

# SPANISH WELLS

## PLANTATION

Hundreds of years ago, the Spanish Armada stopped on a secluded peninsula between Calibogue Sound and Broad Creek to replenish their supplies from freshwater wells. On this particularly beautiful stretch of land, these early visitors may have paused to enjoy the spectacular sunsets and moss-draped live oaks before moving on.

Today, this piece of land is known as Spanish Wells and is the site of one of the most unique residential communities on Hilton Head Island.

You won't find a security gate here, just a "private residential community" sign, as the residents prefer to have a security officer patrolling the neighborhood instead of guarding a gate. But within the peaceful enclave of only 340 acres and just under 200 homes, you will find a private 9-hole golf course and club, a racquet club, pool complex, and community dock.

Development began in the early '70s. The community, almost three miles from William Hilton Parkway and only accessible by Spanish Wells Road or Marshland Road, was even more remote and less populated than it is today.

Bud and Doris Shay were among the first full-time residents when they moved to Spanish Wells in October 1981. At 55, Bud found that he was among the youngest (by far).

"There were only 13 homes and most of them were summer homes – cottages – on the water," he said. The Shays bought two contiguous lots on the Calibogue Sound for \$70,000 each – against the advice of some of their friends. "They told me 'nothing happens out there.' Frankly, the idea of the solitude appealed to us."

Shay served on the property owners association board early on and helped establish assessment fees that were used to improve the roads and establish utilities.

"As we made these improvements, attitudes began to change," he said. "People – particularly realtors – began to notice Spanish Wells."

And as development moved to the north end of the island, young professionals and their fam-



### NEIGHBORHOOD AT A GLANCE

<b>SECURITY GATE</b> .....	No
No gate but there are security cameras and regular security patrols	
<b>GOLF COURSES</b> .....	Yes
1 private 9-hole course (limited non-member play on weekdays) <b>Spanish Wells Golf Club</b>	
<b>TENNIS</b> .....	Yes
Spanish Wells Golf Club	
<b>COMMUNITY POOL</b> .....	Yes
<b>COMMUNITY DOCK</b> .....	Yes
Many waterfront properties have their own docks	
<b>COMMUNITY GARDEN</b>	
Spanish Wells has no restrictions for gardening on individual homesites	
<b>WATERFRONT PROPERTIES</b> .....	Yes
On Broad Creek and Calibogue Sound	
<b>TOTAL HOMESITES</b> .....	217
Includes homesites in Spanish Wells East	
<b>PROPERTIES ON THE MARKET</b> .....	Yes
9 homes listed - ranging in price from \$599,000 to \$3,350,000	
1 waterfront homesite listed - priced at \$1,895,000	
<b>ANNUAL DUES</b> .....	Yes
Improved .....	\$852
Unimproved .....	\$548

ilies found their way to Spanish Wells. The secret began to get out: acre-sized lots, many with deep-water access, and privacy.

Lynne and David Anderson purchased a waterfront lot 15 years ago and were among the first young families in the area.

"We liked the fact that Spanish Wells was away from the mainstream. It was like living in the country," said Lynne. "But most importantly we liked the fact that we weren't restricted by hundreds of covenants."

Property owners association president Holly Jenkins says that many of the current residents

were attracted by the less restrictive covenants – described more appropriately as "guidelines."

"One thing I have heard over and over again," she said. "People choose Spanish Wells because it is not so restrictive." For instance, residents can put swing sets in the backyard and have a vegetable garden if they choose. And where else on Hilton Head could you get an acre of land on the water?

"We thought it was a good value and would experience tremendous growth and appreciation," said Anderson.

And when the Cross Island Parkway opened, it became one of the hottest markets on the island. Waterfront lots with views of the creek or the sound began selling for \$1 million or more. And the trip from Spanish Wells to Sea Pines Circle shrank from 25 minutes to 10.

Today the community is almost fully developed with only 23 unimproved lots remaining. Now just minutes from everything, the streets of Spanish Wells are still shaded by the branches of ancient oaks, and the large lots still offer a sense of privacy. But what was once a retirement community has developed into a bustling family-friendly neighborhood.

And perhaps best of all, Spanish Wells residents feel they are part of a real "community" – a sense of neighborhood that has its roots from the earliest residents.

"When we first moved to Spanish Wells, it was a tradition that everyone exchanged gifts at Christmas," said Shay, adding that he and his family would go caroling throughout the neighborhood. As the community has grown, new traditions have developed – potluck suppers, holiday parties and a Fourth of July parade.

"Spanish Wells is reminiscent of the old family-friendly neighborhoods we all grew up in," said resident Sonny Huntley, an island realtor.

"The fact is, Spanish Wells is a fun place to live and a great place to raise a family," said Lynne Anderson. "I wouldn't want to live anywhere else." – Terry Bergeron