

THE VIP LOUNGE | JARED HAIBON

This 'Bachelor' has a crush on Disney World

He traveled to some prime locations — including Ireland and Mexico — when he appeared last year on the ABC reality series “The Bachelorette” and “Bachelor in Paradise,” but Warwick, R.I., native Jared Haibon said that Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., remains his favorite vacation destination. Haibon still lives in Warwick and is a manager at Providence Oyster Bar. And even though he was one of the final four suitors for Kaitlyn Bristowe's affection in the 11th season of “The Bachelorette,” and was wooed by several ladies in the second season of “Bachelor in Paradise,” Haibon said he is single. We caught up with the 27-year-old to talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation spot? Walt Disney

World. I know that is such a cliché answer, but it's such a fun place. Not only do I love rides, but I love the “magic” of it all. I'm a kid at heart, and while in Disney I get to be a kid again. I have so many wonderful memories from my childhood there, being with family and friends. It's a huge part of some of the best moments of my life.

Favorite food or drink while vacationing? Anything that has a lot of carbs. If I'm on vacation, then I'm eating lots and lots of junk food. Pizza, ice cream, pasta, dough boys, pretty much anything. My favorite drink while vacationing is a Mai Tai because they taste wonderful and do the job. That's what I mostly drank while filming “Bachelor in Paradise.”

Where would you like to travel to but

haven't? I would like to travel to France. I've been to Ireland and Italy, but to see the Eiffel Tower in person would be a dream of mine. The food is amazing, their accents are lovely. . . . I could see myself falling in love with France.

One item you can't leave home without when traveling? My Boston Red Sox hat. I travel everywhere with this thing; if I'm in an airport, most likely I'm wearing that hat. Also, anywhere I go I love to represent Boston.

Aisle or window? I'm a window type of guy. I rarely ever get up during flights [so] it can get annoying if people keep needing to get past me to use the bathroom. If I have a window, it's far better. This way I can just keep to myself, listen to my music, and zone out.

Favorite childhood travel memory? Going to my Uncle Paul's house for Christmas. I was always very close with my Uncle Paul and Aunt Susan's three kids: my cousins Paul, Eric, and Sarah. They're like my brothers and sisters, so I always remember being very happy seeing them on Christmas. Even though they live in Rhode Island and we didn't travel far, it meant enough to me that it's the first thing that comes to mind.

Guilty pleasure when traveling? Listening to movie soundtracks while on the plane. I love film, and there are so many cinematic scores I could listen to over and over again. So if you see me in the airport with headphones in, most likely I'm listening to the “Man of Steel” soundtrack or something like that.



GENE YOUNG PICTURES

France is high on Jared Haibon's travel wish-list.

Best travel tip? Dress comfortably. I used to care how I looked on planes, [but] now I wear sweatpants and a sweatshirt, and it's so much better.

JULIET PENNINGTON

By Niece Regis

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. — Some towns in Florida peddle glitz and glamour; others are meccas for sport fans. Amelia Island, nestled in the northeastern-most corner of the state, offers year-round, low-key pleasures. With winter temperatures averaging 65 degrees, this barrier island's climate is tailor-made for fishing, golfing, kayaking, sightseeing, shopping, or simply strolling its 13 miles of beaches. Located about 16 miles from Jacksonville International Airport — a three-hour nonstop flight from Boston — Amelia Island makes for an easy weekend getaway.

STAY

Historic Downtown Fernandina Beach, a 50-block area of well-preserved late Victorian architecture, is filled with one-of-a-kind shops, galleries, restaurants, B&Bs, and inns. For affordable digs with a view of the marina, just steps from downtown, the **Hampton Inn & Suites Amelia Island** offers 122 rooms and suites — some with balconies and fireplaces — with in-room mini-fridge, microwave, and premium cable television. Unexpected surprises include a ceiling clock above the lobby grand staircase, and an outdoor pool discretely tucked on the second level. Rates from \$129. (904-491-4911, <http://hamptoninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels/florida/hampton-inn-and-suites-amelia-island-historic-harbor-front-AISHSHX/index.html>) For those who prefer beachfront luxury, **The Ritz-Carlton Amelia Island** — perched on the Atlantic shore — offers 446 guest rooms and suites with spa, fitness center, four restaurants, and an 18-hole championship golf course. Rates from \$339. (904-277-1100, www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/AmeliaIsland/Default.html)

DINE

Long and narrow, Amelia Island has three distinct sections with the majority of dining opportunities clustered in the northern end's historic downtown. Coffee lovers flock to **Amelia Island Coffee** for premium locally roasted java and light breakfast and lunch items such as southwest omelet wrap, cranberry tuna salad, and an assortment of muffins, bagels, and gluten-free cookies. (ameliaislandcoffee.com) Hang with the locals at **The Salty Pelican**, an indoor-outdoor casual bar and restaurant offering burgers, wings, tacos, po'boy sandwiches, locally caught seafood, Gulf Coast oysters, and Mayport shrimp. (www.thesaltypelicanamelia.com) Savor romantic moments over dinner at **Joe's 2nd Street Bistro**, serving gumbo, grilled seafood and steaks, bouillabaisse, and shrimp and grits. (www.joesbistro.com) Mid-island, it's worth a stop at Barbara Jean's for made-from-scratch, homemade southern favorites such as she-crab soup, crab cakes, catfish, chicken fried chicken, and bread pudding. (www.barbarajeans.com) In the south end, **Coast** recently debuted at The Ritz Carlton, a modern American dining experience featuring seasonal, healthy, and familiar favorites



The island life

Florida's Amelia Island specializes in taking it easy



PHOTOS BY NEECE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Above: A historical reenactor plays a fife in front of the canons at the historic Fort Clinch on Amelia Island.

Left: Downtown Fernandina Beach is filled with one-of-a-kind shops, galleries, restaurants, and inns

with a twist. (www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/AmeliaIsland/Dining/Coast/Default.htm)

PLAY

Beginners are welcome at **Amelia Island Kayak Excursions**, a family-owned business offering guided tours of inland waterways around the island including Egan's Creek, an estuary popular for spotting shore birds such as herons, roseate spoonbills, egrets, and cormorants. (www.ameliaislandkayak.com) Fishing is one of the more popular sports on the island with charter boats offering offshore, inshore, and backcountry trips. Atlantic charters go out for kingfish, barracuda, amberjacks, and more. Surf fishing can be done along any outer beaches, the most popular being the jetty rocks at **Fort Clinch and Amelia Island State parks**, at the northernmost and southernmost ends of the island. (<http://web.islandchamber.com/Charter-Fishing-Services>) Golfers can tee up at many public and municipal nine to 18-hole golf courses, including the **Golf Club At North Hampton** designed by Arnold Palmer and Ed Seay, or feel salty ocean breezes at championship courses at hotel resorts (www.golfink.com/golf-courses/city.aspx?dest=Amelia+Island+FL). Beachcombers and sun worshippers can enjoy more than 40 public beach access points along 13 miles of shoreline, including various city, county and state beaches. (<http://islandchamber.com/visit/beach-essentials>)

SEE

This quiet island is rich in history; renowned as the only location in the United States to have lived under eight flags in 400 years, starting with the French in 1562. For an overview of the diverse cultures that form the island's heritage, including the Timucua Native American tribe, French and Spanish explorers, and Victorian settlers, it's worth a stop at the **Amelia Island Museum of History**. (<http://ameliamuseum.org>) Through objects, photographs, and video documentation, the American Beach Museum celebrates the African American resort community — established in 1935 in defiance of segregation and Jim Crow laws — whose beach was known as “The Negro Ocean Playground,” a place for “recreation and relaxation without humiliation.” (www.americanbeachmuseum.org) Spanish moss-draped live oaks line the entrance to the 1,400-acre, family-friendly **Fort Clinch State Park** where coastal grasslands, salt marches, and maritime hammocks are home to a wide variety of wildlife including numerous species of birds, gopher tortoises, deer, raccoons, bobcats, and reptiles including American alligator. Enjoy miles of hiking and biking along off-road trails; head to the three-mile shoreline for swimming, shelling, shark tooth hunting, and fishing off the half-mile long fishing pier; and step back to the year 1864 at historic Fort Clinch, where soldiers reenact life during the Civil War. (www.floridastateparks.org/park/Fort-Clinch)

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