

Treasure Coast

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Boaters wowed by new Sunset Bay

BY JONATHAN MATTISE

Correspondent

STUART — The Treasure Coast boating crowd got its first glimpse at the colorful, comfortable confines of Sunset Bay Marina and Anchorage during its grand opening Friday evening.

More than 300 people arrived at the marina south of Roosevelt Bridge to nibble on hors d'oeuvres outside the revamped yellow and bright-blue highlighted harbor master's building.

The light rock melodies of Dean

Lopes' "Endless Summer" filled the air.

Guests also relaxed in the plush, blue-carpeted upstairs captain's lounge, complete with wireless Internet access, a flat-screen television and two stocked bookshelves, and checked out the new laundry facilities downstairs.

But Pam Alexander, who owns and operates the marina with her husband Jay, was just hoping the doom-and-gloom weather forecast would hold off — which it largely did, save a quick downpour.

"We were watching the radar closely and we got very lucky," said Alexander, of Huizenga Holdings Inc. "Everyone has been really happy with the way it turned out. They've said it's very comfortable and welcoming, and that's exactly what we were going for."

The crowd toured the 1.9-acre former site of Southpoint Anchorage on the St. Lucie River, strolling the 128-boat slip dock and checking out the 69-buoy mooring field.

Just north of the harbor

master's building sits the framework of the marina's new restaurant, The Sailor's Return, which will be operated by Bob and Tracy Davis, former owners of The Jolly Sailor in downtown Stuart.

"It's fantastic," said Davis. "And Huizenga Holdings are fabulous people to work with."

About 50 new sailors and motorboaters were docked at Sunset Back Friday evening, and its capacity was at 68 percent full during the opening.

Meanwhile, Stuart resident Bob

Cross, who took a load off and gazed toward the water over a few shrimp kabobs, said his mind's already made up.

Cross, who lounged on a bright blue bench with his 6-year-old cocker spaniel Clyde by his side, decided he's docking his Nordic Tug trawler at Sunset Bay in August and staying for a while.

"It's just wonderful here," Cross, 70, said. "They've really done a wonderful job. It has to be one of the Top 10 East Coast marinas I've visited."