

Commander's Palace

IT'S ALL RELATIVE: Hospitality mavens Ti Martin and Lally Brennan use decades of excellence to bring the New Orleans flare to HarborWalk.



Iconic New Orleans restaurant opens at HarborWalk

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A New Orleans culinary legend is being reborn in Destin. Today, the doors to the long awaited Commander's Palace will officially open to those looking for lagniappe, or a "little something extra."

The rich history of this legendary New Orleans' fixture has found a new second home in Destin at Legendary's HarborWalk Village.

The enduring ante-bellum heritage of Commander's Palace mingles with the refreshing charm of the Emerald Coast for an unparalleled dining experience.

"We wanted it to have a beach attitude," said Lally Brennan, of the famed New Orleans' restaurant clan.

Beach attitude and original taste is exactly what Commander's is serving up in a quaint atmosphere with a modern twist, all with an uninhibited view of the emerald green waters of the Destin harbor.

The multi-level restaurant offers something for everyone.

The attached On the Rocks Bar is an ideal afternoon getaway for hand-crafted cocktails and world class appetizers. Located just yards from the HarborWalk docks, anglers can cap off their day in resort casual style or relax outdoors on the terrace.

"I like to do a throwback to the classics," Michael Richmond, bar chef and four year cohort of the restaurant, told The Log.

Richmond's bar creations are made to reflect owner Ti Martin's passion for a good cocktail. On the Rocks makes drinks to order, but enjoys the opportunity to create something that will personalize a dining experience.

One of Richmond's signature cocktails is his own recipe that he calls La Primavera, after its refreshing combination of Hendrick's Gin, Pomegranate Liqueur, watermelon purée and a touch of bar syrup.

The full bar selection at Commander's Palace comes with a growing international wine collection. With over 250 selections to choose from, beverage manager Greg Wescoat said that bottles run anywhere from \$30 to those in the thousands.

While the liquid refreshment from On the Rocks Bar stands in a class of it's own, the food at Commander's Palace is the star of the new operation.

The menu at Commander's features Haute Creole cuisine, with Floribbean and southern influences.

Diners can get the down home feel with Shrimp & Grits Nassau or indulge in Island Spiced Rum Cake for a tropical touch.

Martin said that a few staples from the original Commander's Palace that carried over



MMMMMM: Assiette of Florida Ceviche gives local grouper, cobia and red snapper a tasty makeover (at top). Top off with the grown up version of Milk and Cookies (above).



MASTERS OF THEIR CRAFT: Above left, Bar Chef Michael Richmond says "Our motto is that our drinks have to be as good as the chef's food." Above right, Executive Chef Danny Trace says "We've done a little bit of research on the local food." Trace has been with the Brennan family since 1994.



PALACE

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to Destin are the garlic bread, Turtle Soup, Creole Bread Pudding Soufflé and Veal Chop Tchoupitoulas.

The menu accommodates appetites of all sizes and tables will always be on reserve for locals.

On Monday, Legendary employees and guests were privy to a preview of what the restaurant has to offer.

Visiting from Baltimore, Md., Ginny Gue sampled the New Orleans Shrimp Remoulade and described it “like nothing I’ve had before.”

She was also pleased to find her favorite desert on the menu.

“Coconut is my favorite ice cream and I can’t find it up north,” Gue said.

Inside of this old and new inspired restaurant, diners are surrounded by designs reminiscent of old New Orleans brought to life by celebrated New Orleans artist Tim Trapolin.

Trapolin created the

images for the menus and contributed the mural that is the backdrop of the Mermaid Room. The mural is a shrine to the original Commander’s Palace and features quirky depictions of Rik and Peter Bos and even New Orleans burlesque legend Evangeline, The Oyster Girl.

While the food, beverages and decor are top notch, the best reason to come to Commander’s is that every guest is treated like a rock star.

The waitstaff utilizes what they call “gang service.” The three tier system is a carefully choreographed presentation that ensures every guest receives personal attention — and an escort to the bathroom.

The Log spotted city councilor Sam Seevers enjoying Adelaide’s Spinach Salad with daughter and Legendary intern, Michael Seevers. Seevers was thoroughly impressed with the “intricate” service and “incredible” food.

“We definitely needed something like this in Destin,” Seevers said.