

ResortQuest In Gulf Shores, AL

The locals will compete with a national firm for vacation rentals after the arrival of ResortQuest on the [Alabama Gulf Coast](#).

"We're in a growth mode and setting it up for a strong future here," said Lino Maldonado, vice president of Northwest Florida operations, which is based in Fort Walton Beach, Fla. "We knew we needed to be in Gulf Shores. The product mix, all the entertainment venues, and the family atmosphere, it's a perfect niche."

ResortQuest is one of the largest firms managing and marketing resort condominium and home rentals in the United States. Its local rental management office is in the former Ono Professional Partners real estate building at 3145 Gulf Shores Parkway in Gulf Shores. Ono Professionals is now called ResortQuest Real Estate, and its 30 sales agents occupy the second floor of the building, according to broker Jeff McLaurin.

Much of the rental inventory at the Gulf has been managed by two large companies, Meyer Real Estate and Kaiser Realty, and a handful of mom-and-pop operations. But there's plenty of business to go around, according to the resort managers. There are 15,263 condo units and hotel rooms available for rentals, according to the Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau.

"Bring it on," said Sarah Kuzma, a spokesperson for Meyer in Gulf Shores. "We're ready and can compete with anyone. If they bring some national attention to our area, that's positive." Meyer manages more than 2,000 properties in Alabama and Florida.

"The inventory is growing and there's certainly room for good, quality companies to promote the area," said Leonard Kaiser, president of Kaiser Realty in Gulf Shores, which manages more than 700 waterfront houses and condo units. "We welcome them back to the area."

ResortQuest bought the management company at Gulf Shores Plantation Resort on Fort Morgan in 1998, and managed only units there, according to broker Pedro Mandoki, who sold them the management firm, but stayed on to run it. When ResortQuest's new owner decided to leave the Plantation in 2005, Mandoki said he bought back the management business.

"They see the opportunity here with the new inventory coming on line and they are trying to grow their company," Mandoki said. "They will bring more exposure to the area."

Since entering the market at the end of May, ResortQuest has signed up about 60 rental units and expects to manage several hundred by next summer, according to Ryan Christopher, senior operations manager.

"We quickly pulled in clients who knew about the company," he said.