KHS&S Contractors, a national specialty contractor located Orlando, Fla., has brought its theming expertise to Gaylord Entertainment's latest project, Gaylord Palms™ Resort & Convention Center (formerly the Opryland Hotel Florida), a mega-resort combining the nationally known reputation of Opryland Nashville with the comfort of Southern living under three spectacular glass domes.

Reflecting the history, culture, wildlife, water and architecture of the Sunshine State, Gaylord sets a new standard for resort theming as visitors will actually experience the beauty and charm of Florida's magical landscapes situated in three distinct atrium areas—the Grand, Key West and the Everglades.

Scheduled to officially open on Feb. 2, 2002, at 2:02 p.m., the project is, according to KHS&S Senior Project Executive Fred Ayers, both unique and challenging. With 230,000 square feet of exhibits, and 48,000 square feet of themed
interiors, Ayers explains, “Our crews are continuously working to provide an aesthetically pleasing form amidst many variables including uneven planes, multi-elevations and ornate architectural features.” Ayers adds that the sheer magnitude of the job is reflected in the detail and support work required by the building—from more than a half-mile of balustrade to $1 million of scaffolding for worker access.

Capturing the Essence

Working with architectural firm HBG Hnedak Bobo Group, KHS&S developed renderings and working drawings for the project’s interior themed façades and features in all three atrium areas. KHS&S captured the “bohemian” spirit of Florida’s southern tip paradise with exacting realism by replicating the “ginger bread’ characteristics of Key West architecture, including multiple laser-cut balustrades, colorful shutters and clapboard siding.

Other Key West building features include a 4,700 square foot seafood restaurant’s gabled roof, partially covered by corrugated steel obtained from an Orlando man’s dilapidated barn, and a 1,300 square foot pie shanty’s Victorian-style metal shingles roof reminiscent of the 1920s. To complete the look, both facades were painted in tropical blue and yellow and covered with a wash coat to produce the “weathered” effect so typical of Key West structures.

Just minutes away from Key West, KHS&S crews were achieving the same kind of dead-ringer detail in the Grand Atrium, recreating the old-style historical ambiance of St. Augustine. Reminiscent of one of this fort city’s most notable structures—Flagler College—the four-level Emerald Plaza façade
depicts 14 over-sized windows built out of wood and framed with more than 200 wooden quoins, designed to look like stones and six arched entrances flanked by 10 columns, consisting of GFRG and painted to look like stone.

In a creative solution to cover a duct opening in the center of this facade, KHS&S artists achieved a Spanish tile effect by utilizing a computer art design to laser cut 20 pieces of quarter-inch 3-by-3 steel plates. One of the highlights of the area is a dome constructed out of cut plywood, measured to the radius of the structure, and covered with copper.

**Tally Ho!**

In addition to the facades, KHS&S crews also constructed and accessorized one of the resort’s most notable theming features—a 65by-26, two-masted ketch, home to the Key West area’s liquor and oyster bar as well as an historical centerpiece.

KHS&S constructed the boat atop 65 cubic yards of concrete, first building the frame consisting of 30 ribs, each one-half inch in diameter and rolled to specified dimensions. Crews then covered the frame with stainless steel lath to form the boat’s hull, resulting in 3,000 square feet of surface area. The hull’s outer layer consists of stucco, which was painted over in blue, and its top will be covered with wood decking, laid down as planks.

The sailing vessel showcases such nautical antiques as a brass forestay and cage lamps, dated around 1944, off the U.S.S. Adroit, a minesweeper in World War II, and brackets off another ship sitting in the Savannah River since 1924. Other accessories include cleats from the Sailing Deck on the Savannah River dating back to the 1800s and an anchor chain thought to be more than 100 years old. The pieces were collected by Jim Bath, of Seven Seas Trading Company, and Karen Pennington, Ayers daughter and a boat enthusiast, both of Wilmington, N.C. Responsible for creating the concept for the vessel’s rigging, sails and masts, Pennington, of Design Consultants, submitted numerous sketches, drawings and photographs before partnering with Bath to secure the pieces.

“It was an interesting project for two ship lovers to work on,” said Ayers. “Basically, once they knew what they
In addition to the antiques, Ayers says other features of the ketch were custom-crafted to complete the authentic effect. Both masts, one 58 feet and the other 60 feet, were cut out of Southern pine trees and lathered with Danish Oil Finish, the natural oil of the tree. A colleague of Bath’s hand-made the ratlines, a rope tapestry attached to the mast and the railing, used when sailors need to climb to the top of the mast for repairs. Pennington also chose to import some pieces, including one of the most visible features of the vessel—18 portholes spaced around the boat’s hull. Having found a brass model in an antique shop in North Carolina, Pennington secured 18 replicas through the store, which imports the adornments from France. Modeled after the portholes of an ocean liner, the fixtures were fitted with obscure glass and lit from behind.

The ketch joins the company of two other vessels constructed by KHS&S—a 155-ft. ocean freighter at Desert Passage in Las Vegas, Nev., and a four-story riverboat at MGM Studios in Orlando, Fla.