

BY ABBI GLINES

Sea & Sun Fun!

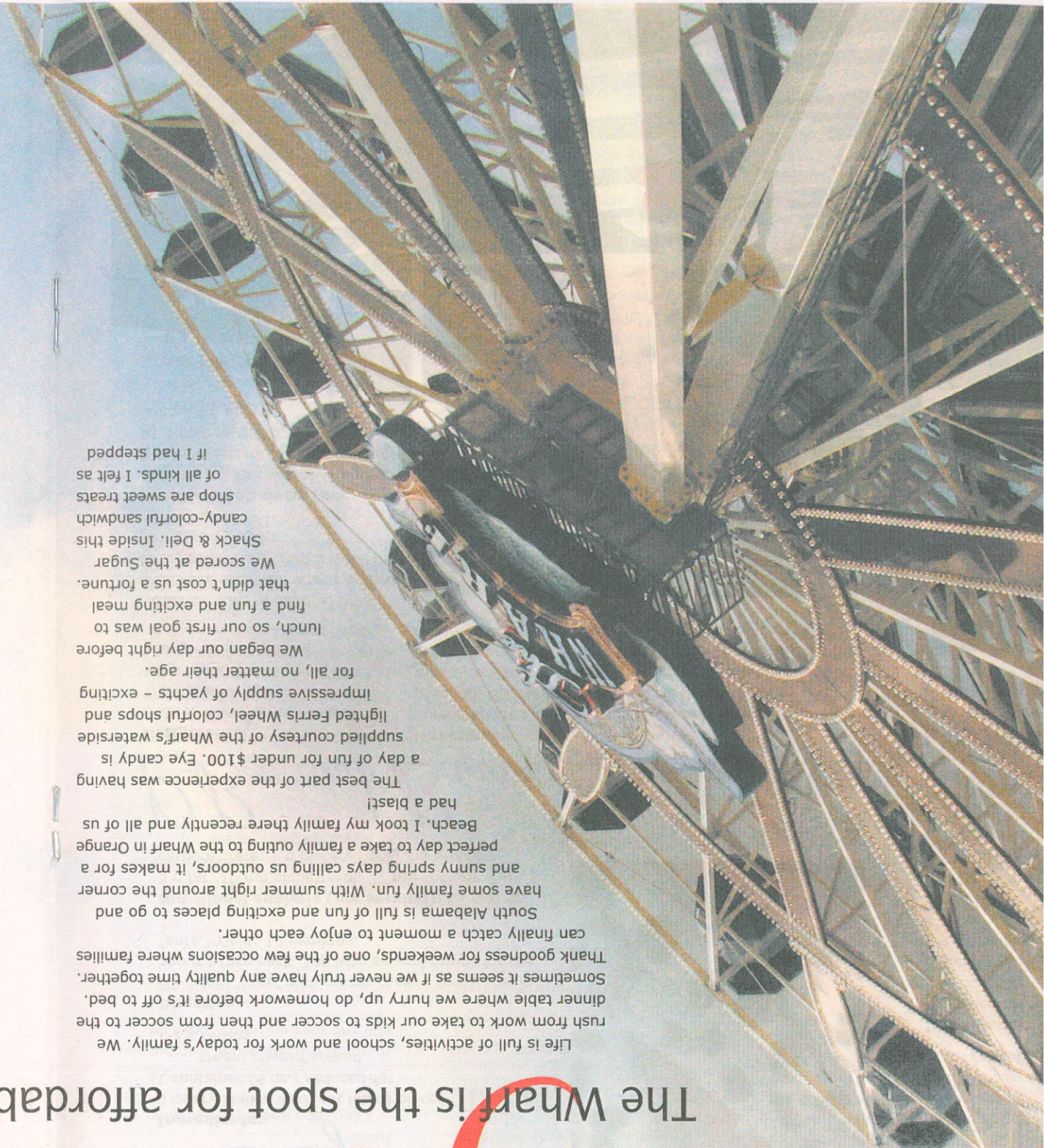
The Wharf is the spot for affordable family adventures

Life is full of activities, school and work for today's family. We rush from work to take our kids to soccer and then from soccer to the dinner table where we hurry up, do homework before it's off to bed. Sometimes it seems as if we never truly have any quality time together. Thank goodness for weekends, one of the few occasions where families can finally catch a moment to enjoy each other.

South Alabama is full of fun and exciting places to go and have some family fun. With summer right around the corner and sunny spring days calling us outdoors, it makes for a perfect day to take a family outing to the Wharf in Orange Beach. I took my family there recently and all of us had a blast!

The best part of the experience was having a day of fun for under \$100. Eye candy is supplied courtesy of the Wharf's waterside lighthouse Ferris Wheel, colorful shops and impressive supply of yachts – exciting for all, no matter their age.

We began our day right before lunch, so our first goal was to find a fun and exciting meal that didn't cost us a fortune. We scored at the Sugar Shack & Deli. Inside this candy-colored sandwich shop are sweet treats of all kinds. I felt as if I had stepped



back in time to a place where soda fountains were a norm. The build-your-own panini was our favorite item on the menu. A "half size" was more than any of us could eat alone, and at \$6.95 it was a quite the delicious steal! The kids ate for \$3. We even chose some truffles from their fresh goodies case and still only spent \$23.

After the Sugar Shack, we decided to walk through the stores that the kids were interested in and stumbled upon a Webkinz jackpot. Ooh La La had every "plush pet" imaginable, and their prices were very reasonable. Webkinz ranged from \$7.95-\$12.95 and, upon speaking with the owner, I discovered they were in fact the largest Webkinz distributor in our area.

If you show up on a lucky day, the "Wheel of WOW" is also there which means that when you buy a Webkinz item you can spin the wheel to win free prizes – by far the highlight of my daughter's day.

After leaving the Webkinz-lover's paradise we made our way to the Ferris wheel, which lays claim as the south's largest, made in Italy. It costs \$4 a person and takes you around 4 times. It had gorgeous views and a thrill factor well suited to my adventurous son. If I had let the kids have their way, we would have done this several more times, no doubt!

After the "wild ride" the parents needed a stiff drink so off to Starbucks we went. The "bartender" ponied up a tall coffee-of-the-day (\$1.65) for us and Horizon's Organic chocolate milk for the kids (\$1.50). And instead of sitting inside and ruining the quiet atmosphere with our abundant excitement we decided to take our drinks and walk to the theater to see what was playing.

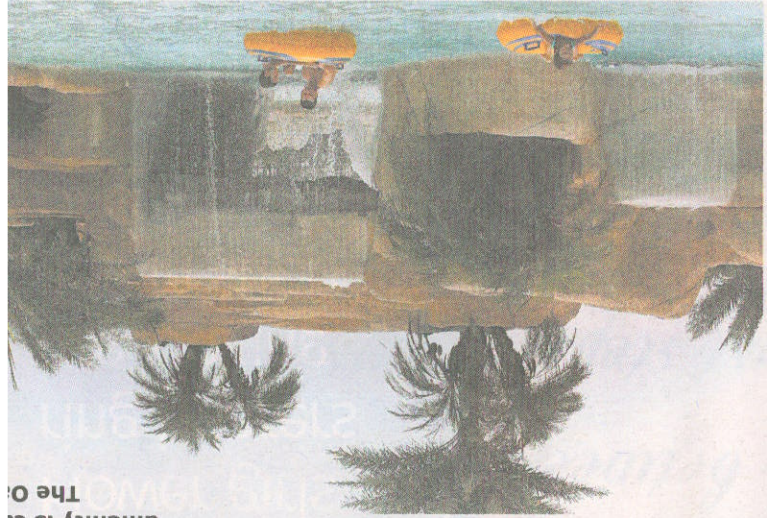


\$100!

Strolling along the waterfront, having wonderful mini-vacation to its conclusion. We enjoyed the stores and amenities, brought our marveled at the beauty around us and talked about whatever popped into our minds. With the hustle and bustle of "life" waiting for our return, it was a delightful time to share with our children, and each other – and all for under

It was matinee time so we decided to catch a movie – \$5.50 a piece, but still somewhat worth it. The 15-screen, state-of-the-art Rave Theater was a great place to kick back and watch a movie. Once it ended, the sun was beginning to set so we headed out to the marina to see the sunset while enjoying the yachts and other colorful pleasure boats.

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