



THE GULF'S HIDDEN TENNIS

GEM

PROVIDING MANY REASONS TO *celebrate* THIS FALL

(WRITTEN BY CARL DANBURY | PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF HIDDEN DUNES)

YOU'LL KNOW THE DRILL! Once Labor Day has passed, the focus of our weekends turns to college football, youth sports, AITA's fall doubles season and then more college football with an occasional NFL game tossed in. If you're not tailgating, you're rubber necking somewhere, or both. Those escapes you enjoy over spring break and during the summer months, particularly along the beaches of the Gulf Coast, are much more accessible and likely less expensive with wait times at your favorite restaurants a mere shell of what they are during high season. So, if your autumn sun doesn't rise and fall with the world according to Nick Saban, whether or not one (or more) of Mark Richt's players has run afoul of team rules again or if Paul Johnson's offense has indeed become outdated, a Gulfside escape from mid-September through November could provide a perfect respite.

For tennis enthusiasts, an escape with their team

members may provide the perfect salve for a season gone wrong, and the Destin area offers three of the finest resorts along the Gulf Coast and the Southeast. Some may be aware of the well-regarded TOPS! Beach & Racquet Resort and Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, but for our latest tennis venture, we chose Hidden Dunes Beach & Tennis Resort.

Tucked off of Hwy. 98 in Miramar Beach, this gem is just east of Destin and little more than one mile from Silver Sands Outlet, The Village of Baytowne Wharf, The Market Shops at Sandestin and Grand Boulevard. The 27-acre natural setting, with a large private beach, includes an enclave of spacious three- and four-bedroom lakeside villas, beachfront condos or Carolina-style cottages, which are available to rent for a perfect fall getaway with your tennis team, family or close friends chosen to assist in your pursuit of fun, sun and relaxation.

(HIDDEN DUNES)



Our cottage came complete with a private screened-in porch, perfect for après-tennis refreshments. Our second floor unit included a generous kitchen, well-appointed living room and a full-sized dining area. A master bedroom with private bath, a second bedroom with adjoining bath and a smartly placed loft - available only in second floor units - to accommodate two more overnight guests made for a comfortable stay. We particularly enjoyed the shaded walkways, positioned under a canopy of trees a mere 20 yards from our parking spaces, leading to our unit. And, like many of these

units, it was an easy walk to the tennis center, and a comfortable distance to the private stretch of sugar white sands at the renowned beach.

Here to Serve

Renee Broxson, director of tennis, has been at Hidden Dunes for the past nine years, the last three in her current position. She and her staff oversee six championship Rubico clay courts, which are nicely protected from the winds so prevalent along the Gulf. Along with tennis Professional George Cobia and Pro



Shop Manager Anne Toone, Broxson has created quite a following from snowbirds to Southerners alike, who enjoy friendly, personal service.

"I truly believe that the level of service we offer is unmatched in the area. If other tennis professionals are sending people [to us] on a regular basis, I believe they respect what we do," Broxson said.

And what Broxson and her staff do, perhaps more

capably than many other resorts in the Southeast, is putting matches together for players of like competency levels.

"I would say 90 to 95 percent of the matches that are played here are put together by our front desk staff. A lot of clubs say they will match you up, but then just provide you a list of names to call. We never do that. We are not going to give away someone's phone number," Broxson said. "We put the matches together for them. We have a list of on-property and off-property players who enjoy the competition and conviviality."

And unlike other clubs in the area, Hidden Dunes allows tennis players who aren't staying on property to play at their facility. Hidden Dunes also offers private or semi-private lessons and clinics for larger groups.

The tennis center is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, except for Christmas Day. While March is historically the busiest month of the year, Broxson said that October was a close second in 2013.

"October and November [are] just beautiful here," Broxson said. "We should have no problem matching players up during that time." ➔



Once tennis is finished for the day, guests can enjoy the uncrowded beach under the warm autumn sun, and Hidden Dunes offers more private beach access per unit than any location in the area. Or, you can relax in one of the neighborhood pools or hot tubs. Other resort amenities include natural gas grills, onsite real estate sales and rental office, wireless Internet and 24-hour gated security.

Celebration Vacation Package Announced

In honor of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Hidden Dunes and other Newman-Dailey Resort Properties are celebrating and honoring the many moms, daughters, sisters, aunts, spouses and friends who have been impacted by breast cancer. The Celebration Tennis Vacation was created to bring together friends and loved ones to celebrate life. The package includes gifts and special offers to make the celebration even more memorable. The Celebration Vacation includes: A champagne welcome basket; \$100 gift card toward Silver Sands Premium Outlets (while supplies last); a Celebration of Life welcome bag filled with products from Silver Sands Premium

Outlet stores (while supplies last); tennis lessons and clinics, organized like-level match play and use of ball machine; 10 percent off spa services or a manicure-pedicure at Emerald Sanctuary Spa; 20 percent off a dinner cruise for two or more aboard the Solaris; and a Newman-Dailey gift card (good toward area activities and free movie rentals).

Also included in the tennis package, depending upon size of the group, are semi-private lessons or clinics, matchmaking services and ball machine rental.

The best part is your vacation will help support the fight against breast cancer. For each package purchased, Newman-Dailey will donate \$50 in the celebrant's name to the breast cancer foundation of their choice for breast cancer research. The Celebration Vacation is available with new reservations for stays of three nights or more from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31. Rates vary depending on size and location of rental. **PN**

