

around town

Alys by night by Amanda Trevelino



Alys by Night provides visitors and locals alike with a fresh and relaxing start to their weekend.



Days filled with sun and sand are flowed by evenings of casual sophistication at Aprés Beach, Alys Beach's unique approach to ushering in the weekend with Friday night wine tastings, hors d'oeuvres and live music. Alys (pronounced "Alice" and named for the matriarch of the town's founders) Beach may be among the newest communities to line 30-A, but it makes a lasting impression each weekend when the music starts playing at Fonville Press. By day, Fonville Press is a worldly newsstand, bookstore, coffeehouse, ice cream parlor and lunch stop, but on Friday nights it becomes a see-and-be-seen haven for locals and frequent visitors.

Approximately once a month, it is the first stop on an open house walking tour that attracts hundreds of curious sophisticates eager to explore inside this unique community. "The Aprés Beach tour of courtyard homes has become a main stay because it's different than anything else," says Beth Dillard, an interior designer with Notre Maison who is putting the finishing touch—a dining room chandelier—on one of Alys' distinctive courtyard homes. "It mixes art, architecture, travel and good conversation, and it has an adult appeal," says Dillard.

The home Dillard designed at 47 Seven Wells Court is a main attraction on the tour of homes. "We meshed clean lines in furnishings and natural textures into the architectural elements like reclaimed red gum floors and cabinets, shell stone and plaster walls," notes Dillard. "Natural driftwood lighting from France, handmade leather poufs, hemp slip-covered couches and a custom Peruvian walnut platform bed capture an ethnic chic style found in St. Barts and the Cote d'Azur."

Another home of note is 24 Ladybug Court. A candlelit courtyard with a desert rose ceramic tile fountain welcomes guests to this romantically eclectic interior, designed by Susan Massey. French doors lead to the gourmet kitchen, master bedroom and living room where black slate flooring is dominant. The



2,509-square-foot, three-bedroom home was highlighted in *The Wall Street Journal*.

All the homes here incorporate architecture inspired by both Bermuda and the family courtyard homes of Antigua, Guatemala. And they are built to *Fortified...For Safer Living* standards, which means the homes are designed to withstand severe storms according to the Institute for Business and Home Safety. They also are built with the environment in mind, with each home meeting the Green Home Designation Standard of the Florida Green Building Coalition.

If a nighttime tour of homes isn't for you, you're invited to help light up the night sky along Alys Beach's 1,500 feet of sugar-white beaches during its first beach bash on Saturday, May 24. The night promises an evening of sandcastle building, live reggae music, food by Pipers, ice cream for all and a brilliant "mile high" bonfire.

Also popular on Friday evenings is Trivia Night at Fonville Press, where comedian Kevin Boyle of the Seaside Repertory Theater delivers hours of entertaining, friendly competition and fun facts. Trivia Night happens Friday, May 9 and Friday, June 13.

Why are evening activities so popular at Alys Beach? According to Dillard, "People are curious. The people that come here crave information on what's going on over here," she says. "They want to figure out what's coming next." The eye-catching community has risen from the sand significantly in the past year, and when complete, the emerging community will be home to more than 600 villas, row houses, courtyard homes and family compound retreats, not to mention a future beach club, amphitheatre, town center and the extraordinary Caliza pool, a 50-foot by 100-foot vanishing edge saltwater pool. Alys Beach is perhaps the most significant recent example of New Urbanism, a method of town planning that has become a signature of 30-A and has been recognized by *The New York Times* as "the most important collective architectural movement in the past 50 years." Andrés Duany of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, designers of more than 300 new towns and revitalization projects around the world, says "Alys Beach may well be the most truly innovative community under construction in the United States today."



More evening programs are all part of the progress. Other events, like a poolside fashion show, a Father's Day dinner and Wines of the World Dinner, color the summer calendar at Alys. Taking place around the sparkling Caliza pool, the events allow guests to enjoy gourmet fare by Chef Olivier Gaupin while surrounded by private cabanas, a secluded hot tub, fountains and a lap pool enclosed by bamboo.

Courtyard tours of homes are scheduled for Friday, May 2, 3 and Saturday, June 14. For more information, call (866) 481-8387 or e-mail events@alys-beach.com.