

A Sea Trail to Paradise



Dedicated golfer married to a serious beach lover? No need to debate. This community has it all in one place.

By Sandra Chambers

In the early 1970s, Henry and Pat DeMattia began spending their family vacations in the Brunswick Islands of North Carolina, at Ocean Isle and Sunset Beach.

“We were living in Maryland at the time,” says Pat, “and we always said that if we could, we’d like to retire down here.”

Some 30 years later, in 2001, the dream came true. The DeMattias built a four-bedroom home on the Byrd golf course at Sea Trail Golf Resort & Convention Center, just a couple miles from the pristine sands of Sunset Beach. They say it’s a great place to host visits from their six grandchildren, ages 2 to 21.

“When they come here there’s always lots to do,” Pat says. “In addition to the pool and beach, they like to visit the Coastal Carolina Museum at Oak Island and Ingram Planetarium at Sunset Beach.

“And if you want great entertainment, shopping, dining and shows, we’re less than a half-hour from Myrtle Beach.”

While there’s been a tremendous growth spurt in Brunswick County in the last few years, Sea Trail is by no means the new kid on the block. With some 1,600 residents, including both retirees and younger people buying second homes, it’s been evolving for 20 years. Yet it still has plenty of choice properties to offer.



Left: Hit the links just a few steps from home at one of Sea Trail’s three golf courses. Above: Sugar Mill Villas are just one of Sea Trail’s many home options.





The living room of this Champions Villa home leads to an adjoining porch with fairway views.

“People feel they have discovered a well-kept secret when they find us,” says Chris Robertson, the community’s marketing director.

A 2,000-acre property of winding creeks, man-made lakes and lush woodlands, Sea Trail is the perfect community for those seeking premier golf and/or resort beach living, since it has both in spades.

Golfers Will Never Get Bored

Golf is serious business at Sea Trail: With 58 holes on three championship signature golf courses, the community had the honor of hosting the qualifier rounds for the 2006 U.S. Open. It also received Course of Distinction honors on *Golfweek’s* America’s Best Residential Golf Courses listings for 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Sea Trail’s three courses were designed by some of the best-known names in golf – Dan Maples, Rees Jones and Willard Byrd. While all three courses are built over rolling terrain and through forested areas of pine, dogwood and live oak, each course reflects the unique design philosophy of its architect. The result is three distinctly different experiences.

The Maples course, a par-72, opened in 1985. Magnificent ancient live oaks and large pines frame this traditional Southern course, which was

awarded 4½ stars by *Golf Digest*. The course offers water on 10 holes and massive waste bunkers, with five holes winding along the scenic Calabash Creek, which is home to nesting ospreys and other native wildlife.

The Rees Jones course, also a par-72, opened in 1990 and features generous fairways, dramatic mounds and water on 11 holes. In 1999, renovations brought a more naturalized look to the course with native grasses and wildflower plantings. In 2006, *Golf Digest* named this course one of the Top 100 Courses in North Carolina.

The Byrd course opened in 1991. This par-72 layout is built around several manmade lakes. The scenic 18th hole winds between two beautiful ponds leading to a picturesque finish at the Jones/Byrd Clubhouse. This 4½-star course has been named One of the Top 50 Courses in the Myrtle Beach Area by *Golf Digest*.

“You’ll never get bored playing golf here,” says Tom Plankers, president of golf at Sea Trails. “Each course is very different, and each offers a unique challenge.”

Pat DeMattia says she plays golf three times a week at Sea Trail.

“I belong to several ladies’ leagues and we just have a lot of fun,” she says. “We also have lots of tournaments for good causes such as Rally for the

Cure (for breast cancer), for which we recently raised \$7,000.”

The backup services for golfers are also first-rate. Sea Trail has two golf clubhouses, each with pro shops, a custom-clubs store, a PGA-sanctioned golf learning center, a lighted driving range and two putting greens. A full-service restaurant, Magnolias Fine Food & Spirits, is located at the Jones/Byrd clubhouse. Under the supervision of Executive Chef Thomas Sullivan, Magnolias offers breakfast, lunch, gourmet dinners, catering services and weekly featured buffets.



Leisurely bike rides along Sunset Beach are a breeze with the sand’s hard, smooth surface.

Beach and Other Amenities

Karen Hutchinson, broker-in-charge at Sea Trail Realty, says the community has a great mix of residents evenly divided between golfers and beach lovers – great news for those who prefer one or the other, but are married to someone who craves the opposite.

For those who choose a beach ball over a golf ball, there’s a free shuttle to Sunset Beach just five minutes away. This family-oriented beach, the No. 1 ranked barrier island on the N. C. coast, is three miles long, with a hard enough surface to allow biking on the sand and an extended pier that’s a favorite with fishermen. Sun worshippers access the beach via a floating bridge across the Intra-coastal Waterway. The bridge is North Carolina’s last floating bridge still in operation.

Offshore, a small uninhabited island can be accessed by foot or bike during low tide. A favorite spot for picnickers and hikers, this island has a single mailbox with a notebook for visitors to add their thoughts.

Back at Sea Trail, the Village Activity Center is the hub of Sea Trail’s other amenities, and includes an outdoor/indoor pool, a whirlpool, spa services and a variety of fitness classes including Pilates, yoga, water aerobics, water yoga and shag dancing. The Village Center also has an Oasis Pool Bar offering deli sandwiches and drinks.

In addition to the Village Activity Center, there are two private clubhouses just for residents: The Resort Swim and Tennis Club and the Plantation Swim and Tennis Club each offer a fitness center and gym, Jacuzzi, sauna, indoor and outdoor pool, and whirlpool.

There are biking and hiking trails that follow the Sea Trail road throughout the development. Owners also enjoy four tennis courts, badminton, volleyball, croquet, meeting facilities, a library and a chapel. Sea Trail even has its



The 62,000-square-foot Sea Trail Convention Center offers space for everything from weddings and family reunions to business conferences.

The Convention Center

In addition to being a private residential community, Sea Trail offers the largest convention center on the N.C. coast. Boasting more than 62,000 square feet of meeting and function space, the resort and convention center hosts business meetings, retreats, family reunions, church groups and weddings year-round.

own urgent-care medical complex adjacent to the property, and there is a hospital 15 miles to the north.

If you're looking for a group to join, *The Sea Trailer*, the community newsletter, lists clubs and activities galore, including a garden club, a pinocle group, bridge groups, book clubs, support groups and a nondenominational Bible study.

Children and grandkids will find that the Village Activity Center offers a variety of activities geared to them, such as arts and crafts, games, movies and a weekly kids'-night-out party with planned activities, pizza and a movie.

Multiple Home Options

When Sea Trail is finished, it will have a total of 922 single family homes, 228 town homes and 469 condos/villas.

There are currently 31 lots available in two

new developments. Twenty-three of them are in the newly released Sea Horse Estate fairway lots, situated on the first three holes of the Rees Jones course, and sell for \$272,000-plus.

"These premier lots will easily fit 3,000-4,000-square-foot custom-built homes," says broker Karen Hutchinson. Buyers can build now or later, with no time limit.

Brookwood Park II, another newly opened section near the north entrance to Sea Trail, will be a quaint neighborhood with 33 interior lots, eight of which are still available. Wooded or open home sites are available beginning at \$125,000.

The Townhomes on Eastwood Bluff, located on the second and third holes of the Byrd course, offers the added bonus of being maintenance-free. There will be 88 town homes in all, with 85 still available for purchase. Each three-level luxury town home is more than 2,300 square feet,



Residents take a splash in the outdoor pool at the Village Activity Center.

and each has its own private elevator. Two available floor plans include three bedroom suites, each with its own bath, granite countertops, fireplace, crown molding and hardwood floors. Eastwood Bluff town homes range from \$600,000 to \$800,000.

There are also 50 resale lots available throughout Sea Trail, and resale single-family homes begin at \$300,000. Resort villas and condominiums are between \$200,000 and \$400,000 and can be rented out through Sea Trail's rental program. And with the purchase of any real estate property, the initiation fee for a golf membership is waived.

"What's so great about Sea Trail is the great variety of home options, and the wide variety of architectural styles," says Hutchinson. "One of our most popular designs has been the Charleston-style single family homes. With 1,800 to 2,600 square feet, they offer up to five bedrooms with a resale price of around \$589,000."

Beyond the Front Door

Sea Trail is an ideal location for those who want lots of sunshine, relaxation and easy access to amenities afforded by larger cities. Just 15 minutes southwest of Sunset Beach is Calabash, N.C., which has earned the moniker "The Seafood Capital of the World." An abundance of seafood restaurants line the waterfront, and picturesque views of shrimp boats abound.

As Pat DeMattia says, 30 minutes to the south is Myrtle Beach, with its beach life, live entertainment theaters and outlet shopping.

Forty minutes to the north lies the historic antebellum town of Wilmington, N.C., famous for its film industry, theater, arts, museums, charming shops and excellent dining establishments.

"When you want great entertainment, shopping and food, it's very close by, but when you want quiet and solitude, you have it here at Sea Trail," says Pat DeMattia. "We couldn't be happier. We live in paradise!" 🏠

Some 85 homes remain in The Townhomes on Eastwood Bluff, located on the Byrd course.

At a Glance

Sea Trail is located near Sunset Beach, the southernmost island in North Carolina. Housing options include single-family homes, luxury town homes, villas and condos ranging from \$200,000 to \$800,000-plus. Residents enjoy 58 holes of golf on three championship signature courses. Other amenities include beach access, a restaurant, a village activity center, two private clubhouses, tennis and the largest convention center located on the N. C. coast. A one-night Discovery Package with room, discounted golf rates and breakfast is available for \$99.

Contact:
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Life's a beach at Sea Trail. As this aerial view shows, a walk on the sand or a dip in the ocean is just minutes away.

For those who seek solitude with access to big-city amenities, Sea Trail's location is a perfect match.

