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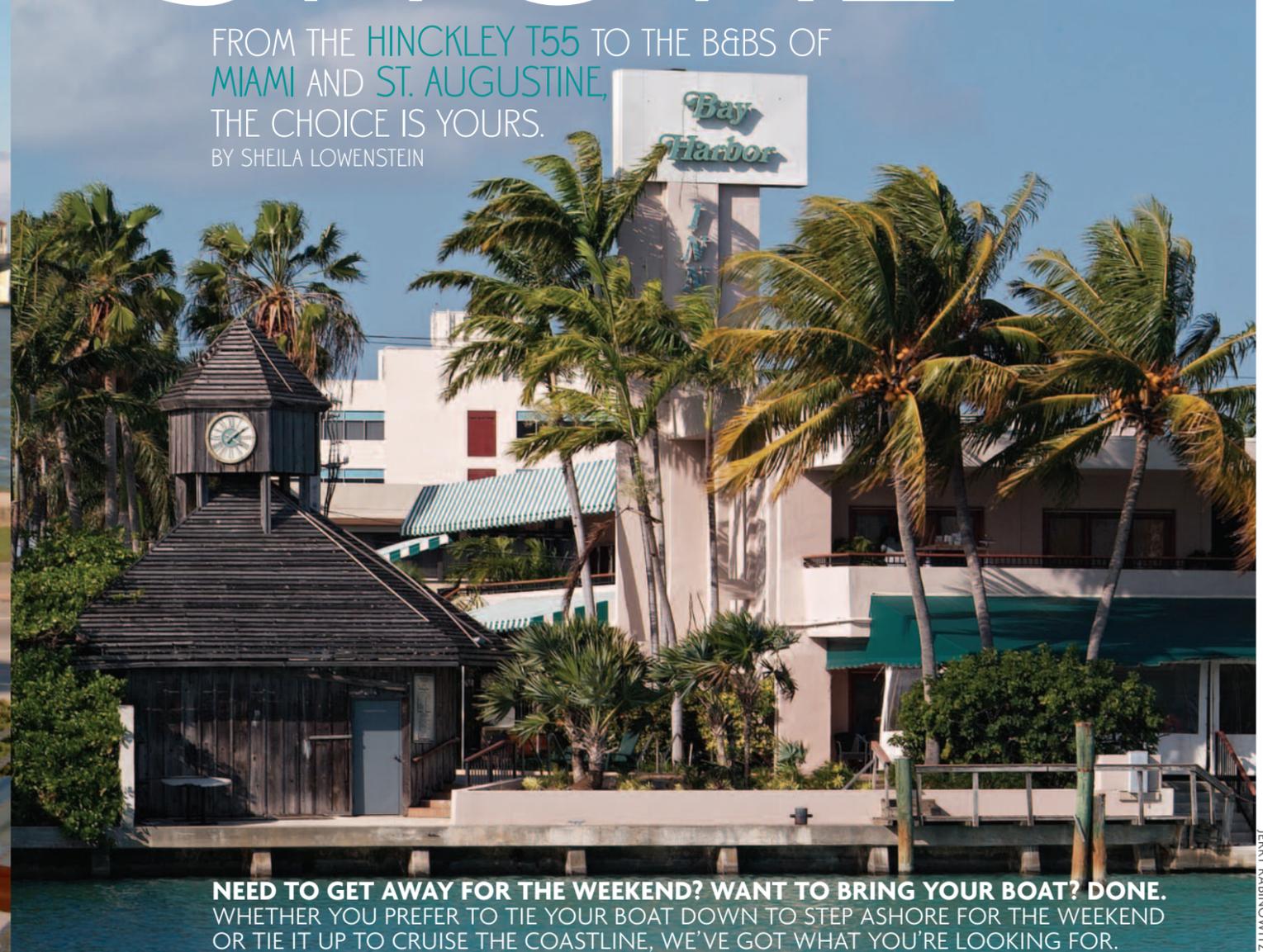
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THE ART OF THE DEAL BUYING A USED BOAT

# SHIP TO

# SHORE

FROM THE HINCKLEY T55 TO THE B&BS OF MIAMI AND ST. AUGUSTINE, THE CHOICE IS YOURS.  
BY SHEILA LOWENSTEIN



**NEED TO GET AWAY FOR THE WEEKEND? WANT TO BRING YOUR BOAT? DONE.** WHETHER YOU PREFER TO TIE YOUR BOAT DOWN TO STEP ASHORE FOR THE WEEKEND OR TIE IT UP TO CRUISE THE COASTLINE, WE'VE GOT WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.

OPPOSITE AND RIGHT/ROB DOWNEY



JERRY RABINOWITZ

# ST. AUGUSTINE'S

**CASABLANCA INN** is quiet and relaxed. The view of Matanzas Bay across the street is stunning, and the shops and galleries on Charlotte Street behind the inn are chock-full of unique finds.

The elegance of the Casablanca is unsurpassed. Guests are welcomed with a jar of chocolate chip cookies, and everyone is given a tour of the inn, as well as complimentary tickets for the tourist train and a drink at the A1A Alehouse. Guests also have access to a refrigerator in the kitchen where beer, soda and carafes of wine and water are kept. On weekends and holidays, a bottle of champagne is placed in each guest's room. The inn provides local restaurant menus, and the staff will make reservations for guests. Many area eateries provide complimentary shuttle service, and there is a nearby taxi stand. Some transportation-savvy guests arrange for one person to arrive at the Casablanca by boat and the other by car. Traveling by boat is a great way to get to the inn, and it provides beautiful scenery and fresh air. We stayed in the Anniversary Suite, and found the spa area to be full of lavish comfort. Private porches overlook the bay's many sailboats and impressive motor yachts.

Guests can arrange to have breakfast in their rooms, but many choose to dine on the porches opposite the bay or in the breakfast room. The Casablanca serves a three-course breakfast every morning with prompt and pleasant service. Flaky Danish pastry and each guest's choice of eggs complement coffee and fresh-squeezed Florida orange juice. Guests relax, read the paper, and watch the boats and horses pass by.

We strolled out the back door to Charlotte Street and found galleries and shops with a panoply of interesting wares. Art and

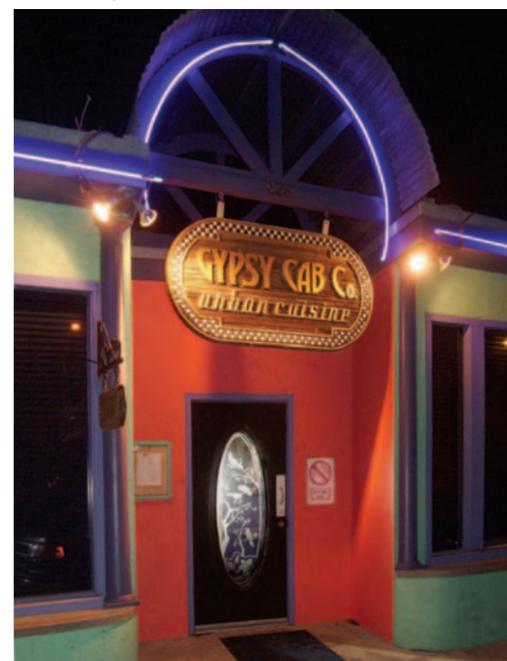
handcrafted pieces from around the world can be found here (we loved the Indian fan pulls made from brilliantly colored wooden birds). Nearby, the restaurant garden of Harry's Seafood Bar & Grille lured us in for lunch. Here, Cajun flavors heat up the terrace and bring the authentic New Orleans flavor to St. Augustine.

In the evening, we took a short drive over the Bridge of Lions to the famous Gypsy Cab Co. for dinner. The purple and green exterior hints at the bright colors that await diners inside, and the eclectic fare ranges from veal scallopini to chile relleno, all delicious and inexpensive. Gypsy Cab has a reputation for great value and flavor among the locals, who pride themselves on the eatery's unadorned ugliness.

We left our boat in excellent hands. The municipal marina accommodates yachts up to 180 feet on concrete floating docks with full fendering; larger vessels are kept at the T head. Daily dockage is \$1.60 per foot with a \$32 minimum. Electricity and water are available as are showers. Docking assistance, fuel, oil, ice, pump-out service and repairs are also available. The marina offers daily excursions from its docks, including day and evening sails, as well as ghost cruises on the topsail schooner, *Freedom*.



THE ELEGANCE OF THE CASABLANCA IS UNSURPASSED.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** The elegant fireplace warms the Celebration Suite; the delicious three-course breakfast includes fluffy frittatas; the Municipal Marina is a short walk from the inn; the inviting shops along Charlotte Street; Gypsy Cab Co. is a no-frills favorite eatery.

**FOR RESERVATIONS**

**CASABLANCA INN AND SUITES**  
 24 AVENIDA MENENDEZ ST.  
 (904) 829-0928 OR (800) 826-2626  
[www.casablancainn.com](http://www.casablancainn.com)

**GYPSY CAB CO.**  
 828 ANASTASIA BLVD.  
 (904) 824-8244  
[www.gypsyscab.com](http://www.gypsyscab.com)

**SAINT AUGUSTINE MUNICIPAL MARINA**  
 111 AVENIDA MENENDEZ ST.  
 (904) 825-1026  
[www.staugustinemarina.com](http://www.staugustinemarina.com)

## BAY HARBOR INN & SUITES,

just north of Miami Beach, is a place for non-stop shopping and designer name-dropping. The rooms feature spacious windows to show off the glorious tropical vistas outside, and the Bay Harbor's commodious dock on Indian Creek accommodates boats up to 60 feet free of charge. Small yachts and runabouts can bypass the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) and explore Indian Creek, located among the Bay Harbor Islands just north of Miami Beach. As you pull up to the dock, you may hear strains of a one-man steel band – the entertainment at Sunday brunch on the deck of the Island Café, the Bay Harbor Inn's own restaurant. Under a large canopy, diners indulge in a multi-course buffet while gazing out at the green-blue waters beyond.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner, offered on the deck every day, is provided and served by Johnson & Wales University, which uses the inn as its Southern classroom. Students of the Rhode Island-based hospitality college spend internships here learning their craft in a hands-on, practical way. Well-appointed guestrooms and suites are available with king-size four-poster beds and large television armoires.

If shopping is the one little pleasure in life that you miss when you're boating, the Bay Harbor Inn is an ideal stopping point. Just over a small bridge are the Bal Harbour Shops (the Saks Fifth Avenue sign beckons from the deck at the inn). If you just can't walk the five blocks to the main entrance, walk through the gate at the Church by the Sea or follow the parking ramp to the elevators. The couture designs of Versace, Armani and Hermès are flanked by preppy Polo Ralph Lauren, Brooks Brothers and specialty boutiques for pampered babies. But pace yourself –

you will find more goods than are good for you.

When you need a break, head for one of the mall's several restaurants and bars, some with al fresco seating. We stopped by Carpaccio, a bustling Italian bistro, where the decibel level is comparable to that of an aircraft carrier's flight deck. It's a self-perpetuating thing: the louder the ambient noise, the louder you have to speak to be heard. We sampled an appetizer of fried calamari and zucchini, which was light and crunchy.

Having quenched our shopping thirst and allayed our hunger, we returned to the inn (after tearing ourselves away from a pair of rhinestone-encrusted sneakers at Addicts) in time to shower before dinner.

For an unforgettable meal, try the Palm, a steakhouse made popular in New York and Hollywood. Located steps away from the main inn's front door and directly across the street from the bayside rooms, it is a short, enjoyable walk on balmy evenings. Be sure to call for reservations; the popular eatery is busy, even on weeknights. We sampled the best-ever veal Parmesan and a melt-in-your-mouth filet mignon. The entrée portions are so hearty that side dishes are almost superfluous. A full bar and an extensive wine list keep patrons smiling as they wait to be seated.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Saks Fifth Avenue beckons from the deck of the inn; the pool, surrounded by lush tropical vegetation; the famous Palm caricatures, a chain-wide tradition; dining al fresco at Carpaccio; every room is a room with a view at Bay Harbor.

## FOR RESERVATIONS

**BAY HARBOR INN & SUITES**  
9660 BAY HARBOR DRIVE, BAY  
HARBOR ISLANDS, FLORIDA 33154,  
(305) 868-4141  
[www.bayharborinn.com](http://www.bayharborinn.com)

**THE PALM**  
950 E. BAY HARBOR DRIVE  
(305) 868-7256

**CARPACCIO**  
(IN THE BAL HARBOUR SHOPS)  
COLLINS AVENUE AT 96TH STREET  
(305) 867-7777

# HINCKLEY'S

**T55** Who needs a bed and breakfast when you've got the sleek and elegant Hinckley T55? We stepped aboard *Charmer*, a Talaria 55 MY hull #1, the first of its kind. The accommodations and finishing touches are exquisite, and the boat itself is easy to handle.

We met Eric Champlin, our captain for the day, at the Hinckley boatyard in Stuart. While all the boats are made in Southwest Harbor, ME, Hinckley now has yards in Stuart. Champlin has been with the company for over 10 years, and he knows Hinckley boats from stem to stern, and every meticulous detail in between.

The new 55-footers adhere to the tradition established with the first handcrafted lobster and fishing boats made in 1928. Always innovative, Hinckley was among the first to combine fiberglass with wood, and they set the standard for elegant sailing vessels with such classics as the Bermuda 40. They developed the Jetstick to allow for single-handed operation. Power from the optional 1,000-horsepower diesel engine is transferred to the twin Hamilton water jets to deliver a cruising speed of 30 knots (maximum 38), resulting in a range of over 400 nautical miles. And it draws just 2 feet, 8 inches so you can take it almost anywhere.

Hinckley designed the boat around its propulsion system, which resulted in unmatched maneuverability and stability. (It actually spins on its own axis.) The Jetstick invention, coupled with bow thrusters, lets you literally hover it, i.e., hold it totally still, despite currents and wind. And gas fumes won't overcome you as you're idling. When gaining speed and reaching a plane, the boat is so calm and quiet, you don't realize how fast you're going. Instead of grabbing for handrails and securing all loose gear, you just go.

The most frequent question from a Hinckley newcomer is, "How'd they do that?" Champlin has all the answers and explains them well.

Champlin notes that Hinckley builds boats, not condos. The primary emphasis is on performance, but comfort is not ignored. The configuration of the amenities above- and below-deck is well-planned and brilliantly executed. A comfortable U-shaped sofa with dinette converts to a large bed. The television hides in a cleverly engineered cabinet. The chart desk doubles as a liquor cabinet. The galley is not the dungeon it often is on so many boats. It features a cathedral ceiling, great lighting, a Sub-Zero refrigerator-freezer, granite countertops, a wine rack, convection range, microwave oven, trash compactor and safety-specific cabinetry that holds your stemware and plates still, even in a chop. Of course, a washer and dryer provide the convenience of home. Next door to the galley is a den or office that converts to another sleeping compartment. The main stateroom is spacious, with ample closets and a beautiful bath and shower. You could ask how they do that, but with all of the space and amenities of home, your only concern aboard the Hinckley T55 is deciding where to go. ⚓



WHO NEEDS A BED AND BREAKFAST  
WHEN YOU'VE GOT THE **HINCKLEY T55?**



## HINCKLEY T55 SPECS

- LOA** 55'3"
- LWL** 51'0"
- BEAM** 17'9"
- DRAFT** 2'8"
- DISPLACEMENT** 53,700 pounds
- FUEL CAPACITY** 1,000 gallons
- WATER CAPACITY** 200 gallons
- ENGINE** Two Caterpillar 800 HP diesel (1000 HP optional)
- PROPULSION** Twin 403 Hamilton water jets (Propeller drives optional)
- STEERING** Jetstick
- RANGE** 411/406 nautical miles
- CRUISE/TOP SPEED** 26/33 (800 HP) 31/38 (1000 HP)

SPREAD PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY HINCKLEY

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** The master stateroom and bath are spacious; the top-of-the-line galley features granite countertops and stainless steel appliances; *Charmer's* stern has generous, comfortable seating; the Hinckley T55 cuts smoothly through the waves.