

God Talks to Claude Alexander • Kissing the Poets Goodbye

By Melissa Hankins

By Van Miller

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# great getaways

**It's March. It's spring break.** And you need to get away. We say, splurge, relax, and take a long weekend. Here are thirteen destinations no more than six hours by car from Charlotte. They range from upscale to super-luxurious and will satisfy your love for architecture, your need to rejuvenate your romance, or your desperation for a little peace and quiet. *edited by blake miller*

## Bald Head Island

### For the Beach Lover

LESS THAN TWENTY FEET FROM THE GOLF COURSE, we spotted a snowy egret, a peregrine falcon, and what was probably an osprey in flight. Bald Head Island is that kind of place—all the amenities one expects from an upscale beach community (golf, fitness club,

**Getting there:** It's five hours to the ferry terminal at Southport via Highway 17 to Route 211 (Howe Street). Turn right onto West 9th Street and continue to the ferry landing where you'll have a twenty-minute ferry ride to the island itself. 6099 Indigo Plantation Drive, Southport, NC, 800-515-2038, [www.baldheadisland.com](http://www.baldheadisland.com)

boating, dining, and shopping) along with unique history and ecology. Baby boomers love it, as much for what it doesn't offer as for what it does. More than three quarters of the island is a protected nature reserve, and fourteen miles of oceanfront beach ensure that even in the height of summer you can still walk or bike to a deserted stretch of sand. There are no cars, and travel is slower by golf cart. Maybe that's why, at the close of our weekend, the island still felt vast, beckoning, and mysterious.



**the digs:** APART FROM TWO B&Bs, ALL rentals are houses or townhomes, a plus for families and anyone desiring privacy and space. Whether you choose a grand oceanfront villa or a cozy forest cottage, every rental comes with linens, towels, and maid service. Rentals start at \$150 to \$600 per night.

**the eats:** THE SHOALS CLUB's seasonal menu emphasizes fresh local seafood. The hazelnut flounder with Swiss chard, butternut squash gnocchi, and pomegranate purée is worth a visit in the off-season all on its own. Save room for the meltingly good Chocolate Decadence cake. Need a quick lunch before an afternoon sail? Try the she-crab soup in bread bowl at the River Pilot Cafe.

**to do:** COMB THE BEACHES, CLIMB "OLD Baldy" lighthouse, paddle salt marshes, or learn to sail. The best shell spot is at the southern edge of Cape Fear, where locals once salvaged debris from shipwrecks. —Tess Gadwa