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## Getaway: New restaurants open on the Gulf Coast

by Cheré Coen

Several hot new restaurants have opened along the Gulf Coast, providing vacationers — or those wanting a fun day trip — plenty of great dining options.

### So True

Chef Wesley True is a native Alabaman who trained in New York at the Culinary Institute of America and in several of Manhattan's top kitchens. He's returned to Mobile to open his own place, a sophisticated spot serving French cooking with Lower Alabama influences.

Named True, this simple but elegant restaurant is located just off Interstate 65 in the Spring Hill area. Since its inception, True has won awards for Best Chef in Mobile and Mobile's Best New Fine-Dining Restaurant by Lagniappe Mobile, and its extensive wine selection has been honored by Wine Spectator.



Photo by Cheré Coen

**Chef Wesley True standing in his restaurant, True, in Mobile, Ala.**

USA Today named it “one of the best places to make a meal out of a salad” for its roasted shrimp salad consisting of Gulf shrimp, zucchini noodles, mushroom ceviche, fennel and arugula and topped with a lemon vinaigrette. True has just introduced a locally inspired Tomato Watermelon Indies Salad with vanilla-infused watermelon and homegrown Mississippi tomatoes with Bibb lettuce tossed with a citrus tarragon whipped cream and jumbo lump crabmeat. And the sweet potato soup with goat cheese, roasted red bell peppers and chili oil is to die for.

You'll know why Southern Living selected True for the March 2009 “Southern Chef Salute.”

### True

(251) 344-3334

[www.truedine.com](http://www.truedine.com)

### Take a Beach Walk

Award-winning Chef Tim Creehan, who spent much of his young adult life in Baton Rouge, has moved his flagship restaurant, Beach Walk, in Destin to Henderson Park Inn, where it now occupies the ground floor of the main building overlooking the Gulf and nearby Henderson State Park as Beach Walk Cafe.

While diners enjoy the sun setting over the water, they can sample such wonderful dishes as Grouper

Vince, named for Vince Gill after Creehan was asked to create the dish for Gill's wedding to Amy Grant. The grouper is lightly toasted with pecans and fried, then topped with a honey Worcestershire sauce that's fabulous. (This recipe is spotlighted in this week's Food Column.)

Creehan has been on numerous TV shows, cooked for celebrities and is now a cookbook author and owner of his own line of food products that can be bought in Florida Panhandle grocery stores.

### **Beach Walk Café**

(850) 650-7100

[www.beachwalkcafe.com](http://www.beachwalkcafe.com)

### **Visiting Paradis**

Former Covington residents Mike and Gayle Pair have moved their Florida Panhandle restaurant Paradis down the road to Rosemary Beach, where they serve up delicious seafood and beef with a Louisiana flair. Crab cakes are lovely creations and their freshly served seafood, from Bayou Labatre shrimp to fresh scallops, arrives in delightful ways.

The new restaurant on the corner of Highway 30-A also offers a wonderful lounge to meet, enjoy fine wines and mingle.

### **Restaurant Paradis**

850.534.0400

[restaurantparadis.com](http://restaurantparadis.com)

### **Other news**

#### **In Houston**

The exhibit Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China's First Emperor has arrived in Houston and is now on display at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. The exhibit features more than 100 artifacts from Emperor Qin Shihuangdi, the man responsible for unifying the warring states now called China.

While in Houston, check out summer specials at the Galleria and stay at the InterContinental Houston two blocks away. The hotel is offering a Retail Therapy package that includes deluxe accommodations, a \$100 Simon Malls Visa Giftcard, two cocktails at The Bar and one in-room movie nightly for \$239 per night. Call (713) 627-7600 or go to [www.intercontinental.com](http://www.intercontinental.com).

### **State Parks**

- Evangeline will be shown at 1:30 p.m. Sundays and Thursdays at Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site in St. Martinville.
- A National Trails Day guided hike will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at Louisiana State Arboretum in Ville Platte.
- Admission is free Saturday at Sam Houston Jones State Park near Lake Charles, and Wildlife and Fisheries will be offering a children's fishing clinic.

### **Summer reading**

Award-winning author Nevada Barr worked for years as a national parks ranger. Now, she lives in New Orleans writing fictional accounts of a ranger named Anna Pigeon, who has adventures throughout the country.

In Barr's latest, *Borderline*, Pigeon is recuperating from a career incident by rafting down the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park. She stumbles upon a dying pregnant woman tangled in a downed

tree, which only leads to more danger and suspense connecting the story to border issues and politicians.

What makes Barr's novels unique and wonderful are the literary trips to our national parks. Readers can't help but feel they have visited these majestic places while reading Barr's page-turning mysteries.

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