



**SOUTHERN TIDE**

Parent company: Oxford Industries  
Greenville, S.C.  
CEO: Christopher Heyn  
Locations: 12



## Selling the Low Country Vibe

The “spirit of the south,” as exemplified in the men’s, women’s and children’s apparel products sold under the Southern Tide brand, has been expanded into an emerging new chain of specialty apparel stores. CEO Christopher Heyn says the stores are formed through joint ventures with various partners such as Kiawah Island, S.C.-based Island Sport LLC, a chain of men’s and women’s specialty wear stores.

Southern Tide contributes brand expertise, products and the point-of-sale presentations, while its partners manage the operations.

“We are not experts at retail operations,” Heyn says, “but we love to build product and to communicate our brand and our lifestyle.”

Acquired by Oxford Industries in 2016, Southern Tide sells some 650 products in five categories to over 850 specialty stores in 48 states. The stores range from 600 square feet to 2,800 square feet. The primary colors are mostly various shades of blue paired with white-washed floors and fixtures that include replicas of dock pillars.

Heyn describes the stores as “clean, crisp, airy with high ceilings and lots of light — everything to make the consumer feel comfortable.”

The most recent stores opened this year in the new markets of Florida and New England. Heyn says plans are to expand as new opportunities present themselves with sites being jointly selected by Southern Tide and its partners who, he says, “have in-depth understanding of their local markets.”

Young people from college campuses serve as volunteer “ambassadors” for the brand. The ambassadors often journey to colorful locations such as Thailand where they take videos of their adventures. Each store has a large video display that shows their adventures as well as videos produced by Southern Tide.

Since the brand’s target market is people ages 20 to 32, the ambassadors “help us learn what is happening in that market each year,” Heyn says, “although we also have many customers both younger and older.” **STORES**

— Liz Parks