

The Price of **PARADISE**

A look at our current cost of living

To newer residents of Hilton Head, settling onto the island may sometimes bring a certain amount of sticker shock. As with all things, this can be argued depending on perspective. Someone relocating to the island from up north and renting a home, for example, may find that their monthly payments might be nearly double what they were before. But, if you enjoy seeing boats and dolphins instead of skyscrapers and being a few steps from the ocean, it will be money well spent. Homeowners, despite recent events, are going to find property taxes that may seem, when compared to those elsewhere, a mere pittance.

Again, this depends on several factors. Mostly, the area from where you moved (ex. urban or rural, north or south) and when you move here. Anyone who moves here during tourist season, when prices of simple groceries can mysteriously skyrocket (a 12-pack of soda, for example, can jump from \$3 in the off-season to \$5 in the summer) might be tempted to about-face back to where they came.

That's one of the very few drawbacks of island living, however. The



PHOTOS BY ROB KAUFMAN

more you look at average costs at a broad spectrum of products, the more you see: the price of paradise may be lower than you think.

Gasoline: If you've turned on a television or radio in the past year, you've heard about the pain we've all been feeling at the pump. Some say this is a natural byproduct of military action in the Middle East. Some blame the oil companies for artificially inflating prices. One consumer advocacy group unearthed internal memos from the Shell Gasoline company

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