

# 'I'm pretty impressed' ... 'I think it's fantastic'

By Patrick Donohue, Keri Holt and Jim Wagner  
Log reporters

A crowd of hundreds — most of the women dressed like stars and starlets at a Hollywood party and most of the men looking casually cool — took in the food, the drink, the view of Destin's harbor — and then went home after enjoying an evening as special guests at the grand opening party of the Emerald Grande.

It was a "look what I've done" party thrown by Peter Bos, the president of Destin-based Legendary Inc., the developer of the Emerald Grande and the as-yet-to-come HarborWalk Village project overlooking the mouth of Destin's harbor.

The party began at 6 p.m. and ended at about 9 with a 13-minute fireworks/music/laser-light show unlike any Destin has ever seen.

Here's what some of the evening's special guests had to say about the Emerald Grande:

•Rick Seevers, Destin businessman: "Unbelievable."

•Richard Griswold, general manager at Destin Water Users: "I'm pretty impressed ... It's one of those things people complain about being massive and dominant, but then it goes away."

•Kevin Bowyer, Destin businessman: "I think it's fantastic. I think it's great for the harbor. I think it's gonna be great for business."

•Ron Moliterno, banker: "I think it's breathtaking. The view is spectacular. This is like a Las Vegas feeling."

•Jim Westbrook, charter boat captain: "Emerald Grand" says it all. I'm impressed. This is just a start of what this point (Moreno Point) is going to be. I do miss 500-year-old oak trees but I can drive a few miles and see that."

He also said HarborWalk Village, upon completion, would be a real bonus for the harbor area and especially for the captains who are poised to handle the additional anglers expected to visit Destin's harborfront.

•Ken Bolden, charter boat captain: "I love it. I think it's gonna give a boost to our community — once our community accepts it." He also said he was pleased that the theme of Emerald Grande's decor was so nautical and tied to the fishing community.

•James Campbell, county commissioner: "The economic impact it's gonna have for our community, it's tremendous. It helps the fishing community. Just think how many jobs it's gonna create."

•Tony Davis, charter boat captain: "It's spectacular." It'll attract a whole new clientele to the charter boat captains who embrace the changes that HarborWalk Village brings to the harbor.

He also said it'll take "a little while" for some people to accept the changes that such a high-end neighbor brings to the harbor area, but that eventually most people will agree it's a change that'll be seen as an economic boost.

•Megan Shannon, a student: "It's spectacular. Very nice. More than I expected. It's great for the Destin area."

•Liz Empson, 20-year Destin resident: "Initial feeling is that it's different, and I don't mean that in a negative ... I'm not sure what it's supposed to be. ... Destin has taken such a dramatic change. ... It's beautiful."

•Ted and Terri Bruno of Pensacola: "Peter says it best with, 'Wow,'" Terri said as she and husband stood looking up toward Emerald Grande. The couple was counting floors and windows, trying to determine which condo was theirs. Just that morning they closed on a unit they plan to use as early as September. They haven't even seen the inside of it yet, but they already know it's beautiful, they said.

"It's very convenient for us because it's only an hour drive," Terri said. "You come over the



**GRAND FINALE:** The Emerald Grande's grand-opening party culminates with a rocking, 13-minute fireworks show.

Log photos by KATHY HARRISON

Destin bridge, and it (Emerald Grande) is just beautiful. We've traveled the world 10 to 12 times, and this is the most amazing place we've ever seen."

Ted said, "For people who can't afford a million-dollar condo, this is the way to go."

•Gary Bowman, Realtor: "Spectacular. This is a prelude to the harbor of Destin's future."

•Frances Montalvo, HarborWalk Charters: "I've traveled a lot of places around this world, and I think this is the most beautiful building. The detail is what makes it incredible. I drive over the bridge every morning at about 4:15 from Fort Walton Beach, and I see this. It's just gorgeous."

•Carolyn Tomlinson, Sunshine Pontoon Rental: "There's no better view than this. This will do wonderful things for the area. It will make people come to the harbor."

•Ron Adams, entertainer: "Awesome. A part of me wishes you weren't allowed to build on the water so nothing would block the beautiful view, but if you own one of these condos, you have the most beautiful view of Destin."

•Jimmy Neilson, harbor resident: "It's astronomical. Let's just hope it will create the destination we've so much needed on the harbor. It really is amazing the number of people who don't even know the harbor exists and now maybe they will."

•Jerry Mucci, Destin's community development director: "It really did fulfill the expectation and planning of having the feel of a luxury yacht club."

•Shane Moody, president and CEO of the Destin Area Chamber of Commerce: "It's a very impressive property and the view is incredible. Peter's got the reputation of having everything he does be first-class and I don't think this building is going to let anyone down."

•Sam Seevers, city councilor: "The rooms are very well laid out and of course, there's this gorgeous view of the harbor. What impressed me most was when we toured the room and he used artwork and photos from old, old Destin. It shows how sensitive he is to what Destin used to be."

•Larry Williges, city councilor: "I don't know if Destin is ready for this or not but it's really very



**BUBBLE MAN:** Among the entertainers at the Emerald Grande party were a man in a bubble, a man on stilts and jugglers.



**HELP YOURSELF:** Mounds of food — meats, seafoods, desserts, fruits, cheeses — are spread out on tables set up on an outdoor deck at the Emerald Grande. It was help yourself, eat as much as you want and have a good time.

lovely."

•David Pleat, president of the Destin Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors: "The view from the deck of the Emerald Grande reminds me of why I moved here."

•Bud Miller, charter boat captain: "It's gonna be great for us and help us get year-round busi-

ness, which we definitely need right now."

•Kathy Price, Destin resident: "It's absolutely beautiful, stunning. It's better than what I expected. I wish I had a condo here."

•Craig Barker, Destin mayor: "I felt the size and mass of the building was not consistent with

my vision for Destin's harbor so I was unquestionably the most outspoken critic of the project during the development review process. And while I still feel that way, it is undeniable that in achieving his vision Mr. Bos has set a new standard for quality construction."

•Tim Krueger, financial adviser: "It's a magnificent structure on a magnificent piece of property."

•Dewey Destin, city councilor: "It's very pretty, pretty massive but pretty. He did a good job of doing what he set out to do. He will bring business to the harbor but this definitely changes things down here but I guess that's just the way things go."

•Jim Breitenfeld, executive director of the Destin Harbor Association: "It's superb. The nicest thing is to see that now the harbor really is the center of Destin. This is what we're striving for."

•Hank Woollard, city Community Redevelopment Director manager: "A lot of cities will spend millions of dollars trying to attract this kind of development and Destin is such a great place that we got it for free."

•Sandy Trammell, Destin resident: "Peter spared no expense. Being from the old part of Destin, I appreciate all of the photos and artwork from Destin's past. It's beautiful and it'll bring business to the harbor, which is just what we need."

•Jim Bagby, city councilor: "I wouldn't have been a supporter of the height but it's definitely a quality project and we need quality projects in Destin. I'd much rather have one or two quality projects than have 100 projects that we're trying to tear down in 10 years."

•Darin Grigg, general manager of Destin Commons: "Just knowing Peter Bos and his dedication and his passion that he puts into everything he does, I just knew this project was going to be a perfect example of who he is."

The class, the taste, he really does this for the love of the game. This is his dream and it's been his dream for a long time."

•Debbie Gericke, Realtor: "It's phenomenal. It will bring Destin into the new millennium. We will all benefit in 2015 from Peter Bos' vision."