

Hey y'all, let's go eat at... The Glades at ChampionsGate

Senior living community opens unique Mediterranean dining experience

Provided to The Sun

The Glades at ChampionsGate, a senior living community in Osceola County, is elevating its dining experience with the opening of Taboon – a Mediterranean-inspired restaurant centered around a 654-degree open-hearth oven. The community unveiled the concept earlier this month.

"We are so excited to invite our residents to Taboon, where they can enjoy the sights and sounds of their fresh, healthy meal being prepared right in front of them," said Dan Guanio, executive director of The Glades at ChampionsGate. "Our residents lead active, healthy lifestyles and many enjoy eating fresh fish and quinoa bowls on a regular basis. Taboon will provide a new and exciting way for them to enjoy these foods and support residents as they pursue a healthy, enriching life."

Named for its open-hearth bread oven, Taboon focuses on Mediterranean and Middle Eastern flavors and seeks to embody the ideals of healthy Mediterranean cuisine with an emphasis on clean, fresh foods. The menu showcases locally sourced vegetables, sustainable seafood, and free-range poultry with menu items such as Mediterranean grouper, roast stuffed chicken breast, Italian flatbreads and small bites.

According to a 2023 study in the medical journal BMC Medicine, a diet that is rich in seafood, fruit, vegetables, nuts and olive oil – like the Mediterranean diet – may lower the risk of dementia. In an analysis of more than 60,000 seniors, researchers found that following a Mediterranean diet

reduces a person's likelihood of developing dementia by nearly one quarter, even among those with genes that put them at a greater risk.

Watermark Retirement Communities, which manages The Glades at ChampionsGate, places a unique focus on whole-person wellness and healthy aging. The top-10 senior housing provider is known for its unparalleled approach to whole-person wellness with signature programs like 360Well®, which helps residents develop, manage, and implement comprehensive health, fitness, and wellness programs.

At Watermark, all activities, amenities, services and care are rooted in the four interconnected circles of wellness: mind, body, spirit, and community. In addition to providing fresh, healthy meals, Taboon will serve as the venue for hands-on cooking classes and resident events.

"We believe that dining is more than just a meal; it's an experience," said James Bain, Regional Director of Dining



Services with Watermark Retirement Communities. "Our 654-degree open-hearth oven is more than a cooking tool; it's a statement of our commitment to authenticity and quality. At Taboon, we want our guests to not just taste but feel the Mediterranean culture in every bite."

Watermark Retirement Communities is rolling out Taboon at communities across the nation. The Glades is the first community in central Florida to open Taboon.

Hey y'all, let's take a day trip to...Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth

Archaeological Park referred to as America's First Colony

By **DONNA FELLOWS-COFFEY**

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Florida is known as an oasis both for youngsters wanting to live it up during their youth and seniors looking to make the most of their retirement during their golden years.

So it seems rather fitting that Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park is located in the heart of St. Augustine, America's oldest continuously inhabited European-founded city in the United States.

According to the park's website, the history dates back to Ponce de Leon's arrival in Florida in 1513.

"Ponce de Leon sights La Florida...and comes ashore at a Timucua village tucked safely into a small harbor of the Atlantic Ocean. Believing the area to be an island, Ponce so named this beautiful 'new land' La Florida because it was sighted during the Festival of Flowers at Easter time. The village of Selo was centered here at the Fountain of Youth and extended about one mile to the north and one mile to the west, up to the San Sebastian River...(In 1565) Pedro Menendez de Aviles founds the city of St. Augustine at the Timucua village of Selo, located at today's Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park."

In 1900, Dr. Luella Day MacConnell, who had amassed a fortune in the Yukon gold fields, bought the property and aggressively marketed it as the Fountain of Youth.

"(In 1909) an employee of...MacConnell's re-discovers the cross of coquina, as well as a silver casque containing



severely worn documentation that has since been proven to be of a parchment and ink that was contemporary to the era of Ponce de Leon's landing in Florida...MacConnell begins a quest that will last until her death to verify the find and prove, once and for all, that she owned the site Ponce de Leon's fabled Fountain of Youth."

In 1934, remains were found for 90 Native Americans at the site. Digs, discoveries and artifacts continued to be found on the property through 2011.



The Fountain of Youth is open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the last tickets being sold at 5 p.m. Tickets range from free for children five years old and younger to \$9.95 for children 12 and under, to \$20.95 for seniors over 60, to \$22.95 for everyone else.

There is a gift shop and a Smoked Southern BBQ restaurant.

The park is dog-friendly and is located at 11 Magnolia Avenue in St. Augustine. For more information, call 904-829-3168 or visit fountainofyouthflorida.com.

PHOTOS BY PONCE DE LEON'S FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH