



JULIE MAY/Special Sections Photographer

Merchants of all types dot the streets of Fairhope's downtown shopping district.

From designer labels at high-end specialty boutiques, to veritable bargains at outlet shops, residents and visitors alike can find a multitude of options in the area to satisfy their zeal for shopping. In fact, with so many great finds in close proximity, consumers may find it difficult to exercise restraint!

COLONIAL MALL BEL AIR

On the south side of Airport Blvd. at I-65 lies the area's largest enclosed mall, complete with a Venetian carousel in its main atrium. With more than 130 specialty shops including Bath & Body Works and The Gap, plus five department stores—Belk, Dillard's, JC Penney's, Sears and Target—this shopping megaplex has the whole family, and any desires they may have, covered.

DOWNTOWN FAIRHOPE

Situated between scenic 98 and Greeno Road, this quaint district is graced with a bayside location and lots of historic charm. From its graceful oaks, to the gingerbread colored merchants lit by white lights in the winter evenings, you can find anything you desire, from designer apparel to gifts to antiques. The city is also teeming with enough art galleries and restaurants to satisfy any taste.

EASTERN SHORE CENTRE

The Eastern Shore Centre sits on 58 acres at the northeast corner of I-10 and Highway 181 in Spanish Fort. With its dancing fountain, outdoor concerts and plethora of shops, this venue is more than a mere destination for shopping. However, its more than 70 stores, including Pottery Barn, Williams-Sonoma and Coldwater Creek, can certainly entice you to believe otherwise. Plus, with the added bonus of varied restaurants and day spas, there is plenty of incentive to make a quick trip an all-day excursion.

Retail Heaven

LEGACY VILLAGE

Mobile's newest upscale shopping destination is located at I-65 and Dauphin, just off the north service road. Tenants include J. Jill, Talbot's, Alabama Outdoors, Ann Taylor Loft, Jos A. Bank and Ballins, Ltd., among other specialty shops. It also offers a large number of eateries for a boutique shopping center, including Zoe's Kitchen, Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches, Starbucks and The Wine Loft, a wine bar with a Tapas style menu.

SPRINGDALE MALL

Situated at I-65 and the north side of Airport Blvd., Springdale Mall established Mobile as a shopping destination when it opened with locally-owned Gayfer's as its anchor store in 1957. Evolving over the years, it added more department stores and numerous specialty shops. Today, it is teeming with activity, between the patrons at well-known stores like Barnes & Noble, Old Navy, Best Buy and Linens-N-Things, to residents who shop for groceries and more at Sam's Club.

TANGER OUTLETS

Located off Hwy. 59 in Foley, Tanger Outlets offers brand name merchandise direct from the manufacturer. More than 120 outlets, including Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, Polo Ralph Lauren, Coach, Nine West and Le Gourmet Chef, ensure you will need comfortable shoes if you are going to tackle more than a few. However, if you do need to take a break from visiting the merchants, there are a number of eateries, including a fudgery, in which you may indulge.

THE VILLAGE OF SPRING HILL

Located in the heart of Mobile, bordered by I-65, Springhill Ave., and University and Airport Boulevards, the Village of Spring Hill contains merchants of all types. From bistros and eclectic neighborhood coffee shops to upscale boutiques, florists and even a botanical garden, you can find it within the village borders. The Holiday, Feather Your Nest, Private Collection, Carpe Diem, The Gallery Shoe Boutique, and Dragonfly are just some of the many stops you may consider on an outing.

THE WHARF

With the intracoastal waterway as a backdrop, a string of national retailers and boutiques, a 10,000-seat amphitheater, the tallest Ferris wheel in the Southeast, a 15-screen movie theater, condominiums, restaurants, and a marina and boardwalk, The Wharf off Canal Road in Orange Beach is more like a destination resort that offers shopping. Add to all this the fact the Wharf is just minutes from the white sands and sparkling waters of the Gulf, and you may plan your whole weekend around a shopping excursion.