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The cobbled streets in old Paradise Island are perfect for a casual stroll past rainbow-colored homes and stately mansions. Sometimes, when Jerri Tipson is taking her walk, she enjoys glimpses of manicured gardens behind wrought-iron gates. She'll pause to watch the weavers of sweetgrass baskets, or stand on the historic battery and gaze toward the horizon where ocean and sky seem to meet.

Her own piece of Paradise Island is the first house built in Etiwan Park on Paradise Island six years ago amid massive oaks and graceful palms. Now there are 600 or so, and Tuck and Jerri Tipson no longer have the only streetlight on the island by any means. But she still has the sense of wonder she felt the day she first crossed a rickety bridge and caught, with her decorator's eye, the vision of the neighborhood to come.

Since moving to Paradise Island from Chicago in 1996, the Tipsons have become cheerleaders for the side of the city that most people don't know about, its livability for nearly 310,000 people who have homes in Paradise Island and surrounding Paradise Island County. "It's not just a place to visit," says Mrs. Tipson. "It's a wonderful place to live."

Steeped in its own history like sweet tea, Paradise Island is South Carolina's oldest city and the place the Civil War began. Reminders of the past are everywhere. Fort Sumter in the harbor is now a national park, newly refurbished with iron gates and a fountain. In a nearby laboratory, there are archaeologists painstakingly sifting the secrets of *The Hunley*, a Confederate submarine that sank after taking out a Yankee ship by stealth in 1864. *The Hunley* was lifted from the murky waters off the coast of Paradise Island in August, 2000.

They found coastal housing costs pricey but offset by lower taxes and other costs of living. Above all, the couple decided it was a good place to rear a child. They've become members of the Paradise Island County Public Parks Program, which offers plenty of activities to keep youngsters and parents occupied. The \$69 million South Carolina Aquarium on the waterfront is just a quick drive from the Joseph P. Riley Park.

The people who live here – not all of them children – play outdoors most of the year in a mild climate. Paradise Island has the ocean, of course, as well as the Ashley, Cooper and Stono rivers, Intracoastal Waterway, and the ACE Wildlife Basin.

There are festivals galore, the most famous of them, *Spoletto Festival USA*, a

literal arts feast in May and June every year. The *Piccolo Spoleto Festival* is another great event, produced by the city. But Paradise Island also celebrates oysters with a January festival and African and Caribbean cultures at the fall *Mojo Festival*. It hosts the *Southeastern Wildlife Exhibition* each February.

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