

Baltimore Charm player Kelly Campbell's beach vacations

Lingerie football defensive back enjoys playing in the Outer Banks

By Stephanie Citron, Special to The Baltimore Sun



Baltimore Charm player Kelly Campbell travels frequently in her dual role as a defensive back and marketing manager of the city's all-female Lingerie Football League team.

Campbell was nominated this year for the league's award for most improved player, as well as for its Mortaza Award, honoring a player's efforts on and off the field.

Campbell says she prefers vacations at beaches, where she can enjoy the activities she doesn't have time for during the football season.

With Valentine's Day on the horizon, Campbell, 24, reveals to us her favorite and most romantic getaway — which would also be her ideal spot to receive a proposal.

Where is the most romantic place you've traveled?

A place called Wrightsville Beach [on the North Carolina seashore] at midnight — it's the perfect place to be proposed to!

Is that your favorite travel destination?

I love the beach — have to go at least once a year. I've seen so many beautiful beaches along the East Coast [and] even Maui, Hawaii. I really have not found one that I love more than the Outer Banks.

What inspires you most about the Outer Banks?

The Carolina weather is perfect. I've visited in March, summertime, fall — it's always nice. This past summer, I went right after the hurricane, and it was stunning — everything seemed so pure again.

I go and renew myself, cleanse my soul and my mind. I love how my skin feels after a day at the beach

— the water and sand are exfoliants. And my hair gets sun-streaked. Then I go back out at night, and the stars are everywhere — it's so clear there. Being down there allows me to escape from reality.



Where do you like to stay?

I have stayed with family in Wrightsville, but this past summer a group of us rented a house right on the water in Nags Head. I prefer that [to a hotel] because there's a lot of space just to hang out and you don't have to worry about leaving your things around. It's more of homey feel.

What do you like to do when you are there?

I'm not one just to lie there and tan. I like to play bocce ball, boogie board and fish off the pier. I love to throw the football around; it's usually just me and the guys, because the girls don't want to play. At the end of the day, I like to just sit and watch the ocean.

Are the guys afraid of playing football with you?

No, they think it's awesome. I'm always the one tossing the ball, throwing the Frisbee or kicking the soccer ball.

Is that how you stay in shape for football when you travel?

If there is a gym nearby, I'll work out. But I find walking and jogging on the beach can be just as exhausting as my regular workout.

Do you have favorite rituals when you visit?

I like to get out on the beach between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m., to help set up the morning fishing gear. Often I'll have a mimosa, then I'll conk out and take a nap in the sun before everyone else arrives.

Do you have a favorite restaurant?

I really like going out for a big breakfast. For lunch, I bring packed sandwiches so I don't have to come off the beach during the day. At night, I love putting on a long, flowing dress and going out for seafood — a place called the South Beach Grille. Last summer in the house, everyone took turns cooking dinner for the group, which was fun and relaxing.



Do people recognize you when you travel?

Not so much yet; there isn't an LFL team between Florida and Maryland. But if I'm carrying my [league] bag or my jacket, I do get some people who have seen us on TV. I've signed autographs.

Where do you want to travel next?

I was in England when I was 17 and want to go back. I really want to explore Scotland, Ireland and France. I've also never been to California; I'd like to see San Francisco and San Diego.

Do you plan your travel or hire a professional?

I like to do the research. I look up restaurants that have been featured on [Food Network TV show] "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" and find the authentic "mom-and-pop" places.

Do you have an all-time-favorite travel read or author?

I love to read spiritual books. Right now I'm reading "The Alchemist." I just finished "The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success."

What is the one item you will not travel without?

I won't go anywhere without mascara.

If You Go

Nags Head, N.C., is on the northern peninsula of the Outer Banks. Its unspoiled beaches are free, with plenty of parking available. The inimitable pink-blue sunsets and charming mom-and-pop establishments help it to sustain an unaffected, wholesome vibe.



Getting there

Nags Head is about 325 miles from Baltimore. You can fly Southwest Airlines nonstop into Norfolk, then rent a car for the remaining 88 miles. Most folks contend it's easier, and cheaper, to make the trip by car, about a six-hour drive.

Lodging

Village Realty, 252-480-2224, villagerealtyobx.com. For expanded living spaces and picture-perfect

sundecks, rent a beachfront condo or cottage from Maggie Sexton.

First Colony Inn B&B, 6715 South Croatan Highway, 252-441-2343, firstcolonyinn.com. With its ocean views and private boardwalk leading to the beach, the historic inn offers an upscale stay. Summer room rates are \$189 to \$289 per night.

Dining

South Beach Grille, 6806 S. Virginia Dare Trail, 252-449-9313, southbeachgrillemp16.com. offers fresh seafood with Caribbean and Asian accents — and stunning sea views from the outside deck upstairs. Entrees: \$12.95-\$22.95

Kelly's, 2316 South Croatan Highway, 252-441-4116, kellysrestaurant.com. Year-round residents love Kelly's for its fresh flounder and sweet potato biscuits. Entrees: \$18-\$29.

Sam and Omies, 7228 S Virginia Dare Trail, 252-441-7366, samandomies.net. This "barefoot and beachy," circa-1937 restaurant is a favorite spot for breakfast. Entrees: \$2.50-\$14.99

Don't miss

The Bridge at Whalehead Club, 1100 Club Road, Route 12, Corolla, 252-453-9040, whaleheadclub.org. Insiders say this is the ideal spot to pop the question. The bridge is within the gardens of a 1920s hunting club and mansion. Admission to park is free; audio house tours are \$9.

The Lost Colony Outdoor Drama, 1409 National Park Drive, Manteo, 252-473-3414, thelostcolony.org. Performed outdoors nightly from June through August, this long-running outdoor symphonic drama tells the tale of an early British colony established in this area that simply vanished. Just one clue was left as to their whereabouts: the word "CROATOAN" carved on a palisade. Tickets: \$24.



The Corolla Wild Horses are protected in a dedicated wildlife sanctuary that features an interactive museum. 1126 Schoolhouse Lane, Corolla, 252- 453-8002. corollawildhorses.com

Jockey's Ridges State Park, West Carolista Drive, Nags Head, 252-441-7132, jockeysridgestatepark.com. For the best beach vistas, check out the highest sand dune on the East Coast. The park also features trails, a boardwalk and beach activities.

Information

Tourism: Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, 1 Visitors Center Circle, Manteo, N.C., 877-629-4386, outerbanks.org.

Reading: For intriguing Outer Banks lore, pick up a copy of "Legends of the Outer Banks and Tar Heel Tidewater," by Charles H. Whedbee.

—*Stephanie Citron*

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