



**Growing up surrounded by exotic animals** has given **Gretchen Schulz** a great love of nature. Taking that love and a deep appreciation for art, Gretchen has created and opened The Nature Gallery located on Foster Street in Downtown Dothan.

“My love of animals and the outdoors evolved into this gallery. My sister who has the same type of gallery in North Carolina inspired me. Then, I was eating at the Bistro one day and walked by this building. It looked perfect and had the vision I was looking for,” said Gretchen.

“It was a diamond in the rough. It was terrible, a mess. It didn’t have air or anything, but I could see through that,” she added.

With the help of her architect, **Gordon Marley**, and contractor **Mark Colby**, Gretchen was able to transform the building into a beautiful display. The Nature Gallery displays photography, paintings, pottery and jewelry that reflect the nature theme, along with gift items such as books and picture frames.

“All of the wall art are from local artists. I want the gallery to promote artists and the local area, but also to help educate the public on conservation and protecting nature,” Gretchen said.

With the help of her daughters, **Virginia Watford** and **Rebecca Wynn**, Gretchen has great plans to expand the gallery. “We will be having evening openings in the near future. We also plan to start offering art classes in the upstairs art studio. I’ve had several artists volunteer to teach classes,” Gretchen said.

The Nature Gallery will be open on Mon. – Fri. from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Sat. from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information on the gallery, please call 671-2050. **D**

**The River Nile Bistro** is back downtown! The café known for its amazing food, and fun atmosphere is making its new home on 274 North Foster Street across from the WTVY building.

“We’re really excited. We’re going to try to create the same look as the last location; it’s kind of our signature. We’re not really changing much, just moving locations,” said owner **Katie Bell Hart**.

“It’s so great being back downtown. It’s exciting to see it flourishing and growing. I’ve always loved this building,



even when we were downtown before. I’ve always admired it so I was excited that it was open. When you walk in the main entrance there are a few small rooms that we are going to rent out to cool, funky artists. So, you’ll get to

shop little venues before you walk up the stairs to eat,” she added.

The grand opening date hasn’t been set yet, but it is estimated for the middle of January. The River Nile’s hours will remain the same, Mon. – Sat. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. River Nile will have a new a new To-Go Parking area and there’s plenty of other parking spaces available nearby.

For more information on the River Nile Bistro and when to find out the date of the grand opening, please call Katie at 702-9111 or 333-0072. **D**

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The Downtown Group  
Post Office Box 1005  
Dothan, AL 36302

[www.TheDowntownGroup.com](http://www.TheDowntownGroup.com)

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