

MOBILE BAY

Restaurant Review: The Fairhope Inn

With new ownership and a fresh new look, The Fairhope Inn is ready to welcome another generation of diners.

By **Maggie Lacey** - December 1, 2020

The Fairhope Inn has had a long and well-respected history on the Eastern Shore. While it was once a personal home with a fish market running out of the back door, and later a small inn, in recent years it has been the place to go for special occasions with family and friends when you want well-prepared food in a quiet, elegant atmosphere. After finding new ownership, undergoing a 100-day renovation and surviving the early days of the COVID-19 shutdown, the grande dame of Fairhope fine dining is back and ready to welcome the next generation of special occasions. But according to new owner Paige Dawson, right, it's just perfect for all your regular occasions, too.



Paige Dawson // Photos by Elizabeth Gelineau

A Gadsden native and graduate of the University of Alabama, Dawson found reason to visit her sorority sisters in Fairhope many times through the years and fell in love with the quaint town. "I wasn't from Fairhope, but I got here as fast as I could," she laughs, remembering how her dear friends lured her to town. She had long visited the Fairhope Inn and was dying to get her creative hands on the four-bedroom inn and its fine dining restaurant to give it all a fresh new look. She got her opportunity at the end of 2018 when the Inn went on the market. She quickly enlisted the help of longtime manager, Jeffrey Mog, to help take the institution into its next chapter.

With such a long and loyal following, it would be hard to completely walk away from a popular menu. Dawson, Mog and their chefs, however, have made a few tweaks, updated some flavors and added a handful of fantastic specials to the classic menu. And with four separate dining rooms and an outdoor patio, the freshly updated space has been the perfect respite during the pandemic. With casually elegant decor, reminiscent of a light-filled Southern home, Dawson sought to "restore the Inn to the lovely old place it used to be, to maintain the history of the building." It is truly hard to tell what is original to this historic home and what has been redone. But that is part of what makes the Fairhope Inn so comfortable. And with countless local families coming back year after year to share great meals, the Inn looks forward to another generation of memories.



On the Menu

Oysters Brittany

Like a fresh take on “oysters en brochette,” these crisp fried bivalves are stacked against aged Parmesan crackers and served over warmed arugula with a drizzle of garlic sage butter.

Fish Du Jour

Perfectly seasoned pan-seared wild striped bass, tender sauteed vegetable m\u00e9lange and a blood orange beurre blanc get a quick garnish of local micro greens — fresh and filling.

Hummingbird Cake

A truly Southern cake that was introduced on the Inn’s Easter menu and was so popular it never left. Pineapple, banana and toasted pecans dot three fantastic layers frosted with cream cheese icing.

Salmon Salad

A Champagne-poached salmon fillet tops a warm spinach salad with a flavorful pineapple chutney, onion vinaigrette and the Fairhope Inn’s famous crisp sweet potato hay.

The Fairhope Inn • 63 South Church St., Fairhope

11 a.m. – 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. until, Th – Sat; 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Sun; closed M – W