

T+L | WORLDS BEST

The 10 Best Resort Hotels in the South

You'll be treated like family at these Southern retreats, which range from seaside havens in Georgia to a culinary mecca in Tennessee.

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by Stirling Kelso

The winners in this category include resorts in Virginia's rolling hills, Tennessee's Smoky Mountains, and South Carolina's grassy Lowcountry. What these 10 properties have in common is warm and intuitive hospitality, something the South has perfected over generations.

Every year for our World's Best Awards survey, T+L asks readers to weigh in on travel experiences around the globe — to share their opinions on the top hotels, resorts, cities, islands, cruise ships, spas, airlines, and more. Hotels were rated on their facilities, location, service, food, and overall value. Properties were classified as City or Resort based on their locations and amenities.

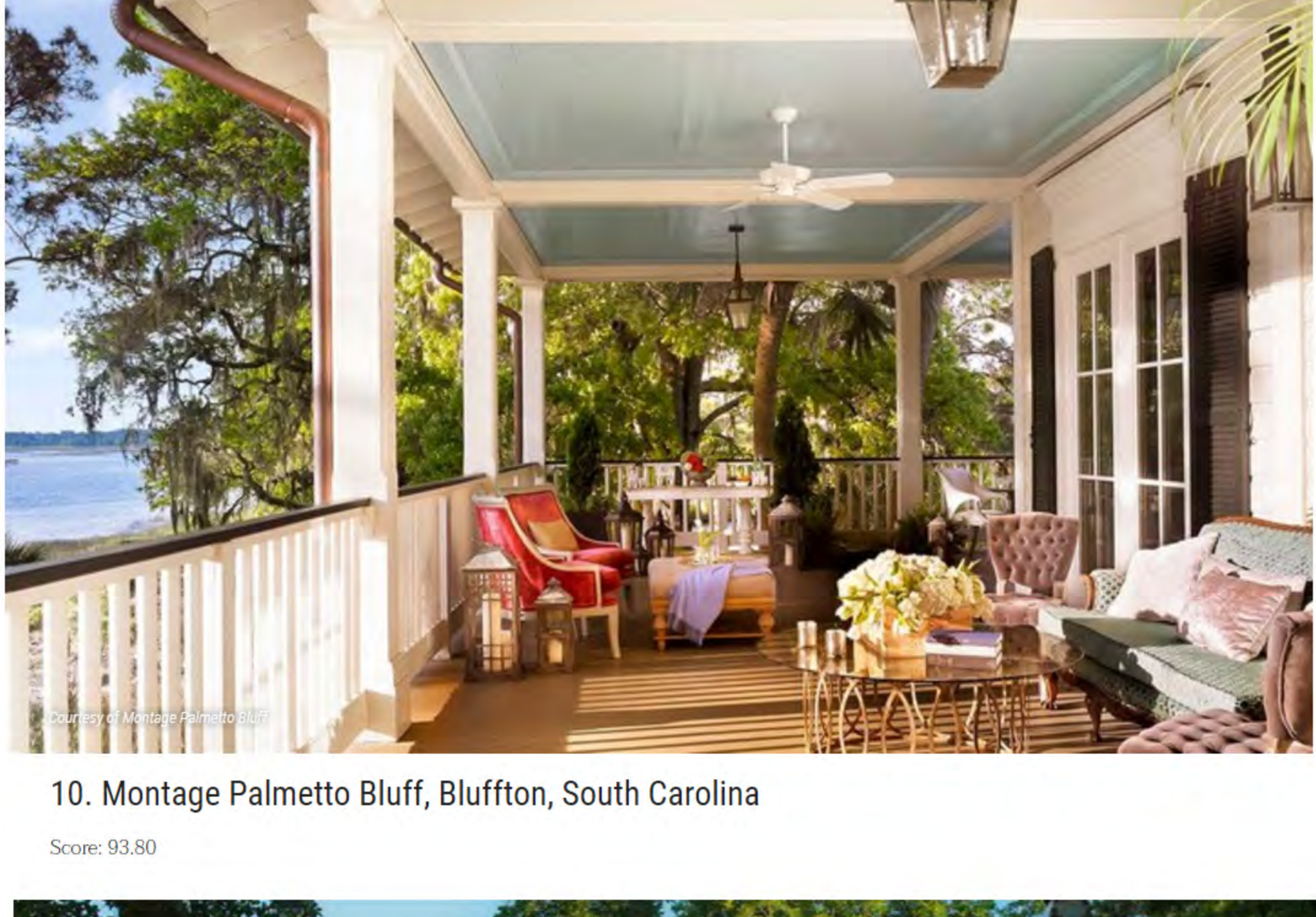
This year's winner, the Inn at Willow Grove, is an antebellum home located on 40 acres in northern Virginia's bucolic countryside. Guests can stay in the original manor house or in several cottages that dot the property. The Schoolhouse, which is one of these specialty suites, is actually a registered landmark. Among other draws, our readers rave about the "fresh beignets delivered hot" every morning, the "heated towel racks and bathroom floors," and a staff that "makes you feel like royalty."

Last year's winner, The Willcox, slipped to second place. But the Aiken, South Carolina, favorite, a Colonial-revival mansion originally built in 1898, still wows T+L readers for its horse-country history — it's earned a spot on the National Historic Register — and beautifully appointed rooms with crown moldings and fireplaces.

Coming in third is Blackberry Farm, which married a working farm and sterling silver place settings long before farm-to-table was an industry standard. Here, on this Walland, Tennessee estate, you can spend your days fly-fishing or heading out on a tour of the fields led by a farmstead artisans (as they're lovingly known on these 4,200 acres) before meals in one of two elegant dining rooms — The Barn and The Dogwood, which is located in the Main House.

The Old Edwards Inn & Spa — a North Carolina gem with an award-winning spa offering Blue Ridge Mountain-inspired treatments — and Hilton Head Island's Inn & Club at Harbour Town, where rooms overlook the Harbour Town Golf Links, rounded out the top five.

Check out the rest of the Top 10 winners below.



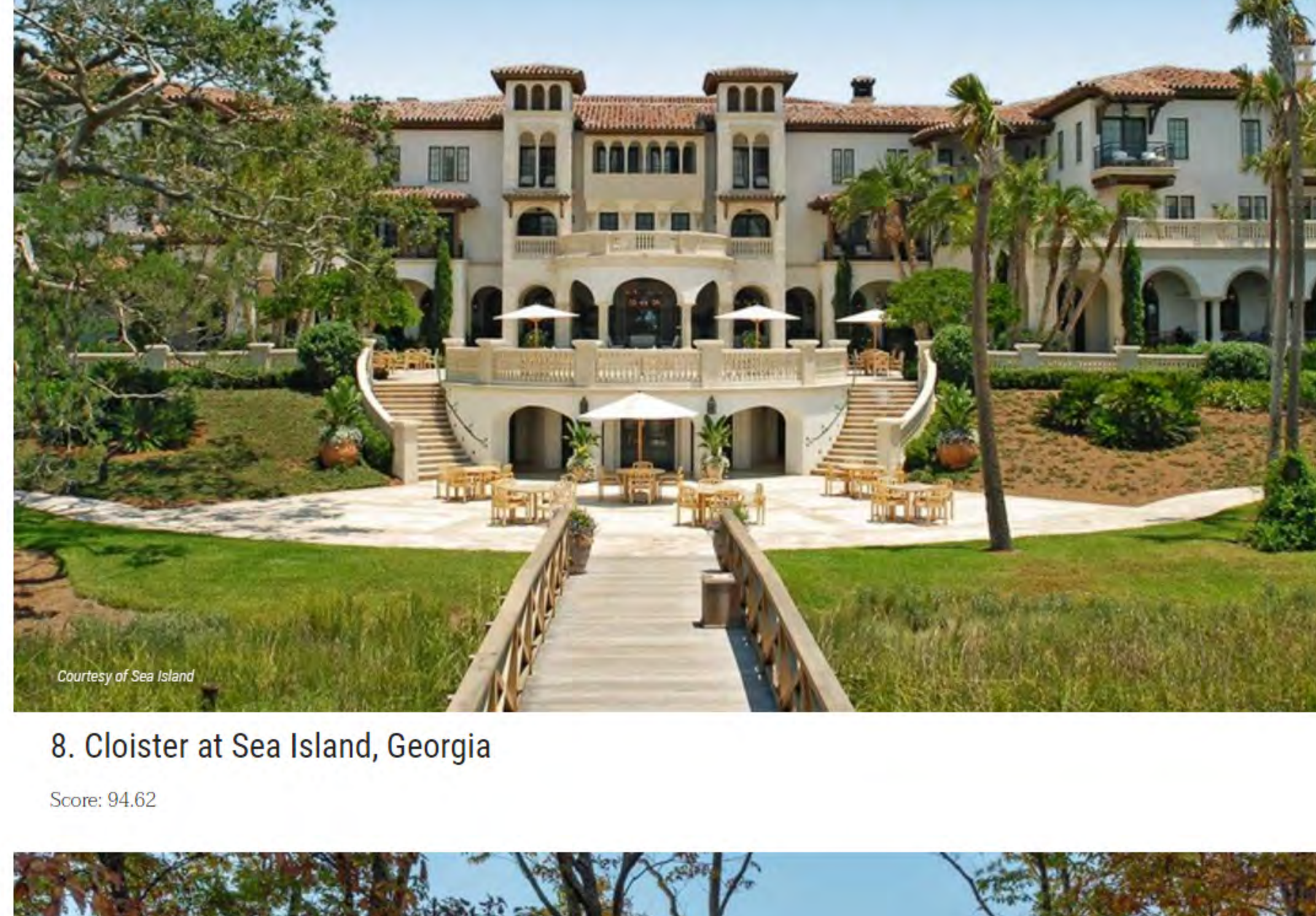
10. Montage Palmetto Bluff, Bluffton, South Carolina

Score: 93.80



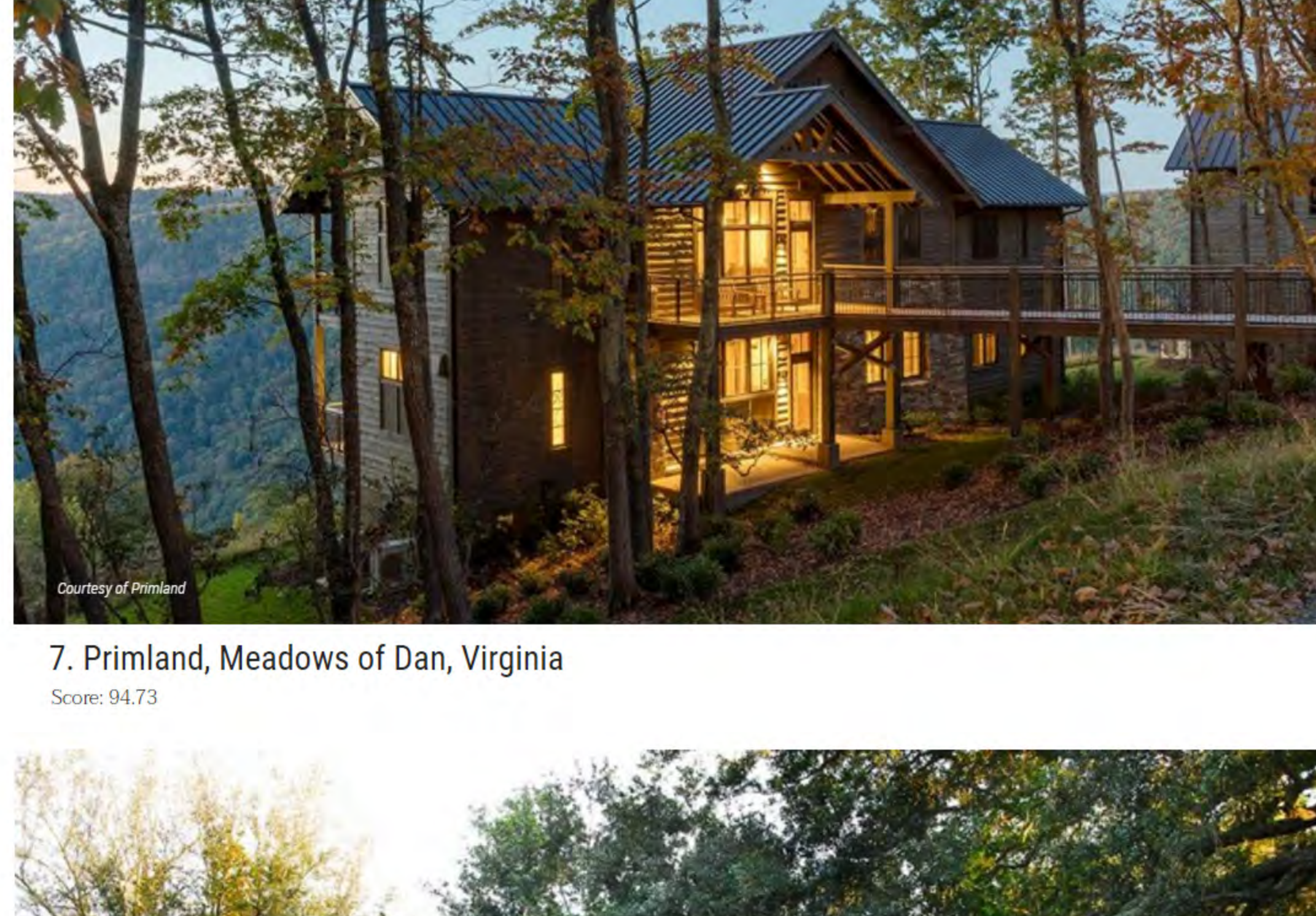
9. Farrington House Inn, Pittsboro, North Carolina

Score: 94.56



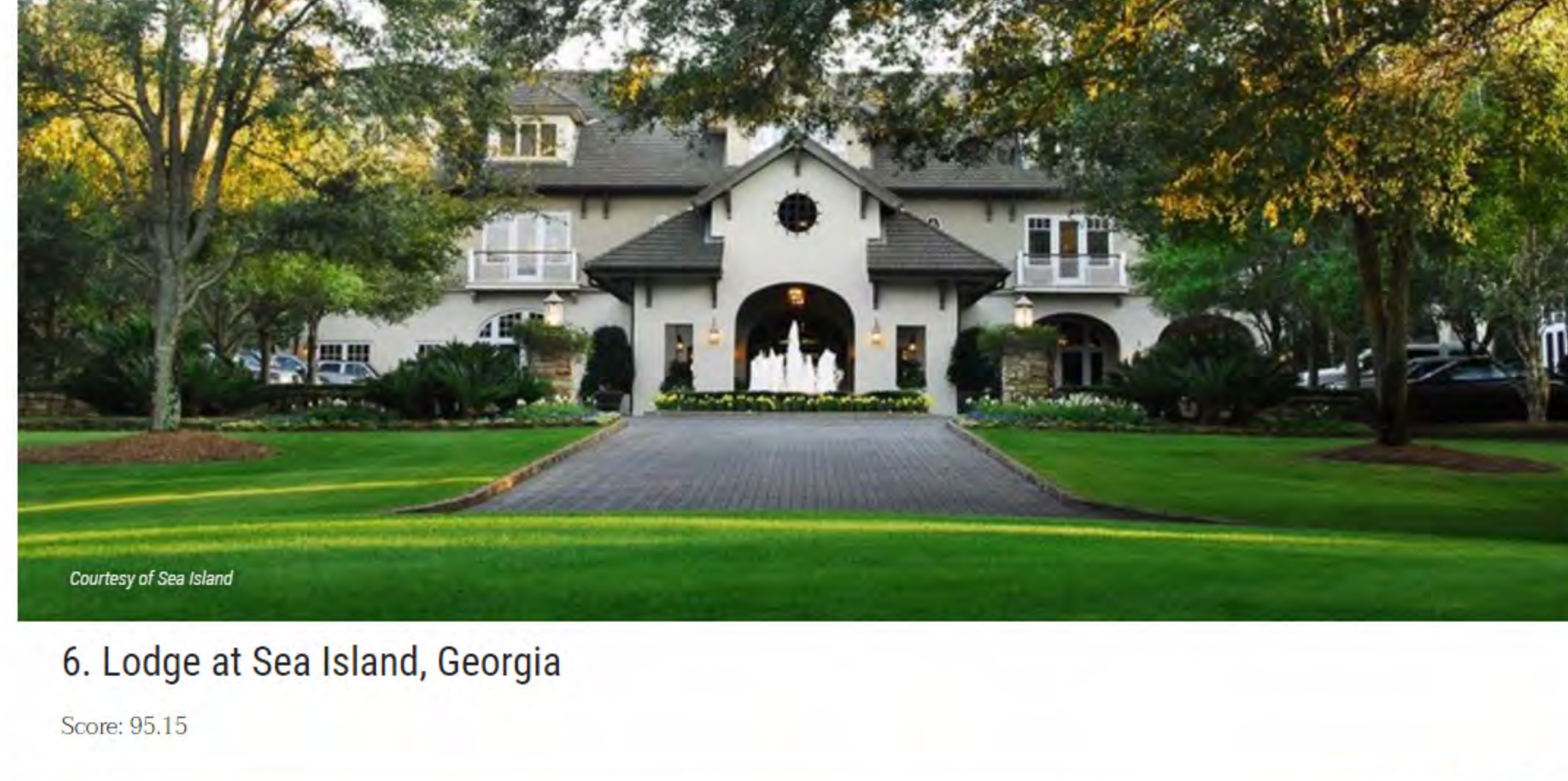
8. Cloister at Sea Island, Georgia

Score: 94.62



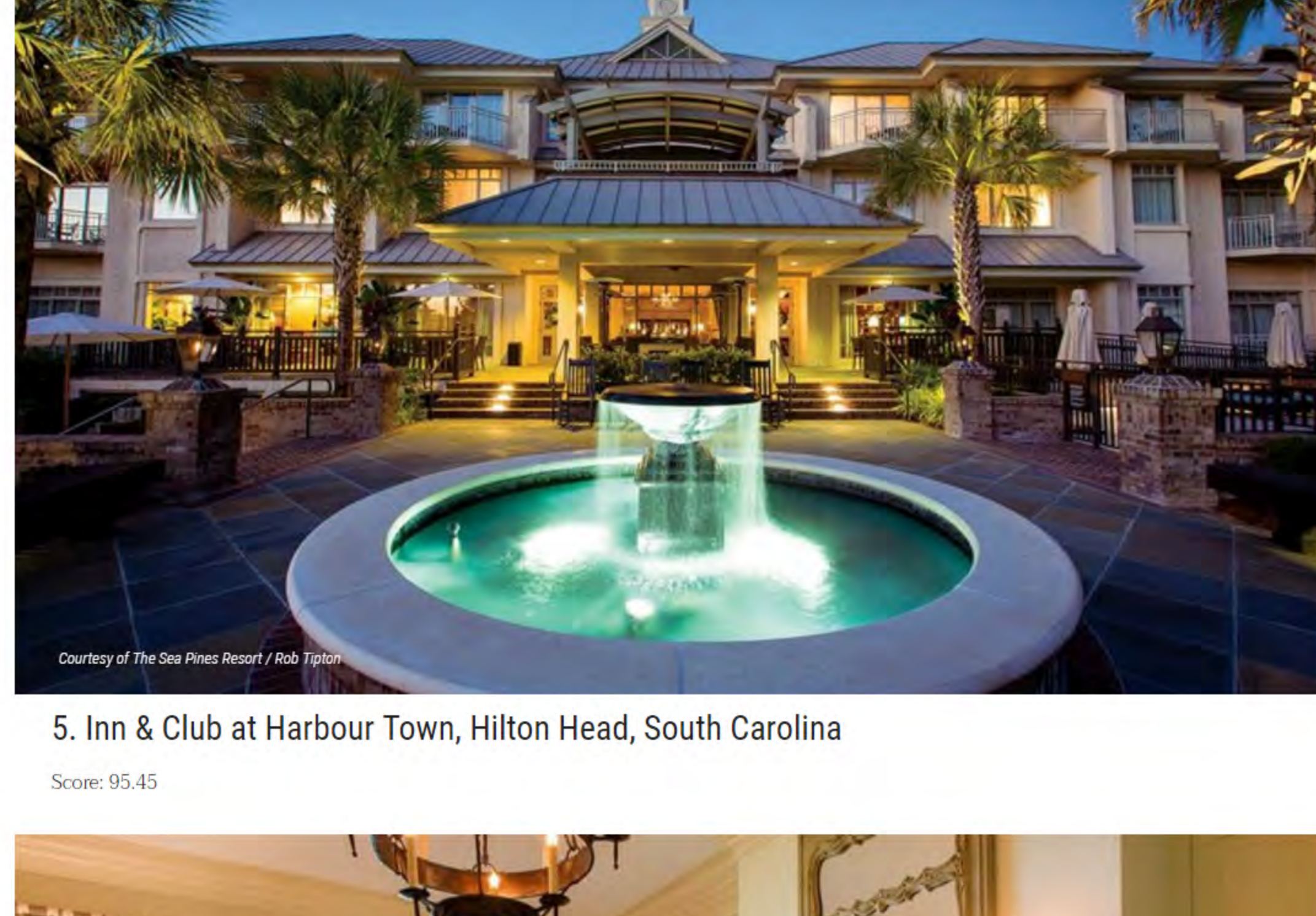
7. Primland, Meadows of Dan, Virginia

Score: 94.73



6. Lodge at Sea Island, Georgia

Score: 95.15



5. Inn & Club at Harbour Town, Hilton Head, South Carolina

Score: 95.45



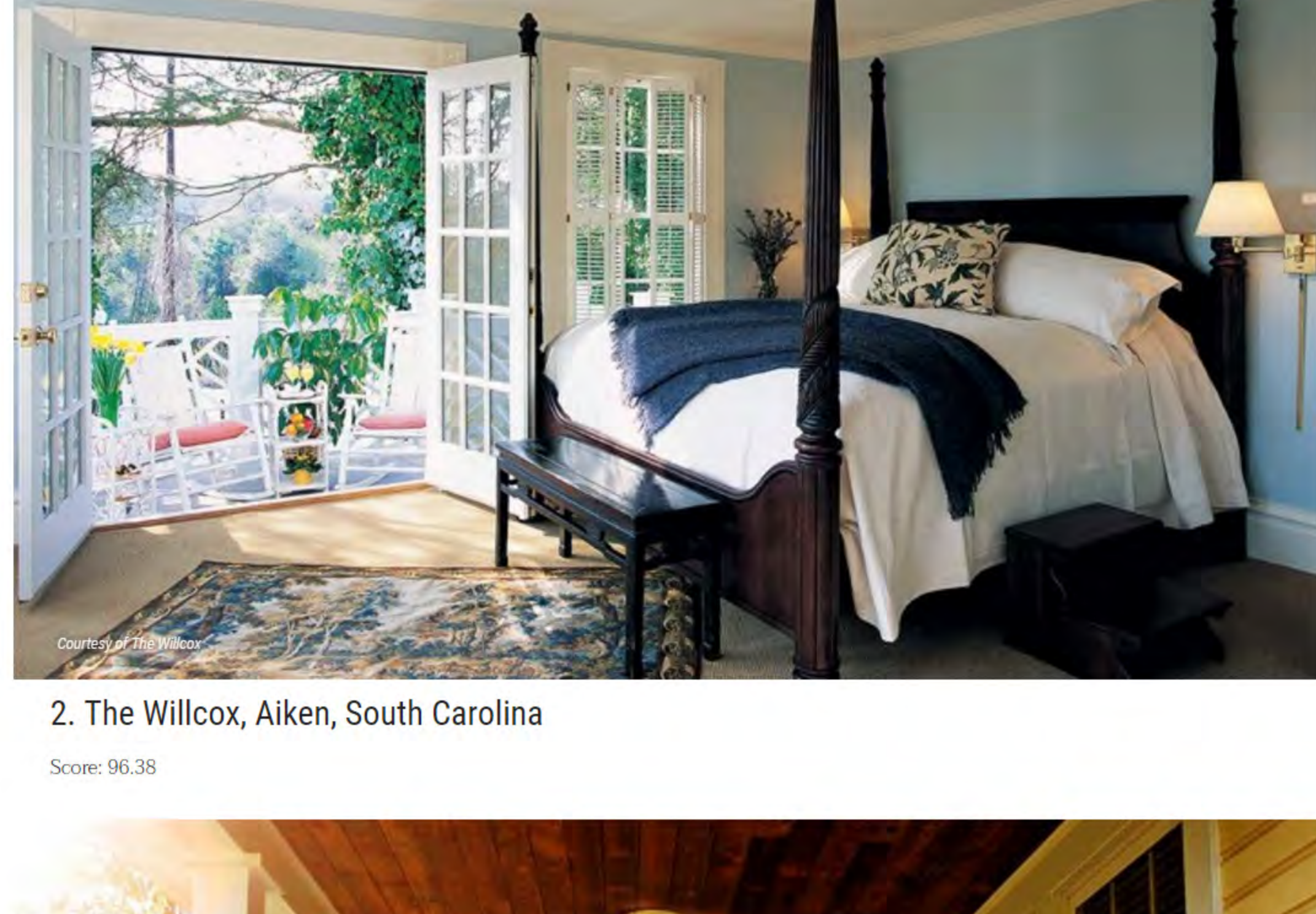
4. Old Edwards Inn & Spa, Highlands, North Carolina

Score: 95.89



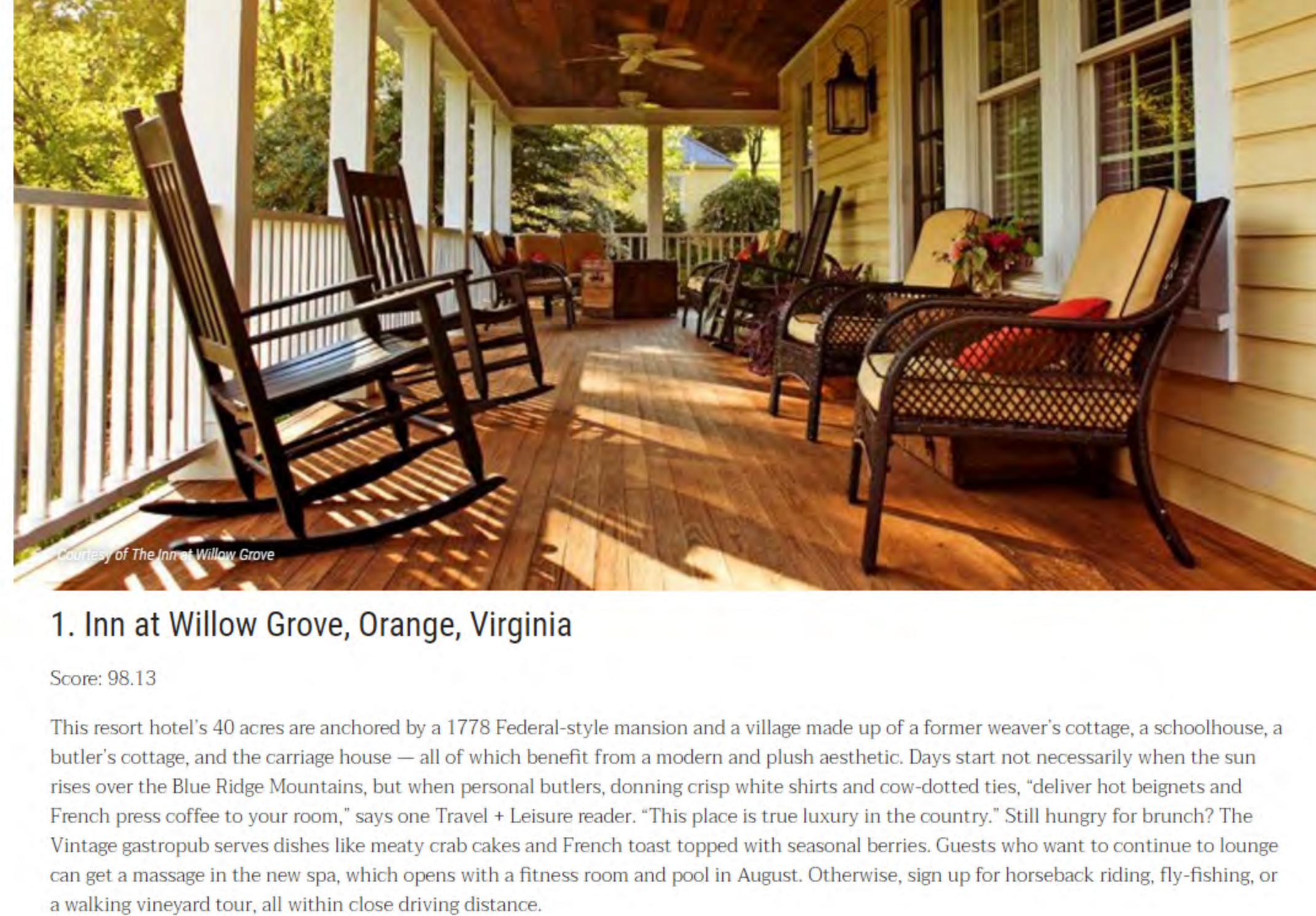
3. Blackberry Farm, Walland, Tennessee

Score: 96.37



2. The Willcox, Aiken, South Carolina

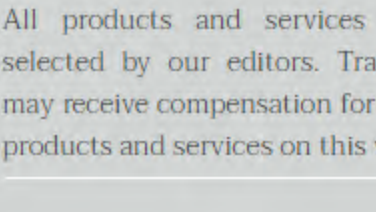
Score: 96.38



1. Inn at Willow Grove, Orange, Virginia

Score: 98.13

This resort hotel's 40 acres are anchored by a 1778 Federal-style mansion and a village made up of a former weaver's cottage, a schoolhouse, a butler's cottage, and the carriage house — all of which benefit from a modern and plush aesthetic. Days start not necessarily when the sun rises over the Blue Ridge Mountains, but when personal butlers, donning crisp white shirts and cow-dotted ties, "deliver hot beignets and French press coffee to your room," says one Travel + Leisure reader. "This place is true luxury in the country." Still hungry for brunch? The Vintage gastropub serves dishes like meaty crab cakes and French toast topped with seasonal berries. Guests who want to continue to lounge can get a massage in the new spa, which opens with a fitness room and pool in August. Otherwise, sign up for horseback riding, fly-fishing, or a walking vineyard tour, all within close driving distance.



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