

SPECIAL: YOUR MIAMI BOAT SHOW GUIDE

SOUTHERN[®] BOATING

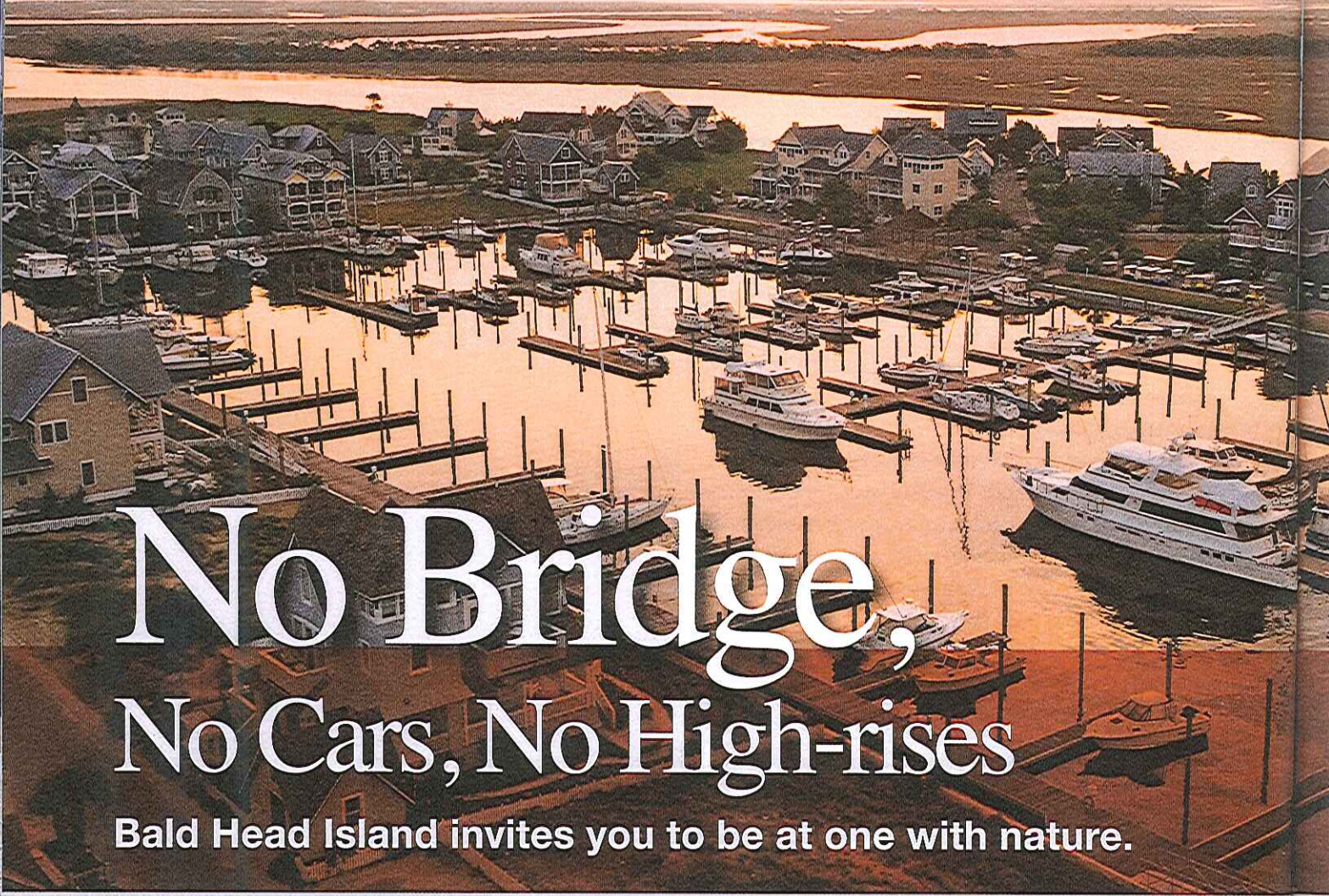
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No Bridge, No Cars, No High-rises

Bald Head Island invites you to be at one with nature.

John Donne may have said, “No man is an island,” but cruising yachtsmen know that every man and woman can be one with an island when they arrive by water. That’s certainly true of North Carolina’s Bald Head Island—which is reachable only by boat.

Quite simply, there’s not another boating destination like it.

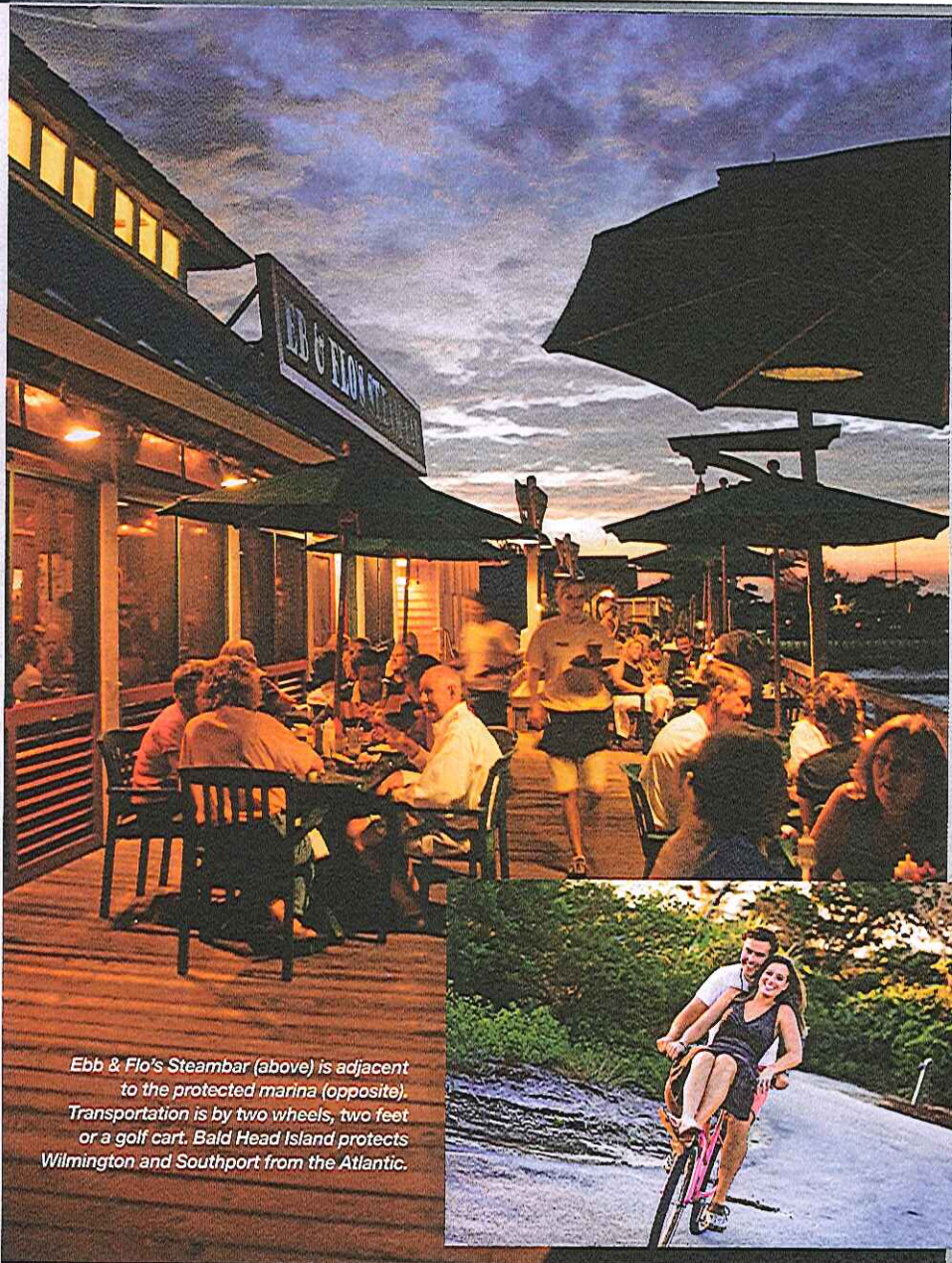
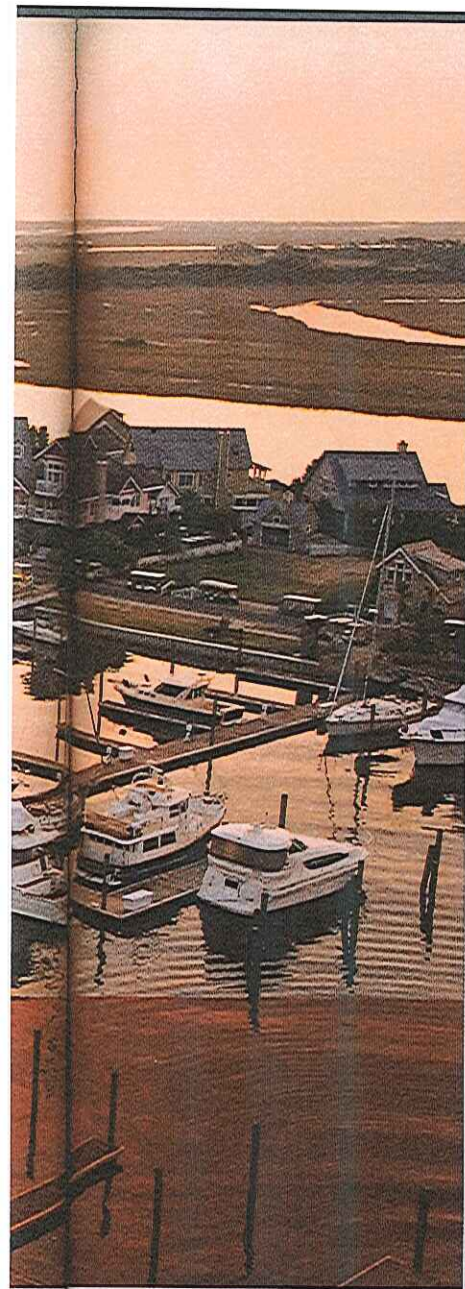
What makes Bald Head Island different? In some ways, it’s what’s missing: No bridge connects it to the mainland; no cars are allowed; and there are no big buildings—10,000 of the island’s 12,000 total acres are beach, marsh and maritime preserves.

What Bald Head does have includes: a bustling full-service marina; rich maritime history (including North Carolina’s oldest lighthouse); 14 miles of beaches; 200-plus species of wildlife; world-class golf and tennis; outdoor activities from kayaking to nature hikes to fishing on nearby, famed Frying Pan Shoals; and a variety of accommodation, dining, and shopping options.

Located in Harbour Village, the marina is the arrival point for Bald Head Island visitors in their own boats or on the ferry from Southport. A lighted entrance channel makes it easily accessible from the Intracoastal Waterway (two miles from MM 307) or the Atlantic Ocean (near Cape Fear River Buoy 13A) via a deepwater shipping channel. Boat slips in the ice-free basin range from 30 to 100 feet for transient dockage, with yachts to 115 feet accommodated on T-heads. The Marina features 30-, 50-, and 100-amp electrical hookups (some have cable TV access and there’s also wireless internet) plus gas and diesel fuel via high-flow pumps.

There’s a lot within walking distance of the marina—no golf cart or bike rental needed, though both are helpful when heading further afield. The Dockmaster Convenience Store

By LYNN SELDON



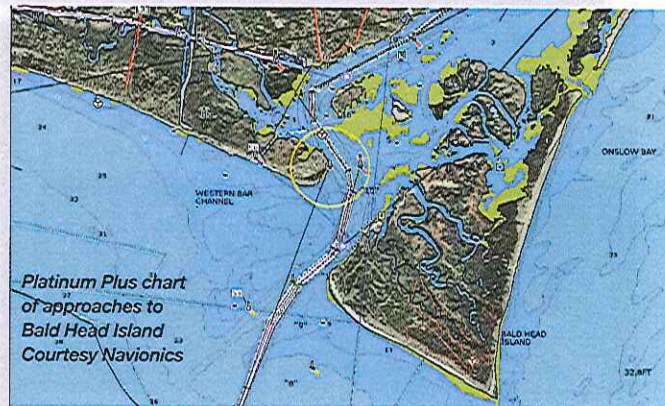
PHOTOS COURTESY OF BALD HEAD ISLAND LIMITED

Ebb & Flo's Steambar (above) is adjacent to the protected marina (opposite). Transportation is by two wheels, two feet or a golf cart. Bald Head Island protects Wilmington and Southport from the Atlantic.



covers basics and more. Eb & Flo's Steambar is the place to go for fresh seafood and to meet fellow cruisers and island residents in-the-know. Adjacent River Pilot Café is more formal and well worth a reservation. Golf cart and bike rentals are nearby, as well as kayak rentals, a lending library and special events at Harbourside Pavilion.

Bald Head Island is one of those places that makes the Atlantic migration fun and comfortable for small boat owners. A place like The Elements makes you hope to get weathered in. Reached by foot or golf cart (included with a stay), the one-bedroom studios are located right on the water and offer great views; their small kitchenettes are bigger than most galleys. Booked through Bald Head Island Limited, an Elements stay comes with varied club membership options. Those staying onboard their boats also have the option of purchasing temporary memberships to the Shoals Club or Bald Head Island Club.



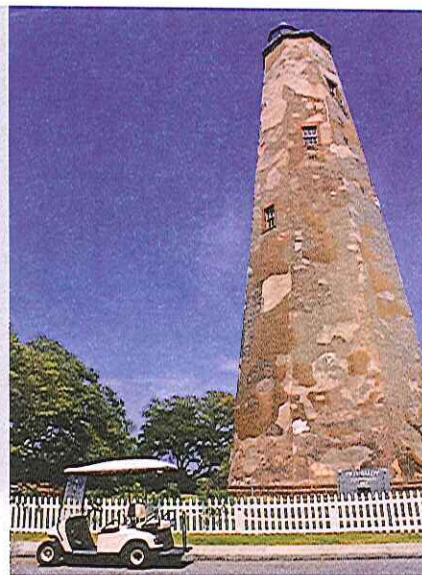
Platinum Plus chart of approaches to Bald Head Island Courtesy Navionics

Live Like a Lighthouse Keeper

For even more space and longer stays, there are a wide variety of house rental options throughout the island. Among many choices, the three Cap'n Charlie cottages seem ideal for cruisers who love maritime history.



Bald Head Island offers the unique opportunity to live in a renovated lighthouse keeper's cottage. Cap'n Charlie's is the larger one on the right. At right, Old Baldy. Opposite, The Smith Island Historical Museum.



PHOTOS BY LYNN SELDON

Captain Charles Norton Swan lived his dream life on Bald Head Island, lighting the lamp to put the new Cape Fear Lighthouse into service in 1903 and then proceeding to man the Cape Fear Light Station for the next 30 years. Modern visitors can now temporarily live like Cap'n Charlie, thanks to three newly renovated lighthouse keeper cottages available for rental. The three wood frame dwellings overlooking a wide beach were originally built in the early 1900s.

"The keeper cottages are symbolic of Bald Head Island's rich and unique history," says Kent Mitchell, president and CEO of Bald Head

Island Limited. "Our motivation in renovating them was to restore and preserve the character of the homes, providing guests with a first-hand opportunity to experience the island's history for themselves."

Located on the island's southeastern tip, the cottages make for a truly unusual stay. They've been completely renovated and furnished with all modern conveniences, including a gourmet kitchen with top-end appliances and a peaceful porch and deck overlooking the wide dunes. Visitors will also enjoy many historic black-and-white photos of Cap'n Charlie and the island from the early-1900s.

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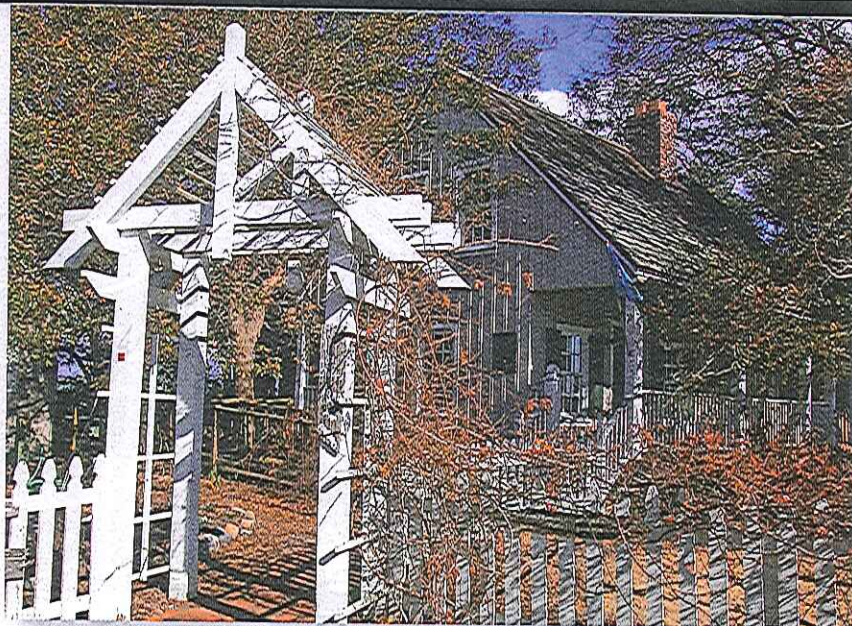
The best place to continue an exploration of the island is along the banks of Bald Head Creek in the shadow of the first lighthouse, Old Baldy. Here, the Smith Island Museum of History is located in a reconstructed lighthouse keeper's cottage from the 1850s, one of three once located around Old Baldy. Smith Island was an earlier name for this island of creeks, wild dunes and a maritime forest.

The interesting little museum features an eclectic collection of island memorabilia, including Cap'n Charlie's pocket watch, a Lighthouse Service engineer's uniform, Civil War artifacts and more. From there, it's a short stroll to Old Baldy, where a circular wooden staircase leads 108 steps into the lighthouse's lantern room for a great view of the island.

Event-full

Whether visiting with a boat or making a special trip without it, the island hosts a wide range of annual events luring many veteran visitors. These include Memorial Day Weekend (with a crab-cracking party and Parade of Homes); early-June's Annual Fishing Rodeo; Fourth of July's

PHOTO BY LYNN SELDON

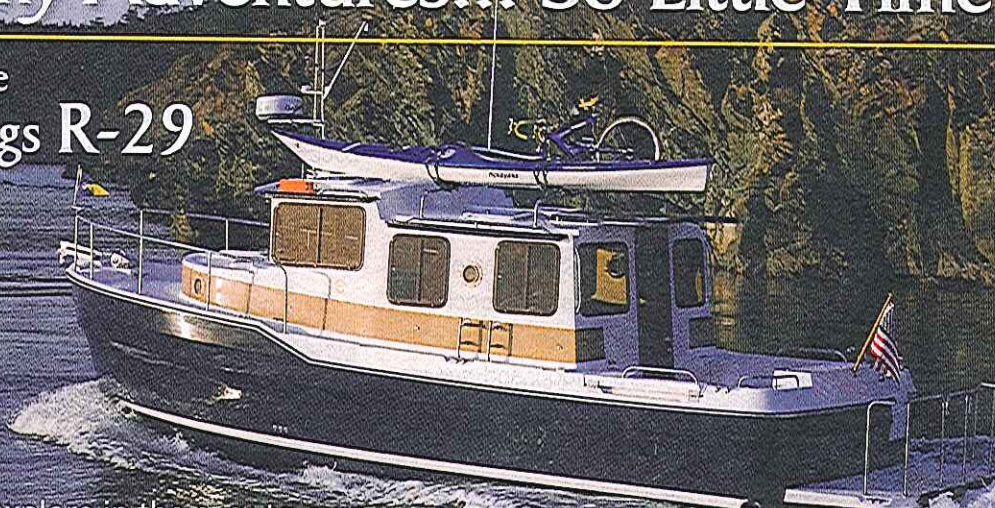


famed Golf Cart Parade; August's Pirate Weekend; September's Labor Day Beach Music Extravaganza, and the North Carolina Wine & Food Weekend.

Bald Head Island also operates the new Deep Point Marina, an 82-slip full-service marina on the Cape Fear River near the charming town of Southport. It accommodates visiting boats 30 to 102 feet with up to 10-foot draft. The basin has a lighted entrance channel and there's fuel service, full electric hook-ups, cable TV, and wi-fi. This marina is adjacent to the new Bald Head Island Ferry Terminal, which includes a snack bar.

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