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Hands On Luxury

**Muralist
Robert Shelton**

One of five featured
artisans whose skilled
craftsmanship keeps
the city in high style

**Taking
the Stage**

The curtain rises on a new
season of performing arts

Party Proper

Luxe dining South of Broad

Borrow from the Boys

Menswear-inspired fashions for fall



Plus: The bounty of Bordeaux
wines, indulge at The Cloister,
& Snob-Punks: the late '80s answer
to new wealth in Charleston

Eye on I'On

Mount Pleasant's neo-traditional 'burb fosters neighborliness and pedestrian-friendly living

WRITTEN BY ANN JEFFERSON TATE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTOPHER BROWN & BEN WILLIAMS



From the top of a newly built stucco house in Mount Pleasant's I'On neighborhood, one can see almost the entire 243-acre development, including two lakes, a large rookery, and the heavy copper-covered dome of the Eastern Orthodox Church being constructed down the road from the village square. In the distance, a few lazy boats troll the marshes of Shelmore Creek, and, in the opposite direction, the twin arches of the Ravenel Bridge rise like majestic sails above the Cooper River. From this vantage point, several nearby rooftop terraces are visible—one of which could not be much more than an arm's length away.

While this level of intimacy might take some people aback, it's exactly what I'On's developers, the **Grahams**—brothers Geoff and Vince along with their father, Tom—

envisioned when they set out to create a community reminiscent of pre-World War II suburbia, where children could ride bikes safely to one another's houses and where neighbors would gather for weekly potluck suppers. Close lots, narrow streets, and mailbox clusters encourage residents of this 10-year-old neighborhood to get out of their houses—which mostly emulate the vernacular architecture of downtown Charleston—and visit with one another.

Shared space is an essential tenet of the community's "new urbanism." Even premium properties fronting the lakes and

From left: The main square on North Shelmore; Beba Luxe offers fashionable shopping; the Eastern Orthodox Church; small shops, streets give residents a pedestrian-friendly town



ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER THIEMES

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

I'ON



creeks do not have exclusive water access; instead, **public paths** allow everyone to enjoy the surrounding natural beauty. This "outdoor realm" adds to the intrinsic value of I'On: In today's commuter society, it invites residents to get out of their front doors and into the community to create an enduring sense of neighborhood. Since all 650 of the community's houses are linked by sidewalks, and then in turn to I'On's

numerous shared civic spaces, it's hard to imagine that a resident could venture out the front door without bumping into at least one familiar face, which is just the way the Grahams envisioned it when the first sidewalk was poured.

Eat & Drink

A stroll around I'On's town square reveals an array of businesses, some of which have

Clarksville from top left to view down Riverside Lane, home to Duke Seacoast Spa and Grill's Shop Grill & Bar, the historic overlooking Charleston, all for more info: 2014-2015 I'On Summer offers a variety of activities including tours to first school, Square District's opening, South City includes the "Museum"—gallery and help with a resident's formal dinner on the main level.



O'Brion's Pub & Grille serves up classic bar fare to happy-hour seekers and thirsty up-to late.

gained enough traction to become destinations for customers outside the neighborhood. **The Square Onion** (literally "Square On Ion") [18 B Resolute Ln. (843) 856-4246] is a mostly to-go restaurant whose inventive sandwiches, such as the "Sassafras"—turkey with green apple and cheddar cheese sandwiched between rosemary focaccia bread spread with basil mayo—tasty desserts, and

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delectable comfort foods attract fans from the neighborhood and beyond. It's a lunchtime hit, but many diners grab made-from-scratch casseroles or lasagna to warm up for dinner. No neighborhood is complete without a local watering hole, and **O'Brion's Pub & Grille** [361 N. Shelmore Blvd. (843) 388-9733] fills that niche well by attracting a thirsty Mount Pleasant after-work crowd. O'Brion's offers traditional pub fare, as well as seafood, including the popular all-you-can-eat crab legs on Mondays,

beyond window shopping.



Midtown's model home is now open by appointment.

One block from King Street's vibrant design district, you'll find some other windows worth peering into. And out of. As the Midtown neighborhood takes shape, everyone is curious to see inside these progressive, modern homes. Why not come in, and try on true urban living—Charleston style? See how it fits you.

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Shop 7 is a suburban spin-off co-owner Dito Berlin's King Street store.

and its 10 TVs attract a loyal football crowd on game days.

Shop

Grazi's Shoe Café & Wine Bar [14 Resolute Ln. (843) 216-2087] offers owner Jennifer Graziano's "two greatest indulgences" in a laid-back setting. She holds \$2 wine tastings every Friday from 5 to 7 p.m. and has live

Since all 650 of the community's houses are linked by side-walks and civic spaces, it's hard to imagine that a resident could venture out without bumping into at least one familiar face.

music about once a month in the store's cozy courtyard. I'On's two main clothing boutiques, **Ellen B.** [152 Civitas St. (843) 856-0760], a compact version of co-owner Ellen Berlin's King Street store, and **Beba Luxe** [353 N. Shelmore Blvd. (843) 388-8480], which carries simple, feminine designer clothing, offer original alternatives to downtown and Towne Centre shopping. Napa Valley vineyard owner Gall Summers moved to I'On looking for "a new house

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Fast Facts

- The neighborhood's namesake is Jacob Bond I'On (1782-1856), the first mayor of Sullivan's Island, a state senator, and a War of 1812 hero, who is buried a half-mile north of the town square. His family owned the property that is now I'On.
- The I'On building code requires that porches be at least eight feet deep to draw residents out of their houses and into their rocking chairs.
- I'On developer Vince Graham built the smallest house in I'On, a two-bedroom bungalow with an open floor plan that makes its 960 square feet feel ample. To encourage his vision of housing diversity, Graham will give \$5,000 to the lot owner who constructs a smaller house in the neighborhood.
- The new building for the East Cooper Montessori charter school, next door to the I'On Club, just opened its doors to first through eighth graders this semester.

that looks old" and brought her passion for wine with her. At **Soif** [357 N. Shelmore Blvd. (843) 884-9708], Summers packs a lot of vintages, including hard-to-find labels, into the shop. To encourage her customers to become more adventurous with their wine purchases, she inaugurated a taste-before-you-buy policy. Also, Soif's just-opened tapas bar further expands dining options on the square. Longtime I'On resident Melinda Armstrong has been hard at work readying the first floor of her lavender-and-aubergine-colored house at the corner of North Shelmore Boulevard and Sowell Street for her home, garden, and gift store, **Sweet Olive** [264 N. Shelmore Blvd. (843) 224-0839], which had its grand opening this month, just in time to start a fall container garden.

Relax

For those needing rejuvenation after shopping or trekking around the neighborhood, massages and facials are on the menu at the **Grace Salon Spa** [10 Resolute Ln. (843) 884-3248], a full-service Aveda salon. ●

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