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# *the irresistible call*

## OF KIAWAH

[ WRITTEN BY HEATHER KW BROWN ]

PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
PATRICK O'BRIEN,  
KIAWAH PARTNERS

**N**OT EVEN THE THREAT OF RAIN could keep us away. This point was clearly made as my friend and I, bedecked in mandatory life-jackets, walked onto the floating dock and waited patiently with paddles in tow. The kayaks at Kiawah Island were calling and as our guides nudged us into the calm current of the Kiawah River, the search began.

Sure, we'd come for the tranquility of paddling through a maze of tidal creeks, but the two of us were also anxiously awaiting the company oftentimes said to patrol tourists through the property's pristine marshland.

Luckily, we didn't have to wait long before several resident Atlantic Bottlenose dolphins made their highly anticipated debut. Cruising the coastal waters with them ultimately became one of many memorable experiences during our Kiawah stay.

And like the five-hour drive from Atlanta to the private South Carolina rental we called home for a few days, it was worth every bit of the wait.

### THE PULL OF PERFECTION

Blue skies and sandy beaches as far as the eye can see are certainly found on Kiawah Island, but a haven like this surpasses the typical allure of sand between the toes and sounds of the sea. The pull here is different — a sense of belonging and an irresistible urge to stay longer than intended.

When I first visited the island years ago, I was initially drawn to The Sanctuary, the resort's stunning seaside mansion, where service and hospitality ensure a VIP-style vacation for families of all generations. The amenity-laden

atmosphere, not only within these well-appointed walls but everywhere onsite, is second to none, but what I loved about my visit this time is that we stayed in one of the many private homes on the island. We felt like locals who could enjoy many of the same privileges.

The three new resort-owned and operated pools are a bonus for families, but we opted to lounge on the beach, where friendly attendants set up our chairs, rolled out our towels and took our drink orders while the waves washed over our feet and our chairs sank deeper into the sand. Ahhh ... now that's vacation.

As if we needed more reasons to indulge, award-winning meals abound at restaurant venues such as Jasmine Porch, The Ocean Room, Tides at The Beach Club and even Hege's Restaurant in Freshfields Village. We, apparently, have no will power, as we couldn't resist diving into dish after dish around the island.

### REFLECTION ON THE RUN

The sun rose only minutes before I did on the last morning of our trip, and yet the welcome was pleasantly warm from the time my running shoes hit the paved trail, to the hard-packed but nearly empty sand and back again. Truth be told, I hadn't meant to find the ocean. I accidentally detoured onto a portion of the trail that led me straight to it. Known to be directionally challenged at times, I can't remember the last time a wrong turn felt so right.

At one point, I turned off my iPod and sat on the sand, staring into the distance. Mesmerized by the view, I remembered how Abby Welch, the lead golf instructor for Kiawah Island Golf Resort, had graciously agreed to teach



me and my friend a few fundamentals and made it such a fun experience. I smiled, remembering how I had looked down at my feet, waddled a bit, readjusted my hands, and then stared at the hole in the ground as if professional posturing combined with my competitive spirit would somehow enable me to land the golf ball onto the green.

And surely I could not forget the incredible massage at Sasanqua Spa, tucked deep into the property, where moss-covered trees and the water wall outside successfully set the tone for

the ultimate pampering that was to come.

Maybe I was daydreaming. Maybe I just didn't want to leave, but when I finally got back on my feet and started running, I realized that somewhere along the way, Kiawah had captivated much more than my attention. **PN**

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kiawah Island Real Estate  
[kiawahisland.com](http://kiawahisland.com)

If you're looking to answer the irresistible call of Kiawah Island, consider calling it home with an address in Indigo Park. As the island's sustainable new neighborhood, Indigo Park home designs aspire to LEED certification. Included among the many amenities that come with owning one of these amazing homes is a Kiawah Island Club membership plus access to renowned local golf courses, The Beach Club, The Sasanqua Spa and the 9,000-square-foot Sports Pavilion.

Kiawah Island is also home to the HGTV Dream Home 2013.