

Coastal VIRGINIA Magazine

Faces of
Coastal
VIRGINIA
2025

IDEAS FOR
SUMMER FUN

100th
ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
CHINCOTEAGUE
PONY SWIM

25
REASONS
TO LOVE
SUMMER

Amazing
Moms

50
YEARS
ON LOCAL
RADIO FOR
MIKE ARLO

CELEBRATING MOTHER'S DAY
AND ALL THE WOMEN WHO
HAVE INSPIRED US TO SHINE

Pictured:
April Woodard
and her mom
Dr. Lucy R. Wilson

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Adventures

Magic in the TREES

NEW OWL CREEK LANDING
NAUTILUS TOWER, DESIGNED BY
OUTDOOR ADVENTURE GROUP,
WILL BRING ENCHANTING
THRILLS AND NEW HEIGHTS
TO VIRGINIA BEACH

By Leona Baker

Bahman Azarm's sense of childlike wonder is infectious.

Peering down from the top level of the new Owl Creek Landing Nautilus Tower as workers are rappelling off trees around which they are still busy constructing the wooden canopy walk that will surround the Tower, the founder and CEO of Outdoor Ventures Group is like a kid on a playground.

A pretty magical playground at that.

Kids of all ages will no doubt be enchanted by what Azarm and his team have built in the 38 acres of maritime forest behind the Virginia Aquarium South Building.

Scheduled for an official opening Memorial Day weekend, the centerpiece of Owl Creek Landing is an eight-story, 65-foot-tall steel spiral offering 360-degree panoramic views of the surrounding forest and wildlife.

Starting from the ground entrance of the tower, guests can gradually make their way up the spiral, which is fully ADA accessible, until they are sharing a birds-eye view of swaying pines and all the flora and fauna on the way back down to the forest floor.

Once they're at the top, those adventurous enough to try it will have the option to spiral back down via the longest steel slide in the U.S., which twists through the tower's center and deposits





UP, UP AND AWAY

Outdoor Adventure Group CEO Bahman Azarm (*top right*) was inspired to create the new Nautilus Tower at Owl Creek Landing after visiting a similar structure in Europe. A first of its kind in the U.S., the tower is located in the forest behind the Virginia Aquarium South Building and will be surrounded by a suspended wooden canopy walk and treehouses.

the slider back on *terra firma*. For non-sliders, it's easy to walk or roll down the same way they came up.

Inspired by his upbringing in the picturesque mountains of Switzerland, Azarm channeled a 20-year background in the construction industry, a love of the outdoors and an appetite for physical challenge into creating thrilling experiences for adventure-seekers including the first-ever aerial forest park in the U.S. at Catamount Ski Area in Massachusetts. Based in Virginia Beach, Azarm's Outdoor Ventures Group is also behind The Adventure Park at Virginia Aquarium, a family-friendly aerial ropes course just across the creek, which opened in 2014 and includes bridges, tightropes, ladders and more than 30 ziplines.

Developed in Austria, the Nautilus Look-out Tower is the first commercial installation in the U.S. to utilize the unique Spinnanker foundation system. Modeled after the root system of trees, the system is designed to provide a sustainable and ecologically friendly method of construction that anchors the tower into the ground without the need to pour tons of concrete.

Surrounding the new Nautilus Tower will be a half-mile of suspended wooden pathways 30 to 40 feet above ground level and connecting to four themed treehouses in an elevated neighborhood of play designed for children age two and older. Guests can access the trails from the fourth level of the tower to explore the forested site.



On the ground, a mile-long network of complimentary walking trails encircles the tower and offers additional areas for natural exploration. At night, the trails are illuminated by a specialty lighting display that transforms the outdoor experience for visitors and includes an interactive component led by Owl Creek Landing's mascot owl.

While giving a tour of the attraction in the final stages of construction, Azarm deftly scales a ladder into one of the treehouses before ducking into the charmingly off-kilter miniature cottage—think Hansel and Gretel meets midway funhouse—and eventually leading the way through a series of suspended wooden bridges and kid-friendly obstacles. So, who's the kid here? Does it matter? Owl Creek Landing is going to be a blast for all those who know the joy of climbing a tree or just letting one's imagination run wild.

Owl Creek Landing is open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Individual and combination tickets are available, \$28 for ages 14+ and \$18 for youth with slide tickets available to add on. Prices may vary seasonally. [Covm](https://www.owlcreeklanding.com)
Learn more at www.owlcreeklanding.com.