



PHOTO BY CHAD RILEY

## The Fairhope Inn & Restaurant

### Paige Dawson, Owner

#### How did you get into this business?

I first came to Fairhope years ago to visit a dear college friend. She took me to the Fairhope Inn for dinner, and I fell in love with not just the Inn but the city itself. After finally moving here five years ago, I was eager to become involved in this wonderful community.

In the Fall of 2018, I was told that the owner might be interested in selling the Inn. Having worked for my father's construction company most of my life, and with a career of my own in property development, I found the possibilities intriguing.

#### How have you taken risks in your career or with this business?

Jumping into the restaurant business was a

complete leap of faith. But when the Inn's general manager of 20 years — Jeffrey Mog — agreed to return and stellar chef Weston Simpson came on board, I knew the stars were aligned.

Another old college friend — Lila Bailey — led the interior design renovation, while B'Beth Weldon added her artwork to the renovated Polo Bar. JubileeScape gave the grounds a new look and renovated the courtyard with fresh lighting to offer more comfortable outdoor space.

#### How has your business grown or changed, and where are you going from here?

With a history covering nearly 120 years, this wonderful place sits at the heart of Fairhope literally and figuratively. The

memories are endless and still fresh for so many ... but the Inn itself needed a facelift, from the restaurant space to the lodging upstairs. I purchased the Inn at the end of February 2019, and by July, began extensive renovations.

Preserving this historic property has been a joy. Seeing the reaction from our longtime patrons as well as new faces is so rewarding for our entire team.

We're celebrating the Inn's traditions but adding new ones, like a Friday Gallatoire's Luncheon. And with the courtyard and private rooms, we can offer comfortable distanced dining that has become the new normal in the restaurant world.

Fairhope has always celebrated here — and it's very special to be part of that continued tradition.

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