

Travel FACTS & FIGURES

The Natural Charm Of A Hidden Jewel

(NAPSA)—Enticing beachgoers for decades, the southern sea towns of Destin, Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa Island along Florida's Emerald Coast continue to lure vacationers looking for a revitalizing retreat where the only castles are made of sugar-white sand and the only glitz is the captivating reflection of the emerald-green waters.

Undoubtedly, the most mesmerizing distraction is the combination of the natural grace of the coast and the wholesome purity of the unspoiled beaches, where more than 60 percent of the area's beaches will be preserved forever. With its natural draw, the Emerald Coast has risen in popularity from the No. 17 most popular drive destination in Florida, all the way to No. 2 (behind Orlando), while also being named "Best Beach" by Southerners for 13 consecutive years by *Southern Living* magazine readers.

Generations have relished the simple beauty of this hidden jewel, from proud dads watching sons reel in a first catch and playful children sculpting sandcastles in the hot, lazy summer sun in sandy swimsuits to adventurous families setting sail side-by-side dancing dolphins and postcard-perfect sunrises and sunsets over the Emerald Gulf, all compliments of Mother Nature. Nostalgic guests relive the same laid-back coastal identity where families return year after year.

The Emerald Coast boasts 24 miles of sugar-white sands and emerald-green waters. Each year, vacationers continue to flock to



On Florida's Emerald Coast, the only glitz is the captivating reflection of the area's emerald-green waters.

the "World's Luckiest Fishing Village" to enjoy spirited seaside celebrations, links of great championship golf, undeniably fresh seafood and, of course, the beautiful beaches.

Without theme parks or the pretentious private beach clubs, this carefree slice of Florida's upper coast continuously remains Southerners' beach of choice by flaunting its natural assets in hopes that vacationers have not forgotten how to enjoy life's simple pleasures. The Emerald Coast remembers when family beach vacations were the highlight of the summer—celebrating simplicity with nothing fancy, just fun "flip-flops"—where the preferred activity is "relaxing and doing as little as possible."

To experience why the Emerald Coast still remains the "Best Beach," visit www.destin-fwb.com or call the Emerald Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. at (800) 322-3319.