

## An Alabama Resort Boasting Tradition & Regality *The Captivating Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa*



Tucked beautifully among 200 year old oak trees is a luxury escape on the shores of Mobile Bay. Famous as *The Queen of Southern Resorts*, the Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa offers guests an amazing respite. When many of its majestic oak trees were just a quarter of a century old, the Grand Hotel opened its doors to guests seeking a relaxing retreat. Initially a two-story building with 40 rooms, today The Grand Hotel is a captivating resort on 550 acres of natural beauty. For over 175 years, it continues as a sanctuary to captivate guests with its rich tradition and variety of activities all while overflowing with hospitality. At the Grand Hotel guests will find a place to relax, refresh, renew and retreat. Guests are beckoned by the immersive outdoor activities of tennis, two challenging courses on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, and an extraordinary pool complex. Relaxation is encouraged at the spacious and peaceful accommodations, the luxurious European-style spa, walking the boardwalk, napping in a hammock, or basking on the beach. This gem, featuring a genteel Southern setting with fresh Gulf air, is an ideal year-round destination.



**Massive Oak Tree at the Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa**

We have visited luxury golf resorts previously including The American Club in Wisconsin, the Broadmoor in Colorado, The Sanctuary on Kiawah Island in South Carolina, and the Grove Park Inn in North Carolina. Each of these luxury resorts has its own special uniqueness that creates its magic and allure. Yet, when we drive into the Grand Hotel Golf Resort and Spa with its canopy of live oaks, we are immediately impressed with its warmth and southern charm. While the Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa is independently owned and operated, it is part of the Marriott Autograph Collection. It also is consistently ranked by AAA as a Four Diamond Hotel. Serving guests for over 175 years this retreat on Mobile Bay has faced numerous challenges from serving as a hospital in the Civil War to weathering major hurricanes including Hurricane Katrina, in August 2005 that caused extensive damage. Despite these challenges, the Grand Hotel continues its growth and expansion. Today, we are welcomed to this large resort offering accommodations in one of five different buildings, numerous dining options, and a plethora of activities. The Grand Hotel maintains its historic look while bringing the best of

modern conveniences to its guests. Our primary activity on this visit is enjoying a delightful and demanding round of golf on the Lakewood Club Azalea Course. After golf we are ready to discover and experience “*The Queen of Southern Resorts.*”



The Grand Hotel's “Extraordinary” Pool Complex

## **EXPLORING THE GRAND HOTEL GOLF RESORT & SPA**

### **An “Extraordinary” Pool Complex**

Taking the covered walkway from The Spa Building, where our room is, it’s a short walk to the massive Pool Complex. Wow! Adults and kids alike are enjoying this awesome complex featuring a large winding pool, slides and more. Plenty of seating surrounds the pool creating a respite for guests. We watch kids playing and laughing in the Splash Pad. The Pool Complex has the Jubilee Poolside Grill for food and drinks. Adjacent to the Pool Complex is North Beach offering Cabanas along the shore of Mobile Bay, as well as, Volleyball, Tether Ball and Bikes. Definitely a variety of options to allow guests to relax or delight in a fun outing or activity.



Relax on the beach of Mobile Bay under the shade of an old Oak Tree.

### **Take a Walk on the Boardwalk**

Strolling along the boardwalk, we enjoy the scenic beauty of the serene waters of Mobile Bay. Along the boardwalk, are numerous beach areas where families are enjoying a dip in the refreshing waters. Additionally, there are more private areas with chairs under large oak trees by the shore, welcoming swings along the boardwalk, and inviting hammocks hanging in the cool shade of oak trees. Everywhere we visit on the grounds of the Resort, we find massive beautiful oak trees. We easily understand the reason the “oak tree” is the official logo of the Resort. Later returning on the Boardwalk, we pass the Activities Lawn. Here families are playing croquet, Cornhole, Horseshoes, Ladder Ball, Ping-Pong Tables, and Putting Green. Yes, there are plenty to entertain all ages.



The canon is fired each day at 4:00PM to honor its wartime history.

### **Learn a Bit of History**

Walking the boardwalk, we stop at the Cannon that points out over Mobile Bay. The Grand Hotel has played a vital role with its strategic location in two centuries and two wars. During the Civil War it was used as a hospital then in World War II it served as the location of a classified military operation. Arriving at the hotel, late afternoon, we missed the daily cannon firing that honors the Grand Hotel's wartime history.



Massive Oak Tree at Home on the Antebellum Walk with a swing.

### **Step Back in Time on the Antebellum Walk**

Chatting with a local gentleman at the golf course, he highly recommends that while staying at the Grand Hotel we walk on the Antebellum Walk. As we pass through the opening on the boardwalk onto the Antebellum Walk, it is like going back in time. Here we see beautiful antebellum homes with large yards and piers reaching out into Mobile Bay. Some homes are in very good shape while a few are still struggling from damage or loss of buildings from prior storms or hurricanes. It is very scenic. Again, as we see at the Grand Hotel, large old oak trees are found in the yards of these homes. Live oak trees that grow to massive sizes, have been used for centuries to protect homes and property from hurricanes. I find a huge oak tree with branches spreading out in one yard and a swing from its branches creating a scenic setting. Imagine a youngster in the swing bringing the excitement of youth in the arms of this centuries old tree.



**Succulent Shrimp and Cheese Grits**

### **A VARIETY OF DINING VENUES AWAIT**

Whether seeking breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks or cocktails, the Grand Hotel offers several choices. From the fine dining at Southern Roots to the casual café at Jubilee Poolside, there are options to fit any guest's tastes. On our visit we enjoy a tasty lunch at the Lakewood Clubhouse and delight in a delicious breakfast in the Grand Hall. For dinner, we choose the relaxed setting of the Bayside Grill with its large windows and scenic view of Mobile Bay. Their eclectic menu has options from pizza to more intriguing entrees. I am thrilled with a lighter dinner of Gulf Shrimp Tacos. I especially liked the sweetness of the pineapple cabbage slaw along with the spice tortilla chips. Richard chooses the Shrimp & Grits with fresh Gulf Shrimp and Herbed Cheese Grits. It is a relaxing setting for our dinner following a day of golf. Afterwards we stroll the boardwalk waiting to watch the sunset. Today it is a nice sunset but not spectacular as the sun drops behind the clouds. A rain shower sends us inside.



**Scenic setting a Bucky's by the Firepit**

### **Bucky's**

Later seeking after dinner drinks we venture back out and head to Bucky's, their signature lounge. We read earlier about Bucky Miller, a Grand Hotel employee who both embraced and was the ultimate example of superior customer service. Bucky's offers an inside lounge with a bar and outside area. The inside lounge has entertainment in the evenings. We opt to sit outside, where many guests are enjoying Bucky's Firepits. Comfy seating surrounds the Firepit making creating a great gathering place for families or friends to sip drinks, visit, and enjoy the views. We have a short respite by a Firepit with its comfy seating before the rains return. (Note: There are nine firepits and reservations can be made for 4.) With the rains sending many guests inside, we decide to seat outside under the covered seating area. Here we share tales with other guests of our Grand Hotel experience and golfing excursions.



View from our balcony in the Spa Building

### **ACCOMMODATIONS: The Spa Building**

Our King Room is located in the Spa Building. The décor is welcoming tastefully blending a modern style with a Southern twist. Our well-appointed spacious king guest room also features a large bathroom soaking tub, separate shower, and double sinks. Stepping out onto our private balcony, we have views of a tranquil cove. Extra features of the Spa Building is its large indoor pool, Fitness Center and their 20,000 square foot Spa. An additional bonus is the self-parking underground garage. With 405 rooms, the Grand Hotel offers several accommodations including main lodge rooms, spacious spa suites, and executive suites that provide balconies overlooking a nautical cove, Mobile bay and the marina.



Downtown Fairhope, Alabama –The Cutest Small Town in the South.

### **FAIRHOPE: The Cutest Small Town in the South**

Just around the bend from the Grand Hotel is Fairhope, Alabama. This little town is a “hidden gem!” We visited Fairhope on a previous visit and it still enchants us. It’s beautiful main street is lined with unique specialty shops, charming restaurants, beautiful brick sidewalks with flowers blooming in flower beds along the street and quaint private alleys with hidden shops. While many guests at the Grand Hotel never venture from its amazing property and activities, others will delight in a visit to downtown Fairhope. With accolades as “Pretty near perfect” by Southern Living and “*The Prettiest Town in Every U.S. State*” by Architectural Digest, and Redbook “14 Cutest Small Towns in the South,” We highly recommend guests explore this hidden destination.



We have a wonderful visit to the Grand Hotel Golf Resort & Spa. This is a most intriguing and unique resort that will thrill guests. Whether you are seeking a romantic retreat, a family getaway, a reunion or conference, the Grand Hotel will easily exceed all your expectations. The property is so impressive and inviting for walks, watching sunsets, sitting by a Firepit, playing games and more. Golfer were enjoy the courses and practice facilities of The Lakewood Club. While this was a short getaway at the Grand Hotel, we look forward to a future visit to more fully enjoy all the “*Queen of Southern Resorts*” has to offer.