



## **The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel**

The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel is located on the sugar white sand beaches and emerald green waters of the Gulf of Mexico in Gulf Shores, Alabama. Established in 1974, The original Lodge was a hub of community activity and premier tourism destination for 30 years before being irreparably damaged in 2004 by Hurricane Ivan. The new Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel, re-emerged on November 1, 2018 as a model of resilient, environmentally-friendly coastal development where connectivity to the outdoors is a central focus. An active lifestyle, access to nature and environmental restoration all play a large part in the character of The Lodge experience.

The Lodge is a unique destination on the Alabama Gulf Coast where nature is at your doorstep. It is located inside the naturally beautiful 6,150-acre Gulf State Park. With its size and the diversity of its nine preserved ecosystems, there is simply nowhere else like it on the Gulf Coast.

The Lodge experience is defined by unique architecture and its commitment to sustainability. The original property had 144 rooms spread across a 30-acre site. The footprint of the new, re-imagined Lodge has been reduced to 21 acres but efficiently contains 350 rooms. While the original facility was dangerously close to the Gulf, this smaller footprint is set back from the Gulf by 200-225 ft to allow for a more resilient dune system in front of it.

To demonstrate a commitment to protecting the environment, this facility has targeted some of the most rigorous sustainability goals in the hospitality industry: LEED® Gold, SITES® Platinum, and FORTIFIED Commercial™ certifications. Upon completion of the certification process, the Lodge will be the only hospitality project in the world with those certifications. The buildings are positioned to take advantage of gulf breezes for natural ventilation and to maximize natural lighting of the interior. This design reduces energy usage by 32% and interior water use by 35% while 15% of building materials are recycled, and 70 – 75% of construction waste was recycled instead of going to a landfill.

The buildings incorporate color, texture, and contrast into the principles of comfort, energy efficiency, and environmental sustainability. The design was authentically inspired by the natural beauty of the park and the history of the former Lodge and the colors are drawn from the nature of the Alabama Gulf Coast with rich blues and greens of the Gulf and lakes, the sugar white sands, and the browns and greens of foliage.

The people of Alabama were also an important part of the inspiration and influence for the design of the facility as well as ensuring the artwork and furnishings told a story and provided educational moments. These pieces are meant to inspire a curiosity about the surrounding natural environment.

The decorative lighting throughout the hotel is all custom made for this project and inspired by the location. The guestroom furnishings and many of the public area furnishings (seating, consoles, lamps, rugs) are also custom made for the project. Of note are the rocking chairs and porch swings made by local Alabama company Wood Studio. The front desks are a custom design inspired by the hulls of wooden fishing boats. The fish tile in Foodcraft is custom painted by a local artist and represents native Gulf fish. The tile at the buffet represents wild edible plants and animals that can be found throughout the Gulf Coast. Almost every piece of art in the hotel is by an Alabama artist.

There are themes to note:

- The Ballroom Pre-function area art is inspired by water. The most notable piece in that area is a glass work by Cal Breed (Fort Payne, AL).
- All of the art for the meeting rooms and corridor on level 1 is inspired by Alabama State Parks while the art for level 2 corridor is inspired by the major industries of Alabama (such as textiles, steel, timber, fishing, and aerospace).
- A focal piece in the lobby is a wall sculpture inspired by the tracks of the loggerhead turtles when they come to nest at the beach.

- Art in the restaurant Foodcraft was inspired by nature through the eyes of a child. With a focus on education and fun, it provides everyone with an opportunity to learn something new.
- Upstairs at Perch, the pieces were inspired by the Alabama road trip. Most notable is a mural by Kyle Steed (originally from Huntsville, AL) that celebrates the wide variety of destinations throughout the whole state. There are also two commissioned sculptural pieces that flank the bar made from signage by Rusted Willow Artworks (Huntsville, AL)
- The guest buildings are themed per floor to highlight the variety of park activities available to guests: Camping, Hiking, Biking, Swimming, and Fishing
- Guestroom art includes 3 different posters custom made by Yellowhammer Press (Birmingham, AL) inspired by vintage travel posters. There are also a framed series of vintage postcards reflecting the nostalgia of the family beach vacation.

### **Sustainable Tourism**

Sustainable tourism is the practice of comprehensively incorporating the tenants of ecotourism into the overall guest experience. It provides increased benefits to both the host community and the tourist/visitor by enhancing the positive experience of the mainstream traveler in an environmentally sensitive manner that also protects the destination. The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel will be a leader in the Sustainable Tourism movement.

The three pillars of Sustainable Tourism are:

- Environmentally friendly operations and facilities
- Support for the protection of cultural and natural heritage
- Direct and tangible social and economic benefits to local people

***“Gulf State Park will be an international benchmark for environmental and economic sustainability, demonstrating best practices for outdoor recreation, education and hospitable accommodations.”***

*– Gulf State Park Vision Statement.*

The initiatives being executed throughout The Lodge at Gulf State Park and our associated enhancements projects in the Park include:

- Bulk amenities in all rooms in lieu of single use products,
- Environmentally friendly facial tissue and toilet paper
- A/C units installed with sensors that cut off the unit if the balcony door or window is left open or ajar.
- 250 new jobs have been created at the resort and that number will increase to approx. 350 during season.
- Daylight and natural ventilation access in all regularly occupied spaces
- Passive cooling techniques include building orientation to take advantage of gulf breezes and wood screens to filter sunlight and reduce energy usage.
- Condensation from the HVAC system is collected and recycled to replace water in the pool. Summer high humidity collection – avg 8,400 gallons/day avg year-round collection is 2,000 gallons/day
- Lighting sensitive to wildlife is implemented. No site lights point to the beach – all lights are shielded away from turtle nesting areas. Lights on the beach side of the property are warmer in temperature (yellow/amber) to be less confusing with cool (blue/white) moonlight on water
- Floor to ceiling glass windows in the main lobby have bird friendly safety measures within the design.
- Rainwater is collected and directed to a restored wetland on site rather than being diverted to storm sewers.
- Permeable parking using TrueGrid allows for rainwater to drain into the ground.
  - Approx. 75% of the site is dedicated to landscaping using native species that can thrive without irrigation, chemical pesticides or fertilizers. By planting native species, the coastal landscape is

restored, and habitats have been created for native birds, nesting sea turtles and the Alabama Beach Mouse.

- Recycle our cooking oil and sort trash into livestock feed, compost, recycle or waste
- Energy efficient lighting in all spaces, with motion sensors to reduce waste
- Water bottle filling stations to encourage less bottled water consumption
- Responsible Bottled Water program partnering with Just Water® using plant-based bottles
- Paper waste reduction program – limit banquet room setups with notepads available only on request instead of auto setting
- Zero Single Serve Initiative – to promote the discontinuation of single serve items to guests
- Hay! Straws® made from compostable Wheat shafts
- Beverage Straws, made from reusable bamboo shoots, biodegradable and made from abundant natural resources
- Coasters, made from bamboo, made from byproduct of bamboo manufacturing, biodegradable, and made from abundant natural resources
- To-Go Containers “Hot & Cold Foods”, made from 100% recycled material, biodegradable
- Bags, made from recycled paper, not plastic, reusable and recyclable
- To-go Cutlery (spoon, knife, fork, other), made from bamboo, biodegradable and made from abundant natural resources
- Dinner Napkins – all cloth napkins being used to reduce waste - laundry uses green processes

### **Alabama’s Gulf State Park & Enhancement Projects**

In addition to managing the hotel, Valor Hospitality is also operating the following projects associated with the Gulf State Park Enhancement Project:

**The Interpretive Center** (the “IC”) was introduced in May 2018 and is located near the Beach Pavilion approx. 1.5 miles east of The Lodge on Beach Blvd. The IC serves as the “Gateway to Gulf State Park” and welcomes visitors to learn about the ecosystems of the Park and the environmentally friendly initiatives taking place throughout the Park and The Lodge. Upon its completion, the IC was the first building ever certified under the FORTIFIED Commercial™ program. It is also targeting full Living Building Challenge (LBC) and LEED Platinum certifications. To receive LBC certification, the building must operate for 12 consecutive months to prove that we are generating more solar energy than we are consuming and that we are collecting and treating more rainwater than we are using. Expected completion is summer of 2020. Currently, there are only 21 fully certified Living Buildings in the world. The interpretive elements tell a story about the building and the park while the interactive exhibits describe the park’s diverse ecosystems.

**The Learning Campus** (the “LC”) is located within the Park, near the Woodside Restaurant and offers additional meeting space, classrooms, labs, bunkhouse style accommodations as well as educational programming and activities. The Learning Campus at Gulf State Park will be an educational hub in the park that provides a variety of learning opportunities and experiences. Also, in 2019 we will partner with the city of Gulf Shores to bring Jean-Michel Cousteau’s Ambassadors of the Environment program to the area and will host week long camp programs as an introduction to this unique coastal area.

**Woodside Restaurant at Gulf State Park** – The Woodside Restaurant is located adjacent to the Learning Campus and will be open to the public serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. It will also be the primary restaurant for the Eagle Cottages.

**The Cottages and Cabins at Gulf State Park** provide variety to the hospitable accommodations found within the Park. The day-to-day management of the Cottages was transitioned to Valor in August of 2018 and was immediately rebranded as Eagle Cottages at Gulf State Park. These incredible three-bedroom facilities have been refreshed inside and out and are seeking membership in the National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World collection. Eagle Cottages partnership with



National Geographic will be a differentiator for the area. The Cabins at Gulf State Park transitioned to Valor management in January 2019.

**Trail Enhancements** With the goal of improving and encouraging pedestrian access to the entire park and providing opportunities for education and car-free mobility, several enhancements were made to the trail system. The trail network was expanded to almost 28 miles that connect all the park's amenities and create multiple car-free loops. There are 40 engaging interpretive signs along the trails describing the park's diverse ecology and cultural history, while wayfinding signs and trailhead maps were all created to enhance the visitor experience.

To learn more about Alabama's Gulf State Park, please visit [www.outdooralabama.com](http://www.outdooralabama.com) or [www.mygulfstatepark.com](http://www.mygulfstatepark.com)