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MOBILE REGISTER

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EXPANDING on THE GRAND

Developers banking on resort to lure buyers to neighboring \$540 million residential community



Courtesy Grand Hotel/Colony at the Grand

This aerial view of the entire Grand Hotel property is a postcard circa 1970. Exhibits at The Colony at the Grand sales office showcase the history of the resort.



Photos by KATE MERCER/Staff Photographer

Left: "This is not just another neighborhood or subdivision," says The Daniel Corp.'s project manager, Jason Tickle, of The Colony at the Grand near the Grand Hotel in Point Clear. The Daniel Corp. has partnered with the Retirement Systems of Alabama to develop the 456-acre project, which includes 1,600 residences, with single-family homes and condominium units.

"The development will be a lure for people wanting to live in the Point Clear area and around the hotel and the golf course."

—Rance Reehl of Coldwell Banker Reehl Properties

The Colony at the Grand

The Daniel Corp. and the Retirement Systems of Alabama have partnered to develop The Colony at the Grand, a community of 1,600 residences, including single-family estate homes and condominium units, on property contiguous to The Grand Hotel Marriott Resort & Golf Club & Spa.



Register graphic

By KATHY JUMPER
Real Estate Editor

Developers predict people who know and love The Grand Hotel Marriott Resort in Point Clear will be buyers of the 1,600-unit residential community planned next to the golf and spa resort.

"This is not just another neighborhood or subdivision," said Jason Tickle of The Daniel Corp. in Fairhope.

Tickle is project manager for The Colony at the Grand, a \$540 million project planned for 465 acres starting at the

northwest corner of Section Street and Old Battles Road, and stretching toward Lake-wood Golf Course and the hotel.

"We've got a once-a-career opportunity to expand on The Grand with a signature piece of property," he said.

Birmingham-based Daniel Corp. has joined the Retirement Systems of Alabama to develop The Colony. Residences include single-family estate homes and at least five, eight-story condominium buildings with 56 units in each building.

The units in the first building

will start in the low \$700,000 range, while prices for home lots have not yet been determined. Reservations are being taken, with sale contracts set to be finalized in late April or early May, according to Tickle.

The developers will ask the city of Fairhope planners on April 3 to change a current planned unit development agreement to allow 1,600 residences on 465 acres. A previous landowner had permits to build 628 condo units in 24 buildings on 175 of the acres.

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Photos by KATE MERCER/Staff Photographer

Far left: This view shows the lake and landscape on the future site of The Colony at the Grand.

Left: The Envision Center, formerly a residence on the property, is being used as a sales office. The wraparound screened-in porch also features exhibits that showcase the history of the 158-year-old Grand Hotel.

Below left: The Grand Hotel as it appeared in 1930, in this photo, courtesy of The Colony at the Grand.

Colony developers bank on Grand to lure buyers

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according to Tickle. The Colony owners also hope that Fairhope will annex their property.

The 465 acres includes about 200 acres at the northern end of the property that developers have under contract to buy from a local investor and five parcels on The Grand property now owned by Alabama Real Estate Holdings, or AREH. The Grand parcels would be used for single-family homes.

AREH is an affiliate of the state's \$26 billion pension fund. RSA has funded three senior living communities developed by The Daniel Corp., including Somerby of West Mobile off Cody and Grelot roads.

Some former Daniel executives recently formed their own company, Dominion Partners, which will handle the Somerby projects.

The Colony at the Grand will include a senior living complex, according to Tickle.

Buyers will have access to all



the Grand Hotel amenities including membership at Lakewood Golf Course.

The Colony development will feature a new driving range, clubhouse, tennis courts, a large pool complex and an outdoor amphitheater. About 154 acres, some of it wetlands, will be a nature preserve, and 65 heavily wooded acres will remain as park land. An existing 13-acre stocked lake will be expanded to 20 acres.

The new pool and clubhouse will prevent overcrowding at the current pool complex at the Grand Hotel, according to Steve Solberg, chief executive officer of PCH Hotels and Resorts, another RSA affiliate that owns and manages the hotel.

They may just be tapping into a market we've not had before."

The exteriors of the condo buildings will be reminiscent of 158-year-old Grand's main hotel building and include screened

in porches. The project architect is Birmingham-based Goodwyn Mills & Cawood, which has a Mobile office. The contractor is White-Spinner Construction in Mobile.

Many of The Grand's guests are loyal, repeat customers, Solberg said. He expects many to look at buying in The Colony.

"The development will be a lure for people wanting to live in the Point Clear area and around the hotel and the golf course," said Rance Reehl of Coldwell Banker Reehl Properties in Fairhope. "Based on the amount of land they've got and the amenity packages they have, I think we're fixing to see how strong Point Clear is."

The area has not been a condo-friendly area in the past, according to Judy Niemeyer of REMAX by the Bay in Fairhope. But the market is changing, she said. "Recently, we've had many condo projects on the horizon.