

Beaufort Bar Hopping

Written by Mark Shaffer
Wednesday, 28 March 2012 08:59

Your Guide to Drinking Downtown

"I feel sorry for people



who don't drink. When they wake up in the morning, that's as good as they're going to feel all day." - Frank Sinatra

Like so many small coastal towns, Beaufort's sometimes described as a quaint drinking village with a fishing problem.

Downtown Beaufort has a pretty good selection of watering holes, most attached to restaurants and several cleverly disguised as restaurants. Whether you're in search of one of craft cocktail, a shot and a beer, or a good deal on an Argentinian Malbec, you can find it all downtown.

ON THE WATERFRONT

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Panini's on the Waterfront

926 Bay Street (843) 379-0300 www.paniniscfe.net

Open at 11:00 am daily.



There are few spots better to sip a frosty beverage in the cool river breezes and watch the sun set beyond the city marina than the patio bar at Panini's Cafe. It is also the only full-service outdoor bar on the waterfront (for some inexplicable reason). And now, with the addition of a giant tent covering the entire deck, completely shaded and waterproof. The inside bar is an ornately carved and canopied 200 year-old testament to English artisanship. It simply begs you take a seat, pull out your journal and order a cocktail - or maybe a pint? The house specialties include bellinis (Prosecco and fresh fruit juice), seasonal martinis and scratch-made sangrias in a variety of flavors and potencies. Sip a drink, catch up on your thoughts and try one of Panini's gourmet brick oven pizzas. There are none better.

Hemingway's

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920 Bay St. (843) 521-4480



www.hemingways.org

Open daily at 11:00am.

If Ernest were still around I have a feeling you might find his beloved Pilar tired up at the city marina and her master holding court at his namesake establishment (probably puffing on a fat Cohiba, smoking can be damned). Hemingway's is a first class dive – or as I prefer to term it, a bar's bar - and this is no bad thing. Great dive bars are hard to come by in this age of corporate homogenization. Bars like Hemingway's are never designed, they simply happen. Located in a subterranean corner of the magnificent Thomas Law Building, the bar is a lot like a '68 Mini Cooper – unique, well driven, and classic but not for the claustrophobic. The actual bar seats half a dozen patrons with a few tables against the wall. The place is festooned with an impressive accumulation of autographed currency, memorabilia and bric-a-brac and the clientele is just as eclectic. Late night this is where Beaufort's service industry comes to unwind, which is the sort of ringing endorsement any bar bar worth it's Jägermeister craves without ever really seeking it.

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Luther's Rare and Well Done

910 Bay St. (843) 521-1888

Imagine Cheers transported from Boston to Beaufort and you'll find Norm Peterson and Cliff Claven arguing over "Final Jeopardy" right here. In fact, Luther's has a palpable Cheers vibe to it, only with a spectacular view of the river and a pet-friendly deck. There's also a brimming shot of semper fi, the Marine Corps motto which – come to think of it – translates to what I like to call the Regular's Creed: *Always Faithful*. If you're a regular or even a semi-regular, chances are your beverage of choice is on the bar before your butt's on the stool. Claim a table or a seat at the big rectangular split-level bar (curiously, one side's taller than the other) to watch the game or the race on a plethora of flatscreens. Luther's features live music Thursday through Saturday with happy hour daily from 4-7. We recommend the famous seasoned wings, and Fred Flintstone would dig the burgers – among the best in Beaufort.

Plums

904 Bay St. (843) 525-1946

www.plumsrestaurant.com

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