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Girlfriends Getaway to Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

Travelled by [Jan Ross](#) on 16 June 2014 | [0 Comments](#)



Travelled By

Jan Ross



Jan Ross has been traveling since she was an infant as her father was a career Marine Corps officer and her family traveled the globe. ...[Find out more!](#)

Beautiful Hilton Head Island, South Carolina is a barrier island tucked neatly up so closely against the South Carolina coast that it is just a short drive over a marsh-lined causeway to get there and a short drive from both Charleston and Savannah, yet a whole world away in the relaxed, island vibe that greets you.

Your first glimpse of the lush foliage and the beautifully designed businesses and resorts which are hidden away, well back from the road, gives you your first clue that this not your typical island getaway. The island's Natural Resources Division enforces the Land Management Ordinance which minimizes the impact of local development and even governs the style of buildings and how they are situated among the native trees. You won't recognize the McDonald's and Wal-Mart here; they are small, built of materials which blend into the environment, and surrounded by trees.



The beach at Hilton Head is amazing; it's absolutely huge with hard packed sand for bike riding and beach strolling. At low tide, tide pools form and attract local birds which forage for tiny fish and crabs trapped in the pools. Most of the island is sublimely private, located inside gated communities and resorts but there are also several public beach access points along with plenty of hotels, shops and restaurants. We were lucky enough recently to take a girlfriends getaway to two of the fabulous resorts on Hilton Head. The first was the recently renovated [Sonesta Resort](#). Beautifully redone with a focus on orange and other colors of the beautiful island sunsets, the resort is located on 11 beautifully landscaped, beachfront acres which contain water features, gorgeous flowers and plenty of butterflies and birds attracted by the colorful foliage.

We pulled up in front of the Sonesta Resort, tucked away on Shipyard

Drive in a perfectly lovely location just a short walk from the Atlantic Ocean, and were immediately very impressed by the beauty of the place. We were greeted by the staff who must have instantly memorized our names because every time we left the resort during the rest of our stay, they called us by name. Not only were they friendly; they were thoughtful as well, inquiring about whether we needed directions and even recommending restaurants and shops to us.



The resort has recently gone through a \$30 million renovation and offers a fabulous swimming pool complex where we spent most of our time lolling in the sun, the Arum Spa, several restaurants, bike rentals, and easy access to golf and tennis as well as the rest of Hilton Head Island with plenty of great shops and restaurants. During renovation, they added a shade pool and hot tub, as well as a zero-entry heated lagoon swimming pool and children's area and we saw all of these in constant use.

We were huge fans of the small gift shop in the lobby called Pearls Market and purchased several gifts there, including some local perfumes and Christmas ornaments. There is also a fitness center although I admit that we were way too lazy on this trip to visit it. We loved this beautifully renovated resort and thought the lobby was especially impressive. Huge, airy, tropical, and beautifully decorated, it was quite an introduction to the resort. We didn't realize that our wonderful suite would be even more impressive! After checking in, we headed up to what we assumed would be a perfectly adequate hotel room but we were seriously stunned when we walked in. Our suite had a large living room with a flat screen television and a nice balcony overlooking the lush foliage and pool area, a separate dining room/office area, and a completely separate bedroom with an adjoining full bath. The couch in the living room folded out into what my SIL assured me was a very comfortable bed so we each had our own living area which was so nice!

In the dining area were a small fridge, a sink, and a Keurig coffee maker which was really handy for light lunches or a quick snack. They also had some great added touches like night lights at the bottom of the bedside tables that came on when you got up at night (I have never seen that in any other hotel) and a television that swiveled so it could be seen from the living room or dining area.

The first thing we did after checking in and swooning over our wonderful suite was take a stroll around the grounds. The resort is a gorgeous property and has impeccably maintained grounds. Every place we looked there were more flowers, fountains, paths, hammocks, and lovely views. Then we headed out to the beach. We loved the wide, expansive beach furnished with beach chairs and umbrellas, but the pool area was so convenient, quiet, and lovely that we spent most of our time there. There was even live music one afternoon.



We didn't actually need to worry too much about delving into the snacks we had brought during our stay as we had breakfast every morning at Heywards and dinner one evening. Breakfast was absolutely fantastic every morning with a full buffet, omelet bar, or a full menu if you preferred. We did prefer the full menu one morning and had the most amazing waffles. Covered with whipped cream, strawberries, and a drizzle of chocolate syrup, they were truly decadent.



Our dinner one night was also fabulous in every way. We started with a great salad, sampled each other's entrees, and finished with several desserts at the insistence of our waiter who said we must try them, although I admit we did not require much persuasion.

We left the resort one night for a truly incomparable meal at a fascinating, small, local restaurant called [The Studio](#). Owned and managed by a husband and wife team, the restaurant offers an eclectic menu with a focus on local and organic items. The husband/chef stays busy in the kitchen while the wife, who is an accomplished artist with work displayed throughout the restaurant, works as a friendly hostess and waitress.

Just when we thought our stay could not get any more relaxing, we spent an afternoon at the Arum Spa for a massage and facial. The spa is located right in the resort and offers massages, facials and manicures/pedicures –

perfect for a girlfriends getaway!

The only problem we had with the Sonesta Resort was when it was time to leave. We felt that we needed a few more days...or possibly a week or so. But, luckily, we had a few more days in Hilton Head at the beautiful [Omni Hilton Head Oceanfront Resort](#).

We loved our suite at the Sonesta Resort but our view of the beach made us fall equally in love with the Omni.

The Omni is laid out in several different buildings connected charmingly with wooden pathways which went through the resort area. Our suite was perfectly fabulous in every way, especially the view of the beach and Atlantic Ocean we had from our balcony, which we enjoyed often. We took our coffee out there every morning and just drank in the view along with our brews. In addition to the view, our studio suite had two queen beds and 530 square feet so it was very roomy. We loved our little dining area with a table and chairs and a kitchenette area with a fridge, microwave, coffee maker and even a little toaster. We made several meals there and really enjoyed the convenience. There is valet parking available but there is also free parking, which I always appreciate. You might want to know there is an \$18 per day resort fee but it includes internet access, in-room coffee and bottled water, complimentary shuttle access in the area, and a few other amenities.

The resort has recently gone through a \$17 million dollar renovation and it's truly a beautiful place. The front entrance, lobby, meeting facilities, fitness center and Ocean Tides Spa have all been transformed. Families would enjoy new kid's splash zone right beside the 3,600 square feet, zero entry Family Pool. We spent all our time at the newly renovated Adult Pool for the peace and quiet and just relaxed and read. We were also impressed with the lavish, sub-tropical landscaping and exotic garden atmosphere that really made the resort gorgeous. As we were on a trip with the primary goal being to relax, the Omni was the perfect location. But if you feel like getting some exercise, they do have three championship golf courses, each more beautiful than the last. They also offer world-class tennis courts, a great fitness center with state-of-the-art fitness equipment. They also have a spa and several restaurants on the property.

We left one day for a massage and facial at a small, locally owned spa called the Ahh Green Spa. They are the island's first truly "green" spa, offering organic, fair trade, and vegan products. Their philosophy is to complement the body's desire to find balance through quality bodywork and skin therapies and we both truly enjoyed our experiences there.

We prepared most of our simple meals in our suite at the Omni, but we did take advantage of the Buoy Bar out by the pool for lunch one day, in between lounging in our chairs and strolling on the beach. We also popped into the Palmetto Market several times, where they have plenty of food items, souvenirs, and other necessities, along with fresh-baked goods and coffee.



We did manage to bestir ourselves enough to throw on some shorts a couple of days and leave the resorts to check out the many vintage/antique/consignment shops on the island. Hilton Head is a great place to spend a day looking for hidden treasures in one of the dozens of shops. We found everything from a Kate Spade purse for \$5 to a vintage, handmade, crocheted tablecloth.

Relax, eat, shop, and enjoy the beauty of this lovely barrier island on your next getaway because it is truly a unique place.

Tell the world!

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