



rewards finding the perfect untracked slope on which to spend the day. When the snows lifted we rode our fat tires through red rock desserts and our skinny tires through lush valley floors. We made annual treks to hear elk bugling and wolves howling and climbed 10,000-foot peaks to see the raptors migrating. The adventures were endless, but as the years passed they became less novel and more of a way of life. We became, in a word, westerners.

But we were far from family, and far from the ocean that had captured my heart long ago. So when it became possible for us to relocate our lives to St. Simons Island, where Clay is from and where I vacationed every summer growing up, we jumped at the opportunity. And therein started the plan of “Becoming Islanders.” Adventures abound on this island, and we don’t want to miss one of them. But it takes a long time to make a lifestyle transformation. We’re taking it one step at a time. The first item on the list? The cruiser bike.

For you cannot immerse yourself in island living without first having the appropriate island transportation. Virtually everywhere we need to go is within a couple of miles, and there is no better way to get there than on a cruiser. A perfect day starts with a ride to the Village for an outdoor breakfast, followed by a trip alongside the ocean and marshes. If we’re lucky we’ll see the brown pelicans gliding inches above the water. Some days the porpoises are playing their favorite game of hide-and-seek, playfully emerging from the water before slipping below, leaving us waiting, eyes scanning, to see where they will rise again. An occasional owl glides silently to the tree by the marsh where he sits so still that I lose him when I accidentally look away. Persistent melodies greet us from birds that I don’t yet recognize by song. These are moments you miss when you take more convenient transportation.

Later, we’ll ride to the Farmer’s Market to fill our baskets with fresh picks for lunch and then on to the grocery for other essentials. After lunch we’ll ride to visit friends, or to my favorite place, anywhere with ice cream. Clay fashioned a trailer for his cruiser that carries a cooler, chairs and an umbrella for a trip to the beach. There is a quicker way to get where we’re going, but we’re on island time.

The cruiser provides the perfect start to our becoming islanders. What’s next? That debate has already begun. Sailboat or sea kayaks? SCUBA classes or fishing gear? Camping in the Okefenokee or a weekend on Little St. Simons? The choices are infinite; it’s just a matter of what to do first. We’ll ride our cruisers to the beach and continue this debate over wine as the sun sets behind us. One day this way of living might not be so novel to us, but we’re in no hurry to get there. ■