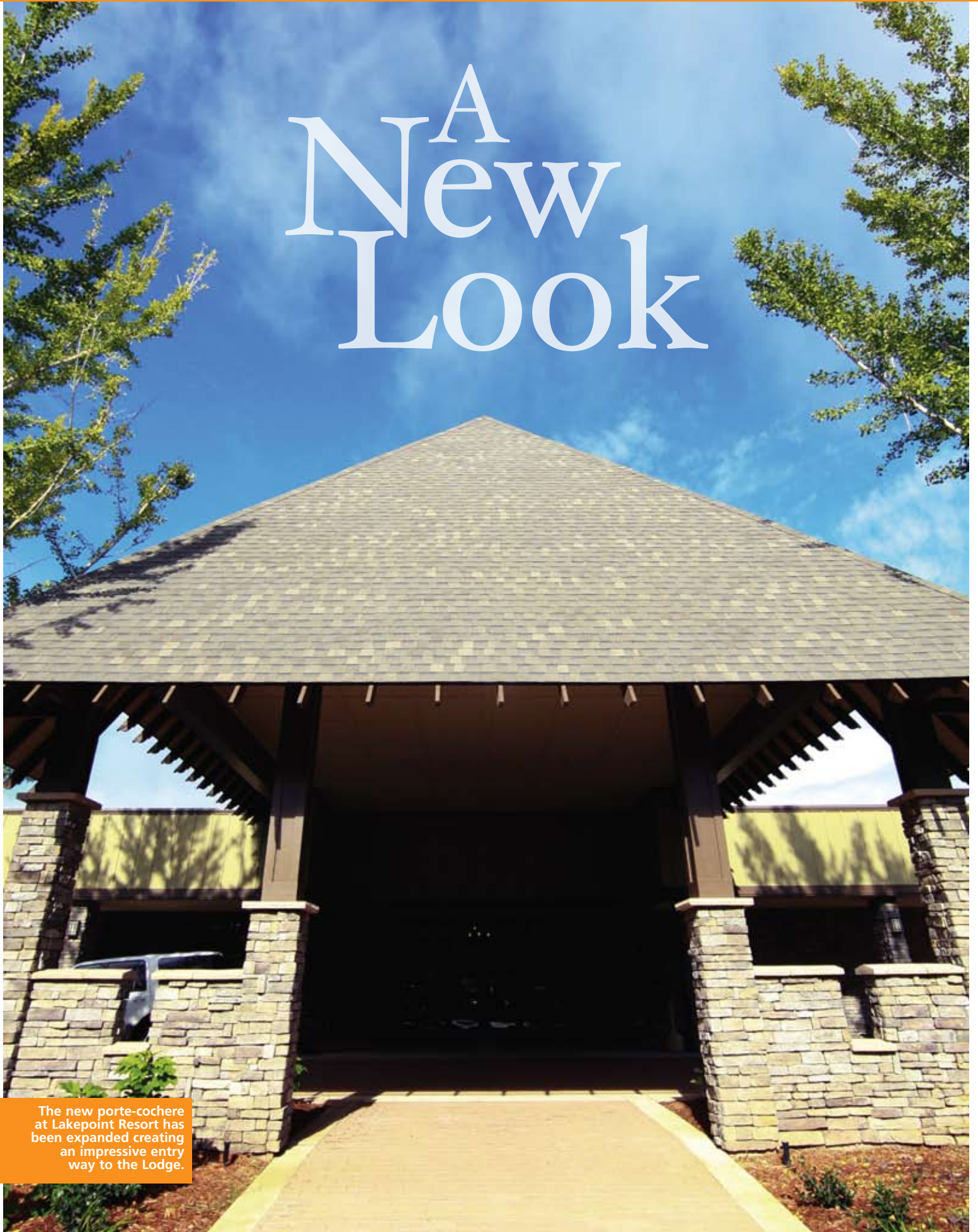


A New Look



The new porte-cochere at Lakepoint Resort has been expanded creating an impressive entry way to the Lodge.



Perched atop the most picturesque point on Lake Eufaula, the Lakepoint Resort and State Park shines with a new brilliance as the result of a \$12 million makeover.

One of the most popular state parks in the state, Lakepoint's lodge and hotel had been closed during the extensive work. The facilities were basically gutted and rebuilt with modern amenities. The outside appearance was also updated.

"Basically, it was a complete renovation of the facility inside and out," said Mark Easterwood, Director of the State Parks Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. "The main lodge, everything in the interior was torn out and we went back in with new floors and new walls. There's a little different design and layouts in the meeting rooms. All the hotel rooms pretty much stayed the same layout, but we put in all new walls and bathrooms with tile and new fixtures, new carpet and different paint."

By David Rainer, Staff Writer

Photography by Billy Pope





The main lobby has a more contemporary look with high ceilings and plenty of natural light.

“Wow” Factor

“I think one thing that’s going to give it a new look is we put a whole new roof on it, a gable-type roof. It had a flat roof before and this is going to make an impression when people drive in and see the new roof and the new siding, compared to what it was. It’s going to be a ‘wow’ factor for them when they drive in the gate and see it. The porte-cochere, what you drive under to go inside to register, was added on and extended. There’s a steep roof on it, which is impressive.”

Gone for now is the swimming pool. A new pool is in the plans but won’t be built until next spring. “We took the swimming pool out and built a big deck area with a trellis structure,” Easterwood said. “I think people are really going to love that, for weddings or anything they want to do outside. We’ve got several weddings planned already.”

Longtime park superintendent Jim Royal said the renovation project has been underway for 20 months. “The lodge has been changed quite a bit,” Royal said. “The lobby area is spacious and impressive with natural slate floors. The banquet rooms and meeting rooms have been increased. The ballroom will hold 450. We now have nine meeting rooms for conventions and functions. Three of the meeting rooms will hold from 150 to 200 people and then we have smaller board rooms and breakout rooms.”

“The dining room has been expanded to the water’s edge. The dining room will now hold 235 people, and we have all new kitchen facilities.

A new menu and expanded dining room enrich the Lakepoint dining experience.



We have a whole new menu and promise to be competitive on food prices.”

Rates for the 102 rooms will range from the \$80s to low \$100s. Six executive suites are included in the total. All new furnishings have been installed throughout the facility.

Local Photos Add Flavor

One of the amenities is a different approach to decorating the walls in the lodge and the rooms.

“We think the artwork is something special,” Royal said. “Instead of some generic art, we got photographer Todd Adams to take local pictures on the lake. He shot pictures of real things in and around the park, as well as Eufaula. Those will be in all the hotel rooms and around the lodge. It’s something we thought that would give the local people some interest.”

Easterwood said when Royal approached him with the art idea, he quickly saw an opportunity to promote Alabama’s wonderful outdoors.

“The photos are great conversation pieces,” Easterwood said. “Plus it shows our guests a lot of what there is to see in the area. When they see the picture, you can tell them that’s across the lake, that’s in the park or in town. If it’s something they find interesting, then we can tell them they can go look at it in person and we’ll tell you how to get there.

“Jim got a few demos and brought them for me to look at it. I thought they were very interesting, and we decided to go the whole route instead of just having generic pictures or artwork. This is something unusual that we haven’t done before, but I think it’s going to turn out to be something very popular.”



Work from local photographer Todd Adams is on display throughout the Lodge including every guestroom.

Amenities

Royal said Lakepoint attracts visitors from all over the Southeast, especially Georgia and Florida, and a significant flock of snowbirds from up north visit during the winter.

“This is the nicest facility between Atlanta and Destin,” Royal said. “And there’s plenty to do when you come here to meet. You’ve got fishing. You’ve got golf. You’ve got shopping. The fishing has really been good this year. The big fish are biting. Our bass tournaments from March to June are very good, always have been. We’ve also got crappie, bream and catfish.

“Eufaula is a unique city. The old antebellum homes are there. We have the Pilgrimage in the spring and they have tours year-round.”



Ten new lakeside cottages offer some of the best accommodations in southeast Alabama. Handicap-accessible cottages are available.

Not only does Lakepoint have a renovated lodge, hotel and banquet facilities, there are also 29 cabins in the park and 10 new upscale cottages sit alongside the lakeshore.

“What we’re trying to do at Lakepoint is bring it together,” Royal said. “You’re within walking distance of the marina and the marina grill to the hotel, the boat docks to the hotel, the cabins to the hotel. The swimming pool is planned to be sitting right in the middle of that. We’ve also done renovations in the campground. We’ve got 288 campsites, some right on the lake’s edge.

“Plus we’ve got an 18-hole championship golf course. And we’ve got some of the most competitive packages you can imagine. The package will include room, breakfast, dinner and golf. It’s available to individuals, couples or groups.”

Perfect Family Destination

Easterwood said the National Association of State Parks Directors has adopted a program to help promote the outdoors to the younger generations.

“The program is designed to get kids outside for health reasons, No. 1, and to learn about our natural resources,” Easterwood said. “So many of our kids are addicted to video games and stay inside. It is nationally recognized this causes health problems in younger and younger children.

“When you have a good bream population like here at Eufaula, you can take a kid and he’s got action right away. That’s what you want. It’s not like bass fishing where you have to have patience. You can bring your family down and go bream fishing. We’ve got rental boats here. We’ve got jon boats and pontoon boats you can fish on. It’s a great deal to bring your family and get the kids excited about the outdoors and learn more about the natural resources of the state. This gets them involved in doing things outdoors, as our parents did with us. That’s an important aspect we’re pushing in all our state parks, as well as nationwide. Once they fall in love with what we have, they’ll bring their kids later on.”

Unparalleled Convenience

For Eufaula residents, they couldn’t be happier with the resort’s reopening, especially those connected with the lake.

Jackie Thompson, one of the premier fishing guides on Eufaula, said the charter fishing industry around the lake

has missed Lakepoint much more than they could have imagined.

“This lodge is the lifeblood of the guide and outdoors business in this town,” said Thompson, who has fished the lake since its impoundment in 1962. “I’ve got guides who work with me when we get company trips and they bring in people to entertain. They usually stay right here at the lodge. Since this lodge has been closed, we really realize how much this lodge means to us – not only to us, but the people who like to come to this lake to go fishing. So it’s tremendous for us and this community.

“We haven’t had but one corporate trip since the lodge has been closed. It goes hand and glove. We work with Jim Royal and work up packages where they might come down and fish one day and play golf the next.”

Thompson said the convenience Lakepoint offers is unparalleled. “I can pick the fishermen up right at their door, go to the boat ramp and then bring them right back to their door in the afternoon,” he said. “If they want to keep some fish, they’ve got a fish-cleaning area at the marina. They can do the whole thing and never leave the park or crank their automobile if they don’t want to.”

Boost for Local Economy

Thompson said the Eufaula area is overjoyed to get the lodge open again, which helps with the overflow when Eufaula hosts youth baseball tournaments and the Pilgrimage.

“In the spring they have an annual Pilgrimage and there’s a host of people here,” Thompson said. “And a lot of people come down and incorporate the heritage with other things because it’s a prime time to fish.

“To give you an example of what this place means to the community, I’ve got a friend from Chipley, Fla., who comes up here three, four, five times a summer every year to go bream fishing. He brings his whole family. It’s an outing for them just like when I go to the beach. The ripple effect of this is just enormous.” **LA**



Lake Eufaula is considered by some to be the “Bass Fishing Capital of the World.”

For More Information

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