

Good eating on a bun at Dave's Dogs

By **COLLEEN COFFIELD SACHS**
Daily News Columnist

DESTIN – The Memorial Day holiday is upon us, signaling the emotional, if not the actual, start of summer.

With that, thoughts turn to summer food, and it is hard to imagine any food being more identifiable with summer than the hot dog.

When hot dogs are what you are looking for, a trip to Dave's Dogs is in order. There are two locations, one at Destin Commons and one at Silver Sands Factory Stores.

The Destin Commons site is at the center plaza of the shopping complex in a kiosk with a fun retro feel. Seating is available in the area around the kiosk, which is adjacent to the playground.

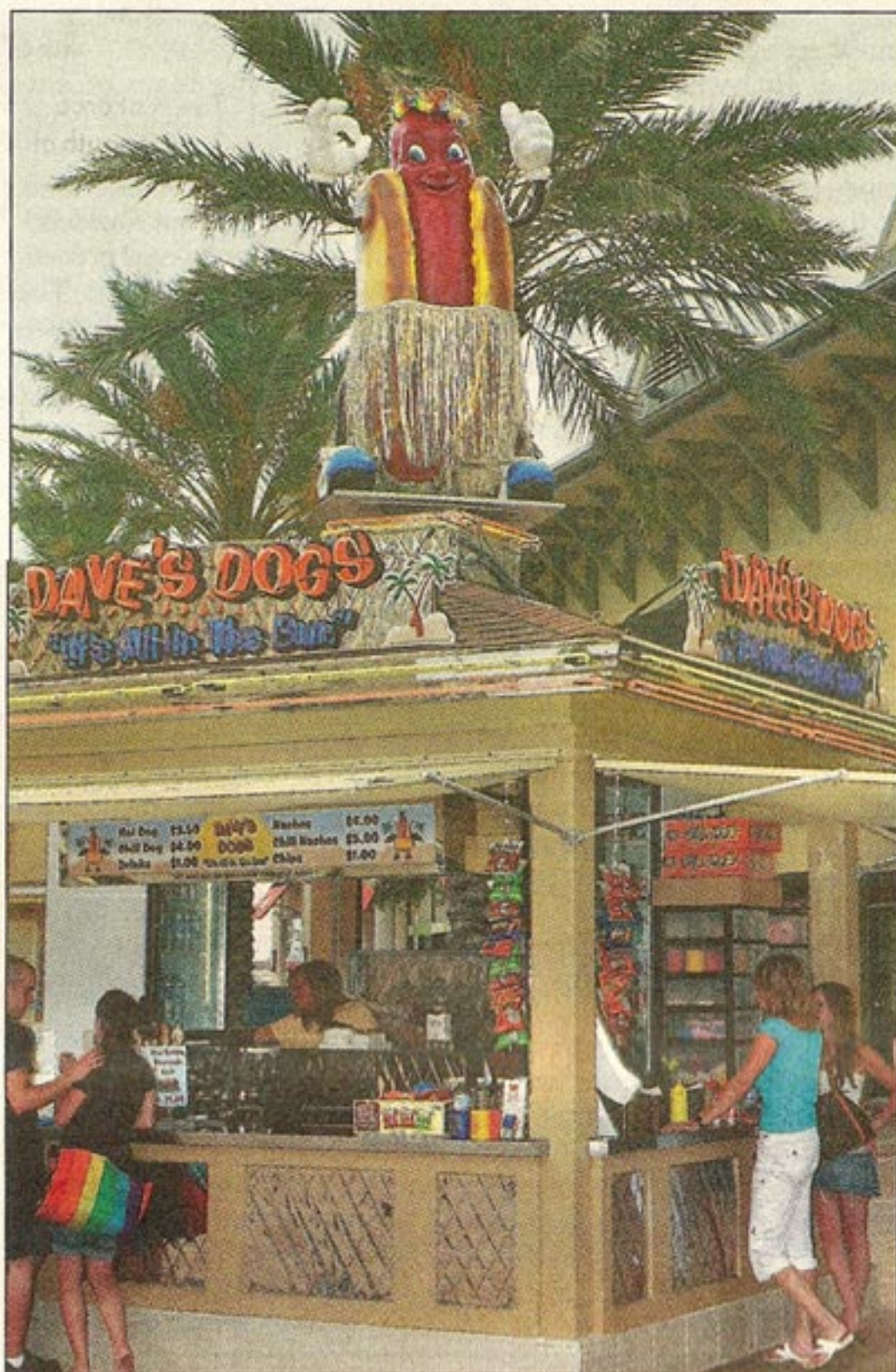
Silver Sands' Dave's Dogs is less visible, tucked into a corner of the shopping center (next to Le Creuset). The outdoor tables and chairs are surprisingly sturdy and comfortable.

A third location is set to open soon, adjacent to a car wash near the Okaloosa-Walton County line on U.S. Highway 98. Unlike the other two locations, this one will have a drive-up window.

Dave's Dogs catches your attention initially with its mascot, an anthropomorphic hot dog that wears sunglasses and a grass skirt. But what holds your attention is the hot dog itself.

The hot dog is of good quality, but as Dave's Dogs' slogan points out, "It's all in the Bun."

The buns are not standard hot dog buns. They are the variety used for lobster rolls in



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One of Dave's Dogs' locations (shown here) is next to the fountain at Destin Commons. The other is at Silver Sands Factory Stores.

Maine.

What looks like a folded piece of Texas toast has a flat bottom and is split at the top. It also has flat sides that make it perfect for grilling.

Dave's Dogs grills the buns on each side adding buttery flavor to the sweetness of the

bread. The result is a crisp golden brown exterior and soft interior.

Once the bun is grilled, it is time to fill it (although it would be great by itself). The two options on Dave's Dogs' short menu are hot dogs and chili dogs.

On the counter are other condiments that you can add yourself. Sauerkraut, pickle relish, chopped onions, pickled jalapeno slices, and shredded cheese are all offered.

The rest of the menu is nachos, chili nachos, chips and drinks.

Nachos are a guilty pleasure. They are simple tortilla chips topped with bright yellow cheese sauce. I liberally top mine with jalapenos.

They are made even better with the addition of Dave's Dogs' chili. The chunky meat chili has a lightly sweet flavor.

Bottled water and soft drinks are offered. So are chips, including Miss Vickie's potato chips, which have great crispness. When we visited, Miss Vickie's jalapeno seasoned chips were available.

Service at Dave's Dogs was friendly, and the staff has enthusiasm for the product they are selling. Hours vary, but Dave's Dogs hours are generally based around the shopping centers' hours.

Because of the kiosk location, payment for Dave's Dogs is geared around cash.

Dave's Dogs doesn't try to do too much. The menu is short, the prices good, and it is easy to pick up a dog during a shopping excursion.

With its twist on the usual hot dog bun, Dave's Dogs has taken the hot dog to a new level, making it an even nicer way to herald the coming of summer.

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Colleen Coffield Sachs is restaurant reviewer for the Daily News. She dines unannounced at area restaurants for this column. You may write to her in care of the newspaper at P.O. Box 2949, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549.

DiningFACTS

Dave's Dogs

Locations

Destin Commons, Destin; and Silver Sands Factory Stores, Miramar Beach
Telephone: None

Hours

Vary

Reservations

Not accepted

Price range

Hot dog \$3.50
Chili dog \$4
Nachos \$4
Chili nachos \$5
Chips \$1
Drinks \$1

Payment

Cash

Atmosphere

★★★½

Value

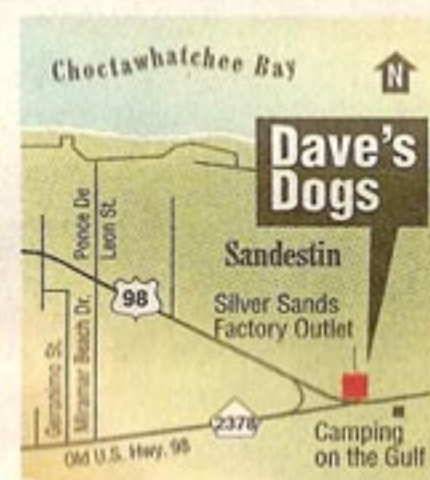
★★★½

Food

★★★½

Overall rating

★★★½



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À LA CARTE

MAY

May 19: **Zampieri's**, 320 U.S. Highway 98 East, Destin; 650-3900.
Overall rating: ★★★★★

May 12: **Blend**, 88 Watercolor Way, Suite 107, Seagrove Beach; 231-4880.
Overall rating: ★★★

May 5: **Mom & Dad's Italian Restaurant**, 2184 U.S. Highway 90 West, DeFuniak Springs; 892-5812. Overall rating: ★★★½

APRIL
April 28: **Silver Sands Breakfast at Harbor Docks**, 538 U.S. Highway 98, Destin; 837-7559. Overall rating: ★★★½

April 21: **Mexico City**, 648 Beal Parkway, Fort Walton Beach; 862-9433.
Overall rating: ★★★

April 14: **Fish Out of Water, WaterColor Inn**, County Road 30-A, Santa Rosa Beach; 534-5050.
Overall rating: ★★★

April 7: **Gravel Road**, 50 Uptown Grayton Circle, Grayton Beach; 534-0960.
Overall rating: ★★★½

MARCH
March 31: **La Rumba**, 36112 Emerald Coast Parkway, Destin; 650-4062.
Overall rating: ★★★

Here is a list of restaurants Colleen Coffield Sachs has reviewed in recent weeks