

## Fashion-First Thursday at One Ocean Resort

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This week I was invited to an event at One Ocean Resort in Neptune Beach called "Fashion-First Thursday". (This was originally posted in [www.outandaboutinjax.com](http://www.outandaboutinjax.com) the site all about events and places to go in Jacksonville! Check it out for pictures and ratings of great local event websites and interesting upcoming events!) When I heard that One Ocean was located in Neptune Beach, my first reaction was "where is Neptune Beach?" I'm embarrassed to admit that my knowledge of Jacksonville's surrounding areas is somewhat limited. This is pretty pitiful considering I've lived in the Jacksonville area for four years now, and I spend much of my time researching places to go in the area. If you've met me, or if you've spent any time reading my posts here on "Out and About in Jax", you probably know that I have a horrible sense of direction. Maps don't help me out much either. My gut reaction when looking at a map is (a.) panic, shove it into the hands of the nearest person and beg for help, or b.) find the nearest GPS device.



Luckily, Effie was able to come out with me tonight, and as a Jacksonville native and a person with a great sense of direction, she was a huge help. In addition to helping me easily find Neptune Beach, which didn't take long – the drive to One Ocean from Orange Park only took about 35-40 minutes—she also pointed out various points of interest along the way. As we drove, Effie explained a little more about the Jacksonville area beaches. "Along the Atlantic coast, there are several beach areas, which are all along the same coastline. From North to South, there's Atlantic Beach, then Neptune Beach, then Jacksonville Beach. All are great areas with different things to offer."

As we drove along Atlantic Blvd and into the beach area, Effie pointed out various restaurants and shops she liked. She was like my own personal tour guide, which was just awesome. The Neptune Beach area was so adorable! It's a small area that used to be part of Jacksonville Beach up until 1931. Simple streets right near the water are lined with nice shops and cute restaurants. I vowed to bring the family here for a day of playing on the beach and shopping just as soon as the weather warms up.

Effie and I pulled up to One Ocean, a GORGEOUS resort right on the beach. <http://www.oneoceanresort.com/> Notice I said "resort". The word "hotel" doesn't really do it justice. It explains why I parked in the lot right in front of the resort and Effie and I headed up to the impressive front entrance. We were stopped by a nice guy wearing a suit. "Ladies, the parking here is complimentary valet. We will need your key."

"Sorry, I'm an amateur," I explained as I handed over my key and was handed a valet ticket. So tip #1 if you visit One Ocean (which I HIGHLY recommend) use the valet, it's free. Tip #2—prepare to be amazed.

As soon as Effie and I walked into the lobby we were floored. Every inch of space was expertly decorated in lovely shades of blue and pearl. Marble was everywhere. Beautiful works of art were incorporated seamlessly into the overall design of the first floor, and each piece of art seemed to give off the illusion of various objects being suspended in mid-air giving the entire place a sort of magical quality. Just being in the resort gave me the feeling of being a rockstar! ... or at least a celestaire. (wikipedia it lol)

This may perhaps be the biggest reason I suggest visiting One Ocean the first chance you get—they will make you feel like a celebrity. As the mother of a toddler, I spend a lot of my time doing things like scraping dried cheerios off of the furniture, and rescuing toy trains from the toilet, so I can't tell you how awesome it is to walk into a place so glamorous and be made to feel like Paris Hilton. I'll explain exactly how they accomplish this in detail, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

Effie and I walked up to the hostess station of the resort's amazing restaurant/lounge Azura (pronounced as-YUR-ee-uh) and we were led to the opulent bar area with pretty little couches and tables. We were seated at a lovely comfortable couch where one of the hostesses explained the details of the evening. "Welcome to our Fashion-First Thursday, a chance to check out the season's hottest trends while experiencing Azura at One Ocean. This event is free and open to the public and will be held on the first Thursday of the month. Here you can sip signature cocktails, sample gourmet hors d'oeuvres and mingle with models who will be wearing the latest from Rosie True, one of the hottest boutiques in Northeast Florida. (<http://www.rosietrue.com/>) The models are in the back getting ready and will be out shortly. Feel free to ask the models your questions, and touch the clothing and accessories."

"Whoa, we can touch the models? Don't tell that to any of the guys who might be here!" Effie laughed. The three of us looked around. There were maybe 25 people in the bar area, and only three or four of them were guys (including the bartender). "So how about some drinks, ladies?" the hostess asked. "Our signature cocktail tonight is the True Love martini. For each one you order, you get a chance to win a pair of Sergio Zolov shoes." She motioned for another hostess who walked up to us carrying two of the most adorable and interesting looking shoes I'd ever seen. They were open-toe platform shoes made of patent leather with a hint of gold along the leather. "I'm in!" Effie breathed as she held the shoes. At that moment I was pretty glad I'd brought Effie. Effie is a fashionista — I'm always jealous of her amazing sense of fashion. I've always admired people who know how to dress. I don't really have a knack for picking out unique or interesting clothes. My wardrobe is very simple.

"I don't think I'll ever be able to 'pull off' shoes like that," I laughed. Plus I'm not much of a vodka drinker, so I opted for a margarita. While Effie and I waited for our drinks, we glanced around the lounge. The entire back wall was made up of panoramic windows looking out on a gorgeous stretch of Atlantic Beach. The bar area was lit with dangling light fixtures that looked somewhat like romantic hanging candles. Against the back wall of the bar was a mirror that housed a flat screen TV. It all looked so amazing! In a flash, the hostess reappeared with our drinks which of course were delicious. Just as I was taking a sip of my margarita, I heard a woman's voice ask "Excuse me, are you Erica?" Her name was Jordan Jacobs, and she was a PR professional for the resort. It was Jordan who had originally extended the invitation for me to come tonight and she'd recognized my face from the blog. Jordan and I quickly made great friends. As we got to know each other we discovered that we'd gone to same college right around the same time and that we were both married to engineers. Our personalities were similar too. Someone like Jordan is a dream come true for bloggers like me. She knew exactly who to introduce me to, and was an expert on everything about the resort and tonight's event. Then she uttered the words I was dying to hear: "Would you like a tour of the resort?"

So Effie and I grabbed our drinks and stood to follow Jordan. Just before we headed out of the lounge area, we met David, one of the resort's managers. David welcomed us and explained some of the future plans "Fashion-First Thursdays." "When the weather gets nice, we'll bring this event outside on the terrace overlooking the beach and have a DJ. In the past we've had some pretty big crowds come out so we are expecting this to become quite a huge event as we head into the summer," he told me.