

A photograph of the interior of the GunRunner Boutique Hotel. The space is a large, open-plan area with a high ceiling featuring exposed wooden beams and industrial-style lighting. In the center, there is a long bar with a warm, glowing light underneath. Several black bar stools are lined up along the bar. To the left and right of the bar, there are seating areas with dark leather armchairs and a large, patterned rug. Two acoustic guitars are leaning against the wooden pillars on either side of the bar. The walls are decorated with framed pictures and artwork. The overall atmosphere is rustic and modern.

*These hotels are small in size, but big on charm*

# Unique BOUTIQUE

GunRunner Boutique Hotel

**By Caroline Eubanks**

When it comes to vacation lodging, the average traveler might believe the bigger, the better. But that's not always the case, especially when you consider charming local hotels with fewer than 30 rooms. Not only are these boutique hotels ideal for socially distanced travel, guests often get more individual attention and access to perks not typical at larger properties.

The next time you're looking for a big surprise in a small package, try one of these hotels on for size:

GUNRUNNER BOUTIQUE HOTEL (3): GETTY IMAGES



Billy Reid suite

GUNRUNNER BOUTIQUE HOTEL  
*Florence, Ala.*

GUEST ROOMS: 10

Florence is just one of the north Alabama towns that make up the area known as Muscle Shoals. The region’s recording studios were influential in the 1960s and ’70s. Countless acts, including the Rolling Stones and Aretha Franklin, recorded nearby. The GunRunner Boutique Hotel honors this legacy, with suites inspired by that musical history. Opened in 2017, the hotel designed each suite with a theme, such as Billy Reid, named for the local fashion designer; and Sam Phillips, owner of Sun Studios, where the “Million Dollar Quartet” — Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash — recorded. The rooms feature custom-built furniture, records and books, along with luxury bedding, coffee makers and soap made exclusively for the hotel. Guests can grab a cocktail at the bar inlaid with onyx or get pampered at the spa. There’s also the “run of the house” option, which lets you rent out the entire hotel.



Muscle Shoals Sound suite

THE CHLOE  
*New Orleans*

GUEST ROOMS: 14

Steps away from the iconic St. Charles Avenue streetcar lies an 1891 mansion-turned-luxury hotel. Opened in October 2020, The Chloe looks like the quintessential New Orleans home, complete with a wide porch and a plant-filled courtyard. Guests get an immediate dose of Southern hospitality with a welcome drink and chocolates. Rooms feature local artwork, curated records from the local Peaches Records store and Italian linens and robes from a New Orleans maker. Enjoy daily breakfast in your room or grab a bite at the restaurant and bar from restaurateur Robert LeBlanc, whose hospitality company, LeBLANC + SMITH, is behind The Chloe. When the humidity becomes too much, cool off at the pool, surrounded by millennial pink umbrellas and chairs and mint green café tables where guests and visitors alike can swim or enjoy happy hour.



Reception desk



Pool bar



Picard suite

Unique  
BOUTIQUES



Lobby

HOTEL SIMONE  
*St. Simons Island, Ga.*

GUEST ROOMS: 24

Opened in February 2020, Hotel Simone is the first new-build hotel on St. Simons Island in decades. The whimsical adults-only hotel is located a few blocks from the beach and steps away from restaurants and shops. Coastal artwork covers the walls of the lobby, which is also home to the bar and breakfast area. All of the guest rooms are suites offering sofa beds, coffee makers and refrigerators. Some also have balconies overlooking Ocean Boulevard. Relax at the rooftop pool, which hosts yoga and other events, or head to the beach, taking advantage of the hotel's valet service and chair rental. Guests can also enjoy the amenities at the nearby King and Prince Beach & Golf Resort.



Premiere king suite

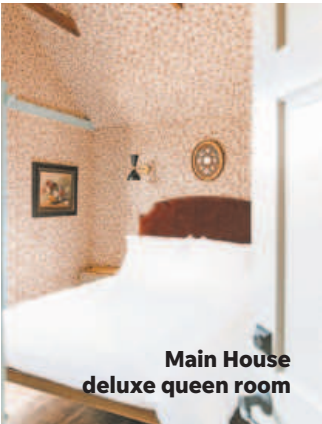
VAUGHN MEDIA: GETTY IMAGES



HIGHLANDER MOUNTAIN HOUSE  
*Highlands, N.C.*

GUEST ROOMS: 18

Set in a 150-year-old home on Highlands' main street, the Highlander Mountain House is like a classic English country home with a modern design streak. Owner Jason Reeves incorporated his background in historic preservation and years in real estate and boutique hotels to open the property. Rooms are covered in "grandmillennial" wallpaper and feature Victrola record players with classic tunes, Malin + Goetz toiletries and vintage art. The fireplace is always burning in the lobby, where guests can enjoy their morning cup of La Colombe coffee or a glass of wine before dinner at The Ruffed Grouse, the on-site restaurant. The menu features Appalachian-inspired dishes like local trout and wild boar ragu. The hotel, which opened in late 2020, also features artwork by members of the Cherokee Nation, honoring the land's ancestral stewards.



Main House  
deluxe queen room



Lobby living room

MAGGIE BRAUCHER

Unique  
BOUTIQUES



POST HOUSE INN  
*Mount Pleasant, S.C.*

GUEST ROOMS: 7

The Post House Inn in the Charleston suburb of Mount Pleasant has long been a gathering place for the community. Originally built in 1896 in the Old Village neighborhood, it also operated as a popular restaurant. It reopened in August 2020 after a two-year renovation under the helm of a local couple, Kate and Ben Towill. Rooms are spread across two floors and feature local artwork, playful wallpaper and antiques, along with a curated minibar of Charleston products. The restaurant, led by chef Nathan Hood, features coastal and contemporary fare like the crispy butterbean burger and local shrimp curry, paired with classic cocktails.



On-site restaurant



Room 1

KIRK ROBERT: GETTY IMAGES

TRAVELERS HOTEL  
*Clarksdale, Miss.*

GUEST ROOMS: 10

Located in ground zero of the blues, the Travelers Hotel in Clarksdale is like your artsy friend's loft where you're crashing for the weekend. An initiative of the Coahoma Collective, a local nonprofit arts organization, Travelers opened in 2019 in a former 1920s hotel for railroad workers. The lobby serves as a hub for guests with morning coffee from Meraki Roasting Company and in the evening with regional beer taps from Wiseacre and Delta Sunshine brewers in Memphis, Tenn. There's a kitchen, conference room and self check-in. Take advantage of the free Wi-Fi, but don't expect TVs. Instead, use your time in town to catch live music acts. After a night out, relax in the minimalist rooms with comfy quilts and Malin + Goetz toiletries. There's even a second location in New Orleans.



Second Floor West room



Lobby

NOLAN DEAN