

Star News

SATURDAY, February 6, 2010

Coastal North Carolina's News Leader Since 1867 \$1.50

Call of the coastal cottage

Captured in a new Carolina Beach community



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Published: Saturday, February 6, 2010 at 10:55 a.m.

When that wave of nostalgia washes over you at the Cottages at Seagrove, it will definitely be mixed with sand and sea salt. The new Carolina Beach community was designed to evoke the summer vacations of a bygone childhood -- trails to explore, amenities within easy reach and, above all, the ocean close at hand.

Some of you former children are likely to recognize the wide porches, the sound of rain on a metal roof and the raucous scream of seagulls spiraling overhead.

"We've tried to come up with classic North Carolina beach architecture at a price point that will allow a family in Raleigh or Charlotte or D.C. to have a second home at the beach," said Jimmy Hopkins of Intracoastal New Homes & Condominiums. "It's also a great price point for empty nesters or people who want to live at the beach full-time but don't want to have a huge house."

Depending on the model, that price point is somewhere in the mid- to high \$300s -- and, for that, he says, "you get a whole lot of house."

The Seagrove community got its start in 2006 with large, custom homes, filled with granite, stainless steel, ceramic and hardwoods. In that section all completed homes have been sold, but home sites remain for anyone interested in a larger, custom home. The Cottages are just getting started. There are 106 total home sites in the entire community, and 42 cottages will be part of that mix.

"You still get a lot of the same features as the large homes," said Hopkins. "They range from 1,500 square feet to about 2,200."

Here at the start-up phase of the cottage community, it's still possible to choose colors and finishes, even styles and floor plans. "We're trying to make it unique so it looks like an old community and no two houses are exactly alike."

The neighborhood is about six blocks from the beach, and many of the neighbors have those street-legal golf carts so they can scoot down the road carrying beach chairs, umbrellas and coolers. Through a beach access agreement with Golden Sands, home of the locally famous Tiki Bar, residents have not only the use of the hotel's beach parking but also enjoy a convenient source of those tropical fruit cocktails with those little party-colored umbrellas.

In the other direction, looking westward toward the Cape Fear River, the property backs up to U.S. government land, never to be developed. "So you're literally in the middle of one of the few maritime forests left in the area," he said.

"The main thing is it's very classic. You can see the beach cottage styling, and they have all rear access so you can park out back. We try to encourage people to sit on their porches and actually get to know their neighbors and enjoy that slower pace of life."

The neighborhood has won environmental awards due to huge swaths of conservation areas and hiking trails. Even more to the point, no grass shall be grown in this neighborhood.

Because, let's face it, grass isn't much interested in growing in this sand, and it's pretty much counter-productive to try to force the issue.

"It's all as landscaped as we can possibly get it, and much more eco-friendly," Hopkins said. "Pretty landscaping with mulch and native plants looks better anyway, and for second homes and for retirees that's the goal."

A pool and a full clubhouse are part of the package, and sidewalks definitely play a leading role in the overall ambience.

"In that price range, as quick as we can frame them and get them up, people are putting in contracts," he said. "Most people are waiting to see what the house looks like, and at least at this point they can make some selections."

Hopkins runs the welcome center at 1237 Spot Lane, but the cottage he was using as a model home is now under contract. Others sprouting up nearby will soon be completed, but are just as likely to become immediately unavailable for touring.

"This is proof that if you price it right and build it at the right price point, people will buy it," he said.

Visit the Web site at SeagroveAtCBeach.com or call 910-509-7468.



Top: Gorgeous kitchens feature center islands, breakfast nooks and amazing storage. Bottom: Open living areas are designed for casual living and entertaining.