

The Club at Lake Sinclair

By Catherine Dean

For Ted and Joni Smith, purchasing the Milledgeville Country Club was a decision made based on saving a long-standing community asset. Since 1957, the Club has hosted numerous weddings, golf tournaments, and charitable events-it has been a familiar anchor for Milledgeville society for generations.

“We wanted to give it as a gift back to our community,” said Joni. “The Club has a history of bringing the town together and we just could not let that fall aside.”

The Club’s future was in peril during the recent recession but in 2016, as the economy was slowly bouncing back, the Smiths took the opportunity to procure and restore the landmark. After months of meticulous renovations of every square foot, the facility reopened as The Club at Lake Sinclair.

The Club’s appearance is nearly unrecognizable now for those acquainted with the old aesthetic. The Smiths wanted to invoke a casual yet luxe atmosphere that would appeal to a wider community.

The outside of the clubhouse is flanked with beautiful stonework and rustic lanterns that welcome guests with a warm glow. Two exquisite Chihuly chandeliers light the entryway which showcases historic memorabilia from the club’s past.

Joni’s personal design choices float throughout the well-appointed common areas. Richly textured drapes frame the windows but do not block the scenic views of the golf course. Handsome brown and white cowhide chairs mingle alongside leather sofas-all inviting guests to sit and linger around the stone fireplace.

The Smiths have installed special pieces of art from treasured family travels to Costa Rico throughout the clubhouse. Mounted photos of Ted’s deep-sea fishing adventures cover the wall while hand carved lights made from the native Guanacaste tree cast a cozy hue over guests.

Restrooms along with the male and female locker rooms have all been refurbished with new storage areas, showers, and water closets. The ballroom that holds so many Milledgeville memories has been given a high-tech upgrade and awaits new celebrations and commemorations.

“When people think of a country club they usually imagine an older, stuffy kind of crowd,” said Joni. “I want this place to draw all members of the family-the younger and the older.”

In fact, the Smiths along with General Manager Jeffery Allbright have worked diligently to create a family-oriented space full of fun activities for adults and children.

Two resort style pools-one for the family and one for adults only-beckon members to dive in on a hot Georgia day. The family pool features two slides, a zero-entry splash pad and an infinity edge. Food and beverages are readily available poolside for member convenience.

“We see many adults taking their turns going down the slides at the family pool,” said Allbright. “It’s a lot of fun for everyone.”

Adjacent to the pools is the Kid’s Club—a space designed to keep the young entertained. Parents may drop the kiddos off at their own clubhouse on the way to out to dinner or any other event and be rest assured that their safety is the staff’s top priority.

Also located in the pool area is The Sport Court where kids and adults can enjoy basketball, shuffleboard, pickleball, volleyball, badminton and more. A calendar full of family activities awaits members including craft nights, BINGO, movie nights—just to name a very few. Summer camps for the children are also offered during the summer months but fill up quickly due to their popularity.

“We want to stress that our membership costs come at a great value when you consider everything offered,” said Allbright. “The fantastic golf course and tennis courts, the activities for the entire family and the excellent dinning—membership indeed holds its value.”

The excellent dinning of which Allbright speaks is Aubri Lanes (AL)—a name associated with fine dining in the lake area. The food and beverage at the Club is executed by AL and provides all catering services as well as lunch and dinner service. Membership is not required to dine at the restaurant, but it does have its advantages in the form of a discount on purchases.

Joni’s stunning taste in design carries over into Aubri Lanes with more hand carved wood accents, warm lighting, and a bar made from zinc that stretches the entire length of the room. Wide-screen televisions are mounted—as they are throughout the Clubhouse—so that guests may watch sports events easily while relaxing or dinning. Meals can be taken inside or outside on the covered porch.

Aubri Lane’s chef and owner Jason Medders is well-known for his contemporary southern cuisine which he brought with him from the original restaurant location downtown to the new site at the Club.

“We have expanded our menu to include lunch served daily and we offer a brunch buffet on Sundays that has become very popular,” said Medders. “Our menu will be soon rotate to fall and winter with more hearty dishes.”

For more information on membership, rental space, or dinning, contact The Club at Lake Sinclair at 478 452-3525, or visit in person at 3700 Sinclair Dam Road, Milledgeville. A new all-inclusive website is currently being constructed and will soon go live.