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BUSINESS



A GRANDE REOPENING

Naples Grande set to reopen following Irma damage

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

CLOSED TO GUESTS EVER SINCE HURRICANE Irma wreaked havoc across Southwest Florida in September, the 474-room Naples Grande Beach Resort has undergone several million dollars in repairs and is set to reopen Friday, Dec. 15.

"We're extremely eager and excited to invite guests and locals back to Naples Grande Beach Resort," Frank Cavella, marketing director for the property, said. "It's been a challenging few months."

SEE GRANDE, A28 ▶



COURTESY PHOTO
The Lobby Lounge, along with Aura Restaurant, the Vista Ballroom and many of the resort's meeting spaces boast new flooring, fresh paint and more.

GRANDE

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The repair work has included upgrades to guest rooms, public spaces, pools and landscaping throughout the 23-acre property. The resort is surrounded by 200 acres of a protected mangrove estuary intertwined with a system of bridges and elevated walking paths that afford access to Clam Pass Beach.

Mr. Cavella said guests and locals can expect a new look from the lobby to 18th floor. The property itself has gone through several iterations as a resort since it opened as The Registry Resort with Club Zanzibar in 1988.

"The resort has been a social center of the community since its opening days as the Registry," Mr. Cavella said. "Flash forward three decades, Naples Grande Beach Resort has grown its local following."

The resort's on-property events will resume as scheduled, including charity luncheons and galas throughout the season.

Naples Grande will host an open-to-the-public, official grand reopening party in mid-January to celebrate all the hard work put in by the resort's team of more than 250 employees. The resort resisted working with outside contractors, utilizing staff to assist directly with renovations, painting, landscaping and cleaning the property.

And, according to the resort, all of their employees were paid during the renovation process. Many service-based employees rolled up their sleeves and went to work. Bartenders could be found sanding walls and stripping tables; chefs were enlisted to help replace sheet rock. And everyone scrubbed, painted,



COURTESY PHOTO

A suite overlooking the Gulf of Mexico.

cleaned and overall pitched in wherever made sense.

"We're so thankful for the support of the Naples community, specifically our hardworking staff, to get us back (in business)," Mr. Cavella said.

Interview with Frank Cavella

A seasoned hospitality professional with more than 20 years of industry experience working across luxury resort, hotel, private residential club and cruise lines, Mr. Cavella worked for The World of ResidenSea, Abercrombie & Kent Destina-



CAVELLA

tion Clubs, Exclusive Resorts and The Ritz-Carlton Hotel before becoming the marketing director at the Naples Grande Beach Resort.

Business mentor: My mother. She taught me many things about life that also apply to business. Her best advice: Above all, have confidence and integrity. Be authentic and work harder than everyone else and you will be successful.

First job: Delivering a free community newspaper.

What would you be doing if you weren't doing this? Teaching and coaching kids.

Advice for someone starting out in your field: Listen, listen, listen. Ask questions. Start from the bottom and

learn everything you can along the journey. That way, when you make it you will understand the human dynamics of the roles and the how and why things should be done.

Two things you look for when hiring: Chemistry and talent.

Favorite business book: Dr. Seuss' "Oh, the Places You'll Go!"

Business words of wisdom: "Figure out some way you can get paid for playing." — Alan Watts.

Any job openings? Yes. We are looking for people to join our culinary team and front office staff. These are great opportunities to launch a career in the hospitality field. Find out more at www.naplesgrande.com/careers. ■