

“IT’S LIKE MAIN STREET – WITH AIR CONDITIONING!”

Like most residents of Oviedo and Winter Springs, you’re probably planning to visit the Oviedo Mall during the holiday season. If so, then brace yourself for a shopping experience that’s been redesigned for 2015. The mall’s brand new holiday decorations are just one part of what Brian Olivi, vice president and general manager, describes as a “big investment in our common area.”

It’s a visual signal that the Oviedo Mall is reimagining itself, not just for the current shopping season but also for its long-term future as an integral part of the Oviedo community. In fact, a strong connection to the community underlies everything you’ll experience when you visit. It’s a strategy that Brian describes with obvious enthusiasm: “Everything we do is specifically designed for the Oviedo area, from our events to our selection of retailers,” he says.

Michelle Deschamps, the mall’s marketing manager, notes that mall events — a busy and eclectic calendar that ranges from A Taste of Oviedo to several 5k races benefitting local not-for-profits — all provide “affordable, family-friendly entertainment.” The mall’s commitment to the community extends to partnering with local nonprofits to provide them with visibility and fundraising opportunities. Strolling around, you’ll notice that Susan G. Komen Central Florida and the Angel’s Life Foundation both have storefront locations.

In some ways, today’s Oviedo Mall is an air-conditioned reboot of what Main Street USA was a generation ago, a place to discover interesting things and shop among a mixture of local stores and national chains.

“There’s certainly validity in having a strong representation of large, national players,” Brian explains, “but we’re also eager to provide a home for interesting local businesses that address the needs of Oviedo families. We’re a great partner for any worthwhile organization that wants to establish a foothold in the community.” Brian adds that the Mall



Brian Olivi, vice president and general manager, and Michelle Deschamps, marketing manager of the Oviedo Mall, promise shoppers plenty of delightful surprises this holiday season with even more retail innovation coming in 2016.

Community Room even provides meeting space for local organizations, including homeowners associations from nearby neighborhoods.

Brian’s strategy is to identify businesses that are uniquely suited to Oviedo and then work with those businesses to make a mall location feasible. Two recently opened locations in the mall are perfect examples. The Zoo Health Club is a 24x7 “neighborhood gym” with classes and amenities that are usually only found at a large chain. Right next door is O2B Kids, a membership-based, next-generation “edutainment” destination for kids up to 13 years old, offering pre-school as well as classes in the arts, musical instruction, science, gym, karate, and a variety of other enrichment programs.

This community-centric approach has the Oviedo Mall enjoying its highest occupancy rate in over ten years, and its business owners couldn’t be happier. Arlene Smith is the community relations manager for the mall’s popular Teddy Mountain outlet. The company’s positive experience as a tenant led the owners to launch a second business at the mall: Oviedo Fudge.

“This isn’t a typical mall,” Arlene explains. “I’m an Oviedo resident, so I know exactly how connected this mall is to the community.”

Even as Brian pursues a strategic vision for the Oviedo Mall, he and his team remain

attentive to all the details that collectively create “buzz” among shoppers. This year, for example, the mall is offering Skip the Line With Santa, an appointment option that can make pictures with Santa less stressful and more fun.

A big part of the “buzz” during any holiday season comes when customers can find the season’s most in-demand products in stores and kiosks. This year, Brian thinks the WizBoard will be the season’s hottest item.

“I’m predicting that the WizBoard — basically a mini Segway — is going to be one of the season’s biggest sellers... and our customers can find it right here.”

Brian’s passion for the mall is striking. “I’ve been in this business for 31 years, and this is the most fun I’ve ever had,” he says. “We’re always working to keep ourselves relevant to the community.”

The mall’s two newest restaurant tenants — both opening just in time for the holiday season — together tell the mall’s unique story. Taco Bell is one of the biggest brands in fast food, while Amarena Gelato is the flagship location for a new, Florida-based company that’s bringing the old fashioned Italian gelato experience to America. The lesson? At the Oviedo Mall, there’s a comfortable home for a national fast food giant and a scrappy Florida startup... and you can always count on finding the best of both when you visit.