GROWERTALKS

Front Lines

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New Botanic in 'bama

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A brand new restaurant/growing/garden retail complex called Botanic just opened in Opelika, Alabama, in September and *Green Profit* got an inside look at the gorgeous grounds. Long-time greenhouse structures expert Chuck Sierke initially told me about the place and put me in touch with King Braswell, who is co-owner along with his wife, Stacy Brown, (creator of restaurant chain Chicken Salad Chick) as they celebrated the grand opening on September 6. King is quick to give Stacy the credit for this venture:

"The real story is Stacy Brown. She is the founder of a 300-unit restaurant concept called The Chicken Salad Chick, who has found the incredible world of horticulture. With Botanic she is bringing together horticulture worlds that include a 12-acre consumable campus that grows cut floral greens, cut flowers, edible fruit crops and hydroponic vegetable production. She is merging this world with two on-site restaurants. One is a reservation-only farm-to-table fine-dining restaurant and the other a first-come, first-served casual dining in a garden setting. The latter is set in a newly constructed retractable roof greenhouse manufactured by Cravo. Finally, she is adding cottages on campus to fully complete her vision of what southern hospitality means to her."

On opening day the garden center, market, patio bar and Grille restaurant were ready to take on customers. The Garden restaurant was still under construction. **GP**

Pictured: King sent over a flurry of photos, and our videographer Osvaldo Cuevas created a video slideshow you can view on our YouTube page, www.YouTube.com/GrowerTalks.