A LOWER-KING-STREET fine jewelry and gift shop with a doorbell and buzzer entrance might give you every expectation of attitude, but once inside, you’re treated like family. And it’s family that keeps this 100-year-old landmark going strong—sisters Mariana Hay and Rhett Outten, and Mariana’s two daughters, Kathleen and Mini Hay. They’re dressed to the nines, they know why you’re there before the door closes behind you, and they’re responsible for half of Charleston’s milestone-marking baubles. When locals say that Croghan’s is an institution, what they’re referring to is the Old Charleston charm preserved by the ladies of Croghan’s.

TBLX: Why Charleston?

Rhett: Charleston has a mix of old and new, and traditional and modern all wrapped up in one. I appreciate the history, marvel over the beauty and enjoy being a part of this community.

Kathleen: I have always loved Charleston. After leaving for several years then coming back home, I love it even more. The energy here, the people, the scenery - it’s like no other place on earth and we are so lucky to call Charleston home.

Mini: No matter where I go, I always like Charleston best; the people, the culture, architecture, the food, the art - it can’t be beat.

TBLX: How is Charleston changing?

Kathleen: I love seeing all the new restaurants, hotels, and businesses opening here. There’s always some new place to try and I love that. I’ve noticed when traveling that more and more people know of Charleston and always comment on how lucky we are to live here.

Mini: We are. And with all the attention we’re getting, we are able to embrace our culture and city as it is and show our roots and heritage to visitors, instead of needing to become “Anywhere, USA” to keep up with the rest of the country. I think because of the surge in tourism, we are able to hold on to our Charleston and share it with everyone, rather than morphing into something else.

TBLX: What is your favorite way to enjoy the city?

Mariana: I like to ride my bike and explore different neighborhoods. I really like the curve in Church Street, Stolls Alley, Philadelphia Alley and just riding around the Battery or through Hampton Park.

Rhett: For me, Charleston is a walking city. The view from the top of the Cooper River Bridge takes my breath away, as does watching the tide come in or the moonrise on one of our beautiful barrier islands.

Kathleen: Yes... I love experiencing Charleston by water, either on a boat or at the beach. I find peace and so much beauty on the water.

TBLX: What is your favorite thing to do with friends visiting Charleston from out of town?

Rhett: Cocktails with a view on one of our rooftop bars.

Kathleen: Yes, definitely visit a rooftop bar, ride bikes around the city, visit a house museum, go on a boat ride, and go out for a meal.

Mariana: A boat ride in the harbor is a fun way to show our city to guests. We have an old, slow, Down Easter-type boat, so touring friends around Charleston usually takes the better part of the day, but it’s perfect for good conversations with wine and cheese.

TBLX: What is something that people don’t know about Charleston?

Kathleen: Charleston is called the Holy City because of our many churches. Take time to stop by each one you see, there are so many beautiful details in all of them.

Rhett: Charleston was founded on the prospect of religious freedom, and that spirit is still very much alive here. Where else can you find a Huguenot church, a Unitarian church, a Circular Congregation Church, the birthplace of the AME religion, a rich Jewish community… when Grace Episcopal Cathedral was being renovated and could not have Easter services, the synagogue around the corner opened their doors. That’s special.

Mariana: Charleston truly is one of the friendliest and most welcoming cities in the world. Charleston has so many things to do, there is no reason to be bored. You finish one weekend and immediately start planning the next.
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–Mini Hay

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ON TOP OF THE RICH HISTORY AND BEAUTIFUL SCENERY, Charleston is a hotbed of creativity. It’s a city filled with innovators and entrepreneurs -- passionate makers, craftsmen, and small business owners doing their own thing. Some are dedicated to preserving traditions by passing recipes or methods down through generations, and others are focused on pushing the envelope and experimenting. It’s so easy to get swept up into buying conventional souvenirs when you visit a new place, and sometimes that’s fun, but here, we challenge you to shop small – seek out those extraordinary items that tell a story, and support the artisans that make this small city so vibrant and colorful.

1. **OLD WHALING COMPANY**
   Divine small batch soaps, creams and bath bombs made by hand. Indigo & Rice and Magnolia scents are inspired by life in the Lowcountry, all a treat for the senses.
   » Products starting at $6
   oldwhalingcompany.com

2. **DOG & HORSE FINE ART**
   Custom miniature oil portraits by Beth de Loiselle paired with Susan Smith Burnett’s jewelry designs result in heirloom pieces that preserve precious memories of your beloved companions to keep close to your heart.
   » Silver Roman Pendant with leather necklace starting at $1,700
   dogandhorsefineart.com

3. **SMITHEY IRONWARE**
   Heritage quality cast iron skillet, hand poured in Charleston. This will last generations and only gets better with age – perfect for big southern meals.
   » Smithey Ironware 12” skillet, $200
   smitheyironware.com

4. **LANDRUM TABLES**
   Made by hand in North Charleston from reclaimed Charleston wood, these tables are strong enough for a commercial kitchen but pretty enough for yours at home.
   » Landrum Tables steel top kitchen island/work table, starting at $1,350
   landrumtables.com

5. **BLENNHEIM GINGER ALE**
   The Blenheim Ginger Ale Company is the earliest independent soda bottling company in the country, and still cranking out their signature blend of fiery but sweet ginger ale. Made just outside the city limits, it works its way into many local cocktails.
   » $26/24 pack
   blenheimgingerale.com

6. **REVELRY BREWING**
   Revelry is one of our favorite local breweries – great rooftop and even better craft beers. Poke the Bear is an American Pale Ale with classic citrus, floral and tropical fruit notes.
   » revelrybrewingco.com

**BRACKISH BOWTIES**
Beautiful pieces of wearable art, each made by hand using sustainably sourced feathers, including pheasant, guinea and quail varieties.
» Starting at $195
brackishbowties.com
1. **CHARLESTON ARTISAN CHEESEHOUSE**
   - Battery Park Brie is their flagship cheese, which they describe as “a cross between a Brie cheese and a farm cheese,” lightly aged for a mild flavor, creamy with a firm and crumbly center.
   - Battery Park Brie, $24
   - charlestonartisancheesehouse.com

2. **CIRSEA**
   - Unexpected ice cream flavors that change seasonally, made by hand in Charleston, SC. It’s hard to pick a favorite, but toasted black sesame, lychee and strawberry goat cheese are standouts.
   - $10 per pint
   - cirsea.myshopify.com

3. **CROGHAN’S JEWEL BOX**
   - The Goldbug collection at Croghan’s Jewel Box is inspired by and named after the Edgar Allen Poe short story written when he spent time on Sullivan’s Island.
   - Croghan’s Goldbug Pin, $70
   - croghan Jewelbox.com

4. **CANNONBOROUGH BEVERAGE CO.**
   - Fresh craft sodas made using seasonal, local, and all natural ingredients. There’s a cocktail recipe included on each bottle, so you can enjoy as-is or use to amp up drink offerings at your next party.
   - Raspberry Mint Cannonborough Craft Soda, $30/12 pack
   - cannonbevco.com

5. **CANDY SHOP VINTAGE**
   - Designed to fit 2 bottles of wine, a bottle of whiskey and two glasses, or anything else you want to carry around town with you, this bag is as versatile as it is good-looking.
   - Tremont Wine Tote in brushed brown waxed canvas, $80
   - starkmade.com

6. **INK MEETS PAPER**
   - Made using a restored letterpress that was uncovered in a Charleston home in recent years, this single press Rainbow Row inspired postcard is a cheerful greeting from a bright stretch of town.
   - “Greetings from Charleston” letterpress postcard, $3
   - inkmeetspaper.com

7. **LOWCOUNTRY KETTLE**
   - Charleston-inspired flavors make these small-batch, kettle-cooked chips stand out from the pack. Satisfyingly crunchy and well seasoned – it was hard to pick a favorite flavor.
   - $36/24 pack
   - lowcountrykettle.com

8. **CHARLESTON SHUCKER COMPANY**
   - By the time fall comes around in Charleston, oyster season is in full swing and we’re outside roasting them by the bushel. Shuck in style with a fold away oyster knife from Charleston Shucker Company.
   - $45
   - charlestonshuckerco.com

9. **J. STARK**
   - Made using a restored letterpress that was uncovered in a Charleston home in recent years, this single press Rainbow Row inspired postcard is a cheerful greeting from a bright stretch of town.
   - Ink me meets paper

10. **COAST BREWING COMPANY**
    - COAST Brewing is a family-owned operation working out of an old navy base in North Charleston. They use local and organic ingredients in their recipes, and there’s something for everyone in their offerings. We love the Hop Art IPA.
    - Hop Art IPA
    - coastbrewing.com

11. **MATTHIAS KAUPERMANN**
    - Hold the jokes, cornhole is part of life in Charleston - you can catch a game on the beach, at backyard BBQs and at oyster roasts. This handcrafted, heirloom quality board set made of American walnut is for serious gamers.
    - Sets starting at $995
    - matthiaskaupermann.com

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