




HOME IN THE MEADOWS

Winn-Dixie's Jacksonville flagship sets a new standard for Southeastern Grocers' next wave of stores.

By Jim Dudlicek



When Southeastern Grocers — parent company of the Winn-Dixie, Bi-Lo and Harveys banners — moved to its new corporate headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla., it needed a new flagship supermarket. The result: Winn-Dixie Baymeadows, a 46,000-square-foot store about 4 miles away that raises the bar for new stores and remodels throughout the company.

“We wanted to represent a step change from where we have been, as well as a clear indicator on how we intend to satisfy our customers’ needs in the future,” explains Ian McLeod, Southeastern’s president and CEO.

A recent visit by *PG* to the Baymeadows store, which occupies a former Winn-Dixie location that had been vacant for several years, reveals an open, bright, welcoming shopping environment with a clear emphasis on fresh local produce, chef-driven prepared foods, everyday deals and top-notch customer service.

“This store has been designed with the customer in mind,” McLeod says. “Not only is the store visually pleasing and easy to navigate, it combines more contemporary design features to appeal to a wide variety of customers without compromising value, through our price investment program. We feel this store, these friendly associates and our always-low prices, as well as a commitment to shape our stores, products and offerings to the local community, separate us from our competitors in the area.”

QUALITY AND SERVICE

President/CEO Ian McLeod says Winn-Dixie is launching a new standard of service, from the deli, with Deli Manager Leslie Watkins (clockwise from bottom); to the Café, with barista Marco Williams; to local, natural and organic produce; to in-house smoked meats.





Creating Something Dynamic

The produce department greets shoppers as they enter the store with a vibrant display of color and visuals stressing “fresh” and “local,” drawing products from more than 50 Florida farms.

Also front and center is the new health food store-within-a-store, Naturally Better, featuring more than 4,000 natural and organic products.

“A common expectation among grocery shoppers throughout the world is a desire for quality food and

HIGHER EXPECTATIONS

Chef-inspired prepared foods like pressed sandwiches and dessert pizzas (above) are key components of the new Winn-Dixie, as explained by McLeod to PG Editor-in-Chief Jim Dudliceck (left).

service at an affordable price,” McLeod says. “We look for inspiration from everywhere on how best to offer the great value and quality of products at Winn-Dixie, but most importantly, we look to our customers.”

The Kitchen features a stone-hearth pizza oven and a smokehouse delivering brisket and pulled pork slow-cooked for up to 12 hours, in addition to many chef-driven recipes — developed by corporate chef Deanna Stephens (a *PG* Top Woman in Grocery) and her team — offered for enjoyment at home or on site.

The day of *PG*’s visit, the Kitchen offered samples of smoked meats and fruit-topped sweet pizzas, the latter of which elicited comments of “This is so cool!” from a couple of women perusing the selections.

“We developed an extensive product mix in the Kitchen, tailored to our customers’ tastes for quality, ready-made and make-at-home meals, from the smokehouse and in-store pizza shop, to hand-rolled sushi from our trained sushi chef, entrées, sides, quinoa salads and organic meals,” McLeod says. “Our Kitchen boasts made-from-scratch sauces for barbecue and pizza, and ready-made meal options.”



Points of Interest

At the nearby Café, baristas dispense fresh coffee from beans roasted on site for customers to sip in their seats or take along in the cup holders of their shopping carts. “We sent our employees to New York to be barista-trained,” McLeod says. The Café offers a full coffee menu that also includes Prestige Gelato and sorbet, with 12 favorites such as Key Lime Pie, White Chocolate Raspberry and Bananas Foster.

The Deli features more than 350 local and international artisanal cheeses, and is staffed by a trained American Cheese Society-certified cheese steward who can advise shoppers on recommendations and pairings. With up to 40 local artisanal cheeses, Baymeadows is the first Winn-Dixie to offer a full range of grass-fed milk cheeses. There’s also a host

BIG CHEESE

The Baymeadows deli department offers a vast array of charcuterie as well as fine imported cheeses, including at least one selection from CEO McLeod’s native Scotland that has become a big seller.

of charcuterie, with large, creative signage offering insights on the many varieties available.

“The idea is to create points of interest through the store. Stores tend to fall a bit flat at this point, so we created this area of interest,” McLeod says of the stylish deli area. “We wanted to create something more dynamic.”

Regarding the cheese selection, McLeod recounts, “I asked the buyers to indulge me: Can we have just one Scottish cheese?” The Scottish McLeod, who spent time running supermarkets in Australia before arriving in Jacksonville, proudly notes that the cheese has become a popular seller.

Service, Quality and Value

A full-service butcher shop offers natural and grass-fed beef, organic chicken, USDA Choice and Prime beef steaks, dry-aged beef, Berkshire pork, boar ribs, and an expanded assortment of fresh sausages and natural packaged meats.

“You can buy wild boar, deer, rabbit, elk,” McLeod says, “giving customers that breadth of choice they normally wouldn’t get.”

Adam Logan, fresh food manager, adds, “You

“**With a focus on stunning-quality food, serving with personality, and great value, this store has been tailored to the Baymeadows community’s tastes and preferences to help them eat well for less.**”

—Ian McLeod, president/CEO, Southeastern Grocers



MINDING OF THE MEATS

The butcher shop offers natural and organic meats, USDA Prime and Choice steaks, sustainable salmon, and a fresh daily catch of the day.

new to this store, churns out fresh sweet goods to great customer response, especially on weekends, McLeod notes.

The commercial bread aisle was relocated from center store to be adjacent to the in-store bakery. “Customers will cross-shop anyway, so this is more convenient for them,” McLeod explains.

In addition to local craft beers and wines in the main store, there’s a new separate spirits shop next door, including a special section dedicated to local Florida-based craft spirits such as St. Augustine Distillery.

“This store is an example of our mission to be constantly innovating while maintaining service, quality and value for our customers,” McLeod says. “The store also brings a new social café experience to our shoppers, giving them an opportunity to spend time with family, friends and our wonderful associates.”

An Opportunity to Shine

A bright spot in center store is the aforementioned Naturally Better section, a health-focused area with up to 4,500 natural and organic products, compared with 2,000 at most other locations.

“This area indexes highly for natural and organic,” McLeod says of the Baymeadows community. Similarly, the health and beauty section is positioned as a store-within-a-store.

Local products are also called out throughout the store, from Florida wines to hometown beers (Jacksonville has a vibrant craft community) to a local honey made by a 21-year-old who’s “passionate about his product,” McLeod says. “We like to give local products an opportunity to shine.”

Winn-Dixie Baymeadows has also been designed to make shopping a little easier for parents. The store features mini shopping carts for children and educational engagement throughout the store, with “moo moo!” and “cluck cluck!” sound features located near the milk and eggs, engaged through buttons at heights easy for kids to reach.

can buy meat and we’ll smoke it for you,” noting that snowbirds, visiting from up north and with limited kitchen facilities, come in for help cooking holiday meals.

There’s also a variety of seafood, including 4-Star BAP-certified sustainable salmon and a fresh catch of the day. A trained fishmonger offers guidance as well as “seafood made easy,” packaged with vegetables and seasonings, and ready to cook at home.

The bakery includes a full dessert case featuring specialty cakes, a patisserie with local cupcakes from Cupcake 50 Etc., cheesecakes from The Cheesecake Factory, and assorted artisanal breads. At least 10 varieties of artisanal breads are baked daily, along with bagels and croissants, plus 11 varieties of gluten-free bread. Additionally, a mini doughnut machine,



10915 Baymeadows Road
Jacksonville, FL 32256

Grand opening: Feb. 4, 2016

Total square footage: 45,956

Selling area: 31,736 square feet

SKUs: More than 40,000, including 4,000 natural and organic items; 450 fresh produce items; 260 beer varieties, including 150 craft brews; 1,000 wines; 350 artisan cheeses; and more than 100 local products

Employees: 107

Checkouts: 10, plus two kiosks

Hours: 7 a.m.-11 p.m. daily

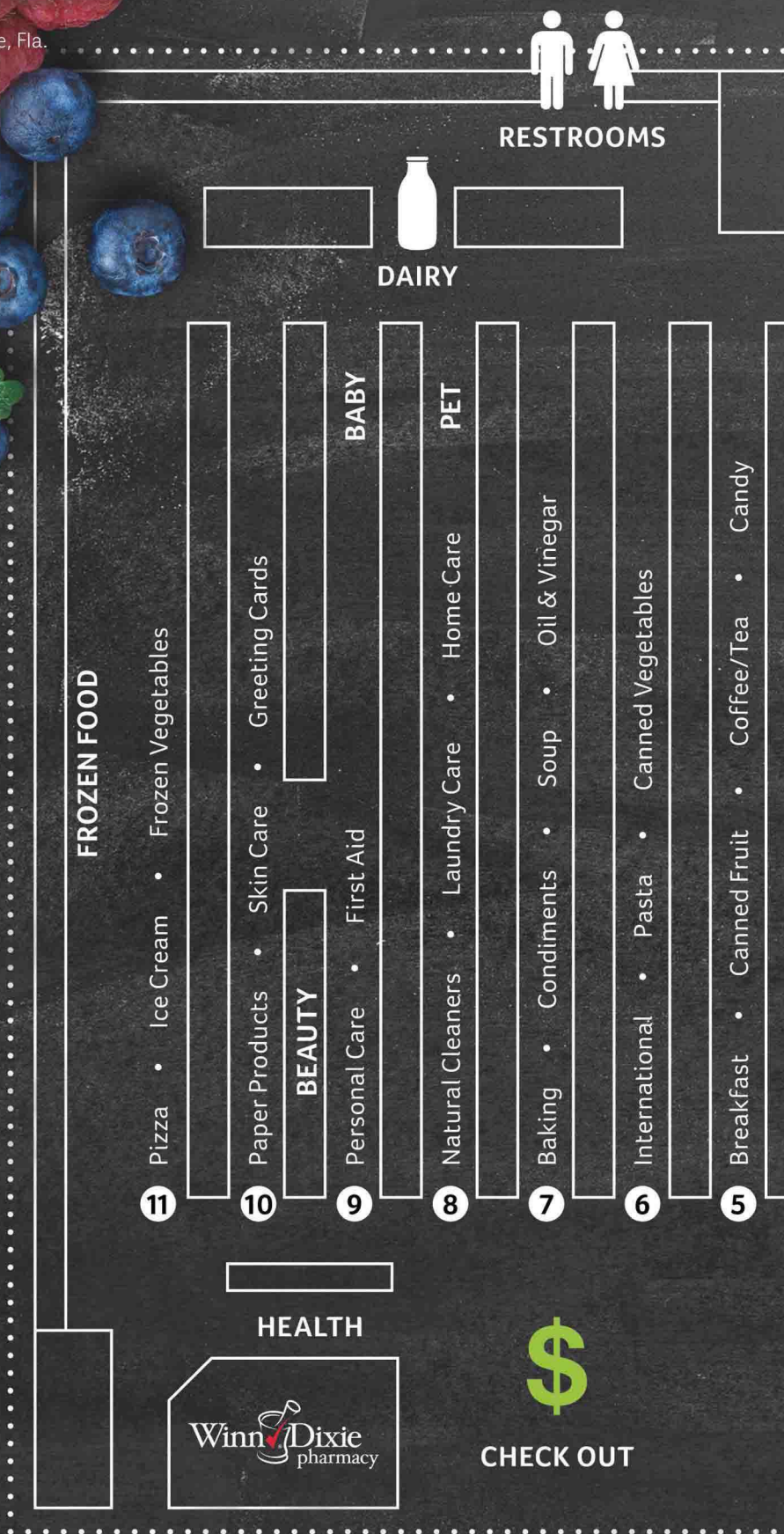
Designer: Southeastern Grocers

"We want to make sure customers get a sense of value," McLeod says, noting that Winn-Dixie has lowered prices on 3,000 items since last fall. The price-cutting campaign, driven home in commercials with special lyrics to Dolly Parton's hit song "9 to 5," has created "great engagement with the customer — strong recall and strong association with the brand," he asserts.

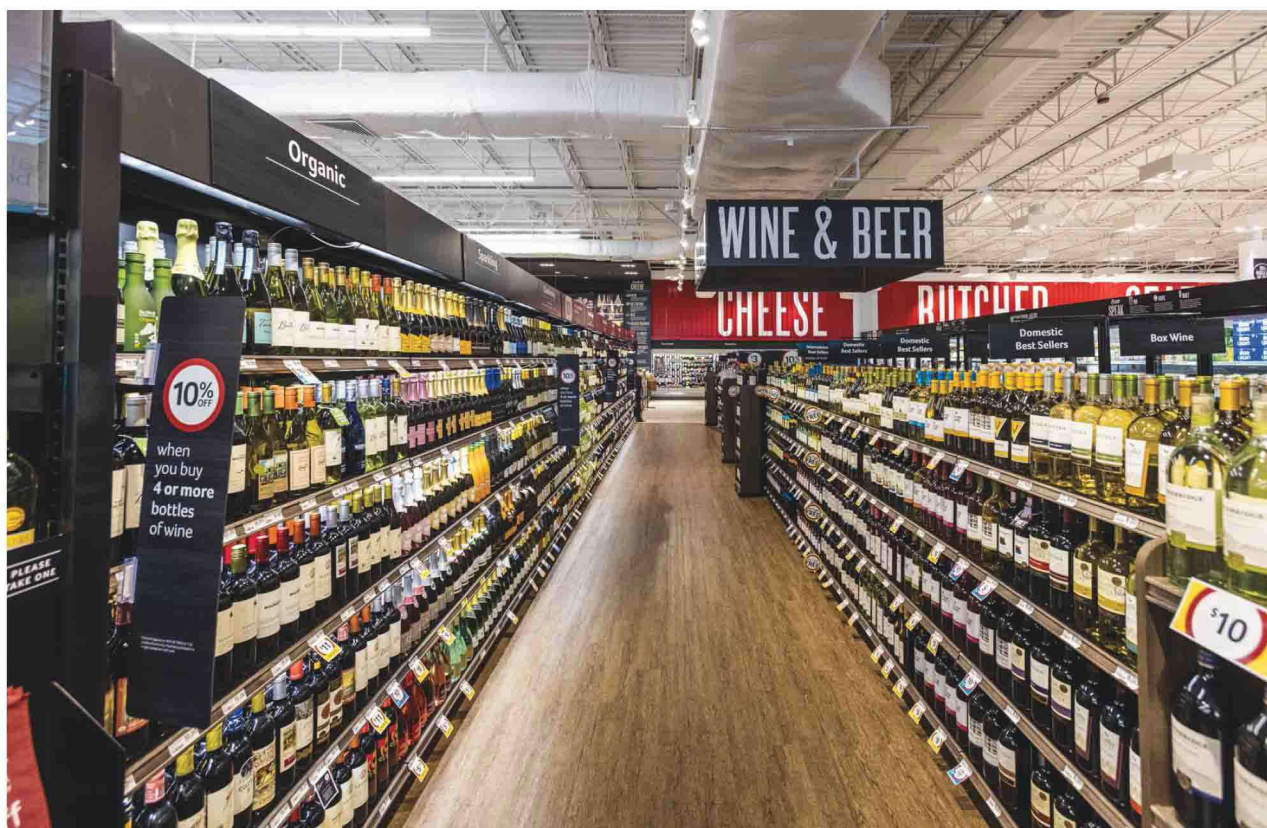
McLeod continues: "We believe in eating well for less. This means that while we are offering quality food, customers will not be paying more for their basket. Since October last year, we have invested over \$70 million into lowering our prices. We now have over 3,000 new lower prices, and over 600 products on Down Down — prices that are down and staying down."

A Notable Step Forward

Winn-Dixie has received an "incredible response" from customers since the Baymeadows store opened in February. "They tell us they love the product selection and meal inspiration, the friendly faces and helpful service they receive when they walk







through our doors, and the consistently affordable prices,” McLeod says. “This store and the offerings within it ultimately reflect the needs and preferences of the local community. We want them to feel that we’ve listened to them to best understand their expectations and needs, and that they can

VINE AND DANDY

Local wines and beers are featured selections in the Baymeadows spirits department, as well as being offered in a dedicated shop next to the supermarket.

turn to us for the selection and convenience they want most, with prices they can count on.”

With more than 2,600 new products at Baymeadows, the store provides Winn-Dixie’s suppliers with “a unique opportunity to provide innovation to our customers,” McLeod says, “but our suppliers that can strike the most effective balance between quality and value will certainly have the most opportunity in this store.”

Shoppers appear to love the Baymeadows store, so Winn-Dixie — which plans up to 50 remodels this year — should expect a similar response as it extends the store’s features to other markets. While incorporating its best practices, the company expects to create a unique identity for new stores in each community, according to McLeod.

“This store was a notable step forward in demonstrating to our customers and our associates how serious we are about transforming this business,” he says. “It clearly shows that we’re capable of great innovation and growth, and that we are completely focused upon shaping our stores to the unique tastes and preferences of the communities in which we operate.” **PG**

ABOUT SOUTHEASTERN GROCERS

Southeastern Grocers LLC, parent company of Bi-Lo, Harveys and Winn-Dixie grocery stores, is the second-largest supermarket in the Southeast based on store count. The company employs nearly 60,000 associates at 750 grocery stores, 140 liquor stores and 500 in-store pharmacies throughout Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina. Southeastern’s banners are well-known and -respected regional brands with deep heritages, strong neighborhood ties, proud histories of giving back, talented and loyal associates, and strong commitments to providing the best possible quality and value to customers. For more information, visit www.segrocers.com, www.winndixie.com, www.bi-lo.com and www.harveysupermarkets.com.

Founded in 1925, Winn-Dixie operates more than 500 grocery stores, 145 liquor stores and 390 in-store pharmacies in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi.