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SIMPLY BUCKHEAD®

Your Guide to Living Well in Atlanta

*Serving Buckhead, Brookhaven,
Chamblee, Dunwoody, Sandy
Springs and Upper Westside*



RISING STARS

7 DYNAMIC INDIVIDUALS TO WATCH IN 2023

JOURNEY TO
ABRUZZO, ITALY
ELECTRIC OWL
STUDIOS DEBUT
PEACHY
COCKTAILS

Contents



68



78



18



24



38



28

12 Editor's Letter

UP FRONT

15 NEWS

Shape Up

Luxe bodywear brand opens first Georgia store in Buckhead

16 LOCAL SALUTE

It Takes a Village (Organizer)

Eat, drink and raise funds for childhood diabetes research

18 LIVING THE LIFE

Tamara Zacks

This local resident started a grassroots effort to preserve one of Buckhead's beloved parks

19 APPROVED

Life of the Party

Every host with the most needs these staples for summer entertaining

22 TRAVEL NEAR

Modern Incarnation

Skyline Lodge resurfaces once again as a mountain refuge

24 TRAVEL FAR

An All-Seasons Getaway

Wide-open spaces and laid-back luxury at The Green O in Montana

26 TRAVEL FAR

Enchanted by Abruzzo

A journey to Italy's verdant countryside

LIVING

28 HOME

Riverside Retreat

There's more to this Westside home than meets the eye

34 BULLETIN BOARD

A Way With Windows

Expert tips on selecting shades and treatments

36 TRENDING

Swept Away

Tropical modernism is a whimsical decor update

38 TASTEMAKER

Flying Colors

Textile and wallcoverings designer Rochelle Porter is on a hot streak

Photos: 18, 78, 68: Erik Meadows, 28: Brittany Bah



Electric bikes make the few inclines along the Costa dei Trabocchi easy to tackle.

ENCHANTED BY ABRUZZO

A journey to Italy's verdant countryside

STORY: Giannina S. Bedford

I've been to many of the well-known Italian cities and marveled at historic ruins, churches and world-class art. On my fourth trip to Italy, I discovered a more under-the-radar region where I admired some of the same things, but fell in love with the mountains, unspoiled Adriatic coast and views of the countryside. Maybe that's why Abruzzo, about three hours east of Rome, is often called "The Green Lung of Italy," with half of its territory designated as national parks and nature reserves.

My home base was Casoli, a medieval town known for olive oil production where cobblestone streets, a ninth-century castle and friendly locals made me feel at home in the storybook-like setting. I roamed the Friday market, picking

up fresh produce grown by local farmers, accepting samples of salty porchetta and creamy mozzarella. I lunched at Fiore Ristorante, a small, elegant eatery that stocks local wine, serves coursed meals made with local bounty and offers an incredibly decadent crème brûlée.

Along with lots of delicious eats, Casoli's surroundings offer an array of active pursuits, from hiking and biking to skiing the Apennine Mountains (Roccaraso resort is about an hour away). A 20-minute drive from Casoli, Roccascalegna castle is worth the curvy ride and heart-pumping steps up to its high perch. Originally built in the ninth century by Benedictine monks, it offers stunning views and a prison tower with torture apparatuses that are not for the faint of heart. For more pinch-

me views, head to Pennapiedimonte. Stop in at La Macina, a restaurant housed inside a 19th century oil mill dug out of the rock.

My favorite activity was an electric bike tour with Green Road Bike on the Costa dei Trabocchi along the Adriatic Sea. I did a 12-mile portion of the 40-plus mile path that leads from the city of Ortona to San Salvo. I pedaled past coastal hills, coves, reefs and numerous picturesque *trabocchi*, over-water structures on wood piles used for fishing, and some eateries that serve fresh catch. I made a stop at Trabocco Sasso della Cajana where the multi-course meal of fresh seafood began with salted anchovies and crawfish, and continued with shrimp, mussels, fried calamari, frutti de mare pasta and a fish filet.

For more eating and drinking—this is Italy after all—visit Azienda Tilli where the Tilli family produces Montepulciano, Trebbiano, Merlot, Rosato and more from its organic grapes. The modern tasting room offers stunning views of the Apennine Mountains as well as experiences pairing wines with bites such as pizza, bruschetta, cold cuts and cheese.

Other worthwhile Abruzzo adventures include exploring the towns of Pescara, Lanciano and Ortona, the latter the site of a famous WWII battle and the resting place of Thomas the Apostle. While there is lots to do, my suggestion is to prioritize a few laid-back days of strolling, eating (of course) and taking in the beautiful surroundings. Only then will you feel the true magic of Abruzzo. ■

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Own your personal slice of unspoiled Abruzzo with a new project taking shape in Casoli. **Palazzo Ricci Private Residence Club** by Viaggio Resorts is set to open in summer 2024, offering 14 upscale residences, five-star amenities and personalized concierge services. Created from the transformation of a 220-plus-year-old palace that once belonged to the noble Italian Ricci family, the project features a swimming pool, Roman spa, library, billiards room, fitness center and more in the heart of the charming medieval town. Each individually designed residence boasts balconies and views of the mountain, garden or village. Palazzo Ricci operates under a fractional real estate ownership concept, which means that for an initial fee (starting at \$100,000) owners have a minimum of 5.5 weeks annual palace usage rights with all the amenities and services, including local transportation, pre-arrival grocery delivery, chef access and more, making you feel like Italian royalty.

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Left: Casoli's Friday market features fresh produce, cheese, meats and housewares.

Right: Hilltop towns, green rolling hills and views of the coast are just some of what Abruzzo has to offer.

