WELLENPARK



WHERE WE **ALL CAME FROM BEFORE WE GOT HERE**

BY CHARMAINE ENGELSMAN-ROBINS

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

hen new residents of the Sunshine State get their Florida license tags, they often hang on to the old "homestate" plate and display it proudly in their garage or in some other conspicuous, highly visible place. A matter of pride and

SEE WELCOME, A4 ▶

License plate collector Jeff Poulton and artist Barry Thorne with an original art piece of the United States commissioned for the new Wellen Park Welcome Center.

SIP & SERVE

Barrel & Bean: Where everybody knows your name

BY CHARMAINE ENGELSMAN-ROBINS

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Residents are getting to know the on-site local businesses that bring something of a

small town feel to the Wellen Park community. venue an "everybody knows your name" Recent addition Barrel & Bean is adjacent type of place, right down to emphasizing to the new Welcome Center — and logically so; managing partner Tommy Villani strives to make the coffee shop, wine and craft beer

the various Wellen Park areas with themed

SEE BEAN, A2 ▶



WELLEN PARK JOURNAL PHOTO

Pickling for a Purpose

IslandWalk residents raise money for mammograms. A6 ►



To market

Head to CoolToday Park on Wednesdays for fresh air, fresh produce and more. A8 ▶



Around town

Activities connect residents of Renaissance at Wellen Park.

A34 ▶



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Publisher Brandi Riede brandi.riede@floridaweekly.com

Editor Cindy Pierce cpierce@floridaweekly.com

Presentation Editor Eric Raddatz eraddatz@floridaweekly.com

Contributing Writers Robin DeMattia, Patricia Horwell, Glenn Miller, Charmaine Engelsman-Robins

> Photographer Chris Tilley

Production Manager Alisa Bowman abowman@floridaweekly.com

Graphic Designers Chris Andruskiewicz · Emma Campos Linda Iskra · Scott Sleeper

> Circulation Supervisor Alea Feeley alea.feeley@floridaweekly.com

Account Executives Suzanne Beiner sbeiner@floridaweekly.com

Operations Manager Kelli Carico

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BEAN

From page 1

"Neighborhood Nights and sandwiches named after the neighborhoods."

Mr. Villani and his staff have been working overtime to map out events that will work well in the constantly changing world of living in a pandemic. They have come up with some adaptable ideas, such as having small gatherings on the open patio out back, an area many have already staked claim to as a great spot to relax and watch Wellen Park's breathtaking sunsets.

They're also lining up Wednesday, Friday and Saturday live music for "Sunset on the Patio" performances. Already featured (and likely returning) is the popular duo R.P.M., delivering great acoustic covers of more of your favorite songs than can fit in one sunset (and if you express interest, they might even do a couple of their amazing original tunes for you).

If you're a breakfast person, you can get your day off to a great start at Barrel & Bean as early as 7 a.m. (night-owls can also get breakfast at a more civilized later hour). The locally roasted Venetian coffee is especially complimentary to the made-in-house pastries (which you'll note get rave reviews online), and the variety of quiches offered will keep you coming back to try them all.

Lunch is served until 4 p.m., and the panini's —again, each named for a Wellen Park neighborhood — feature Boar's Head meats. Happy hour from 2-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday offers some intriguing small plates that are fast becoming favorites among Wellen Park residents and visitors alike.

Barrel & Bean has also launched ticketed wine/ beer pairing dinners, which have been a big success. Keep an eye on Barrel & Bean's Facebook page for the latest information and a chance to get an advance glance at the menu. And by all means, stop in and have a cup o' joe.



The patio at Barrel & Bean provides stunning sunsets and plenty of seating options.



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"It took quite a while to make this piece, well over 100 hours. It wasn't easy, but it was very rewarding." — Barry Thorne, artist

WELCOME

From page 1

identity, it can serve as sort of a visual shout-out and bonding symbol to others from that area.

Adjusting to thinking of any new locale as "home" can take some doing; in fact, most of us never quite let go of wherever we're "from."

When artist and retired educator Barry Thorne — who is "from" Michigan — was asked to create a large original work of art for Wellen Park's new Welcome Center, he knew it would be a challenge. It had to be something that would symbolize the coming together of so many people from so many places, all choosing this place for their new

What do we all have in common?, Mr. Thorne wondered.

Every state has its own myriad of symbols from flowers, birds and mottos to food specialties, sports teams and histories. Each has things that are unique to them ... but what do they share?

One sure bet, he determined, is pride in the specifics that everybody loves about their home state. And many of those specifics — state symbols and slogans, etc. — are displayed in a common format: the lowly license plate.

The realization resulted in a plan for the perfect piece of Welcome Center art. Mr. Thorne, a member (and instructor) of the North Port Area Arts Center, would gather license plates from every state in the union to represent every Wellen Park resident's roots.



VM18

CHRIS TILLEY / WELLEN PARK

Above: Barry Thorne with the art piece of the **United States created for** the Wellen Park Welcome Center.

Right: Sarasota National resident Jeff Poulton at the Welcome Center with some of the stars he creates from license plates he collects.

Before the assemblage could begin, he put many hours into preparation for both the art and its

installation. He checked the suitability of the desired 10-by-7-foot display space, created a template, configured the finished weight of

the piece and the suitable sturdiness of the wall where it was to reside.

And then there was a little matter of securing all of those license plates from other

Thankfully, the Wellen Park marketing team knew who could help source the license plates. Wellen Park resident Jeff Poulton is a collector of old license plates, from the common to the rare. He belongs to several established groups of aficionados who search out, swap, create with, sell and seriously collect license plates. (Who knew?) It wasn't long before the necessary tens-of-pounds of plates arrived, and the project advanced from a plan to a work in progress. (If you're interested in this hobby, check out Mr. Poulton's Facebook page or reach out via email to jp0294@aol. com. You can also see some license plates he has transformed into unique stars, both large and small, in the Welcome Center.)

"It took quite some time to make this piece, well over 100 hours," Mr. Thorne says about his piece commissioned for the center. "It wasn't easy," he adds, "but it was very rewarding."

The project got lots of likes and reposts (from the NPAAC web page and social media), connecting him with new people. It also brought attention to Mr. Thorne's other assemblage art, including his intriguing steampunk pieces.

Even residents who think they know everything about Wellen Park should visit the Welcome Center to check out the awesome assemblage of state license plates. Bring your smart phone so you can post a selfie pointing to both your beloved "from" state and your new home. And be sure to tag @WellenPark so all your friends "back home" know you're living your best day ever, every day.





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ALL WELLEN GOOD

"Pickling for a Purpose"

IslandWalk residents raise money for mammograms

In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, IslandWalk residents hit the pickleball courts over several days in October and raised more than \$8,000 to help provide nocost mammograms for local uninsured or underinsured women.

With the fundraiser open to all IslandWalk residents, both pickleball and non-pickleball players were drawn to "Pickling for a Purpose" to donate to the worthy cause. Many expressed appreciation to the organizers for the opportunity to help deserving women in the community.

The "Island Walk Rocks" ladies upon request did not hesitate to help out by painting breast cancer inspired rocks that were offered to anyone who made a donation; they could either keep the rock for themselves or give it to someone going through their personal breast cancer journey.

Donors were encouraged to fill out pink pickleball stickers with words of inspiration to honor those who are battling cancer or others who have sadly lost their battle. The stickers were added to a "Pickling for a Purpose" banner designed by Venice Print Center.

There were giveaways to all donors, and for every \$10 donation, the donor earned a raffle ticket for a chance to win one of five prizes.

Many pickleball players also took up the "Dink for Pink" dinking challenge, with the two winners donning pink hats donated by Viking Pickleball (for the win, Kren McManus and Beth Bergun dinked back and forth an incredible 823 times).

And finally, one generous IslandWalk resident stepped up to match up to \$2,500 raised. Shortly after the tournament wrapped



"The response by our IslandWalk community was heartwarming and overwhelming," says organizer Sharon Ransom. "In light of so many nonprofit fundraising efforts sidelined by the pandemic, the collective

Rita Bertler, president of Dollars for Mammograms, at left, and event organizer Sharon Ransom.



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Happy Flowers vendors Anne and Jim Bellinder.

ANNALEE HALL / WELLEN PARK JOURNAL

FUN-LOVING LIFESTYLES

To market, to market

Head to CoolToday Park on Wednesdays for fresh air, fresh produce and more

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

The Atlanta Braves knocked it out of the park when they launched a farmers market at their CoolToday Park last fall. The convenient location in Wellen Park along with plenty of parking makes the Wednesday morning market attractive for both customers and vendors.

"It's awesome for our customers," Stephanie Brocardi Albin, owner of Sassy Tarts, says of the market's location. "People are less stressed when they come to the market because they don't have to worry about where to park or if they even can park. That's really tremendous."

Ms. Albin's father, Jean Pierre Brocardi, is "the charming French guy" she sends to the market to sell her baked goods. The most popular items are chicken pot pies, beef burgundy pot pies and a Key lime tart with a wild blueberry swirl.

Sassy Tarts is one of more than 30 food and agriculture vendors who set up shop each week.

Anne Bellinder, the owner of Happy Flowers, sells fresh-cut flowers and arrangements made from dozens of flower varieties she imports from Ecuador and Columbia.

^aYou name it, we have it," she says, adding popular flowers include Dutch purple hydrangea, orchids, carnations, lilies and Gerbera daisies.

Ron and Betty Joe Baca of Baca Breads sell

nine different flavors of challah bread (Mr. Baca recommends the cinnamon raisin for French toast and onion or New York rye for sandwiches). The couple's business is in the process to becoming certified as a kosher bakery.

Other vendors provide local and organic fresh produce, meats, seafood, dairy, herbs, syrups, salsa and more.

Market Manager Lee Perron says he and

his team have spent a lot of time curating "what we believe are the finest vendors in the region." He works with local vendors as well as some who drive to CoolToday Park every week from Naples and Miami.

Mr. Perron's organization, Friends of Sara-

sota County Parks, launched the Englewood Farmers Market in 2011 and still operates that in addition to one in Venice and the Atlanta Braves market. A nonprofit organization, the Friends group has donated almost \$200,000 in proceeds from vendor fees to charities such as food banks and health-care clinics.

All three markets accept, and even double, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

SNAP) benefits.
"A big part of our mission is to address

SEE MARKET, A22 ▶

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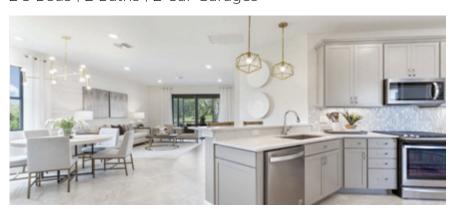






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Discover the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art

BY CHARMAINE ENGELSMAN-ROBINS

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

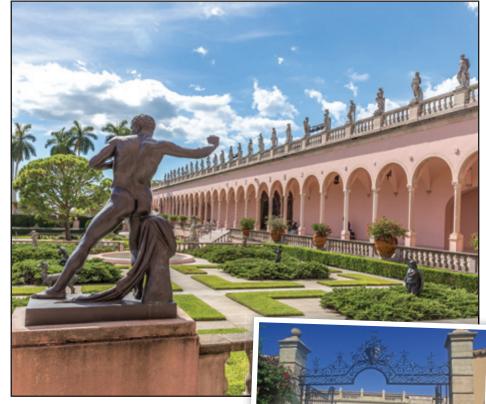
The State Museum of Florida, the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota has 21 galleries of more than 10,000 pieces of art in paintings and sculpture but also drawings, photographs, prints and more.

The beautiful building is a work of art on its own, established during the Roaring Twenties when the Ringlings were still enjoying their pre-Great Depression heyday. The elegant décor is like stepping into another place and time. Its beauty is bound to captivate you nearly as much as the art pieces, including the most-popular 16th to 20th century European paintings and a world-renowned collection of some of Reubens' most breath-taking works.

Like everything else, the museum has had to make some adjustments to comply with ever-changing guidelines of the unprecedented global pandemic, but a venue of this size and scope has a much easier time accommodating visitors than smaller public places might.

Before you Wander with Wellen to this fabulous museum, here are some things you should know*:

- Visitors are encouraged to purchase tickets online.
- Groups are limited to a maximum of 10 people.
- Masks are required inside the museum and encouraged on the grounds.
- Even in this generous setting, occupancy at any time is being limited to comply with social distancing guidelines.
- Docent-led tours are not currently being offered, but online guides and maps are available.



Above: The courtyard at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. Right: An entrance to the museum.

- Trams are operating only for visitors whose mobility is limited (and their personal care attendant).
- The Ringling Art Library is closed.
- Both the Ringling Grillroom and Mable's Coffee and Tea are open at this writing.

before venturing out, check the website or call

*Information is subject to change;

the museum.

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>> Admission: \$25 for adults, \$23 for seniors, \$5 for ages 5-17 years of age. Children 5 and under are admitted free, as are members. Yearly passes are \$25.

Adjusted admission prices (with current ID) are offered to active U.S. military (\$15), Florida teachers (\$10) and college students (\$5, with students of FSU, USF, SCF, NCF and RCAD admitted free).

In keeping with the aim of "Museums for All," guests presenting a current, state-issued I.D. and their card for SNAP, WIC or other EBT benefits are granted free museum admission for the holder and up to four guests.

The museum and gardens are open to the public for free on Mondays.

>> Info: www.ringling.org (register for email alerts if you'd like to plan your visit to catch a special event)





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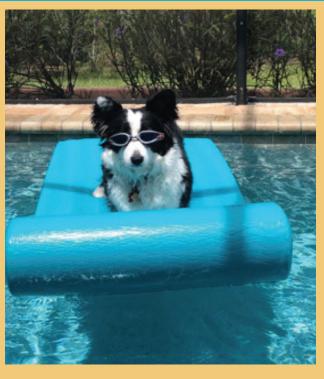
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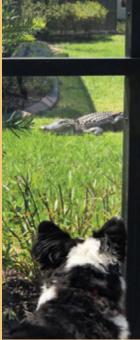
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GUNNER

This handsome guy, who moved to Renaissance with his humans Willie and Janice Ward from Connecticut 2 1/2 years ago, loves to play hide-and-seek on the lanai.



JORIE MARIE

Everyone around Sarasota National loves to pet this sweet border collie/shepherd mix as she walks with her owners around the neighborhood.



Welcome to the **Wellen Park Pet Parade**, where we share pictures sent in by the proudest pet owners in our pet-loving community. Rest assured that whether your best animal buddy is a cat, a bird, a rabbit or even a reptile, we want to see it and share it in the Wellen Park Journal and on our social channels.

Submit your pet pics via email to info@wellenpark.com or via Facebook messenger @wellenparkfl. We'll do our best to include them in the next Wellen Park Pet Parade and on our social channels.



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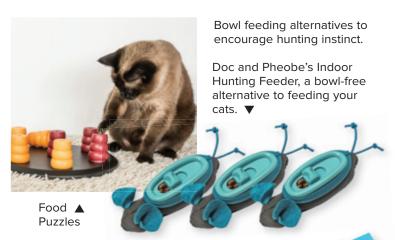
PET TIPS

From veterinarian Andrea
Daniels of West Villages
Animal Clinic
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For the gift-giving season, Dr. Andrea suggests these presents for your pets, from simple stocking stuffers to outrageous splurges. **Happy holidays!**

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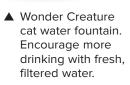
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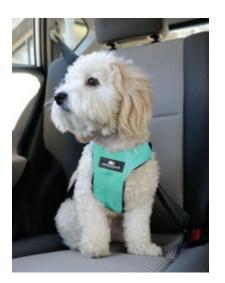


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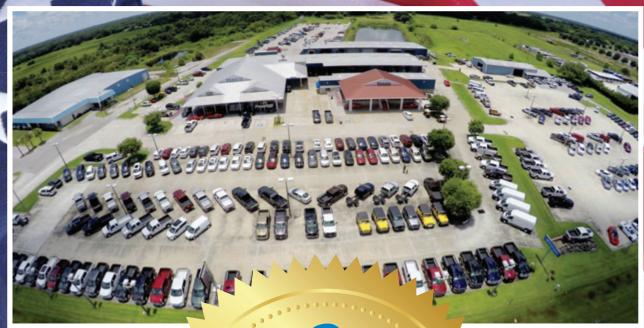


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Peachwave Frozen Yogurt: A family's dream come true

BY CHARMAINE ENGELSMAN-ROBINS

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Everyone has a story to tell and the Tinslev family, the owners of Peachwave West Villages, were eager to share how they came to open a frozen yogurt shop six minutes from their home in Wellen Park.

Vanessa Tinsley, the friendly face behind the counter in the shop in West Villages Marketplace at Wellen Park, holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Duke University and is a former college professor and administrator. She and husband, Rob Tinsley, bought their IslandWalk home as their second home when they moved from North Carolina to England for Rob's job as a regional sales manager in telecommunications. They would spend school holidays in Florida for several weeks a few times a year.

When they moved back to the U.S. in 2017, they decided to make their IslandWalk home their full-time residence. Having never lived in the area before, they wanted to become more involved in the community and plant

"I think a lot of people dream of having a little neighborhood shop where neighbors can meet or see each other," Vanessa muses. "I always did. At first, I thought 'Maybe a coffee shop?' ... but I'm not an early riser."

It was the closing of the nearest frozen yogurt shop (a favorite of 16-year-old Isabelle, youngest of their three children) that got the ball rolling. When the shop was closing last year, Isabelle suggested opening a frozen yogurt shop as her mom's new business. And that's how Peachwave West Villages came to be.

But even the best-laid plans can suffer a



CHARMAINE ENGELSMAN-ROBINS / WELLEN PARK JOLIRNAL

Left to right: Isabelle, Rob and Vanessa Tinsley keep things all in the family at Peachwave Frozen Yogurt in the Marketplace at Wellen Park.

heavy blow in the face of such unexpected obstacles as a worldwide pandemic. The planned March 2020 opening was delayed until late May; and instead of opening as a self-serve, build-your-own-treat concept, the shop opened with the staff making yogurt

When Florida entered Phase 3 of reopening in October, Peachwave returned to the self-

serve concept, with customers filling their own cups with yogurt and toppings. They can choose from (or combine) a dozen yogurt flavors and more than 50 toppings. Additions and updates are often posted on the Peachwave West Villages Facebook and Instagram pages. Among the favorite flavors are pistachio gelato, peanut butter yogurt, Pineapple Dole Whip and the unique taste of Euro Tart

"I think a lot of people dream of having a little neighborhood shop where neighbors can meet or see each other. I always did. At first, I thought 'Maybe a coffee shop?' ... but I'm not an early riser."

> — Vanessa Tinsley, owner Peachwave Frozen Yogurt

yogurt. Peachwave also offers create-yourown shakes and smoothies as well as root beer and Orange Creamsicle floats. Toppings include fresh fruit, crumbled waffle cones, edible cookie dough, brownie pieces, popping boba pearls, chopped nuts, crushed candy and cookie toppings, freshly whipped cream and a sweet selection of syrups and sauces.

Peachwave also actively supports community groups and has partnered with the local schools, food pantries, family shelters and summer camps.

At 12157 Mercado Drive (next to the UPS Store near Publix), Peachwave's current hours are 2-9 p.m. Monday-Friday; noon to 9 p.m. Saturday; and noon to 8 p.m. Sunday. Most credit cards are accepted, along with ApplePay and, of course, good old cash. Limited inside and outside seating is available.

Check it out. This peach of a neighborhood shop has lots of delicious treats to offer everyone fortunate enough to live in or visit Wellen Park.



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HOMES AT WELLEN PARK

WINTER 2020 | A17

IslandWalk - Divosta







Martin Ray

The inviting single-story Martin Ray home design at IslandWalk impresses with its open concept, versatile flex space. Starting at 1,968 square feet, this home provides plenty of space for entertaining and everyday life. The open concept gathering room offers a warm welcome with lots of natural light from the sliding glass doors, while the flex room or den provides a relaxing space to work at home without interruption. The kitchen is highlighted with many thoughtful features including a walk-in pantry and large center island. This home design offers some of the most deeply desired features for everyone.

Sales center: 13639 Salinas St., Venice 941-220-0548



Specifications

& Base price: From the \$370s

SF: 1,968 to 2,303

2 to 3 Bedrooms

☆ 2 Bathrooms

Home Type: Single Family

Renaissance – Mattamy Homes







Dawn II

The Dawn II is an 1,843 square foot single-family home with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and a 2-car garage. Upon walking into the Dawn, you are welcomed by an impressive foyer and hall that leads you to the bright, open Great Room. A patio door provides access to the outdoor covered lanai and abundant natural light. The kitchen features an island with a breakfast bar and ample cabinet and granite countertop space, in addition to the walk-in pantry. The kitchen overlooks the dining area and Great Room. The secondary bedrooms and full bath are located towards the front of the home. The owner's suite is designed for privacy and to serve as a peaceful retreat and includes a generous walk-in closet and an oasis-inspired bath.

Sales center: 11720 Renaissance Blvd., Venice 941-208-6375



Specifications

1 Base price: \$308,990

SF: 1,843

a Bedrooms

🛱 2 Bathrooms

M Home Type: Single-Family

A18 WINTER 2020 www.WellenParkJournal.com WELLEN PARK JOURNAL

Oasis – M/I Homes



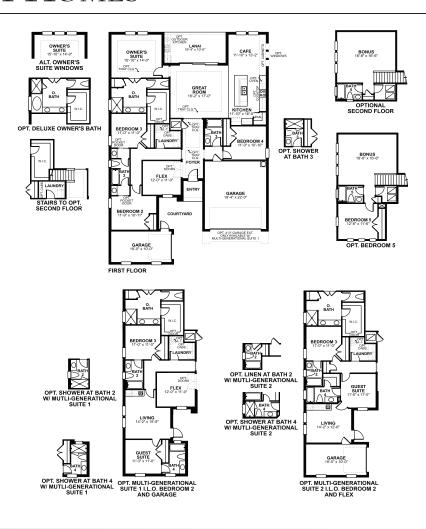




Columbia

Welcome to the Columbia. Starting at 2,370 square feet, the Columbia's standard layout includes four bedrooms, three full bathrooms, a flex room and an open-concept kitchen/great room. There's also a three-car garage. This plan is uniquely designed to allow for several structural options, including bonus room and guest suite with living and garage space, making it ideal for the multi-generational family. Personalize your Columbia today. It can become truly what you need.

Sales center: 19806 Bridgetown Loop, Venice 941-208-6897



Specifications

® Base price: \$389,990

SF: 2,370 – 2,973

4-5 Bedrooms

3-5 Bathrooms

Home Type: Single Family with Multi-Gen Option

Gran Paradiso – Lennar







Amelia

The Amelia Coach Home features 1,741 square feet of comfortably designed living space. There are 3 bedrooms that occupy two opposite ends of the home for a friendly split plan. The owner's suite includes walk-in spacious closets and large bathroom. The remaining two bedrooms share a full bathroom and useful utility closet for handy storage solutions. The kitchen with large island, dining room and living room offer inviting open concept living spaces. The 2-car attached garage is perfect for inside parking or a hobby play area. A covered patio lets the cool breeze in and keeps pests out!

Sales center: 20061 Galleria Blvd., Venice 941-214-9684



Specifications

® Base price: \$270,999

SF: 1,741

2 3 Bedrooms

2 Bathrooms

WINTER 2020 | **A19** WELLEN PARK JOURNAL | www.WellenParkJournal.com

Grand Palm – Neal Communities







Sea Star

The new Sea Star home plan offers an open design, flexibility, and accommodating living spaces so that it reflects you! The great room opens to an island kitchen, breakfast nook, dining room, and den. The covered lanai, for the ultimate outdoor living experience, offers an extension with outdoor café and a pool bath. The master suite holds two walk-in closets, a dual sink bathroom, a walk-in shower, and private water closet. It also has an optional door from the bedroom out to the lanai and a bay window with sitting area. The two other bedrooms are perfectly placed near a full bath for convince. This single family home is perfect for a bustling family, a second house, and for an individual looking to entertain their friends!

Sales center: 21209 Wacissa Dr, Venice 941-214-9190



Specifications

1 Base price: \$397,990

SF: 2,379

2 3 Bedrooms

2 Bathrooms

A Home Type: Single Family

Boca Royale - Neal Communities



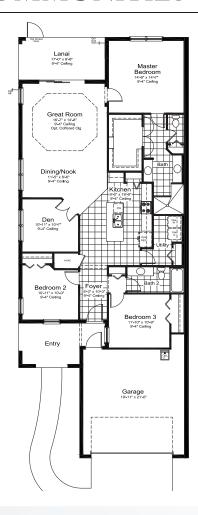




Sandcastle

The largest twin villa home design by Neal Communities, Sandcastle offers bright open living spaces including an island kitchen, dining area and great room with optional coffered ceiling. A den, entered from the main living area through lovely French doors, provides a great spot for a home office. A covered lanai sits at the back of the home, accessible through sliding glass doors or optional pocket slider from the great room. The lanai can also be entered from the master bedroom through an optional door. The master suite also features an over-sized walk-in closet and bath with two sink vanities. Two secondary bedrooms, full bath and utility room complete the floor plan.

Sales center: 1 Golf View Dr, Englewood 941-214-9760



Specifications

1 Base price: \$309,990

SF: 1,842

2 Bedrooms

2 Bathrooms

A Paired Villa

A20 WINTER 2020 www.WellenParkJournal.com WELLEN PARK JOURNAL

Gran Paradiso – Sam Rodgers







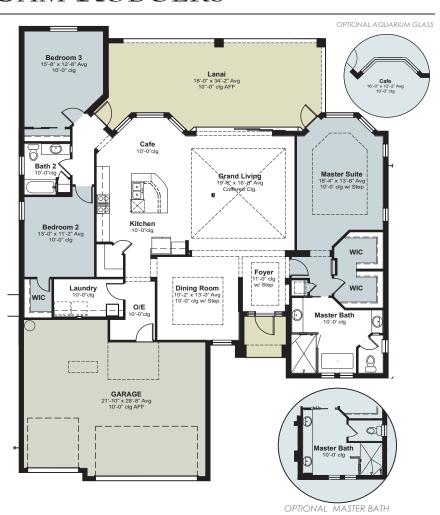
Bellisimo

Inspired ceiling designs enhance this exceptional three-bedroom home's appeal. The ten-foot ceilings throughout this floor plan make the distinctive pyramid ceiling in the grand living room and the tray ceiling in the formal dining room even more dramatic. The combined great room-island kitchen-casual dining area with its walk-in pantry and pocket sliding glass door onto the large lanai make this home ideal for entertaining. An outdoor kitchen is an attractive option for making the lanai the perfect outdoor retreat for any time of year.

Two of the three bedrooms feature walk-in closets and the master bath boasts double vanities, a garden tub and a separate shower. Abundant storage, including linen closets in each bathroom and a three-car garage, make it easy to keep this home neat and organized.

Along with most of the exceptional design features in the Bellisimo I, the floor plan can be modified to add a second floor with nine-foot ceilings and include a large bonus room and another bedroom with en suite bath with shower.

Sales center: 20107 Passagio Drive, Venice 941-218-2696



Specifications

® Base price: \$500,900

SF: 2,296

3 Bedrooms

2 Bathrooms

Sarasota National – WCI, A Lennar Company



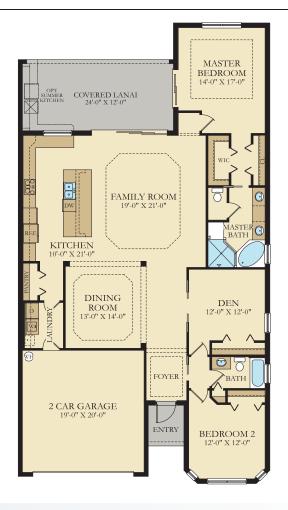




Angelina

The Angelina features 2,061 square feet of living space divided between 2 bedrooms + den and 2 baths. The beauty of this model is the delightful way the home is almost divided in half, with one side dedicated to lounging and relaxing with the Owner's suite, second bedroom and den neatly stacked. The common living areas featuring a formal dining room, kitchen and family room are featured on the other side. A large lanai with optional summer kitchen is the perfect addition to any Florida home since BBQ season in full force all year long!

Sales center: 23114 Copperleaf Drive, Venice 941-246-0076



Specifications

® Base price: \$411,999

SF: 2,061

2 Bedrooms & Den

2 Bathrooms

★ Home Type: Single Family

WINTER 2020 | **A21** WELLEN PARK JOURNAL | www.WellenParkJournal.com

Atlanta Braves poised for a powerhouse season

BY GLENN MILLER

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Mike Dunn knows this is a special time in the long history of the Atlanta Braves. As the team's director of Florida operations, he also knows that, pandemic permitting, fans will flock to CoolToday Park to watch this dynamic team in action this spring.

The Braves have won three consecutive National League East titles. In 2019, they won the division ahead of the Washington Nationals (who went on to win the 2019 World Series).

The Braves won the 2020 division title in a coronavirus-shortened season and then pushed the Los Angeles Dodgers to seven games in the National League Championship Series (the Dodgers went on to win the 2020 World Series).

That quick review shows how close the Braves could be to winning their first World Series since 1995.

"It's really an exciting time for us," Mr. Dunn says. "We're seeing the fruits of our scouting and development."

The 2020 Grapefruit League was supposed to be the first full spring for the Braves in North Port after moving from Lake Buena Vista just west of Orlando. But the pandemic shut down all major sports in March, and the Braves played only 10 games in their new home before the international health crisis descended.

Like all franchises in any sport, the Braves have endured ups and downs. They dominated the division from 1991 to 2005, winning every year but one (they finished second in 1994).

There were bleak stretches in the 1970s and 1980s, but the 2020s certainly hold the poten-



COURTESY PHOTO

Spring Training 2021 for the Atlanta Braves opens March 1 at CoolToday Park.

tial for more success.

The Braves have reached this point through scouting, wise draft choices, brilliant international signings, astute trades and developing young players in their farm system.

Who's on first

The centerpiece of the current powerhouse might be first baseman Freddie Freeman, who was selected on the second round of the 2007 draft out of a California high school. Thirteen years later he has established himself as a steady and productive player, one good enough to perhaps someday have his number retired and displayed outside CoolToday Park

along with Braves legends Hank Aaron, Eddie Mathews, Warren Spahn, Chipper Jones, John Smoltz, Phil Niekro and Greg Maddux.

At 31 years old, Mr. Freeman is a veteran on a team bursting with younger, 20-something talents such as pitchers Max Fried, Mike Soroka and Kyle Wright; infielders Ozzie Albies, Austin Riley and Dansby Swanson; and outfielders Ronald Acuna Jr. and Cristian Pache.

After 11 seasons with the Braves, Mr. Freeman ranks sixth all-time in franchise history with 240 homers.

Atlanta's outstanding starting rotation was strengthened in November when it signed veteran right-hander Charlie Morton to a one-

ATLANTA BRAVES **SPRING TRAINING GAMES** AT COOLTODAY PARK

Ticket prices TBA

Day games will start at 1:05 p.m. and night games at 6:05 p.m.

Report dates: Pitchers and catchers Feb. 13, remainder of squad Feb. 17-18

Monday, March 1: Washington

Wednesday, March 3: St. Louis Cardinals

Thursday, March 4, Boston Red Sox Friday, March 5: Detroit Tigers Saturday, March 6: Minnesota Twins Thursday, March 11: Minnesota Twins Friday, March 12: Tampa Bay Rays Sunday, March 14: Philadelphia Phillies Monday, March 15: Baltimore Orioles Thursday, March 18: New York Yankees

Saturday, March 20: Baltimore Orioles **Sunday, March 21:** Tampa Bay Rays Monday. March 22: Boston Red Sox Wednesday, March 24:

Pittsburgh Pirates

Thursday, March 25: Toronto Blue Javs

Sunday, March 28: Minnesota Twins Monday, March 29: Boston Red Sox

year, \$15-million deal. Mr. Morton's destination for Spring Training 2021 is just a short drive from where he spent this past spring, when he pitched for the Tampa Bay Rays and trained in Port Charlotte.

SEE BRAVES, A22 ▶

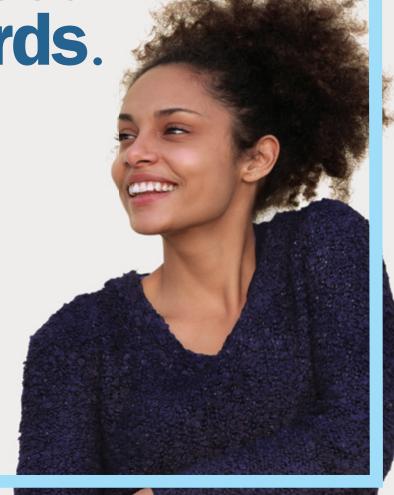
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MARKET

From page 8

food insecurity in the communities we serve," Mr. Perron emphasizes. "If someone spends \$20 on their card, we double that to \$40 to spend on Florida-grown fruits and vegetables. It encourages them to have a healthy lifestyle."

He notes that the pandemic and related unemployment rates have led people to require this assistance, making SNAP use "more robust than ever" at his markets.

He was approached by the Braves organization last year about setting up the market at CoolToday Park. "We agreed it would be a great idea to have a market for Wellen Park. It's an amazing partnership, and the Braves deserve a ton of credit."

He adds the Braves staff help set up and break down on market days, provide generators for vendors and offer marketing support.

Like the vendors, Mr. Perron says the park's abundant parking is one of the market's biggest attractions. "No one wants to carry a watermelon for four blocks," he laughs.

While the market has made it easier for people who live near CoolToday to get fresh



and Darel Albin offer mouth-watering French tarts and American pies.



Onwer Ron Baca, right, talks to customers at the Baca Bread booth.

and prepared foods, Mr. Perron says he also often sees chefs from local restaurants perusing the market for items from local farms that they can't find from other sources.

About 25 percent of the customers come every week, Mr. Perron says, and about another 40 percent come twice a month.

"We have a couple that visits Sassy Tarts every week and buys one large and several small pies. I asked them, 'You buy a lot of pies?' They said, 'The small ones are for lunch and the big ones are for dinner."

This season, the market provides social distancing between vendor tents, all vendors wear masks, all food handlers wear gloves, and sanitizing stations are placed at entrances and vendor booths

"We want to provide a safe outdoor shopping experience," Mr. Perron says. <a>

Atlanta Braves Farmers Market

- >> Where: CoolToday Park, 18800 S. West Villages Parkway, Venice
- >> When: Wednesdays from 8 a m. to noon, October-March

8888659086

BRAVES

From page 21

Free-agent signings and trades have fleshed out the roster with such worthies as catcher Travis d'Arnaud, outfielder Adam Duvall and pitcher Drew Smyly (who was signed to an \$11 million, one-year deal in November).

The on-field excitement seeps into every corner of the Braves organization.

"It definitely gives you a little giddy-up in your step," Mr. Dunn, who previously worked running the Rome Braves, the team's affiliate in the Class A South Atlantic League, says.

Many current Braves played in Rome on their way to the majors.

"Back then you could tell some special things were about to happen," Mr. Dunn says.

Time will tell

So, will 2021 be the year the Braves win their first World Series since 1995, two years before Mr. Soroka, Mr. Albies and Mr. Acuna were born?

And here's another question yet to be answered: Will fans be allowed into CoolToday Park for games in February and March?

"We're planning on fans to be in the stands," Mr. Dunn says. But crowds will be limited, with details still being worked on as this edition of the Wellen Park Journal went

"All the facilitie are having their challenges," Mr. Dunn notes about planning for Spring Training during the pandemic.

Maintaining social distancing is part of the plan for fans in the stands in 2021, he says, adding safety protocols also include masks and continuous sanitizing and cleaning.

What will the 2021 Grapefruit League look

"So much is unknown," he says. That goes for what might happen on the field as well.

If Major League Baseball returns to a 162game season in 2021 instead of the truncated 60-game version of 2020, a great deal can happen in the crucible of a such a grinding schedule.

Atlanta has the pieces in place for another season in contention. Pushing the eventual 2020 World Series champion to seven games in the National League Championship Series is noteworthy.

"Nobody accepts that as being a successful season," Mr. Dunn says.

True success means winning the franchise's first World Series in a quarter of a century.



BRAVES AT A GLANCE

- >> 2020 record: 35-25, won National League East
- >> Manager: Brian Snitker

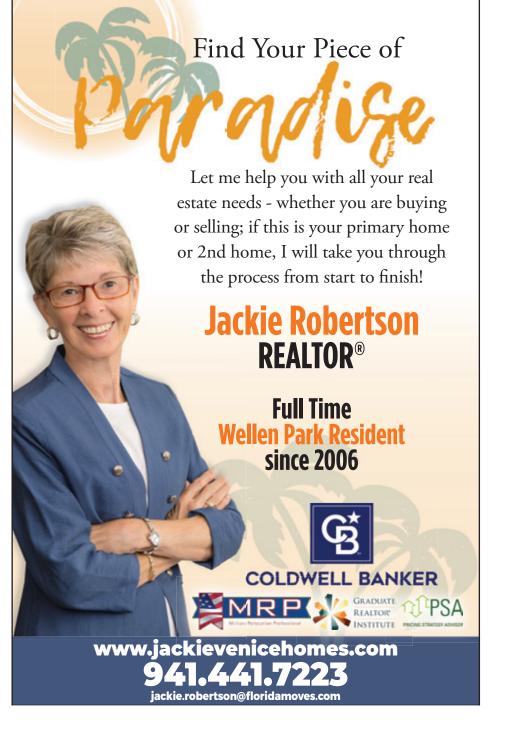
TENTATIVE DEPTH CHART

- >> Starting rotation: Charlie Morton, Mike Soroka, Max Fried, Ian Anderson, Drew Smyly, Kyle Wright, Josh Tomlin
- >> Catcher: Travis D'Arnaud
- >> First base: Freddie Freeman
- >> Second base: Ozzie Albies
- >> Third base: Austin Riley
- >> **Shortstop**: Dansby Swanson
- >> Left field: Adam Duvall
- >> Centerfield: Cristian Pache
- >> Right field: Ronald Acuna Jr.



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AROUND TOWN



Future model home in Neal Communities' Avelina at Wellen Park.

Coming soon from Neal Communities: Avelina at Wellen Park

AVELINA

We recently caught up with Leisa Weintraub of Neal Communities to get the scoop on a new community that folks are already asking about at the Wellen Park Welcome Center. Here's what we found out for you.

WPJ: There's been quite a bit of early buzz on this newest neighborhood. When did you break ground for it?

LW: We just broke ground this past July.

WPJ: So when can you realistically be ready

LW: A grand opening is expected in the third quarter of 2021.

WPJ: Where exactly is Avelina? LW: The community is in the Playmore District of Wellen Park (see master plan map). A gated, maintenance-assisted community, it is situated on 175 lakefront acres and will have 96 homes at completion. We're offering five floor plans from 2,327 square feet to 2,752 square feet, in a coastal style with British West Indies influence. A model of the Silver Sky design will be open at a

WPJ: What makes the Avelina location so

LW: Many Avelina home sites have views

of a surrounding wetland. It's also less than a mile away from Cool Today Park, the spring training home of the Atlanta Braves, and less than a mile from Downtown Wellen. Plans for Downtown Wellen include an 80-acre

> lake, shopping, dining and entertainment options, a town hall, children's playground and splash pad, a food truck kiosk area and an outfitter renting e-bikes, paddleboards and kayaks.

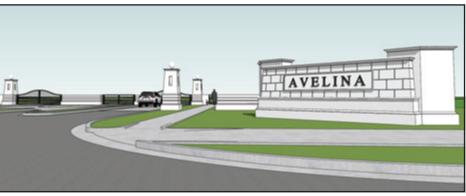
WPJ: What will be the make-up of the average

Avelina resident? Will it be 55 and over, or

LW: Avelina is designed for all ages to be right at home here — young families as well as retirees and everyone in between.

WPJ: And finally, why Wellen Park? LW: Because Wellen Park has been rated the No. 3 top-selling master-planned community in the country in 2019 and the first half of 2020 by RCLCO Real Estate Advisors. The name Wellen means "waves" in German and "wellness" in Dutch, and the entire community is designed around a focus of living well at every stage of life.

For progress reports about Avelina at Wellen Park, go to the Neal Communities website: www.nealomunities.com.





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AROUND TOWN

Keeping the focus on economic development

BY PATRICIA HORWELL

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

Whether your business is large or small, the North Port Economic Development Division (NPEDD) stands ready to help you succeed.

"All Economic Development organizations focus on helping businesses grow and become



THOMAS

sustainable members of the community," says Mel Thomas, the city's economic development manager. "We know what business resources are available," she says, adding the NPEDD staff can help prospective business owners find solutions for skilled workforce, financial

resources and other business needs.

Recently, with the advent of COVID-19, the NPEDD team was able to assist area businesses navigate the federally funded CARES Act and Sarasota County's Resiliency Loan program so they could stay in business.

The NPEDD partners with Sarasota County's Economic Development Corporation and the state's economic development agency with the ultimate goal to bring new industry to the area through the site selection process which includes helping to secure workforce training for future employees.

"The Atlanta Braves organization moving its Spring Training headquarters to CoolToday Park at Wellen Park was a major win for the area; not only is it bolstering the local economy, its presence in the community is the perfect backdrop for showcasing what kind of

community North Port is - that it is a great place to plant and grow a viable business," Ms. Thomas says.

"If a well-run sports enterprise like the Braves thinks we're a great place to be, I'm confident medium to large businesses will also find North Port a great place to locate their company."

"Wellen Park is the perfect location for entrepreneurs such as those selling online services, technical startups, creative endeavors and other ventures — all stimulating the local economy with new money.'

And for those young entrepreneurs, "We are looking to try to change the night life of North Port," Ms. Thomas adds. "The promise of a downtown Wellen is that it will provide a much-needed entertainment district.'

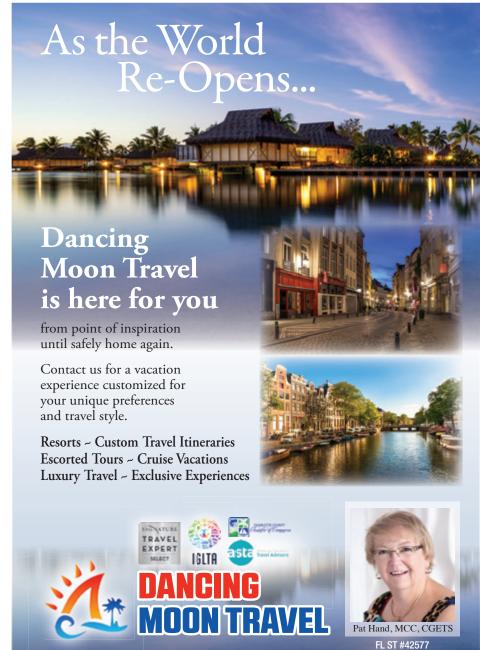
While the new Welcome Center at Wellen Park doesn't yet have a brewery, it does have Barrel & Bean, a place for residents and prospective residents alike to chat over a cup of coffee, a glass of wine, light bites or a draft beer from a local Venice brewery, 3 Bridges Brewing. The Welcome Center is situated to overlook the future Downtown Wellen, which will include an 80-acre lake and a variety of shops.

"Downtown Wellen is going to create a heartbeat, a sense of place for the city of North Port," Ms. Thomas says.

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>> Information: 941-429-7029 or EconomicDevelopment@ CityofNorthPort.com





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WELLEN ROUND-UP

Holiday bazaar and toy drive at Gran Paradiso



















Starting left to right: Robert G. Coseo, D.D.S., Neil Seaver, D.M.D., Joseph C. Bender, D.M.D., Timothy L Palmer, D.D.S. Seated left to right: Ashley N Reynolds, D.M.D., Melissa M. Duston, D.D.S.



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WELLEN ROUND-UP

Jingle Jam at CoolToday Park





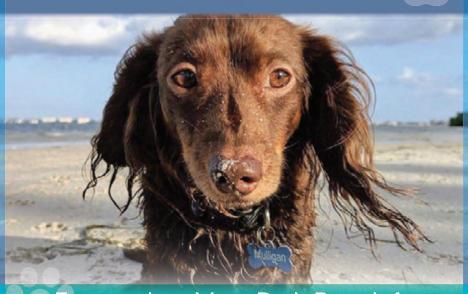


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WELLEN ROUND-UP

Ribbon-cutting at the Welcome Center











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WELLEN ROUND-UP

North Port Police Department "Coffee with a Cop"











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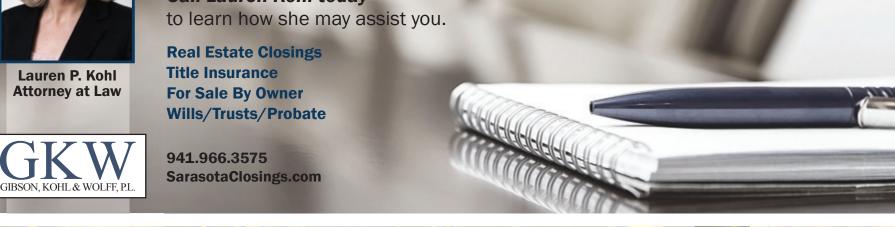
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Golf at Boca Royale is a good walk, with cool technology as a new option

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

There is a mystique about golf that elevates the sport from just a game to sometimes a truly transcendent experience.

It feels that way for Ed McConnell, head golf professional at Boca Royale Golf & Country Club in Englewood.

"There's no better place to start your day than at a golf course watching the sun come

"Probably what we hear the most is that even though the course is challenging, it's very playable for all skill levels," Ms. McConnell says. "It plays a lot longer than the yardage indicates," he adds. "Don't be fooled by what the scorecard tells you."

When faced with small greens protected by bunkers and water hazards, Mr. McConnell advises laying up. "The objective is to keep the ball in play. To score effectively here, you have to be able to hit greens."

Boca Royale is already known for its abundant trees, significant amount of water hazards and its variety of wildlife, including alligators, bald eagles, sandhill cranes and hawks. What the course could become known for is having Club Car's Tempo Walk handsfree autonomous "caddies" that follow golfers who want to walk the course.

Tempo Walk carries bags, coolers, sand bottles and other tools while providing GPS yardage to the front, middle and back of the green. Golfers wear a small device on their belt and the Tempo Walk glides along behind.

"You get some exercise and you don't have



CHRIS TILLEY / WELLEN PARK JOURNAL

Golf Pro Ed McConnell on the job directing a club members game.

to carry your bag," Mr. McConnell explains. make this a popular option, he adds. "It's easy to learn after about a five-minute

Boca Royale is adding the Tempo Walk instruction from the staff." Florida's winter carts to its fleet this month, making it one of temperatures and focus on fitness should the few area courses with the technology. A State golf team, came to Boca Royale four

standard cart fee is \$23.50; the Tempo Walk fee will be \$30.

Mr. McConnell, who played on the Penn

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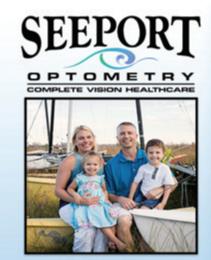
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"There's no better place to start your day than at a golf course watching the sun come up,"

> — Ed McConnell, head golf professional Boca Royale Golf & Country Club

years ago after working as a golf pro in Vero Beach (Bent Pine Golf Club and John's Island Club), Chicago (Sunset Ridge Country Club), Hilton Head (Moss Creek) and Sarasota (The Founders Club), among other locations.

He is helping Boca Royale evolve into what he calls "a higher end private country club experience."

Boca Royale has approximately 200 golf memberships but allows year-round public play, which accounts for 40-50% of the rounds.

With the pandemic limiting people's travel and golf deemed an essential activity, Mr.

McConnell reports triple the amount of play through the end of July than the course typically does.

Golfers can dine in the Boca Royale restaurant, which is open every day for lunch and Thursdays for dinner, before or after making their way around the course. The 19th hole is also open, as is the members-only Ginger's Bar & Grill, for adult libations.

Annual family and single memberships are available for full golf, racquets (tennis and pickleball), fitness and social levels. For more information, contact Membership Director Allie Lowery at 941-475-6464.

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- >> Twilight rates (after 2 p.m.) are offered in the spring.
- >> Members can schedule tee times seven days in advance; public tee times can be made four days in advance.



Scott Holcomb, left, and Ed McConnell at Boca Royale.







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WELL-VERSE

Variety of activities connect residents of Renaissance at Wellen Park

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Wellen Park Journal Correspondent

The monthly beach get-together to enjoy powdery soft sand, turquoise Gulf waters and friendship is a highlight for residents of Renaissance at Wellen Park.

"Everyone loves the beach. It's why we moved to Florida," says Lifestyle Manager Susan Geeslin.

A New Hampshire native, Ms. Geeslin is now a Florida Master Naturalist who enjoys helping people identify shells and shark teeth during the group's beach outings.

"I love being able to educate people about our marine life, sea shells, mollusks, manatees and the wildlife they are going to see here in Renaissance, especially if they're not from around here," she says.

Her friendly face greets people entering the Renaissance clubhouse and helps everyone feel welcome.

"My office faces the front door, so I literally say 'Hello' to everyone who walks in," she says. "I love being the face of the community and meeting new homeowners coming in for the first time."

Ms. Geeslin was the resort recreation manager at The Falls at Ogunquit in Maine, taking residents on trips to places like L.L. Bean, and a senior activities coordinator on Longboat Key before embracing the Renaissance job about six months ago.

"I love Wellen Park and the idea of it," she says. "Renaissance is in a great spot within Wellen Park. The homes are beautiful. There are many walking and biking trails. People are



Left: Renaissance Lifestyle Manager Susan

Geeslin loves planning activities for residents.

sance special. "Everyone is so friendly. They

want to get together and make new friends,

whether they are from the Midwest, North-

With about 250 completed homes and

east or the California coast."

very active and enjoy the outdoors."

But the neighbors are what makes Renais-

almost 700 scheduled, new residents are moving in all the time. Ms. Geeslin's job is to help them find activities they enjoy or might want to try for the first time while also getting to know their neighbors.

Activities include a monthly adult craft proj-

Activities include a monthly adult craft project, which recently featured wine glass painting, as well as a kid-friendly monthly craft, like string art. Popular events around the pool deck include music bingo and trivia night.

The monthly "Neighbor Meet and Greet" is a BYOB social hour with light appetizers, soft drinks and coffee.

The weekend before Thanksgiving, residents were "Thankful for Pie!" and ate dessert before turkey day.

When it's safe to do so, Ms. Geeslin plans to resume the monthly birthday celebration with cake and ice cream. "For now, we're doing what we can to enjoy each other's company and feel somewhat normal while keeping safe," she says.

She also supports clubs run by residents, including the Pickleball Group, Renaissance Card Club, Renaissance Book Club, Aqua Fitness, Sit & Stitch, Romeo's Donuts, Ladies Luncheon, Bunco, Mahjong and Dinner Club.

And with so many wonderful trails nearby, she's working on starting walking and biking clubs as well.

She says she gets wonderful ideas from Renaissance residents. "I listen to the homeowners and ask what they enjoy and want to do. My goal is to make everyone happy."

Renaissance at Wellen Park residents have many events to look forward to this season. A seasonal celebration will include a visit





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"Renaissance is in a great spot within Wellen Park. The homes are beautiful. There are many walking and biking trails. People are very active and enjoy the outdoors."

- Susan Geeslin, Lifestyle Manager at Renaissance



COURTESY PHOTOS Above: One recent monthly activity for adults involved painting wine glasses.

Right: Making a splash at water aerobics in the Renaissance pool.

from Santa and ornament making. The Jersey Shore Crab Cake Company is a draw during the community blood drive. Homeowners can ring in the New Year enjoying live music on the pool deck. And residents can show off their car, motorcycle or golf cart during the Renaissance Rides car show in January.



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Joining a golf and country club comes with many great benefits and opportunities. These opportunities will allow you to better your game, enjoy time with friends and fellow golfers and tennis players, and allow you to take full advantage of what golf clubs have to offer.

If you live in the Venice or Wellen Park area, here are some reasons why becoming a member of a private golf and tennis club, such as the Plantation Golf & Country Club, is beneficial.

Unlimited Golf & Tennis

One of the top benefits of joining a golf club is that most of them offer membership packages which include unlimited golf and tennis opportunities.

Plantation Golf & Country Club's Full and Executive memberships offer unlimited access to BOTH magnificent 18-hole golf courses, driving range, and practice facilities. Offering 36 holes of golf yearround, golf so great the LPGA qualifies here every year. Plantation's Sports/Fitness membership offers unlimited access to Tennis and numerous golf opportunities annually.

Priority Tee Times

Members of golf clubs are able to get first pick at reserving their preferred tee times. Plantation Golf & Country Club is 100% private and Golf members gain access to priority tee time and you can conveniently book your tee time online.

Amenities

Another perk of joining a golf club is the facilities that come with it. Most clubs offer their members unlimited use of practice facilities and driving ranges.

Plantation Golf & Country Club facilities include an active dining and events calendar, 24/7 fitness center, fitness studio for classes, heated and chilled Jr. Olympic size lap pool and spa, 13 Har-tru tennis courts, bocce, pickle ball, Members and their guests are offered premier dinners, themed events, and holiday parties.

Members get to enjoy full club privileges, including unlimited access to our clubhouse facilities.

Reciprocals with Other Golf Clubs

Most clubs offer reciprocal agreements, which allow their own members to play at other private country clubs on an arranged basis. As a member of Plantation Golf & Country Club, you'll have the opportunity to play at the Concert Golf Partners Clubs. See our website for a complete list of reciprocals.

Community & Networking

One of the most beneficial parts of becoming a golf club member is the social aspect. Golf and tennis bring together friends, family, employees, and potential clients and business partners. Joining a club means you will meet people with similar interests as you. You are also more likely to meet some influential people, considering that a majority of top CEOs play golf. Golf has long been seen as the perfect sport for building long and lasting business relationships and friendships.

Plantation Golf & Country Club

has a few different membership packages which allow you to pick the one that works best for you and your lifestyle. Contact us to learn more about memberships or to become a member.





