

TRAVELS IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH

southbound

FREE SPIRIT

33 ADVENTURES
THAT DON'T
COST A THING*

*Including hiking the East Coast's tallest sand dunes in North Carolina's Outer Banks

Plus

SEDUCTIVE SAVANNAH

Why it's still a bestseller

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS

Celebrate the olde way



HOLIDAY FUN

Horsing Around

You don't have to be a horse enthusiast to find something to love at the World Equestrian Center, the largest such competition venue in the country. Located in Ocala, Florida, the venue recently opened the **Riding Academy Hotel**, a sophisticated, pet-friendly stay with playful artwork and minimalist bedroom decor. The new spot joins the regal **Equestrian Hotel**, opened in 2021, which offers a 7,000-square-foot spa, elegant chophouse, and sparkling zero-entry pool. Together, the properties transform into a winter wonderland decorated with more than a million twinkling lights for the holiday season. On-site bakery Emma's Patisserie creates a giant gingerbread replica of the sprawling center, live performances take over the Grand Plaza (look out for professional dancers, face painters, and balloon artists), and the property gets decked out in over-the-top, floor-to-ceiling holiday decor, which includes a photo-worthy, 45-foot-tall, walk-through Christmas tree.

RENOVATION

Into the Wild

New outdoors-destination hotelier **Trailborn** has opened a thoughtfully renovated stylish lodge in Highlands, North Carolina, introducing their adventure-focused mission to Blue Ridge and Great Smokies travelers. With interiors inspired by the natural setting, the 63-room property features a Nordic spa and an upscale Appalachian-inspired restaurant but draws guests outdoors with experiences galore. Practice mindfulness while forest bathing, challenge yourself with rock climbing, fly fish for native trout, and ride horseback through the mountains—all with the help of experienced local guides.

NOW OPEN

Join the Club

The Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail is getting one of its biggest mixed-use developments to date, anchored by **Forth**, a 196-room luxury hotel and social club. The new 16-story property features an upper-level pool, a 20,000-square-foot fitness center, a coworking space, a spa with hot and cold therapies, and four food and beverage concepts, including a rooftop cocktail lounge. Its striking lattice exterior adds to the intrigue.



CELEBRATE

Here Comes the Bride

Three hotels pull out all the stops for bachelorette parties

Kimpton Surfcomber

Miami, Florida

Once the bridal party books their stay at this South Beach property, they can pass the planning reins to the hotel's bachelorette ("Bach Guru") team, who take care of the rest, including reserving the best poolside cabanas and providing a charcuterie and Champagne welcome treat.



Virgin Hotels Nashville

Nashville, Tennessee

Those hoping for a honky-tonk-style sendoff will love this Music Row hotspot. In addition to complimentary decorations and local goodies (think Goo Goo Clusters and craft beer) upon arrival, the hotel hosts events such as drag brunches and rooftop DJ sets most weekends—perfect ways to spice up the itinerary.

Mills House Hotel

Charleston, South Carolina

Brides-to-be can go all out with the whopping three-night \$16,000 Pretty in Pink package that caters to your group's every need, including a photo shoot around Charleston, personalized suite-decorating services, a private fitness class, dedicated poolside butler service, and plenty more for up to eight guests.

MAVEN PHOTO AND FILM; MATTHEW WILLIAMS; SHUTTERSTOCK