

## Buon *Fresco!*

**I**talian restaurant Sale e Pepe on Marco Island offers both a spectacular view of the Gulf and a beautiful indoor landscape to go with it. The Marco Beach Ocean Resort eatery's interior is a sight to behold, with marble floors, arabesque walls — and a hand-painted fresco by Orlando-based artist Rossen Tonkov.

Fresco comes from the Italian phrase "*buon fresco*," which means really fresh. The technique consists of painting pigment in a water medium on wet or fresh lime mortar or plaster.

"The fresco had to be in tune with the overall ambiance of the building," says Tonkov, who learned to paint murals at the Art Academy in Bulgaria, the country from which he originally hails. He adds that with the natural beauty of the Gulf as a backdrop, he needed to have something as close to the "real thing" as possible. "We had to pretend it was a 500-year-old piece



Tonkov's fresco adds ambiance to the dining experience at Sale e Pepe.

of art, so it had to be aged and textured."

The fresco is the restaurant's showpiece and can be seen from every seat in the restaurant. It adds much to the surroundings and creates an incomparable dining experience. *Buon appetito!*