

# TRAVEL + LEISURE

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## 10 GREAT PLACES TO SPEND CHRISTMAS

FASHIONABLE JACKSONVILLE

### INSIDER/florida

With its prairie-style architecture and small-town friendliness, Jacksonville would seem an unlikely place for the fashion set. Yet thanks to one Florida designer who died last year at 88, leaving behind 100,000 pairs of his signature shoes, it couldn't be much hotter. "Joseph La Rose shoes scream Florida so loudly they actually transcend it," says Tiffany Dubin, author of *Vintage Style*. Currently, the Florida shoemaker's confections, beloved by Joan Crawford and Jackie Kennedy, are available only at Manhattan's hipper-than-thou **Cherry** boutique (185 Orchard St.; 212/358-7131). Serious shoppers, however, can make an appointment with Cherry's owners to tour the Jacksonville warehouse, which still houses 50,000 pairs, and take in the town's sights. Near the original La Rose boutique, on Hemming Plaza, is the **Jacksonville Museum of Modern Art** (333 N. Laura St.; 904/366-3911), whose collection ranges from Picasso to Robert Longo. (An exhibition of La Rose shoes is in the works.) From the plaza, cruise across the Blue Bridge over the St. Johns River, which divides the city. For dinner, follow the fashion set's lead: French chic at **Bistro Aix** (1440 San Marco Blvd.; 904/398-1949; dinner for two \$60) and taxidermy-casual at **Clark's Fish Camp** (12903 Hood Landing Rd.; 904/268-3474; dinner for two \$40). Sleep off your meal at the **Lodge at Ponte Vedra Beach** (607 Ponte Vedra Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach; 904/273-9500; doubles from \$175), in Jacksonville's toniest beach suburb. ■

