

Historic Hotels!

XXXIV: Sea Island's *The Cloister*

The Cloister was founded by Ohio auto magnate Howard E. Coffin and officially opened in 1928 by President Calvin Coolidge. This month, The Cloister celebrates its 75th anniversary.

The controlling family has a long-standing policy of controlling development to protect the natural heritage of the island which is lush with flowering shrubs and trees and which is home to hundreds of wading and migratory birds, as well as year-round species.

When you drive over the Frederica River, one leaves behind the neon world of the southern Georgia mainland and enters the old South where cotton was once king. Over the Black Banks River, you make your first left and the old hotel with its orange roof and Spanish Mediterranean architecture comes into view beneath the magnolia trees. You've arrived at The Cloister, one of the country's leading resorts and since 1927 a golf and vacation destination of thousands of American and international vacationers. Here, on the tiny 5-mile sliver of land that is Sea Island, one of the barrier islands off the Southern Georgia coast that make up the Golden Isles, the rhythm slows down amidst abundant natural beauty. Here, too, you find a gracious atmosphere you would expect of a Mobil 5-star resort frequented by prominent families like the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts...and the George Bushes who honeymooned at the Cloister and returned in 1995 for their 50th anniversary.

For many, The Cloister is synonymous with the best of the Old South -- gentle, languorous, and refreshing. The spacious hotel, with its over 240 rooms, elegant dining room, dance hall, and magnificent courtyard in the back, is complemented by guest houses with oversized villas. Fronting The Cloister's private beach is the beach club with two large swimming pools (decks, outdoor bars and jacuzzis) and a restaurant offering outstanding cuisine in a casual atmosphere. Adjacent to the beach club is the resort's salon and state-of-the-art health spa.

[taken from Alan Nichols, 1997]

