

A GRAND GETAWAY

STORY BY TERRI GLAZER | PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GRAND HOTEL





As the August heat swelters, planning a fall getaway is the perfect way to take your mind off the high temps and humidity. There's no better time to explore than October, when cooler weather and smaller crowds make travel in the deep South a joy. And there's no grander destination than the Grand Hotel in Point Clear, AL.

Situated on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, the Grand has welcomed guests since 1847 and has long been known as "The Queen of Southern Resorts." Along with its storied history, the hotel's beautiful architecture, stunning accommodations, top-notch golf and luxurious spa draw visitors from the region and beyond. American presidents, world leaders and stars of movies and music have vacationed at the Grand.

After an easy day's drive from the Mid South, settle into a well-appointed room or suite with a picturesque view of the marina, the lagoon or the Grand's lush grounds. Then, the agenda is strictly up to you. Active types will love a round of golf at the Lakewood Club, a Robert Trent Jones Trail member. Two 18-hole courses offer scenic views and challenging play. Tennis lovers of all skill levels will feel at home at Lakewood's racquet facility, recently included in Tennis magazine's Top 50 resorts in the country. Hotel guests have complimentary access to the ten courts. A full staff of pros is on hand if a lesson is in order to brush up on your game..




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if relaxation is the goal of your fall getaway, the Grand is just the spot. Beach and pool cabanas give guests the ultimate day outdoors. Just bring your sunglasses and a good book; every cabana is equipped with chilled water, a fruit tray, a refrigerator and a Bluetooth speaker. The hotel's 20,000-square-foot spa oozes elegant tranquility. Whether you choose an indulgent treatment from the extensive menu of spa and salon services or opt for a day pass that includes access to steam rooms, the sauna, whirlpools, the bespoke Relaxation Room and more, you'll feel stress slip away.

Nature lovers who visit the Grand in October will be in good company. Thousands of Monarch butterflies come to Mobile Bay's eastern shore every fall on their 3,000-mile migration from Canada to Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. They rest and feed in the hotel's beautifully manicured grounds and lush gardens before beginning their trip across the Gulf of Mexico.

The beauty of nature is on display in a myriad of ways throughout the area, from the wide variety of birds who call the bay home to the iconic live oak trees draped in Spanish moss to Mobile Bay itself, one of the largest estuaries in the United States, where five rivers converge to provide a habitat for more species per square mile than anywhere else in the country. Watch Mother Nature's pageant unfold on a ride along the Grand's biking trail, a paddle on a stand-up paddleboard or a fishing trip.

For an adventure off the property, hop on one of the hotel's loaner bikes and take advantage of the cooler October weather when you pedal the easy eight miles on the Eastern Shore Trail to the charming town of Fairhope. *Southern Living* magazine named Fairhope among the very best in Southern small towns, and it's easy to see why. Its flower-lined streets are filled with antique shops, bookstores, boutiques, art galleries and local restaurants. Time your excursion to arrive back "home" to the Grand before dusk. You don't want to miss the chance to enjoy a beverage and watch the sunset while seated around a cozy outdoor fireplace at Bucky's Lounge. Follow it up with a delectable dinner at Bayside Grill, Sweetwater Cafe or Southern Roots, then a nightcap at 1847 for the perfect end to the perfect day in the perfect time of year for a Grand Hotel getaway.



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