



**BEST-OF-THE-BEST: MYRTLE BEACH AREA RECEIVES
PRESTIGIOUS ACCOLADES AND AWARDS**

***The Grand Strand holds records ranging from “World’s Tallest Sandcastle,”
to “Favorite Destination for a Family Vacation” and more***

The Myrtle Beach area of South Carolina continually proves that it is worthy of the moniker “The Grand Strand” year-after-year, garnering prestigious awards and designations ranging from the “World’s Best Beach” by *Yahoo! Travel*, “Overall Value for Money Destination” and seven of the “Top 100 Public Golf Courses in America” by *Golf Digest*. Whether seeking an exciting sporting event or recreational vacation, the perfect family beach, the ideal retirement location, or the best place to host a meeting, visitors to the Myrtle Beach area will find award-winning offerings in every lifestyle category.

**AOL
“2009’s Top 10 Most Searched Vacation Destinations”**

Myrtle Beach was included in 2009’s round up of most searched vacation destinations on AOL. The wide variety of offerings and attractions throughout the area create an ideal vacation destination for travelers looking for the entire package.

**EXPEDIA
“2009 Insider’s Select List”**

Expedia experts named the Anderson Ocean Club and Spa to the 2009 Insider Select List. This honor is awarded to resorts and hotels considered in the top 1% in the world for value and quality. With a prime oceanfront location along the Grand Strand in Myrtle Beach, the Anderson Ocean Club and Spa is a luxury resort with a full service spa designed to pamper and please any visitor, and fully live up to this prestigious title!

**RESERVE AMERICA
“2009 Top 25 Park Beaches”**

ReserveAmerica, the United States’ leading recreation reservation service, named Myrtle Beach State Park as one of America’s Top 25 Park Beaches. With its family-friendly beaches, beautiful scenery and abundance of nature, it is no surprise that Myrtle Beach has emerged as one of the top park destinations in the country.

**GOLF WORLD
“2010 Reader’s Choice Awards”**

Golf World readers named the Dunes Golf & Beach Club as one of the top 50 resort golf courses in the United States. Courses were evaluated by the following criteria: quality, condition, reputation, prestige, golf practice facilities, speed of play, clubhouse and locker rooms, hotel accommodations, caddie program, golf pro shop, food and dining, off-course activities and amenities, service and overall value. The Dunes Golf and Beach Club has remained a world class course since it opened its doors in 1947.

**GOLF DIGEST MAGAZINE
“2009-2010 America’s Top 100 Great Public Courses”**

Golf Digest editors named seven of the Myrtle Beach area’s top courses to Golf Digest’s America’s Top 100 Great Public Courses. Courses include The Dunes Golf and Beach Club, Caledonia Golf & Fish Club, Tidewater Golf Club, The Heritage Club, The Resort Club at Grande Dunes, and The Fazio Course and Dye Club at Barefoot Resort.

TRAVEL + LEISURE MAGAZINE

“2009 Top 500 World’s Best Hotels”

Travel + Leisure readers named the Myrtle Beach Marriott Resort and Spa at Grande Dunes to their 2009 rankings of the Top 500 World’s Best Hotels. With its excellent location on a beautiful stretch of beach and proximity to the best of Myrtle Beach, the Marriott Resort and Spa offers visitors an affordably luxe vacation experience.

TRAVELOCITY (2009)

“Top 8 Value Destination for Spring Break”

Myrtle Beach was highlighted as one of the best bang-for-your-buck destinations as 2009’s rough economic times continue to churn. With the area’s plethora of wallet-friendly accommodations and activities, it’s no wonder the destination received such a coveted accolade.

RESTAURANT BUSINESS MAGAZINE

Restaurant Growth Index (2009)

Myrtle Beach is the number one destination listed in Restaurant Business Magazine’s Restaurant Growth Index feature, which alerts restaurateurs of hot spot locales for opening restaurants. With the recent influx of quality eateries in the Myrtle Beach area, it’s no wonder the destination received such a “yummy” honor.

The Great Towns of America (2009)

In 2009, authors David and Joan Vokac included Myrtle Beach in their book that highlights the top 100 Great Towns of America. In fact, Myrtle Beach is the only South Carolina location included!
www.greattowns.com/america.html

TRIPADVISOR.COM

“2009 Top Aquariums” (2009)

Tripadvisor.com travel enthusiasts placed Ripley’s Aquarium in Myrtle Beach, SC on site’s Top Aquariums list, ranking the aquarium in the top five. The rankings are based on traveler popularity, consumer ratings and Trip Advisor editors. Ripley’s Aquarium is a state-of-the-art, 87,000 square-foot aquarium experience, located at Broadway at the Beach. The aquarium’s mission is to provide a top quality, world-class, marine life facility that will foster environmental education, conservation, and research, while simultaneously providing entertainment for visitors of all ages.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE OWNERS

Grande Dunes Resort Club - “2009 NATIONAL GOLF COURSE OF THE YEAR”

Grande Dunes Resort Club was selected as the “2009 National Golf Course of the Year.” Presented annually by the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA), Grande Dunes is the second Myrtle Beach area course to receive the national honor. The “Course of the Year” Award honors a member that demonstrates four criteria: exceptional quality of the course, exceptional quality of ownership and management, outstanding contribution to its community and significant contribution to the game.

SOUTHERN LIVING:

“FAVORITE BEACH” (2009)

“FAVORITE FAMILY DESTINATION” (2009)

“FAVORITE WEEKEND GETAWAY” (2009)

“FAVORITE BEACH TOWNS” (2007)

“FAVORITE FAMILY VACATIONS” (2007)

The Grand Strand has consistently topped *Southern Living*’s annual favorites list every year since 1995, when the Readers’ Choice Awards were first instituted.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RV PARKS AND CAMPGROUNDS (ARVC)

“NATIONAL RV PARK OF THE YEAR: OCEAN LAKES FAMILY CAMPGROUND” (2008-2009)

Ocean Lakes has helped to revolutionize the campground industry. By design, Ocean Lakes is very user-friendly, as all 893 campsites are large and pull-through, accommodating today's increasingly larger RVs. Each site includes water, sewer, 20-30-50 amp electric, 70 channel cable TV hookup, a modem friendly phone jack with free local calls, a picnic table and daily curbside trash pickup. With almost a mile of oceanfront property, gaming center, pools, bike rentals and other various amenities, Ocean Lakes offers visitors a fun-filled haven to retreat at the end of a vacation day.

AOL.COM

"#2 SEARCHED DOMESTIC DESTINATION" (2008)

Throughout 2008, Myrtle Beach was the second largest searched domestic travel destination on the AOL Search Engine. Boasting sixty-miles of beautiful coastline and countless attractions, it's no wonder the destination has piqued the interest of travelers looking for affordable fun.

The Weather Channel

"TOP 10 FAMILY-FRIENDLY DESTINATIONS" (2008)

Myrtle Beach was listed in the Top Ten family-friendly destinations by The Weather Channel in 2008 for its family-oriented activities and ease on vacationer's wallets. With tons of activities like sandy beaches, fun attractions like amusement parks and mini-golf courses (Myrtle Beach is the Mini-Golf Capital of the World), the destination is fast becoming the nation's best vacation spot for Americans looking for family fun on a budget.

ASK.COM

"TOP FAMILY DESTINATIONS" (2008)

Myrtle Beach was listed in the Top Ten destinations for families looking for a cool and affordable vacation in 2008. Offering a plethora of attractions for all ages – and at every price point – Myrtle Beach continues holding steady as one of the country's best vacation spots to visit with your family.

GOLF DIGEST

"OVERALL VALUE FOR MONEY DESTINATION" (2008)

Golf Digest named Myrtle Beach as one of the best values for 2008 in its "2008 Travel and Destination Survey." With more than 100 public courses in the Myrtle Beach area, golfers have a plethora of choices and prices when selecting their perfect tee spot.

TRIPADVISOR

"TOP FAMILY RESORT" (2008)

With its fantastic indoor water park, the Dunes Village Resort ranked as the #1 family-friendly bargain resort on *TripAdvisor.com* for 2008. Located alongside other appealing, family-oriented hotels on the Grand Strand's beautiful coastline, the Dunes Village Resort offers families great value for its amenities and prime location.

YAHOO!

"TOP TEN PLACES FOR FAMILIES TO VISIT IN THE U.S" (2008)

Myrtle Beach was named to the Top Ten list of places for families to visit in the U.S. according to Yahoo.com. The destination was recognized with other key family spots like Orlando, Phoenix, and South Padre Island.

WIRED MAGAZINE

"TOP TEN WIRELESS DESTINATION" (2007)

Ranked alongside other popular beach locations (Waikiki, Malibu, Atlantic City and South Beach Miami), Myrtle Beach was recognized as one of the best beach spots for Wi-Fi technology. Offering access either to 802.11b or 802.11g technology, the destination is a safe haven for those who require internet access while enjoying the sand and sun.

MYRTLE BEACH SUN FUN FESTIVAL:

"WORLD'S TALLEST SANDCASTLE" (2007)

Myrtle Beach's Sun Fun Festival reached new heights when it created the "World's Tallest Sandcastle."

Towering at an astonishing 49.55 feet high, the Sandcastle surpassed the previous record of 37.9 feet set previously by Virginia Beach. Myrtle Beach's record-breaking castle had a base width of 90 feet, weighed more than 2 million pounds and was as tall as a five-story building! The Sun Fun Festival Committee has submitted the Sandcastle's credentials to Guinness World Records to certify its official classification as a world record achievement. Myrtle Beach also holds the official Guinness World Record for the "World's Longest Sand Sculpture" at 86,535 feet long.

TRAVEL CHANNEL-TV:

"AMERICA'S BEST BEACHES - BEST BEACHES FOR FAMILIES" (2007)

Once again, as in 2006, the *Travel Channel* has named Myrtle Beach among "America's Best Family Beaches," one of only 15 U.S. beaches chosen for the 2007 designation. "Myrtle Beach...is an extensive stretch of silky white sand, and offers opportunities for fishing, swimming, sunbathing, sailing and surfing," reported this popular, national television program.

YAHOO! TRAVEL:

WORLD'S BEST BEACH (2007)

Myrtle Beach's gorgeous beaches beat out those in such exotic locales as Sydney, Australia; Miami, Florida; and Honolulu, Hawaii, in the April 2007 poll of hottest beaches conducted by Yahoo! Travel. The Grand Strand won first place as the "World's Best Beach" based on consumer ratings collected through the prominent online travel site. Myrtle Beach has been a presence on Yahoo!'s "World's Best Beach" poll every year since 2003.

GOLF DIGEST:

"TOP 100 PUBLIC GOLF COURSES IN AMERICA" (2007)

Myrtle Beach has solidified its title in 2007 as "The Golf Capital of the World" with preemptive status as home to 10 of the Top 100 public golf courses in America, according to *Golf Digest*. The 10 area courses winning titles among the best in the U.S. include: Dunes Golf & Beach Club, Tidewater Golf Club & Plantation, The Heritage Club, Barefoot Resort's Love course, River's Edge Golf Club, Tiger's Eye Golf Links, King's North at Myrtle Beach National, Caledonia Golf & Fish Club, True Blue Golf Club, and Barefoot Resort's Fazio course.

FORBES:

"100 BEST SMALL PLACES FOR BUSINESS AND CAREERS" (2007)

In a May 2007 survey conducted by *Forbes* magazine, Myrtle Beach ranked as one of the top "100 Small Places for Business and Careers." The rankings were based on the average cost of doing business, potential for job growth, average education of the population, and number of area inhabitants.

WHERE TO RETIRE:

"100 BEST RETIREMENT TOWNS IN AMERICA" (2007)

Where to Retire magazine named Myrtle Beach one of the "100 Best Retirement Towns in America" in its January 2007 issue, citing the area for its low cost of living, and calling it one of the best beach towns in the nation. The Grand Strand was selected for this honor by editors who visited destinations in all 50 states.

SOUTHERN ACCENTS:

TOP 10 WINNER IN THREE CATEGORIES (2006)

"FAVORITE SOUTHERN CITY FOR A WEEKEND GETAWAY"

"FAVORITE GOLF/SPA DESTINATION"

"FAVORITE BEACH DESTINATION"

In the May/June 2006 issue of *Southern Accents* magazine, Myrtle Beach snagged three Top 10 titles in the second annual "Great Escapes Reader Travel Award Contest": "Favorite Southern City for a Weekend Getaway," "Favorite Golf/Spa Destination," and "Favorite Beach Destination."

AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (AAA):

"TOP FIVE MOST POPULAR DRIVE DESTINATIONS" (2006)

For three consecutive years, the Myrtle Beach area was designated among the five most popular destinations for vacationers traveling by car, according to a survey of members conducted by AAA. Myrtle

Beach is ranked alongside other popular drive destinations including Orlando, Niagara Falls, Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon.

GOLF DIGEST:

“NUMBER ONE GOLF-HOME COMMUNITY” (2006)

Golf Digest named Myrtle Beach as both top “Golf-Home Community in the Southeast” and “America’s Number 1 Golf-Home Community.” The designation is a result of data collected from the Longitudes Group, a research firm specializing in leisure activities that evaluates cities on the basis of such criteria as the number of highly ranked courses, playable days per year, cost of living, and off-course diversions.

MEETINGS SOUTH MAGAZINE:

“BEST OF THE SOUTH” (2006)

Pawleys Plantation in Pawleys Island earned a title as one of the best meeting facilities in the Southern U.S., Caribbean and Yucatan Peninsula for 2006. The award from *Meetings South* magazine was achieved from reader votes and was based on the quality of meeting space, guest rooms, guest services and amenities, food and beverage service, high-technology services and equipment, recreational facilities and activities, the efficiency and helpfulness of staff, and overall value and experience.

USA TODAY:

“10 GREAT PLACES TO GO COASTAL WITH YOUR KIDS” (2005)

The beaches of the Grand Strand made Stephen Leatherman’s (aka Dr. Beach) list of “10 Great Places to Go Coastal with Your Kids,” published in the July 2005 issue of *USA Today*. Leatherman is professor and director of the International Hurricane Research Center & Laboratory for Coastal Research at Florida International University, and the author of *Beach Vacation Travel Journal* and *Dr. Beach’s Survival Guide*.

ESCAPEHOMES.COM:

“MOST DESIRABLE SECOND HOME MARKETS” (2005)

The Myrtle Beach area was ranked Number One on the 2005 list of “10 Most Desirable Second Home Markets,” according to EscapeHomes.com, a web site for second-home buyers, beating out the popular communities of Las Vegas, San Diego, Santa Fe and Orlando. Myrtle Beach was ranked fourth on the same site’s listing of top golf towns.

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED:

“SPORTSTOWN USA” (2004)

Long known as the “seaside golf capital of the world,” the Myrtle Beach area now has a new moniker – Sportstown USA – thanks to *Sports Illustrated* magazine and the National Recreation and Park Association. To mark its 50th anniversary in 2004, the magazine selected one city from each state for the Sportstown designation: Within South Carolina, Myrtle Beach was chosen because “its leaders recognize that sports are an enormous force for good in the community.” The area’s numerous parks, recreational facilities and 115 golf courses were also factors. The genesis of *Sports Illustrated* was in Myrtle Beach in 1954, when parent company Time Inc. first met at Pine Lakes Country Club and announced plans to launch a new sports magazine.

GROUPTRAVELPLANET.COM:

“TOP GROUP VACATION DESTINATIONS WITH SPECIAL HOTEL RATES” (2005)

The online group travel booking web site GroupTravelPlanet.com has ranked Myrtle Beach as one of the top three “Group Vacation Destinations with Special Hotel Rates.” The site proclaims: “This desirable beach destination is a great place for groups of families, friends or anyone looking for some sun and fun this summer.”

RESTAURANT BUSINESS:

“BEST CITY FOR GROWTH POTENTIAL” (2004)

For the fourth consecutive year, the Myrtle Beach area earned the top spot in *Restaurant Business’* ranking of the top cities in the U.S. for growth potential. The publication rates the nation’s top restaurant markets based on overall sales, sales as a percentage of income, and per-capita sales.

For additional information on the Myrtle Beach area, go to www.VisitMyrtleBeach.com or call 1.888.Myrtle1.

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