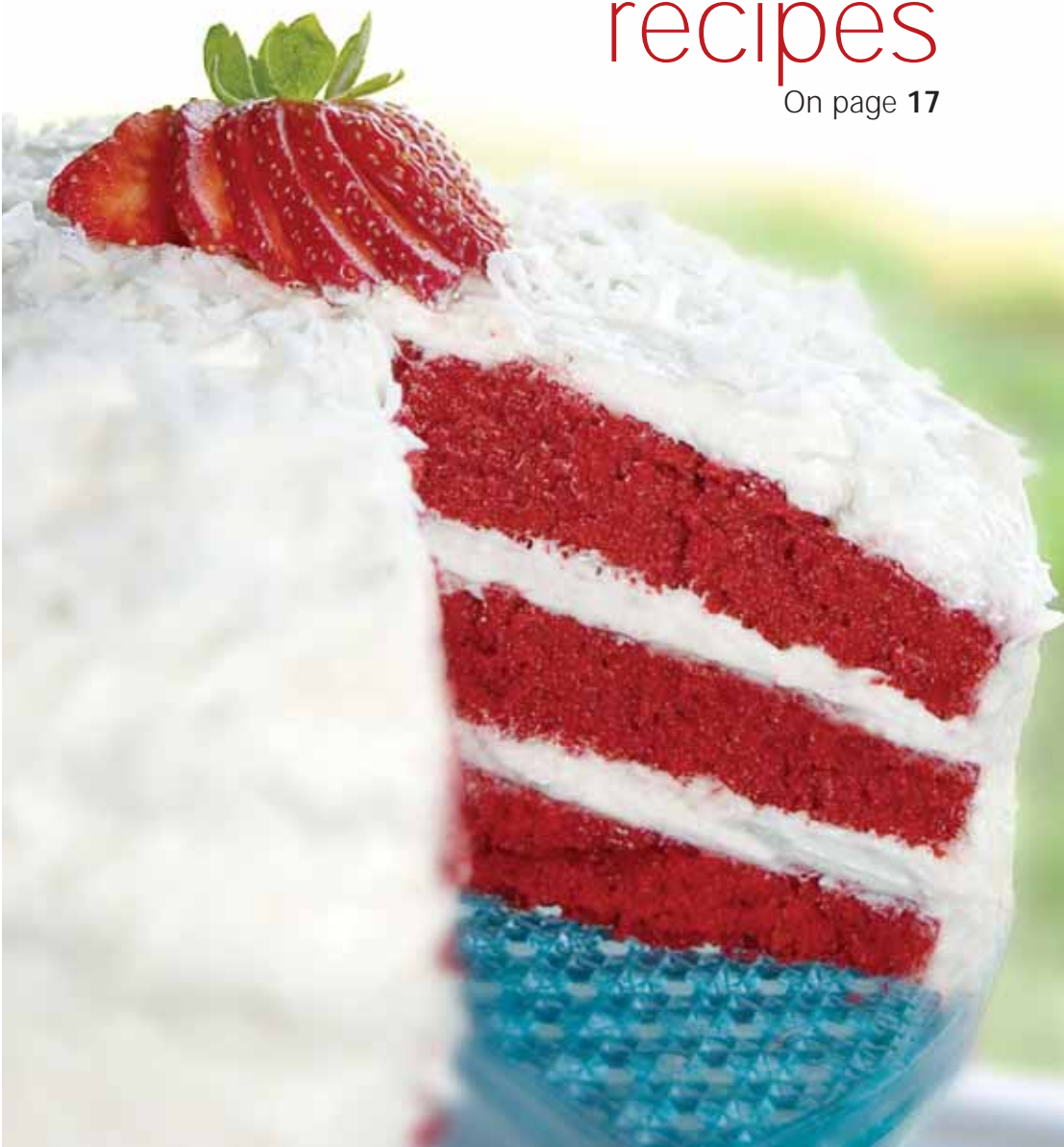


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welcome to e-Breeze



It is my distinct honor to welcome you, the loyal readers of *Southern Breeze*, to the first ever edition of *e-Breeze*, the electronic version of *Southern Breeze* magazine. We are timing these online issues to come out in months the magazine does not so that we can stay in your lives on a more regular basis. Think of us as an uninvited house-guest bringing plenty of gifts!

e-Breeze is chock full of more stuff you love about the magazine, but in a convenient format that you can come back to time and time again.

Whether you're at work (on your lunch break of course!) or online paying bills, just click on the link to see even more of what *Southern Breeze* is famous for... "the good life on the Gulf Coast."

And unlike other online newsletters from magazines where the content is often recycled press releases, the articles in *e-Breeze* are all original editorial content written just for you! For example, we have a feature story about 5Rivers—Alabama's Delta Resource Center by Mobile native and assistant editor Mary-Allison Lancaster. and our other feature is "overflow" from the *Southern Breeze* Best of 2007 issue, but focusing on Louisiana courtesy of Mandeville resident and lover of all things Louisiana, Deb Burst.

Also in this issue is a profile of Demetrius Fuller the dynamic young conductor of the Sinfonia Gulf Coast in Northwest Florida. We also have reviews of a new show at the Beau Rivage Resort & Casino, a detailed travel guide to New Orleans, as well as three finger-licking restaurants on the Mississippi Coast. Speaking of succulent food, you will truly love the sumptuous summer meal that Jenny and Ross Maxwell have concocted for you. It's easy enough that yours truly could engineer it!

I also have to give credit to *Southern Breeze* art director extraordinaire Catherine Juchheim, without whom this quixotic new venture would have never taken shape. You rock, Cat!

So enjoy this premiere issue of *e-Breeze* and do not be shy about telling me what you think of it! But you're gonna love it!


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RENDERINGS COURTESY OF EMERALD GRANDE



Emerald Grande opens on Destin's harbor bringing a taste of luxury to the Emerald Coast.

On the Water Front

A turn-of-the-century yacht club has arisen on Destin's harbor front, luring boaters and land lovers alike to the emerald waters of this once-sleepy fishing town.

Emerald Grande at HarborWalk Village is a hotel/residential development that includes shops, restaurants, boat slips, and water sports venues. Its bustling city center is slated to become a gathering place for visitors and residents alike as they preview the dinner catch or enjoy an afternoon's refreshment on an eatery's piazza.

Destin-based developer Legendary, Inc. snagged the architectural team of Helman Hurley Charvat Peacock Architects, Inc. to design the retro yacht club exterior. The two towers that dominate the Emerald Grande skyline employ Spanish and Florida influences, with a tan stucco exterior accented with emerald green roofline. Matching cupolas with nautical flags and exposed rafter tails further extend the look.

Legendary promises the hotel will be a four-star designation. Lavish common areas evoke the

ambience of Rockefeller or Carnegie retreats, complete with 24-hour concierge and poolside dining and drinks.

The property, which officially opens in June, includes 281 units, priced from the \$200,000's for fractional (shared) ownerships to the millions for sole owners. Condominiums will feature plans ranging from two bedrooms and one bath to four-bedroom, four-bath units plus a wrap-around balcony. All of the units provide generous entertainment space and well-appointed master suites with luxurious baths.

Restaurants in the city center include Water Grill (a Restaurants-America "New Concept" restaurant), Lucy Snapper, and Pat O'Brien's. Visitors and residents will also have access to the Grande Vista Bar and Grill, The Spa at Emerald Grande, a fitness center and juice bar, a beach shuttle, an arcade and kids' play area and a concierge and parking valet.

The Grande Vista pool deck is also expected to be a key draw for the resort, as swimmers and sunbathers alike gather to enjoy the sixth-floor views of Destin's East Pass as it meets the Gulf of Mexico. ●

story by
JEAN M. McLEAN

HARBORWALK VILLAGE
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*In a setting
reminiscent of a
town square,
Destin Commons
is definitely
not mama's
shopping mall*



story by
MARK A. NEWMAN
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CRAIG TANNER

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legends of the MALL

I admit that I've always had a proclivity for shopping malls. As a youngster growing up in Jackson, Alabama, we only had the Jackson Square shopping center, home to a Winn Dixie, Revco drug store, and the "main attraction" where I bought my paperbacks, model kits, and Rick Springfield 45s, TG&Y. So when my parents and I would venture to the "big city" of Mobile to visit Aunt Louise, the highlight for me was to spend almost an entire day at Bel Air Mall (*two* bookstores!).

Once I discovered amazon.com the mall had become passé. Besides, going in and out of the different levels of climate control didn't do my sinuses any favors and it's not like The Gaps in Manhattan sell something different from The Gaps in Alabama...or Sri Lanka, for that matter. Enter Destin Commons, which doesn't bill itself as a mall, but rather as a lifestyle center. Anchored by Bass Pro Shops, Hard Rock Café, Belk, and Rave Motion Pictures, it is a far cry from the long corridors washed with uneven fluorescent lighting and anchored by Sears, J.C. Penney, and Gayfers.

Destin Commons is arranged more like a town square that let's shoppers enjoy the fresh air as they stroll along a reasonable facsimile of a quaint downtown. There really is a square in the middle replete with fountains and food vendors, not to mention live music and children's activities when the weather is nice. While these lifestyle centers are more popular in climes like our own—who wants to trudge through snow on a shopping spree?—they are the mall of the future while the malls of the past get converted to community colleges or demolished altogether.

Spread out over 56 acres and comprised of 470,000 square feet, Destin Commons is home to more than 80 stores and restaurants and is expanding

with a new five-level parking deck and an additional 92,000 square feet of Class A office space (there's already 70,000 square feet of offices above the storefronts, so it really is like a town square!)

Destin Commons is an opportune meeting place because it has ideal locales for conducting business such as the laptop-ready Panera Bread or Starbucks. I timed my journey so that I could see a movie at the ultra-modern Rave theater and even picked up a gift card for a friend's birthday at Hollister. The fact that a Banana Republic will be open by the time you read this means that Destin Commons will be my preferred shopping venue on my many trips to Destin.

Other favorites I'm glad to see there are the Hard Rock Café (great burgers despite being a tourist trap), Cold Stone Creamery (their Birthday Cake Remix is my kryptonite), Books A Million (where *Southern Breeze* is sold), and Bombay Company, which always manages to have at least one item that I want!

Located on Hwy. 98 and Mid-Bay Bridge Road, Destin Commons provides convenient one-stop shopping in a beautiful environment that, yes, even rivals the TG&Y of my youth (but good luck finding Rick Springfield 45s!). ●