

Emerald Grande, a whole new world

Destin changed Thursday night.

Actually, the die was cast a few years ago when Peter Bos, the president of the Legendary Inc. development company, first showed off his plans for HarborWalk Village, a grand residential/retail magnet overlooking the mouth of Destin's picturesque harbor.

On Thursday evening, hundreds of invited guests took in the experience of the twin-tower Emerald Grande high-rise that will be the cornerstone of HarborWalk Village.

"Incredible." "Spectacular." "Breathtaking." "Amazing." That's what people at the party were saying.

Sure, there was some quiet grouching about the monstrous Emerald Grande towers, about the changes they've forced onto Destin, about how the once quiet fishing village is harder to find.

Altogether, the luxury and glitz of Emerald Grande are what Peter Bos gives his undertakings. They're his fingerprints.

With the Emerald Grande and HarborWalk Village, he aimed to raise the bar of the quality of development in Destin. And he'll tell you he has indeed done that.

Up to 2007, Bos has brought to Destin a fishing marina, boat dealerships, a golf course, restaurants, apartment houses, upscale and trendy neighborhoods, and the Destin Commons shopping/dining experience. Emerald Grande now has upped the ante — which Bos promised it would.

With all of his upscale development, much of it highly visible and in your face, Bos has attracted detractors.

Yet no one can argue that what he has done *for* Destin, and done *to* Destin, has kicked this community upstairs into a whole different echelon of destinations along America's picturesque Gulf of Mexico.

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