

Southern Living®

50 REASONS TO LOVE SUMMER IN THE SOUTH

Seafood dives, swimming holes, beach reads, ballparks, and all the tomatoes you can eat



little strip of stores and restaurants, the village remains old-school.

"Go on out to the Backyard of Love," says a mellow woman behind the counter at **Hibiscus Coffee & Guesthouse**, a little bed-and-breakfast hidden beneath Spanish moss. She points to a shaded area behind the inn. Nailed to a tree outside is a rustic wooden sign that reads (she wasn't kidding) "Backyard of Love." Below it, there's another sign that simply says "Hug in...hug out."

To get there, you will meander through a lush, fairy-worthy tapestry of ivy and narrow pathways forged during the B&B's 25 years in business. Like most things in Grayton Beach, the Backyard of Love is nothing fancy and a little funky—the kind of place where you could imagine a Woodstock revival coming together. That suits a town with the unofficial slogan "Nice dogs, strange people."

"THESE TINY TOWNS FIT TOGETHER LIKE MEMBERS OF A FAMILY, EACH WITH ITS OWN PERSONALITY."

After a morning bike ride, trade dusty pedals for the whitewashed floors of **Black Bear Bread Co.** Once inside the cozy cottage, you'll be smacked with the pleasant aroma of toasty sourdough and Benton's bacon, mingling in perfect harmony with poached eggs.

Warm, flaky croissants and cinnamon rolls tempt you as you wait to order at the counter. You might catch executive chef and co-owner Phil McDonald running point by the galley window or swooping in with a steaming plate of the weekend-only biscuits and gravy to satisfy a hungry diner.

"I remember the days when we used to sit around a table and try to figure out how to get people to come down to 30A!" says co-owner Dave Rauschkolb. "We'd go, 'When are they going to discover this place?'" Nobody's asking that now.

Taste James Beard Award semifinalist Debbie Swenerton's delectable pastries.



Black Bear Bread Co.'s popular Banana Tartine