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# Popular Charleston restaurant publishes first cookbook after 20 years of serving up seafood

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SEP 4, 2025



Fleet Landing has served up seafood, drinks and more on the Charleston Harbor for more than 20 years and launched its first cookbook featuring the most requested recipes Sept. 5.

**CHARLESTON** — Weesie Newton has thought about putting together a cookbook of her restaurant's favorite recipes for nearly a decade, but always shelved the idea for one reason or another.

But as Fleet Landing approached its 20th anniversary last year, the idea resurfaced — and stuck.

"We thought, we really need to share this," she said. "So many people ask for our recipes, so many people think of us as part of their family. And we thought this would be a really good time to just celebrate our longevity and put the story in writing."

Available for sale Sept. 4, “The Fleet Landing Cookbook” features a curated collection of 68 home-cook-friendly recipes highlighting drinks, dips, dishes and desserts that have made the restaurant a dining destination for two decades.

To assist readers, who most likely aren't professional chefs in state-of-the-art kitchens, Jenni Lata offers helpful techniques to cook the recipes at home. The wife of Mike Lata, chef and partner of FIG Restaurant and The Ordinary who was also named 2009 James Beard Foundation Best Chef for the Southeast, performed extensive research over a span of months, testing every recipe, Newton said.

While eateries in Charleston come and go, Fleet Landing’s endurance over 20 years is a testament to its menu and its service and, Newton said, it’s “location, location, location.”

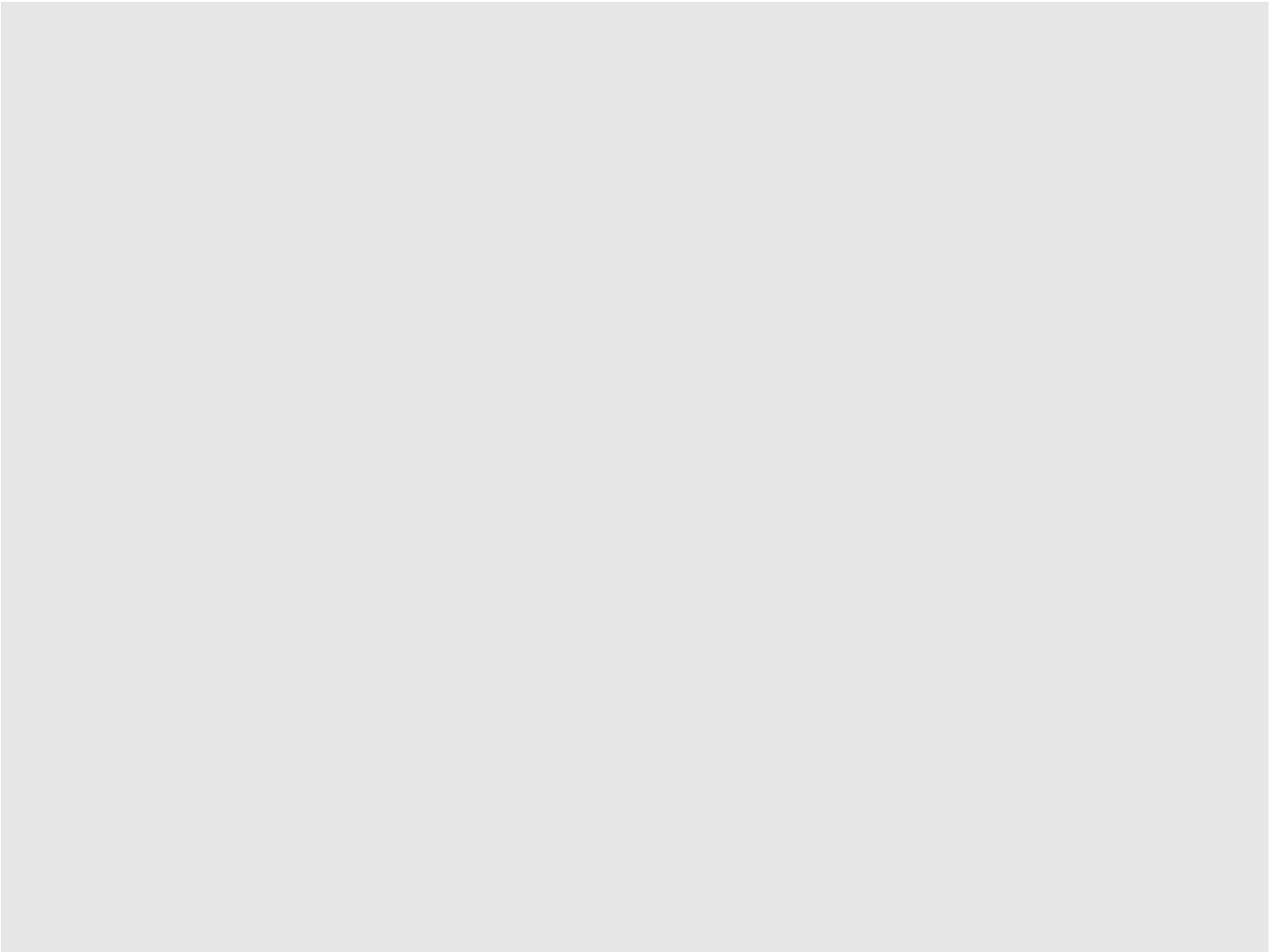
The restaurant is housed in a 1940s retired naval building on the edge of Charleston Harbor. Newton, whose background is in real estate, said she and her husband, Tradd, long admired the building on the water and were excited to transform it into a restaurant. Her husband had previously worked in the grocery business under Piggly Wiggly and had a hand in establishing McCrady’s restaurant, hiring the chef and coming up with the menu.

The restaurant's moniker came from the wording across the building.

Fleet Landing opened in 2004, serving seafood-forward Southern fare that has attracted locals and tourists alike.

The restaurant’s waterfront location “for a very long time has been a key draw,” Newton said.

Now, food lovers can recreate Fleet Landing's cuisine at home with the cookbook that offers how-tos on sweets, such as the restaurant’s homemade pecan pie, and cocktails like The Charleston Sunset that calls for a mix of vodka, coconut rum, peach Schnapps, and pineapple and cranberry juices.



Fleet Landing has published its first cookbook that will be sold at the restaurant beginning Sept. 4 and in Buxton Books starting Sept. 9.

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Readers can also follow along with recipes for the fried green tomato stack with tarragon crab salad, seafood pasta and caprese oysters with creme fraiche, balsamic vinegar-marinated tomato rind, pesto oil and freshly shucked oysters

Selecting which recipes to include wasn't terribly hard as Fleet Landing has been doing "a lot of the same thing for the whole 20 years" it's been open, Newton said.

"We took really the staples, the things that people come back for ... and ask for the recipe for," she said.

The Fleet Landing Cookbook is on sale at the shop starting Sept. 5 and will be sold exclusively at Buxton Books on King Street come Sept. 9.

Owner Polly Buxton said she is proud to carry the title as part of its cookbook collection and noted the shop will offer broader services, be it in-store sales, signed copies or shipping the book.

Buxton has known the Newtons since childhood and noted her store originally was at the corner of Concord and Cumberland streets, directly across from Fleet Landing. Six years ago, Buxton books moved to its current location on King.

"I like the bookstore for small town moments like this," she said. "When we get to have our hometown people share their recipes (in our store), it feels like a full-circle moment for me."

The locally owned shop first opened with books solely by local authors and with regional tie-ins, and has since expanded to be full-service offerings. Now, the small business plays host to large-scale events at The Charleston Gaillard Center with thousands of people coming to meet local and international authors, including Stephen and Evie McGee Colbert, and Martha Stewart.

A future collaboration with The Post and Courier Sept. 18 will feature an intimate chat with best-selling author Elin Hilderbrand for the paper's inaugural "Porch Talk" series.

"Martha Stewart's book will be a best seller for the month it comes out, but the Fleet Landing cookbook, when it's locally connected, it becomes an ongoing best-seller for us," Buxton said. "Our locals come back again and again to gift it. And the visiting community comes into our bookstore and wants to go home with something from here they can't get elsewhere."

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Teri Errico Griffis is the senior business reporter and assistant editor at The Post and Courier, focusing on retail and real estate. An award-winning journalist, she previously worked as a Southeast commerce reporter for the Journal of Commerce and a reporter for the Charleston Regional Business Journal where she covered all facets of business in the Charleston region. Raised in Connecticut and New York, she has called South Carolina home since 2012.