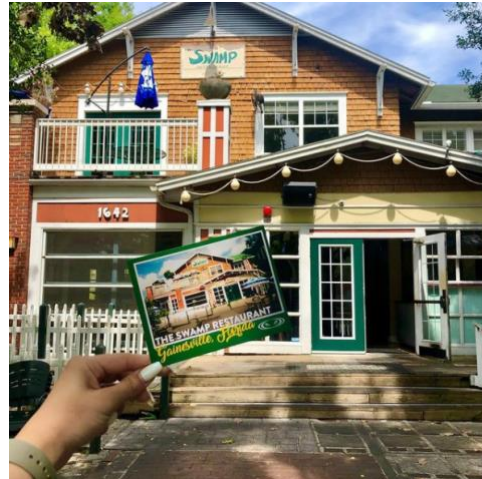


“WE’RE BACK!”: Gainesville’s Iconic Swamp Restaurant Announces It Will Continue Legacy in New Building Inspired by the Original, Historic Landmark



Just six months after Gainesville’s iconic Swamp Restaurant closed its doors to the public and its historic building razed to the ground, the restaurant has announced it will be returning to Gainesville in a brand-new building that will fully emulate the original, charming landmark it was housed in for over two decades.

Located just four minutes away from its previous location off of West University Avenue, The Swamp’s new home will look nearly identical to the iconic building that University of Florida students, alumni, and Gainesville citizens came to revere. It will still be located within walking distance of the University of Florida campus and Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, but in a new setting at 1026 SW 2nd Avenue in the Gainesville Innovation District.

The news comes as a welcome surprise for loyal patrons of The Swamp, which operated as a restaurant, sports bar, and event venue for over twenty-five years from its founding in December 1994 to its unexpected closure in June 2020.

“We were inspired by the overwhelming support we received from the Gator Nation when news broke that The Swamp’s original building was being knocked down,” said Ryan Prodesky, owner of The Swamp Restaurant. “We’re excited to announce that due to the dedication and loyalty from our clients, The Swamp will be reborn in a new location.”

It became a cultural icon in the Gainesville community, establishing a legacy as one of the most beloved spots to tailgate for Gator Football games. Formerly a professor’s house constructed in 1914, its distinct exterior became a recognizable landmark, with its historic charm, white picket fence, and sprawling front lawn.

A popular location for college events, sports celebrations and Sunday brunch, the restaurant’s immense popularity was in part due to the memories that were created there.

“When people think of The Swamp, they think of so much more than a restaurant,” said owner Ryan Prodesky. “They think of having Sunday brunch on the front lawn with their friends, watching the Gators homecoming game on the big screen outside, or celebrating their 21st birthday. Given its 25-year history, I’ve heard stories from multiple students that their parents

even met at The Swamp.”

It was announced in early 2019 that The Swamp was to close after a national developer purchased the land it sat on for over a century in order to build a mixed-use multifamily development.

When news of the historic building’s pending closure initially broke, a nationwide campaign to preserve the historic building and prevent its closure was initiated. Swamp supporters from all over the nation banded together, claiming that if the building was demolished, a critical piece of Gainesville and UF culture would be destroyed.

Many also cited that a building of The Swamp’s age was too historic to destroy, with Florida State Representative Anthony Sabatini going so far as to advocate the building be designated as a national landmark to prohibit its demolition.

A Change.org petition advocating for the protection of The Swamp received over 34,000 signatures.

Though supporters of The Swamp raised a convincing fight, the building closed its doors on June 30, 2020, and was demolished the following month.

Around the same time, it was reported that The Swamp would reopen in a restaurant space on the ground floor of this mixed-use complex, but Prodesky worried that a part of the Swamp’s magic would be missing.

“So much of The Swamp’s appeal was that historic building, and the memories created inside of it,” said Prodesky. “We knew that if The Swamp was to return, it needed to be in a special, authentic space that matched the ambiance of the original restaurant.”

In order to do so, Prodesky consulted with local Gainesville developer Trimark Properties, who has been a part of the Gainesville area for over twenty-eight years and specializes in infill projects, historic building preservation and boutique, upscale developments. The developer will create a building that will fully capture the likeness of The Swamp’s original venue, featuring the same historic-house appearance, but with a state-of-the-art kitchen and bar.

The Swamp will be located in the Innovation District, the region next to downtown just east of the UF campus. Described as a live, work, play development that is home to over 80 companies ranging from established law firms to tech startups, Prodesky states that the new location will be advantageous for capturing a wider market of patrons. Just two blocks from UF’s main entrance on Southwest 13th Street, The Swamp will still be located within walking distance of UF students and faculty, but will now be closer to the professionals working in the Innovation District and downtown.

“[The Innovation District] is where many students live and where some of the most prominent companies in Gainesville are located,” said Prodesky. “It’s still in an ideal location for gameday tailgates, and can also serve as a lunch or dinner spot for UF students and faculty as well as

people living and working in the District.”

The Swamp will return in its new Innovation District location in August 2022 in time for Gator Football season.

Those interested in learning more about The Swamp’s return can visit the website for more information and to sign-up for updates, and to purchase exclusive merchandise. Leading up to the reopening, The Swamp will also be holding giveaways for merchandise, free beer, and gift cards.

Prodesky is asking students, alumni, friends, and family to share their favorite memories at The Swamp by using the hashtag #swampmemories.

Website: <https://www.swamprestaurant.com/>

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