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## Red Lobsters to get new 'seaside village' look

By 2014, Red Lobsters here won't look the same as they have for the past 40 or so years.

The Orlando-based chain plans to give each of its nearly 700 restaurants in the United States and Canada a new look, one that's reminiscent of the seaside village of Bar Harbor, Maine.

Red Lobster, a division of Darden Restaurants Inc., has locations at 1940 Wade Hampton Blvd. in Greenville; 170 Blackstock Road in Spartanburg; and 3426 Clemson Blvd. in Anderson.

The Greenville restaurant opened in 1969, while the Anderson and Spartanburg locations opened, respectively, in 1974 and 1973, according to Erica Jaeger, spokesperson for Red Lobster.

The Upstate locations have never been redesigned, she said.

In the near future, those and other Red Lobster restaurants will have new exterior features that include a stone tower, ship lanterns, Adirondack-style chairs to encourage guest conversation and mingling, and window decals that spell out the types of seafood guests will find inside, the company said.

The restaurant's signage will be a "contemporized logo" with an updated lobster icon and a new modifier highlighting Red Lobster's signature fresh fish and live lobster, the company said.

The interiors will have "cozy booths, warm wood paneling, softer lighting and nautical décor, such as signal flags and seaside-inspired artwork," the company said.

Company leaders said the new design was first developed in 2005.

The change was in response to a desire expressed by customers for a more up-to-date atmosphere, according to Red Lobster president Kim Lopdrup.

"We listened to their feedback and are very proud to now offer guests this beautiful new setting in which to enjoy a refreshing seaside dining experience," Lopdrup said.

Guests can also enjoy new menu items along with the restaurant's familiar offerings.

The new entrees include maple-glazed salmon and shrimp; pecan crusted jumbo shrimp; cedar plank salmon; parmesan-crusted tilapia, New England lobster rolls, and shrimp flatbread and grilled shrimp salad.

These initiatives are among the latest in recent additions to Red Lobster, the company said.

The company expects to have 33 percent of its restaurants remodeled by June 2011. The goal is to have them all transformed by 2014.

Jaeger said there is currently no specific information available on the construction dates for Upstate restaurants.

Restaurants will remain open throughout the remodel process, she said.