie, taste, repeat. Not a bad way to spend an early evening in Columbia. The staff of each restaurant was waiting for us, the tables set and stories to share. We learned about the food we were served and our drinks matched perfectly. Shrimp and grits with white wine? Check.

Tidbits of sushi with warmed pomegranate Saki? (Try it, you’ll love it.) One perfect meatball and a tiny Bloody Mary? Yum. An Ole-timey tavern with wings and a pint-sized brewsky? Of course. And

finally, chocolate cake and red wine in a speakeasy atmosphere? Yes, please.

It wasn't all decadence and indulgence, however. In between noshing, our guide fed us mental tidbits just as satisfying. Did you know Columbia was one of the first planned cities in the United States? Or that the two major streets were named after the governing bodies?

Not to blow our own cultural horns, but our architecture is stunning, and our industrial accomplishments noteworthy. What's more, this fair city has had its own share of scoundrels and ladies of the evening. And, Columbia's downtown area now known as the Congaree Vista was a bit of an eyesore at one time. (No longer. After work, the area is brimming with fun-seekers, hungry folks and lots of eye candy.)

WOW Factor: Bottom line is that Two Gals and a Fork, coupled with Historic Columbia, offer a great tour, a taste of eateries that will draw you back, and fun facts to take back to your significant other.

Hint: comfortable shoes, of course, and a hearty appetite for stories along with your tastings. Take friends and a notebook. www.TwoGalsFoodTours.com

Carolina Famous Faces

Let Your Heart Decide

Nicholas Sparks

Born December 31, 1965

He's one of the world's most beloved storytellers and although Nebraska is his birthplace, he's called New Bern, North Carolina home for about 20 years. Many fans discovered the novelist when he published *The Notebook*, one of his best-known stories. His published work includes 18 novels,

as well as a non-fiction memoir, *Three Weeks With My Brother*, published in 2004.

The Choice, is his eleventh film adaption and is in theaters now. Set in the picturesque Inner Banks coastal town of Beaufort, NC, it is the setting for a romantic story that parallels but doesn't copy, earlier novels.

According to Sparks: "Again, as with all my novels, one of the questions I must first answer when attempting to conceive of a story is the "obstacle" that keeps the characters apart. The obstacle creates the tension and drama inherent in the story; in many ways, it's the glue that holds the entire story together."

Every Nicholas Sparks fan has a favorite story that speaks to them. *The Notebook* is first on most lists, however for me, *Nights in Rodanthe* perfectly conveys the feel of the Outer Banks of North Carolina, as it tells the love story of Adrienne and Paul.

The Choice is the first independent feature from Nicholas Sparks Productions and stars Benjamin Walker and Teresa Palmer. You may not know this about Nicholas Sparks:

- He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where he is a

major contributor to the Creative Writing Program (MFA).

- A former full scholarship athlete (he continues to hold a track and field record at his alma mater), he has coached at his local public high school. (In 2009, the team he coached at New Bern High School set a World Junior Indoor Record in the 4 x 400 meter.)

- Between the Nicholas Sparks Foundation and personal gifts from the Sparks family, more than \$15 million has been distributed to a variety of charitable causes, scholarship programs, and projects. He and his ex-wife, Cathy, have five children.

Carolina Creative

Jim Victor, Artist “Reactionary Expressionist”

A native of Newark, New Jersey, Jim Victor was influenced by his Italian immigrant grandparents as well as neighbors and family that were part of his childhood. Intrigued by work from the great masters such as Cezanne and Michaelangelo, he visited museums in Europe while stationed there, serving in the U.S. Army. Eventually, he and his wife, Holly, found their way to Charleston, SC, where he lives and works today.

A Few More Weeks

Hello Tony,

The Polar Vortex is still around, but here in the Carolinas, we've seen buds on trees and the promise of Spring is upon us. Clearly, it's time to make plans for adventure.

Find recommended trips, adventures, history tours, sports, antiques and one killer dessert – plus the romance king of all storytellers.

Still hip deep in the white stuff? We feel your pain, as former inhabitants of the northern climes. Here, festivals are about to roll out and the glorious Carolinas weather will entice us all to spend more time outdoors.

With fabulous deals available, folks

“The Abstract Core work evolved out of the lack of challenge that I usually have while I am painting. The excitement of my previous work was dissipating. Not to say that I no longer liked my earlier work. It was exciting at the time, but it just became too predictable. When that occurred, I started experimenting and the outcome was the Abstract Core. There is a

relationship that develops between me and the canvas. There is no music, no outside interference, just the two of us working and creating together. There is that excitement and anxiety which occurs while creating the unknown and the unrecognizable. At my age I'm fortunate to still have access to those feelings!

I fell when a person looks at abstract art, it becomes a physical and emotional experience. I recommend the best way to view an abstract painting is to 'look at what feelings it provokes in you.' The entire body of work is signed only on the back, so the viewer is not distracted. Also, each painting is untitled, giving the viewer freedom to have their own experience.

are looking to relocate, retire (or unretire) and, perhaps, acquire that Carolina vacation investment deal. Click here for links to [Retirement Living](#) & [Real Estate Tips](#), and check online for our best-in-the-nation [tax bite](#) – a sweet taste, for sure.

Then, there's always CarolinaLiving.com showcasing [93 town profiles](#) & [Tax Facts](#) ... all guaranteed to guide you straight.

Wishing you happy travels and just maybe, a new Carolina slice of heaven to call your own in 2016!

Leyla & Patrick Mason

Co-Founders

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Carolina Symbols

Why is the Spotted Salamander South Carolina's official state amphibian?

It goes back to a third grade class in Spartanburg, SC. They mounted a campaign to adopt these colorful, sweet creatures as the state's own, and after a bit of lobbying and persistent letter writing the effort paid off in 1999.

Although they're found throughout South Carolina, you may never "spot" one because they spend most of their time in underground burrows

These creatures have legions of fans. As pets, they're easy to care for and gentle in nature. What's more, they

In the beginning it's me and the canvas; in the end it's the viewer and the canvas.

www.jimvictorart.com

Jim Victor painting: Abstract Core Series, oil on canvas, #0172013

Stepping into Spring

2016 Azalea Garden Tour April 8-10, 2016

This award-winning beauty of an event is always worth the trip. (Prepare to be greeted at the gardens by Azalea Belles in full plantation dress.

It's an honor for them to be chosen and they'll make sure you find your way.) This year's tour features 13 gardens including Airlie Gardens, UNCW's Kenan and Wise Houses and ten additional private gardens.

Tickets are on sale now for \$25 each and are available at www.capefeargardenclub.org

An official, featured event in the NC Azalea Festival. www.ncazaleafestival.org

Learn more about [Wilmington](#).

Buffet Golf

can live 20 years or more and grow to six-nine inches long. Plus they're very pretty – in a reptilian way, of course. And, they positively devour a variety of insects including mosquitos and spiders.

Photo © Wildphotos | Dreamstime.com

The New Guide is here!

[Click here](#) for the official hold-in-your-hand Guide to Carolina lifestyle fun and adventure trips, plus real estate tips, tax & cost-of-living advantages, retirement opportunities and town profiles.

Just share your dream goals and we'll help lead you to smart Carolina life and times.

We hear it over and over.

Folks visit (and move) to the Carolinas for the four-season climate and the ability to be outdoors most of the year.

How do you get your thrills? Biking? Birdwatching? Hang gliding or Parasailing? What about zip lines? No thanks – no problem.

Get your jollies from a slow day fishing beside a mountain stream, or waiting for the perfect outdoor nature image to come into view.

See how we do it, at carolinalive.com/outdoor-thrills

Facebook

Sports – We've got 'em!

March Madness is almost here and the Carolinas have great contenders in the match-

Carolinas Memberships Can Fill Up Most Golfers

By Larry Gaurich

I suppose there is some golfer out there who prefers the comfort of playing his or her home course over and over, day after day. For the rest of us, we are made blissful when we can play a marshland course one day, a tree-lined parkland course the next, followed by perhaps a links-type layout.

And if we find ourselves up in the mountains, perhaps one day of golf around a lake followed by another with dramatic changes in elevation will set our hearts aflutter. After all, this is what most of us associate with golf vacations: A different golf course every day for a week (or, if fortunate, longer). And if every day of retirement feels like a vacation day, how special is that?

Thanks to significant changes in the golf industry, many a result of the recession of 2008 that only recently has emerged from the shadows, retirees can access multi-course golf memberships across a range of prices and options.

[Here is a rundown](#) on the major types you will find in The Carolinas.

Oldies and Goodies

The North Carolina Antique Trail

From mountains to coast, and north to south, there are 73 members of the NC Antique Trail.

Visit the website to discover where to find hidden treasures. The Carolinas are brimming with furniture and collectibles from the way we were. We're sure the perfect antique cookie jar, or side table is waiting for you.

www.northcarolinaantiquetrail.com

Photo: © Adrian Lewert | Dreamstime.com

ups. After that, Spring soccer competes with tennis and golf, and baseball practice begins. Summertime is swim time, and sailing, boating and skiing weather.

With fall comes football, and fall soccer. Slip in Lacrosse, rugby, equestrian sports, and a bit of disc golf or pickleball and you can count on year round ways to enjoy our great outdoors.

Want to go at your own speed? Try biking or walking – it's all good in the Carolinas. What's your favorite way to get outside and move? Please share with us on [Facebook](#).

Carolina Cuisine

Heading your way

- **Let's Take a Road Trip!**
- **Carolina Famous Faces**
- **Insider Attractions**
- [eNewsletter Archives](#)

Chocolate, how we adore thee.

Carolina Cuisine -- This regional television show – and now cookbook – explores fabulous recipes from in and near the Carolinas. It's not downhome cooking – quite the contrary. The locations are Southern but the flavors are international. Remember, chocolate can be good for your health (in small doses of course).

Despite its decadent and difficult look, you can make this beauty appear on your table. Try the recipe for [Molten Chocolate Cake with Godiva Hot Fudge Sauce](#) and keep the favorite flavor of Valentine's Day going a bit longer. You'll be inspired to buy the book and throw a party!

www.carolinaliving.com phone 803.782.7466
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