

Good

The Character Of The South

Grit



AWAKEN

JANUARY - FEBRUARY



HOMAGE

HONOR THE RICH TRADITIONS OF SOUTHERN GENERATIONS PAST, AND
CONSIDER HOW THOSE INFLUENCE OUR PRESENT AND FUTURE.



RALLY THROUGH
RED HILLS

WORDS BY J.N. CAMPBELL
PHOTOS BY DANIEL SHIPPY



T

here are several telling definitions for the word “rover,” and each one can be introspective on its own.

However, if you combine them all into something like a fine quail stew, you have an idea for what you might find at the Red Hills Rover Rally, an event hosted by the Wright Real Estate Group in Thomasville, Georgia.

Among the longleaf pine and native groundcover in and around Thomasville, you find folks who view the protection of the past as a fiduciary responsibility, who cleverly marinate memory with meaning for successive generations. With more than 60 vehicles owned by folks from as far away as Michigan in tow, some vintage Rovers and some just off the assembly line, will wind their way through the red-clay roads. Nestled among those tall pines, participants wander historic properties and plantations, and see some wonderful views—a veritable forest through the trees.

Here are some rovers we ran across.

A RANDOM OR LONG-DISTANCE MARK IN ARCHERY—USUALLY USED IN PLURAL

The past qualifies as its own kind of archery rover. It is distant and sometimes difficult to pin down. But if you look hard and long enough, you will uncover it. The spirit that the Rover Rally reflects is one that places an emphasis on the landscape itself. Beginning with a meet-and-greet, longtime motorheads and novices alike mingled, shared random tales, and enjoyed a hearty breakfast. Afterward, they aimed down the meandering paths of the Red Hills, which were once traversed by indigenous peoples, making their way to historic plantations, like Greenwood, founded by the ancestors of some folks who protect some 300,000 acres of private lands that continue to turn with the seasons. At the end of this sojourn, old and young alike left for home with a cache of experiences that will last a lifetime.

DEFINITIONS OF A ROVER:

1. A random or long-distance mark in archery—usually used in plural.
2. Wanderer, roamer
3. A player not assigned to a specific position on a team, playing wherever needed.
4. A vehicle for exploring the surface of an extraterrestrial body (such as the moon or Mars).



All ages are welcome at the event and it's even encouraged.



THE ROVER RALLY IS BEN MCCOLLUM'S WAY OF BROKERING A DEAL WITH THE HISTORY AND THE LANDSCAPE.



WANDERER, ROAMER

Bobtail quail are rovers too. Their habitats can be found along those roads that wind through otherwise untouched woods, reminding us of the importance of protecting them for future generations. Conservancies at the state and local levels, such as Tall Timbers and the Red Hills Conservation Association in Thomasville, have assisted in preserving more than 100,000 acres and counting. Using some of the same wagons pulled by mules for hunting quail that were a part of the early 20th century life, locals are simultaneously honoring the past through responsible hunting, all the while fixed on a future through focused management.

A PLAYER NOT ASSIGNED TO A SPECIFIC POSITION ON A TEAM, PLAYING WHEREVER NEEDED

Ben McCollum is a rover who roams an out-field made of pine. He serves as the principal of the Wright Real Estate Group and is a native of Thomasville, making him part of a legacy here that stretches back to the 19th century. As such, the Rover Rally is his way of brokering a deal with the history and the landscape. By organizing a movable feast through five private plantation properties, he is the master of ceremonies, pulling back the pine curtain of the Red Hills. McCollum and his team are serving as stewards of a metaphorical transition team. Nostalgia, coupled with a healthy dosage of understanding of the past, acts as a GPS for him as he carries the torch to hand to the next generation. By benefiting the 22nd Annual Plantation Wildlife Arts Festival in Thomasville, the Rover Rally, as he says, "reminds us to open our eyes, smell that pine-infused air, and see what a special place this truly is."

A VEHICLE FOR EXPLORING THE SURFACE OF AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL BODY (SUCH AS THE MOON OR MARS)

The Land/Range Rover is, as you can surmise, a vehicle for exploring. With its nubbed tires and sturdy racks, it speaks with a romantic accent while harkening to a bygone age of safari, of empire, and for those that have sought adventure. Although southwestern Georgia is by no means the moon, its landscape is made up of rugged terrain and elicits a reaction of wonder, amazement, and peace for these explorers as they stand holding a bloody mary, leaning on the toasty hood of a vintage Rover, overlooking the splendor of Pebble Hill Plantation, where so many other parties of neighbors and guests have stood on the road of history.



LIFE ADVICE WITH
BEN MCCOLLUM

1 Pursue a higher-level of introspection.

2 Surround yourself with friends and family you trust.

3 Learn to experience the world.

4 Don't get caught in the trappings of consumer culture; "things" don't matter.

5 Remember, the past informs and nature has so many gifts to treasure and conserve.