SCENE
SOUTHWALTON

Find Your Perfect Beach

Miramar Beach
Seascapes
San Destin
Dune Allen
Gulf Place
Santa Rosa Beach
Blue Mountain Beach
Grayton Beach
Watercolor
Seaside
Seagrove
WaterSound
Seacrest
30A
Allys Beach
Rosemary Beach
Inlet Beach

VisitSouthWalton.com

Cover Art by Jenna Varney
With an abundance of natural beauty to behold, it's no wonder that South Walton's landscapes serve as a muse for artists and musicians. Galleries, live music and festivals are the heartbeat of South Walton's 16 unique beach neighborhoods.
Let South Walton Speak to You

With 26 miles of sugar-white sand and turquoise water, South Walton is the perfect destination for a beach vacation, a family reunion or a couples/friends getaway. What soothes the soul more than lying on the beach, listening to the waves lap in the distance as warm Gulf breezes dance in your hair?

And while you could probably spend the entire day soaking up the sunshine, there’s so much more to explore in South Walton.

To truly immerse yourself into the South Walton culture, look no further than the local art galleries, live music venues or performing arts stages that dot our 16 unique beach neighborhoods. From Inlet Beach in the east to Miramar Beach in the west, there are dozens of art galleries beckoning to be explored; countless musicians pouring their passion into microphones; and Broadway-quality thespians acting out the perfect scene night in and night out.

Take a walk along the beach. Casually stroll a secluded trail. Enjoy panoramic views of rare coastal dune lakes. Eat at one of our award-winning restaurants.

No matter where you look, there is inspiration everywhere. Find your creativity in South Walton.

Learn more about South Walton’s diverse arts and culture scene at VisitSouthWalton.com.
Do you love live music? Check out the annual 30A Songwriters Festival. What about food and wine? There are more than a dozen annual food and wine-centric events in South Walton, from longstanding traditions like the Sandestin Wine Festival to the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival to Taste of the Race, Harvest Wine & Food Festival, and the 30A Blue Crab Festival.

If art is more your style, be sure to indulge in South Walton Art Week and Digital Graffiti, both held each year in May. With cooler temps and beautiful fall sunsets, a trip to South Walton in November is a must to enjoy the MountainFilm on Tour outdoor film festival in WaterColor.

But the events don’t stop there. Given South Walton’s natural beauty and welcoming climate year-round, there are a number of outdoor and sports-related events on the calendar. Runs like the Seaside School Half Marathon & 5K, the 30A 10K and Fun Run (a Thanksgiving Day tradition), and the 30A Half Marathon & 5K will certainly get your blood pumping.

Come for the beach, stay for endless entertainment.

Full lineup of South Walton’s annual events at visitsouthwalton.com.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY: 30A SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL - Listen as renowned songwriters take the stage at this one-of-a-kind event. Enjoy live music at multiple venues throughout South Walton during the three-day festival.

FEBRUARY: CRESCENDO! SINFONIA GULF COAST - Enjoy an energy-infused cultural and culinary experience showcasing winemakers, celebrity chefs, auction items and award-winning musicians. Crescendo! is an exciting new cultural extravaganza benefiting Sinfonia Gulf Coast and its music education and community engagement initiatives throughout Northwest Florida.

FEBRUARY: 30A WINE FESTIVAL AT ALYS BEACH - Cleanse your palate and prepare for five days of exquisite wines, delectable dishes and beautiful surroundings. Meet with winemakers, participate in seminars and enjoy live entertainment.

FEBRUARY: SANDESTIN GUMBO FESTIVAL - Eat unlimited gumbo and dance to live Zydeco music at one of the largest and most popular winter events on the Emerald Coast. Sample a variety of gumbo styles and vote for your favorite to win “People’s Choice!”

MARCH: SEASIDE SCHOOL HALF MARATHON & 5K - This event-packed weekend kicks off with the Taste of the Race event presented by Emeril Lagasse, live entertainment and an exciting race expo. On Sunday, join thousands of runners for a race along Scenic Highway 30A.

APRIL: SANDESTIN WINE FESTIVAL - The Sandestin Wine Festival is a highly anticipated event featuring local chefs and wine experts from around the world. Learn and explore the world of wine while enjoying live music and entertainment.

APRIL: SOUTH WALTON BEACHES WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL - One of South Walton’s biggest events, this lively springtime gathering brings out the connoisseur in us all. There’s something for everyone, including diverse cuisine from celebrity chefs, live music and over 800 of the world’s tap wines.

MAY: SOUTH WALTON ART WEEK - Formerly known as ArtsQuest, this expanded event celebrates the creative spirit of our beach neighborhoods. Come witness the sights and sounds produced by local artists and musicians.

MAY: DIGITAL GRAFFITI FESTIVAL - Watch the white stucco walls of Alys Beach come alive during this can’t-miss event. Digital projection artists create stunning works of light that dazzle and delight. In its eighth year, this first-of-its-kind event showcases light and color in a truly spectacular way.

JUNE: EMERALD COAST BLUE MARLIN CLASSIC - This premier sport-fishing tournament, held at the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, boasts entertainment and activities as well as a live cooking demonstration, fireworks and live music. Admission to Baytowne Marina is free, and attendees can watch as skilled anglers vie for nearly $2 million in prizes.

SEPTEMBER: SANDESTIN TRIATHLON - Are you cut out for a half-mile Gulf of Mexico swim, a 20-mile bike along the coast and a four-mile run through Sandestin’s beach and bayside communities? Find out at the 32nd annual Sandestin Triathlon, benefiting the Sandestin Foundation for Kids.

OCTOBER: 30A HALF MARATHON & 5K - This weekend-long event features three days of fun including a kickoff party, race expo, race festivities and award ceremonies. Train for the run or cheer for others as they tackle 3.1 or 13.1 miles.

OCTOBER: SOUTH WALTON CELEBRITY GOLF CLASSIC - Enjoy a round of golf with sports legends and celebrities at the South Walton Celebrity Golf Classic, held at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort. Proceeds will benefit the Operation Renewed Hope Foundation.

OCTOBER: SANDESTIN WINE FESTIVAL - Cheers to beer at this annual festival showcasing over 200 beers for your tasting pleasure. In addition to lagers, stouts and IPAs from around the country and the world, there’s also a focus on local beers.

OCTOBER: 30A BLUE CRAB FESTIVAL - Enjoy live music, local art and blue crab from the Gulf prepared in every way imaginable at this annual festival. Celebrate the 30A lifestyle and all it has to offer.

OCTOBER: BAYTOWNE WHARF BEER FESTIVAL - Sip and savor at this annual festival showcasing over 200 beers for your tasting pleasure. In addition to lagers, stouts and IPAs from around the country and the world, there’s also a focus on local beers.

NOVEMBER: HARVEST WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL - This two-day outdoor film festival is dedicated to educating, inspiring and motivating audiences about issues that matter. Films selected for the festival explore themes of culture, preserving environments and promoting adventure.

More information on South Walton’s annual events, at eventsinsouthwalton.com.
From Mediterranean-inspired cuisine and Neapolitan pizzas to steamed pork dumplings and Southern favorites like fried green tomatoes and grits, the menus in South Walton’s restaurants will take you on a journey around the world. Pair those with award-winning wine lists for an unforgettable experience.

With food and wine events dotting the calendar year-round, the opportunities to experience new flavors, cuisines and wines abound. Be sure to make plans to attend these can’t-miss culinary adventures.

CRESCENDO!
February • February 15-17 • sinfoniagulfcoast.org
Benefitting Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Crescendo! is a “cultural extravaganza” that showcases incredible wines paired with thoughtful menus, a live auction and plenty of Sinfonia flair.

SANDESTIN GUMBO FESTIVAL:
Sandestin • February 15-16 • sandestingumbofestival.com
“Pursue the Roux” at the annual Sandestin Gumbo Festival. Sample gumbos prepared more ways than you can count all while strolling the streets of the Village of Baytowne Wharf.

30A WINE FESTIVAL:
Alys Beach • February 20-24 • 30Awinefestival.com
The 30A Wine Festival is a five-day event, featuring carefully curated wine dinners, pairing showcases, a mixology seminar and a grand tasting with more than 80 wines.

SANDESTIN WINE FESTIVAL:
Sandestin • April 11-14 • sandestinwinefestival.com
With more than 30 years of tradition behind it, the Sandestin Wine Festival is one of South Walton’s longest standing events. The four-day event features a wide range of experiences, from attending wine dinners with celebrity chefs to participating in preview events throughout the year and taking part in wine tastings that showcase hundreds of wines.

SOUTH WALTON BEACHES WINE AND FOOD FESTIVAL:
Miramar Beach • April 25-28 • sowalwine.com
The South Walton Beaches Wine and Food Festival is “more than a festival, it’s a lifestyle.” Sip and savor your way through Grand Boulevard as you taste endless eats, take part in interactive seminars and choose from more than 800 wines.

30A BLUE CRAB FESTIVAL:
Blue Mountain Beach • October • 30Acrabfest.com
The 30A Blue Crab Festival is a “celebration of the 30A lifestyle,” featuring live music, cold drinks, cooking demonstrations and plenty of blue crabs to feast on, as well as other tasty eats.

BAYTOWNE BEER FESTIVAL
Sandestin • October • baytownebeerfestival.com
A beer lover’s dream becomes reality each October, as the Village of Baytowne Wharf comes alive for the Baytowne Beer Festival. More than 200 beers from around the globe are served up, from stouts and porters to lagers and IPAs.

HARVEST WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL:
WaterColor • October • dcvaf.org
Benefitting the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, the Harvest Wine & Food Festival is a three-day festival that showcases world-class wines, winemaker dinners, live music and a charitable spirit.

ROSEMARY BEACH UNCORKED:
Rosemary Beach • October • rosemarybeachuncorked.com
Held in Rosemary Beach, this event showcases fine wines and culinary creations from the beach town’s talented chefs, and live music.

AN EVENING OF SPARKLING WINE AND HOLIDAY LIGHTS:
Sandestin • November • baytownesparklingwinefest.com
Everything is better with a little bubbly, even the holiday season in South Walton. Spend the evening in the Village of Baytowne Wharf sampling a variety of sparkling wines and tasty eats.

SEEING RED WINE FESTIVAL:
Seaside • November • seeingredwinefestival.com
Reds, whites and rosés are the perfect shade of fall in Seaside as part of the annual Seeing Red Wine Festival. Culinary creations from Seaside’s restaurants will also be on full display to please your palate.
ART + MUSIC EVENTS

South Walton’s unique neighborhoods are home to an amazing collection of talented artists, performers and musicians. The art scene in South Walton showcases everything from art festivals to digital projection art, music festivals and on-stage performances.

30A SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL:
Venues throughout South Walton • January 16-21 • 30asongwritersfestival.com
If music runs through your veins, there’s no better event in South Walton. With venues spanning from Miramar Beach to Inlet Beach, the annual songwriters festival is a showcase of hit makers and emerging talents in the music scene.

YETTES AT THE VILLAGE:
Sandestin • March 23 • baytownewharf.com
Get ready to rev your engines as America’s most iconic cars take over the Village of Baytowne Wharf. Stroll through Baytowne as you check out a wide variety of corvettes and see their evolution throughout the years. Attendees are invited to vote for their favorites.

DIGITAL GRAFFITI:
Alys Beach • May 17-18 • digitalgraffiti.com
Art takes on many forms, but it’s truly a unique experience when it’s displayed digitally on the stark white buildings in Alys Beach. The festival attracts not only digital artists, but filmmakers, musicians, interactive designers, photographers, celebrities, and fans of art, technology and architecture.

SEASIDE DANCE FESTIVAL:
Seaside • May 3-5 • seasidefl.com
If you’re a fan of dance, this is the event for you. Watch as members from national dance companies perform a variety of dance styles, including ballet, tap, hip hop, jazz, modern, neo-classical and more.

ART WEEK SOUTH WALTON:
Venues throughout South Walton • May 9-19 • artweeksouthwalton.com
A true art lover’s paradise, Art Week presents a mix of visual, performing and literary arts throughout the community, showcasing the best of what South Walton has to offer.

MOUNTAINFILM ON TOUR:
WaterColor • November • mountainfilm.org/tour
This two-day film festival in WaterColor offers a unique setting where audiences are treated to films that are designed to educate, motivate and inspire its viewers to create a better world.

EMERALD COAST THEATRE COMPANY:
Miramar Beach • Programming throughout the year • emeraldcoasttheatre.org
The non-profit Emerald Coast Theatre Company aims to “inspire, educate, and empower the community and artists of all ages to achieve the highest level of cultural excellence through collaboration, productions, and educational programs that promote lifelong learning and provide excellent, professional entertainment in the Emerald Coast Community.”

THE REP THEATRE:
Seaside • Programming throughout the year • lovetherep.com
From live music to theatre productions, The REP has proven to be a local favorite for those seeking a performing arts outlet. Shows include “Every Christmas Story Ever Told (And Then Some),” talented musicians, magicians, and a variety of camps and classes.
Biking, hiking, swimming, stand-up paddleboarding, kayaking, and running are just more enjoyable at the beach. And given South Walton’s location along the Gulf of Mexico, fishing adventures are easy to come by. Whether you’re looking to stay fit on vacation or just want to cheer for your favorite athlete, don’t miss these South Walton events.

SEASIDE SCHOOL HALF MARATHON AND 5K:
Seaside • March 1-3 • runseasidefl.com
Held in Seaside, this annual race is a long-standing South Walton tradition along Scenic Highway 30A. The race weekend not only features the half marathon and 5K, but also Taste of the Race, a foodie favorite and showcase of local culinary creations.

CVHN SMILE MILE AND 5K:
WaterColor • May • cvhnkids.org
Run for a great cause at the annual CVHN Smile Mile and 5K at Marina Park in WaterColor. Runners and walkers of all ages are welcomed to participate in the 5K and Smile Mile, benefiting the Children’s Volunteer Health Network.

EMERALD COAST BLUE MARLIN CLASSIC:
Sandestin • June 19-23 • fishecbc.com
Whether you’re a participating angler or just an observer, the annual Emerald Coast Blue Marlin Classic is a sight to behold. Watch as boats dock in the Baytowne Marina and weigh-in massive fish that can tip the scale at more than 600 pounds!

SANDESTIN TRIATHLON:
Sandestin • September • sandestintriathlon.com
Each year, hundreds of athletes come to the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort to test their physical limits during the Sandestin Triathlon. The .5-mile swim in the Gulf of Mexico, 20-mile bike along the flat scenic coastline, and 4-mile-run showcase the natural beauty of South Walton and resort property.

With endless amounts of natural beauty, more than 200 miles of hiking and biking trails, 26 miles of sugar-white sand, rare coastal dune lakes, and welcoming year-round temperatures, South Walton is truly the perfect place to get out and be active.

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30A HALF MARATHON AND 5K:
Gulf Place • October • 30ahalf.com
Whether you choose the half marathon or the 5K, there’s plenty of fun and camaraderie to be had at the annual 30A Half Marathon and 5K, which follows a mostly flat course that begins and ends in Gulf Place. As part of the race, there are a variety of events and family-friendly activities to enjoy.

SOUTH WALTON CELEBRITY GOLF CLASSIC:
Sandestin • October • hiltonsandestinbeach.com
For more than two decades, the South Walton Celebrity Golf Classic has seen celebrities and golfers alike tee off for a weekend of golf, fun and charity. In the past the tournament has welcomed the likes of Patrick Warburton, Brett Butler, Jim McMahon, and Bucky Dent.

30A 10K:
Rosemary Beach • November 28 • 30a10k.com
Race your way along 30A as you begin this festive Thanksgiving Day run in beautiful Rosemary Beach. Can you think of a better way to burn off a few hundred calories before you indulge in all that turkey, dressing and pie?
**BEST SOUTH WALTON EVENTS**

If you're looking for entertainment while visiting South Walton, you're in luck. Whether you like live music, soaking up local arts and culture, getting active, or sampling some of the best culinary creations and wines, South Walton's event calendar is overflowing with awesome experiences.

As part of the annual Perfect in South Walton awards, more than 23,000 votes were cast for the “Best Event.” These three events took home Diamond, Platinum and Gold honors.

**30A SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL (DIAMOND):**

Music has a way of soothing the soul, so it should come as no surprise that the 30A Songwriters Festival was named as the best event by voters in the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards.

Who doesn't love great music complimented by sugar-white sand and turquoise water?

Now in its 10th year, the four-day event is a showcase of incredibly talented musicians from around the country who take a trip to the beach and perform on more than two dozen stages throughout South Walton's 16 beach neighborhoods.

From intimate venues like Amavida Coffee in Rosemary Beach and Bud & Alley’s Pizza Bar to the rooftop of 723 Whiskey Bravo, FOOW, Caliza Pool and Grand Boulevard, you'll see the likes of Jason Isbell, Shawn Mullins, Charlie Mars, Farewell Angelina, Gretchen Peters, and Marc Broussard grace the stage, in addition to local favorites like Bouku Groove, Season Ammons, and Chris Alvarado.

Enjoy the perfect night out with friends, all while soaking up some great tunes, a cold cocktail or a great meal in South Walton.

For more information, visit 30Asongwritersfestival.com.

**30A HALF MARATHON AND 5K (GOLD):**

A healthy lifestyle is easy in South Walton, especially when there is an endless amount of natural beauty to behold. Whether you are a seasoned runner or a newbie, the 30A Half Marathon and 5K offers something for everyone.

The three-day event, which was honored as the Gold Winner in the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards Best Event category, features not only the half marathon and 5K, but plenty of live music, entertainment and food, as part of the 30A BBQ Festival.

From stunning architecture to rare coastal dune lakes and expansive nature vistas, the course takes participants from Gulf Place to WaterColor and back down Scenic Highway 30A, so lace up your shoes and get ready to run.

For more information, visit 30Ahalf.com.

**SOUTH WALTON BEACHES WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL (PLATINUM):**

Held annually in Grand Boulevard, the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival has proven to be a local favorite. Voters in the 2019 Perfect in South Walton Awards agreed, as the four-day festival takes home Platinum honors in the Best Event category.

The festival, scheduled for April 25-28, features a variety of wine seminars, a culinary village showcasing local eats, live music, craft beers and spirits, and more than 800 wines to sample. In addition to an incredible lineup of wines, entertainment and food, the South Walton Beaches Wine & Food Festival is a charity event, benefiting the Destin Charity Wine Auction Foundation, a non-profit organization that supports children’s charities throughout Northwest Florida.

For more information, visit sowalwine.com.
EXPLORE THE ART SCENE
Because she grew up the daughter of a clam digger on Long Island, New York, it should come as no surprise that Jenna Varney ultimately made her home in a beach community.

“Most of my memories as a kid were from being on his clam boat,” she says. “So to come here, this beautiful beach community surrounded by water, and all of these beautiful things, it all just came together.”

Varney’s first canvas was a placemat at an Italian restaurant in New York. To this day, Varney’s parents still have that drawing. At age 8, she began taking formal art lessons and painting with oil paints, and soon after was invited to study with watercolorist Mary Reay. While in high school, Varney would apprentice for modern contemporary artist Malcolm Morley.

“I’ve always loved art,” she says. “I’ve always loved museums, and when I was younger I dreamed of going to Venice, Italy and France. It was kind of just engrained in me, I guess.”

As an Air Force spouse, Varney has moved around the world, and no matter where her family was stationed she would paint and create. But while she’s had a knack for art and creativity since childhood, the 2019 Visit South Walton Artist of the Year didn’t find her footing as a professional artist until the Air Force assigned her husband to Eglin Air Force Base in 2002.

“We were never really anywhere long enough to get my talents out there and get in a gallery,” she says. “Once you would get clientele or a following you were out of there.”

But she didn’t let the dream of becoming a full-time artist fade. While looking for a home in Florida, Varney and her father were traveling along 30 A and she knew she’d found her heart’s home. She told her dad she knew it was the perfect place for her to sell art, too.

During her first “real art show” at Gulf Place in 2014, Varney sold a painting of Oyster Lake. It gave her confidence that she was on the right path. Now as Visit South Walton’s 2019 Artist of the Year, Varney is moving faster down that path.

“I was not expecting it at all,” Varney says of the phone call she received telling her she had won. “There was a lot of screaming and a lot of jumping around.”

“To be up there with such talent, it’s almost unreal,” she says, noting prestigious past winners, as well as talented fellow artists like Clint Eagar and Chris Alvarado.

Varney’s signature style is hyper-realism. She likes to say that it’s “photo-realism with a little bit of life added to it.” Looking through her works, you’ll see incredible detail engrained in subjects ranging from clams and oysters to sea turtles and other marine life.

“My hyper-realism stuff is really my close ups, my oysters, my clams,” she said. “I like the glitz, I like the sheen, I like the colors that come out. Capturing that, it’s important. A photograph is flat, so I’m trying to do something that has depth.”

Is she ready to represent South Walton’s vibrant arts community in 2019 and accept the torch passed along by previous South Walton Artist of the Year winners?

“It’s very exciting, and a challenge I’m looking forward to,” she says. “I think I’m ready. Everything up to this point so far has prepared me for this.”

To learn more about Varney, visit jennavarney.com.

FORMER ARTISTS OF THE YEAR

KATHLEEN BROADERICK, 2018
MARISOL GULLO, 2017
MELODY BOGLE, 2016
JUAN ADARO, 2015
MARY HONG, 2014
ANDY SACZYNSKI, 2013
ALLISON CRAFT, 2012
ALLISON WICKEY, 2011
MICHAEL GRANBERRY, 2010
MICHAEL MCCARTY, 2009
DONNA BURGESS, 2008
BILL STEPHENSON, 2007
PHIL KISER, 2006
JUSTIN GAFFREY, 2005
SUSAN LUCAS, 2004
DOROTHY STARBUCK, 2003
A trip to South Walton provides endless opportunities to create memories. From scenic strolls along the sugar-white sand beach to long bike rides, world-class dining, year-round festivals, and a thriving local music and arts scene.

Whether you want to channel your inner artist or just browse intricate works of art, a stop by the Mary Hong Studio-Gallery and Shard Shop in Grayton Beach is a must. There’s a reason why locals and visitors alike voted Hong’s creative spaces as the “Best Studio/Gallery” in the annual Perfect in South Walton awards.

MARY HONG GALLERY - THE SHARD SHOP (DIAMOND):

Brightly colored works of art perfectly capture the sun’s rays shining throughout her gallery. Hong’s works use a dimensional glass technique to stand glass rigidly on its edge to allow light to pass through while reflecting colors and textures onto a surface. Her work is inspired by South Walton’s coastal environment, with marine life, birds, and coastal landscapes and all recreated with recycled glass.

After browsing Hong’s work in her gallery, a quick walk next door will take you to The Shard Shop, a working studio where you can create your own masterpiece in a fun atmosphere. Staff will walk you through the creative process from start to finish, then you’ll have your own Mary Hong-inspired shard art to take home. It’s the perfect way to spend an afternoon or a rainy day no matter your age.

A professional artist for more than 20 years, Hong was honored as Visit South Walton’s 2014 Artist of the Year.

For more information, visit maryhongstudio.com or call (850) 231-1416. The gallery is located at 26 Logan Lane in Grayton Beach.

JUSTIN GAFFREY GALLERY (PLATINUM):

A stroll through 2005 South Walton Artist of the Year winner Justin Gaffrey’s Blue Mountain Beach Gallery is a showcase of texture, color and styles.

The self-taught artist was honored as the Platinum winner in the “Best Studio/Gallery” category of the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards. Gaffrey, whose family came to South Walton in the 80s, draws his inspiration from nature, human nature and life experiences.

For more information, visit justingaffrey.com or call (850) 267-2022. The gallery is located at 21 Blue Gulf Drive in Blue Mountain Beach.

FUSION ART GLASS (GOLD):

The Gold winner in the “Best Studio/Gallery” category in the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards category is a kaleidoscope of color.

Fusion Art Glass features works from more than 200 artists. Examples encompass everything from ornaments and glassware to jewelry, sculptures, home décor and ceramics. Founded by Russ Gilbert in 1996, Fusion Art Glass has two locations, one in Seaside and the other in Miramar Beach.

For more information, visit fusionartglass.com or call (850) 231-5405. The Seaside gallery is located at 55 Central Square and the Grand Boulevard Town Center gallery is located at 585 Grand Boulevard.
While it’s not uncommon to see an octopus, a propeller or even a diver’s mask settled under the water’s surface, one might do a double-take when they come across a pineapple or a deer, not to mention an 8-foot tall skull.

It’s definitely not something you see every day. But a visit to South Walton’s Underwater Museum of Art, a first in North America, reveals one of the more unique collections of art you’ll find, especially since you have to don SCUBA gear to check it out.

Submerged 0.7-miles from the shore of Grayton Beach, seven sculptures were chosen as part of the project’s inaugural deployment in 2018.

The first sculptures to populate the Underwater Museum of Art are “The Grayt Pineapple,” by Florida-based artist Rachel Herring, a welded stainless steel statue of a deer called “Self Portrait” created by Justin Gaffrey (2005 Visit South Walton Artist of the Year), the “SWARA Skull,” created by Vince Tatum, Evelyn Tickle’s “Concrete Rope Reef Spheres,” the “Propeller in Motion” sculpture by Marek Anthony, Allison Wickey’s (2011 Visit South Walton Artist of the Year) “Anamorphous Octopus,” and “JYC’s Dream,” a collaborative work by Kevin Reilly and the South Walton Montessori Academy students and teachers.

Soaking up sunshine in South Walton is always a great way to spend the day, but did you know you can have just as much fun exploring beneath the surface of the Gulf’s beautiful turquoise water?

In addition to providing a site for SCUBA diving that will be unique in the world, the sculptures are designed and selected with their suitability as marine habitat in mind, so even in the absence of SCUBA divers, the Underwater Museum of Art is certain to have many visitors, including schools of baitfish, grouper, sea turtles and dolphins.

The Underwater Museum of Art is the first installment of the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County’s Art is Public Spaces program, as well as a partnership with the South Walton Artificial Reef Association and community partners.

Want to check out the museum for yourself? The sculpture garden’s central piece, the SWARA Skull, is located at Latitude N 30°18.754, Longitude W 86°09.522. Each year, the CAA will select new artists to create sculptures for the museum.

For more information on the South Walton Artificial Reef Association, upcoming projects and ways to support SWARA, visit swarareefs.org.

Learn more about the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton and its mission at culturalartsallinace.com.
EXPERIENCE THE MUSIC SCENE
Local bars, restaurants and outdoor pavilions showcase live music almost nightly. After spending the day on sugar-white sand there’s no better way to unwind than by grabbing a few friends, sipping on a cocktail and tapping your toes to live tunes.

From behind-the-scenes songwriters to iconic names in the music business, South Walton becomes the epicenter of live music each January for the 30A Songwriters Festival. This annual event showcases incredibly talented artists performing at venues throughout South Walton.

No matter the time of year, the stage is set. Here’s where you can catch a show while in South Walton:

**THE MARKET SHOPS:**
9375 Emerald Coast Parkway, Sandestin • (850) 837-3077 • themarketshops.com
Located in the Market Shops at Sandestin, this live music venue is home to regular concerts, such as the Winter Concert Series that showcases different artists each weekend.

**BAYTOWNE WHARF:**
9300 Baytowne Wharf Boulevard, Sandestin • (850) 267-8180 • baytownewharf.com
Located in Sandestin, Baytowne Wharf hosts a regular concert series, as well as annual events and plenty of kid friendly activities. Restaurants and shops line the streets of Baytowne Wharf.

**VILLAGE DOOR:**
136 Fisherman’s Cove, Sandestin • 60 Seascapes Drive #101, Seascapes
(850) 502-4590 • thevillagedoor.com
If you’re looking to dance the night away, The Village Door is ready and waiting. With a wide variety of cold drinks and a full menu it’s easy to settle in and enjoy the evening, whether you visit the Baytowne Wharf or Seascapes Town Centre location.

**THE GULLEY AMPHITHEATER:**
45 Town Center Loop, Gulf Place
(850) 267-8458 • gulleyamphitheater.com
Located along Scenic Highway 30A, the Gulley Amphitheater is complimented by a collection of shops, art galleries and eateries.

**AJ’S GRAYTON BEACH:**
63 Defuniak Street, Grayton Beach
(850) 231-4102 • ajgrayton.com
With live music nightly, this Grayton Beach spot is a great place to gather with friends. AJ’s also serves up lots of casual dining options, along with plenty of cold drinks.

**THE RED BAR:**
70 Hotz Avenue, Grayton Beach
(850) 267-1008 • theredbar.com
A local institution in South Walton, The Red Bar is located in Grayton Beach and is best known for its eclectic décor, Sunday brunch and long-running relationship with live music.

**SEASIDE AMPHITHEATER:**
Central Square, Seaside • seasidefl.com
Nestled into the heart of Seaside, the amphitheater regularly comes alive with toe-tapping tunes. Surrounding the amphitheater there are shops, galleries and plenty of restaurants, including the famed “Airstream Row.”

**THE REP:**
216 Quincy Circle, Seaside • (850) 231-0733 • lovetherep.com
Located in Seaside, this intimate 75-seat venue showcases talented musicians throughout the year and as part of their Live @ The REP Concert Series.

**GRAYTON BEER CO. TAPROOM:**
217 Serenoa Road, Santa Rosa Beach • (850) 231-4766 • graytonbeer.com
Live music and hand-crafted beers go hand-in-hand at the Grayton Beer Company taproom in Santa Rosa Beach. With a wide assortment of musicians taking the stage regularly, you’re certain to catch some great tunes while you’re here.

**THE HUB:**
24 Hub Lane, Watersound • (850) 213-0782 • hub30a.com
Located in Watersound, The Hub is an outdoor venue that’s perfect for catching a show. In addition to live music, The Hub also has plenty of space for the kids to run around, shops and dining options.

**ALYS BEACH AMPHITHEATRE:**
Alys Beach • alysbeach.com/amenities/parks/amphitheatre
Grab your favorite chair or towel and take a seat on the green at the Alys Beach Amphitheatre. This central gathering spot is great for a night of live music with friends and family.
Live music and South Walton are a perfect match. From your favorite local bar to an outdoor amphitheater, talented musicians take the stage on a nightly basis.

Whether you like country music, pop, funk, or bluegrass, there’s a show that will fit your mood and style.

But what makes the perfect music venue? Based on the voters in the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards, it’s tradition, funk, quirkiness, and down home vibes. We’re talking about The Red Bar, of course.

**THE RED BAR (DIAMOND):**

The one-time general store is owned by Belgian-born brothers Oliver and Phillipe Petit, who modeled the funky decor on a nightclub their father once owned in Leige, Belgium. Foreign film posters and Christmas lights dominate the main dining room, with street signs, photos, statuettes and mismatched tables and chairs taking up most of the remaining available space. Oliver Petit calls it his “tribute to pop culture.”

For years, The Red Bar has been a South Walton tradition. Tucked inside its quaint walls, both local musicians and full-fledged stars have taken the stage. You’ll see familiar faces like The Red Bar Jazz Band, Dread Clampitt and DJ Vladi on a weekly basis, but you never really know who may pop up on stage at any given time.

Come for the live music, stay for the top-notch drinks, tasty eats, and eclectic décor.

Learn more about this local favorite at [theredbar.com](http://theredbar.com). The Red Bar is located at 70 Hotz Avenue in Grayton Beach.

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**THE HUB (PLATINUM):**

If you’re a fan of live music, then you’re a fan of The Hub in Watersound. With a mixture of live entertainment, restaurants, shops and boutiques, it’s no wonder The Hub is popular.

As the Platinum winner in the “Best Live Music Venue” category in the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards, The Hub’s stage has seen some of South Walton’s most popular acts perform, in addition to regional touring artists. There’s something about live music in an outdoor setting that hits the spot.

To learn more about The Hub and its concert lineup, visit [hub30a.com](http://hub30a.com). The Hub is located at 24 Hub Lane in Watersound.

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**THE BAY (GOLD):**

Sit back and relax at The Bay, as you look out at the Choctawhatchee Bay, sip on a cold cocktail, nibble on chef-inspired eats and tap your toes to the tunes. As part of the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards, The Bay took home Gold honors in the “Best Live Music Venue” category.

For their Wednesday Night Bonfire, The Bay dishes up live music, featuring the likes of Mike Whitty, Luke Langford and Kyle Lamonica. Their “Sunday Pickin’” is also a popular gathering for music lovers.

Learn more about The Bay’s music lineup at [baysouthwalton.com](http://baysouthwalton.com). The Bay is located at 24215 U.S. Hwy. 331 South in Santa Rosa Beach.
SOUTH WALTON SCENE GUIDE

FORREST WILLIAMS BAND (PLATINUM):

A staple of the South Walton music scene, it’s no surprise that voters in the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards chose the Forrest Williams band as the Platinum winner in the “Best Musician/Band” category.

From Stinky’s Bait Shack and Local Catch Bar & Grill to the annual 30A Songwriters Festival and the Backyard Boogie, the Forrest Williams Band can be heard on stages throughout the area, playing their perfectly blended mix of blues, country, folk and rock.

To learn more about the Forrest Williams Band, visit facebook.com/theforrestwilliamsband.

THE GRAYTONES (GOLD):

If you’re a fan of the South Walton music scene, more than likely you’ve crossed paths with the Gold winners for “Best Musician/Band” in the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards – The Graytones.

Formed in 2017, The Graytones bring a funk and jam band vibe to any stage, from 30Avenue to The Bay and the stage of the SandJam Festival. The majority of the band, which partially draws its name from Grayton Beach, has been friends since their college days.

Learn more about The Graytones at facebook.com/thegraytones.

DREAD CLAMPITT (DIAMOND):

If South Walton were to have a soundtrack, it would certainly sound something like Dread Clampitt.

Their folksy, bluegrass fusion fits perfectly with the pace of life along the beach. Anyone who’s been to local hotspots like The Red Bar or has spent a bit of time exploring South Walton’s live music scene has been indoctrinated to the sounds of Balder Saunders and Kyle Ogle.

Honing their craft since they first took the stage in 2002, Dread Clampitt has built a tremendous local following. Their shows have proven to be must-see events, which is evidenced by the fact they were voted as the “Best Musician/Band” in the annual Perfect in South Walton Awards.

With a laundry list of original music to their credit, Saunders, who plays the mandolin, and Ogle, guitarist, are also known to sprinkle an assortment of covers into their shows. If you’re looking to catch the guys in action, look no further than The Red Bar.

Dread Clampitt has been a staple at the Grayton Beach hangout for years and you’ll see them serving up folksy funk each and every Sunday.

Learn more about Dread Clampitt at facebook.com/Dread-Clampitt-185233628749.

BEST LOCAL MUSICIAN/BANDS

No matter the type of music you prefer, you’re more than likely to find a local artist performing on one of South Walton’s stages. Funk? Jazz? Soul? Country? Maybe even a bit of rock n’ roll? We’ve got them all.

But picking a local favorite can be tough. Voters in the annual Perfect in South Walton awards took the challenge and voted these three musicians/bands as their top picks.

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Standing in his converted workshop, Chris Alvarado is wearing a t-shirt and jeans. As he settles into a chair, surrounded by belt sanders, saws, and various tools of the trade, the 30-something-year-old husband and father talks about his life as a creator.

Anyone who’s spent time out and about in South Walton, has probably crossed paths with Alvarado. It may have been at a favorite local restaurant or bar. Perhaps it was at a local festival or charity event. No matter where you may have seen or heard him, he certainly had a guitar in hand. Alvarado’s both a musician and luthier (a maker of stringed instruments), so his trusty guitar is never too far behind.

While it was his skills as a high school trumpet player that won him a college scholarship, it was Alvarado’s rebellious choice to play the guitar as a 13-year old that would lead to his life’s passion.

“It was kind of an anti-dad thing,” he says, chuckling. “Plus, girls liked guitars.”

Alvarado’s story begins in New York, where he was born to a military family. By the age of six, his family had relocated to Okaloosa County. After graduating from high school in 2001, and shortly after the September 11 attacks, Alvarado joined the Air Force.

“I was going to be a pilot and do my 20 years, but then a switch had gone off,” he says. “I’d gotten my slot to go to school to be an officer, and I was just waiting for that, then I decided I wanted to get out.”

Alvarado, who was stationed in Alaska at the time, told his instructor that his dream was to play music and build guitars. Needless to say, he had absolutely no idea how he was going to accomplish that, but it didn’t deter him.

“It’s funny what a little bit of fatherly encouragement can do. He began to play shows and build a local following. He played at almost every local hotspot you can imagine, blending a familiar lineup of cover songs with a few originals.

“It was bar music,” he says. “Pretty much the same thing I do now.”

A gig at a wine bar in Seagrove, at the sight of the original Perfect Pig, was Alvarado’s first taste of the 30A scene. He was immediately hooked.

“You’re playing music, and people were really listening,” he says. “I could play the music I wanted to play – like James Taylor and Jim Croce stuff – so I made it a point to stay out on 30A.”

Alvarado’s style is mellow and familiar. And while he plays covers, the songs take on a different style when performed. He’ll strip down the original song, then re-build it in a way that’s original to him.

“Out of the 350 songs on my list, I have pared them down and they are all songs I like to play,” he said.

As someone who likes to tinker and build things, it only makes sense that Alvarado would try his hand at building guitars.

“It took me about nine months to build my first guitar,” he says.

And while he can easily admit his first few attempts failed, it was his commitment to the process that helped him begin Driftwood Guitars, which he founded in 2007.

Alvarado makes each one of his guitars in his home workshop. The process is long and tedious, but incredibly rewarding. Each guitar that he’s commissioned to craft starts with Alvarado building a relationship with its future owner. The personal relationship allows him to tailor a piece that’s truly one-of-a-kind. He describes his style as feminine, curvy and clean, with elaborate inlay work that comes off the fretboard and spills over onto the body of the guitar.

“This company has taken me from building guitars for the Grammys and building guitars for Fleetwood Mac and all of that crazy stuff, and it’s all just from me building guitars in my garage,” he says. “What I do is build really nice guitars for people, whether it’s Fleetwood Mac, Florida Georgia Line or a really incredible Bob Dylan guitar for a guy who lives in Santa Rosa Beach.”

Now, as a 35-year-old, Alvarado has been playing music for more than 20 years. He has a family and a business that he is incredibly passionate about. Life is good.

“I’m just doing me,” he’ll tell you.

To learn more about Alvarado or Driftwood Guitars, visit driftwood-guitars.com.