

# A New Look at PD

Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort expands horizons, charts course for the future.

By Allison Hersh

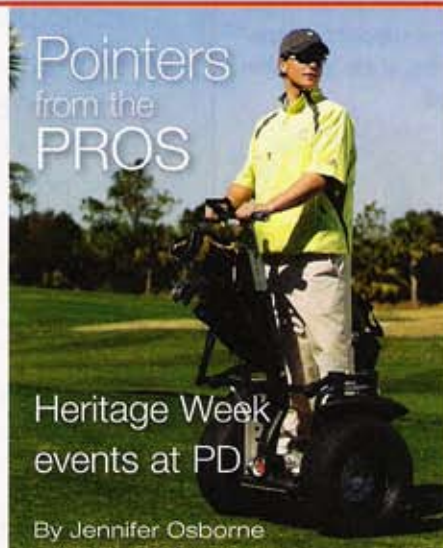
Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort has been welcoming visitors from across the Southeast and around the country for more than three decades. However, a new marketing campaign, branding strategy and expanded menu of resort services have given this award-winning resort new life and a fresh perspective as it moves into the 21st-century travel market.

"We have a long standing community of people who love this place, and come back year after year," said Bret Martin, vice president of resort operations for Greenwood Development, the parent company of Palmetto Dunes. "We want to attract new people to experience the vacation of a lifetime we have to offer here."

Accordingly, resort management organized focus groups and brand steering committees last year to find out what Palmetto Dunes was doing right and what it could do better. "We understood that we needed to change to stay current in the mind of the destination traveler and the potential buyer," Martin explained.

Although the resort had three critically acclaimed championship golf courses and an extensive array of awards, it needed to market itself more successfully to contemporary travelers. "Today, you need to offer a lot more than just golf,"

Perhaps it's just in a turn of the hips. Maybe it's the lack of a fluid enough follow-through. The knees were too bent... or not bent enough? Is it even possible to blame clubs or, worse yet, faulty balls on this one? Was it that third purchase from the beverage cart? Why, WHY, does your golf score stink worse than low tide? Well, maybe you should ask four-time PGA Tour winner and 2004 Heritage winner, Stewart Cink. In case you've managed to lose his cell number again, he'll be at the Robert Trent Jones golf course at Palmetto Dunes as part of Heritage week. "Heritage is always Thursday through Sunday, and we always do fun events at Palmetto Dunes Monday through Wednesday," said Brad Marra, resident golf pro at Palmetto Dunes. "We're going to have Cink here on Tuesday from 1 – 3 p.m. and that same day, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., we'll have all the reps you could have out there – Nike, TaylorMade, Callaway, Cobra & Titleist." The sales reps are actually a part of the Custom Fit Spectacular, designed to help guests find the perfect clubs for individual styles and skill levels. "We'll have launch monitors out there so people can see how far they're actually hitting and they'll have all of the new equipment there, so we're



By Jennifer Osborne

PALMETTO DUNES GOLFERS ENJOY SEGWAY X2s

very excited about that," said Marra. He added that bringing the kids is encouraged, as there are junior clubs to be sold and that there will plenty of free golf goodies for all. The following are the confirmed appearances at Palmetto Dunes for the week of Heritage; check [palmettodunes.com](http://palmettodunes.com) for updates.



**MONDAY 4/14:**

10 a.m. – noon: Eric Lastowski, 2006 runner-up in World RE/MAX Long Drive Championship, trick shot artist, and a member of the 2002 Pinnacle/Cobra Long Drive Team will appear at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course.

**TUESDAY 4/15:**

9 am – 12 noon: Custom Fit Spectacular- Nike, Taylor-Made, Callaway, Cobra & Titleist reps will be under tents at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course to help the guest find the perfect clubs and get advice on the benefits of being custom-fit. 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.: Stewart Cink, four-time PGA Tour Winner, 2004 Verizon Heritage Champion, and two-time Ryder Cup member will appear on the range and then sign autographs in the pro shop at Robert Trent Jones Golf Course.

**WEDNESDAY 4/16:**

9 a.m. – 2 p.m.: Birdie Ball Target Contest at George Fazio Golf Course. 2 p.m.: Hole-In-One Shootout (must register by Tuesday, April 15, limited to 100 participants) at the George Fazio Golf Course. TBD: Possible player appearance from Callaway or Adidas at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course.

PHOTOS COURTESY GREENWOOD DEVELOPMENT

said Martin, who also serves as chairman of the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Visitors & Convention Bureau and vice chairman of the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce.

"Visitors are more interested in vacationing with their extended family and making sure everyone has many activities to choose from," he explained. "We have always been able to fill that need, but we needed to market the resort more aggressively and to put it together to make it easy and save visitors time and money. We also realized that we need to emphasize our connection to the water, since we have three miles of beach, the harbor at Shelter Cove and 11 miles of lagoons."

Accordingly, Palmetto Dunes is defining itself as the region's preferred full-service oceanfront accommodations and activities resource and is actively building upon the resort's long-time reputation as a must-visit destination.

Contributing to that reputation is the grandeur of the Hilton Oceanfront Resort, which now contains the island's newest nightlife hotspot, the XO Lounge. Visitors also enjoy incomparable lodgings at the Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa.

Because today's travelers are also seeking convenience, the resort now offers air-conditioned carts, Segways and handy one-call service, which allows visitors to book their accommodations, golf, tennis, kayaking, bike rentals, nature tours and more with a single phone call. Earlier this year, the resort assumed control of vacation rentals, catering and event planning services, ensuring the ultimate in service and quality for leisure travelers and groups.

Islanders may have noticed some recent capital improvements at the resort as well. The Palmetto Dunes Welcome and Guest Registration Center completed a major interior renovation in March, featuring new decor, flooring, furniture and operating systems. Exterior renovations include signage improvements, new landscaping and a repaved parking area. The Palmetto Dunes reservations team, sales team, property management staff and guest registration and concierge services are now located in the newly renovated building.

Despite all the changes taking place at Palmetto Dunes, Martin said, one thing remains unchanged – the resort's legacy of delivering the ultimate in customer service. "We want to provide great experiences for visitors," he explained. "We want to be able to compete against any other resort in the world."

For details, visit [palmettodunes.com](http://palmettodunes.com). **M**

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