

# Sand Castles

LUXURY \* LIFESTYLE \* REAL ESTATE



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**SPRING INTO  
SUMMER ISSUE**

MAY 27, 2021

Your Community Voice for 50 Years  
**PONTE VEDRA**

# Recorder

Photo provided by Janet Westling



# Welcome to Sand Castles: Spring into Summer issue



**Janet Westling**  
Contributing Editor

Welcome to our Spring into Summer issue as we remember and honor those who have served our country on Memorial Day.

This spring, the weather has been one of the most pleasant springtimes and such a welcome from spring 2020.

Not only has the weather been wonderful, but our real estate market has

been the best sellers' market we have seen in an awfully long time. In fact, 99.85% of properties on the market sold for list price and 36.8% sold over the list price.

The influx of buyers from many lockdown states has been one of the main drivers in this market, along with an inventory that remains extremely low.

David Johnson, mortgage broker with Ameris bank gives insight to the current market with rising interest rates, multiple offers and over-the-listing price conditions affecting lenders.

I used to say that Ponte Vedra Beach is Florida's best-kept secret; that is until now.

Financial Times journalist Alastair Gray wrote about, "Florida's Hidden Gem for prime homes, Ponte Vedra Beach."

He went on to say, "The area known as 'Jacksonville's Malibu' can offer country clubs, gated communities and golf courses."

Miami city planner Melissa Hage vacationed here with her family in 2019 and wrote about her stay in her blog,"

Ponte Vedra: The allure of the beach

town." According to Ms. Hage, "Ponte Vedra is a charming beach town that figured out how to make comfortable roadways with space for everyone with lush landscaping, bright green colors, wide sidewalks, bike lanes, narrow lanes for moving traffic and large homes up and front alongside the roads and it shows."

"The last leg of our summer road trip," wrote Hage, "was a sleepy beach town, (Ponte Vedra) with an unbelievable wow factor."

In this issue, nine Realtors share their stories about their amazing new listings, each with their own wow factor from the oceanfront to the Intracoastal and in between!

Travel explorer Alex Wulbern, who is in Thailand on a wonderful adventure, writes about his "Journey to Asia," in the first of a three-part series.

With the football season almost upon us, a column by the Jaguars' Brian Sexton covers the recent draft with insight into where the franchise is headed into the future.

Food expert Alice Hickox, with Lettuce Do Dinner, offers some great healthy ideas on cuisine with her recipe for tequila lime shrimp with zoodles, perfect for summer entertaining.

Speaking of entertaining, this spring, my husband Dale and I hosted "An evening with Sarah Huckabee Sanders" in our Sawgrass Country Club home, catered by Alice Hickox and Lettuce do Dinner.

With a nod to making everyone comfortable, we dined outside in a perfect setting with our special guest who is running for governor of Arkansas.

In closing, our home is our castle, and, at the beaches, it is our castle in the sand. From palm trees to sand dunes, and golf courses to resort living, Jacksonville, Ponte Vedra and the Beaches communities offer the most desirable living in Northeast Florida.

**Janet Westling, REALTOR, GRI, CIPS**  
**Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices**  
**Florida Network Realty**  
**Sand Castles creator and contributing editor**  
**Award-winning section**  
**[www.janetwestling.com](http://www.janetwestling.com)**

## MARKET WATCH

# Ponte Vedra housing and mortgage market update

By David Johnson

Mortgage Banker, Ameris Bank

### FLORIDA HOUSING MARKET

The Florida home and condo market is on fire. Housing prices have increased for 112 consecutive months — the greatest rise happening the past two years.\* Two factors are the cause for the recent improvement: Low interest rates and freedom-favorable state and local pandemic restrictions combined to attract migrating rust belt and Northeast residents, many who are fleeing restrictive rules for them, their business and children.

**Interest rate concern.** Mortgage interest rates remain historically low. They were lower in April than March. The average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage rate is 3.18%. A 15-year fixed rate is 2.44%.\*\*\* This level is expected to continue into June. Moving into fall, the overall trend points to a steady increase. Although forecasts vary between 3.3% to 3.6% by summer's end, the general consensus among analysts is for increasing rates. Locking in a rate now might help you avoid missing out on the current low rates.

### LOCAL HOUSING MARKET

Can we all agree it's a seller's market? Supply does not meet demand. The Ponte Vedra Beach housing supply is 1.2 months. Six months is considered healthy. In April, 36.9% of listings sold above list price — up 134% compared



Photo provided by metrocreativeconnection.com

to April 2020. Most listings receive multiple offers.\*\* Because of multiple offer situations, and sales prices rising above original list price, buyers require professional Realtor representation.

Katie Hughes-Johnson, of RE/MAX Specialists Ponte Vedra explains it this way. "To win in a multiple offer situation you need to work with an agent equipped to position your offer to win. A strong offer will accommodate sellers' needs both financially and situationally. Potentially allowing sellers to post-occupy the home after closing."

Hughes-Johnson went on to say, "In this market, a buyer has to be aware of any terms that may help them to tip the

scale and win the house. Another reason why using a seasoned agent with a proven track record of success is important."

Listings are up year over year in Ponte Vedra Beach and the surrounding area. Nocatee listings are up 24%, South Ponte Vedra Beach 19% and Ponte Vedra Beach and North Ponte Vedra Beach 19%.\*\* The increased listings do help local buyers have more options than the year before; however, there are many more buyers this year.

Making sure you are prequalified is important. In certain situations, a local Realtor will feel more comfortable accepting a mortgage buyer with a trusted lender prequalification letter. Choose a

lender with a reputation of closing on time. In the current environment, buyers are less likely to look the other way after a mortgage contingency expires, and your binder deposit is at risk. A seasoned Realtor and mortgage banker will look out for your best buyers' interest.

### MORTGAGE MARKET

In Florida, the banking and residential mortgage industry has already begun the transition back to normal operations after the previous year of staff working from home. Branches are reopening to full capacity. Supporting services such as title companies are once again opening their doors to in-person closings with Realtors and mortgage bankers in attendance. Appraisers are booked with new home purchase and refinance inspections.

The industry is thriving.

Builders are also staying busy. Construction mortgages are becoming widely used because, in many cases, it has become easier to buy a lot and build a custom home compared to purchasing hotly contested existing homes.

The outlook is sunny for PVB and the surrounding area housing market.

**\*Article posted March 31 on Top Ten Real Estate Deals website. Home price increase is from a study commissioned by the Florida Realtors Research Department.**

**\*\* Source: Northeast Florida Association of Realtors**

**\*\*\*Bankrate.com, May 19, 2021**





Photos provided by Debi Kopp

# Spinnakers Reach condo is an oceanfront paradise

By Debi Kopp

Natural light pours into this stunning end-unit residence. Upon entering, you will be transported from the stress of everyday life to a state of relaxation.

This move-in-ready condo offers panoramic views of sunrises over the sparkling Atlantic Ocean, gorgeous sunsets over Guana Preserve and scenes of tropical landscaping with pool views. You will feel like you're on a permanent vacation!

The oceanfront lifestyle is only steps from your front door. Wake up and go for a

beach walk, paddle boarding, ocean kayaking or take your beach cruiser for a stroll. Sawgrass Village is within biking distance or only a short drive away and offers the best dining and shopping Ponte Vedra Beach has to offer. Numerous top-ranking golf courses are all within a few miles. You can lock up and feel at ease while you're off exploring other beautiful destinations.

The under-building parking and storage for all of your beach toys adds to the appeal. This special end unit offers privacy and serenity with no one above you. The split floor plan has three spacious bedrooms

with a view and three en suite bathrooms that have been beautifully updated. Neutral porcelain tile flows throughout the entire condo. The kitchen boasts a large eat-in area with a picture window, granite countertops and stainless-steel appliances, with a balcony right off the dining area where you can relax with your favorite beverage and enjoy all of the beautiful sunsets. The balcony off the living area and the master bedroom is a great spot to sit and watch dolphins, the sunrise or moonrise and spectacular fireworks during the 4th of July!

Spinnakers Reach is full concrete block

construction located within the secured gate of Sawgrass Beach Club. The Spinnakers Reach condos allow a minimum one-month rental and could be excellent income for someone who doesn't live here full time. Jacksonville and historic St. Augustine are an easy drive away.

Don't miss the opportunity to make this slice of paradise your new home. Schedule your private showing today.

This condo is represented by RE/MAX Unlimited, presented by Debi and Keely Kopp of The Kopp Group and is offered at \$1,200,000.



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Photos provided by CiCi Anderson

# Exclusive lot in Marsh Landing CC offers best of Ponte Vedra Beach

By CiCi Anderson

Anyone who has spent time in Ponte Vedra Beach knows just how special it is — a true gem with a quality of life that is hard to beat. With its perfect mix of serene coastal living, top-tier golf and tennis and upscale social options, more and more people are discovering the many benefits this special seaside community has to offer. No state income tax and no personal property tax make now the perfect time to own your very own piece of Ponte Vedra Beach.

Nestled right in the middle of the

premier gated community in Ponte Vedra Beach sits the single remaining lot in the exclusive Found Forrest inside of highly sought after Marsh Landing Country Club. This estate lot is 3.42 acres with 2.66 acres of uplands. Build your dream home and even a separate in-laws house on the property. Private, hidden space abounds to create a spectacular outdoor living escape with mature and majestic trees to surround your sanctuary or entertainment space. Surrounded by luxury estate homes that range in size from 5,000 square feet to palatial residences of 15,000-plus square feet, your own per-

sonal residence is in good company.

Take a short walk to the Marsh Landing Country Club driving range or tennis courts and finish your day with a refreshing cocktail at the neighboring clubhouse. Your guests are sure to be impressed with Marsh Landing’s careful attention to detail and focus on nature preservation. Combined with its close proximity to the beach, A-rated schools and world-class hospital systems like Mayo Clinic there is truly no other community like this one in Florida. Ponte Vedra Beach is a short 40 minutes north of St. Augustine, two hours south of Sa-

vanah, Georgia, and with access to “big city” features, including the Jacksonville Jaguars, the Broadway Artist Series and the Jacksonville Symphony, it is a location unlike any other.

With 3.42 acres of premier land in the heart of Ponte Vedra Beach your options to design the home and life you always imagined is now!

200 Deer Colony Lane is available for \$1.9 million. Bring the builder of your choice or be connected with a Marsh Landing preferred builder. Represented by MLCC Realty and listed by Jenna Fisher and Cici Anderson.



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## SPORTS SPOTLIGHT

# Lawrence gives Jaguars a solid foundation to build on



**Brian Sexton**  
Guest Columnist

2020, it turns out, wasn't a very good year, what with a global pandemic and all, but it was a very good year to be a bad NFL team. Last month in Cleveland, the Jaguars converted their woeful 1-15 record from 2020 into getting the best quarterback college football has seen in a generation and a haul of football talent that promises to transform their team — and maybe even their town.

Trevor Lawrence isn't just the quarterback the NFL has been watching and waiting for since January of 2019 when, as a freshman, he took down mighty Alabama for the National Championship. The folks at Cartersville, Georgia High watched him in middle school and waited for him to take their program to new heights. His phenomenal talent and incredible leadership helped Clemson go 34-2 and win a championship and finish second in another national title game. Lawrence is a revelation on and off the field where he has already graduated and

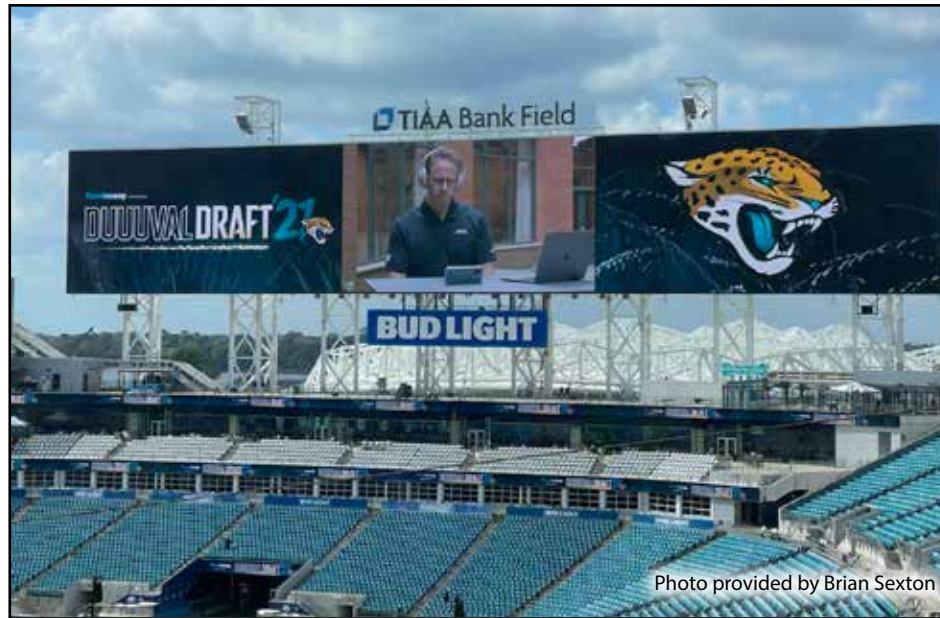


Photo provided by Brian Sexton

married his middle school sweetheart. His strong Christian faith figures to translate as well in North Florida, as will his famously flowing locks and that Southern college football pedigree. In short, the man asked to revitalize the Jaguars is more than up to the task.

Since new head coach Urban Meyer arrived on the scene in Jacksonville in January, everything is different. There is

no mention of what happened in the past, only a strong focus on where the franchise is headed into the future. Lawrence is obviously the lynchpin; Meyer wouldn't have brought his College Football Hall of Fame resume out of retirement and away from a comfortable television job had it not been for the chance to work with Lawrence. Meyer's approach to the 2021 NFL Draft was all about the future. The

Jaguars have the benefit of thinking long-term coming off a one-win season. No one expects them to win the Super Bowl in 2021 or even make the playoffs. They expect better and that seems certain.

The selection of Stanford offensive tackle Walker Little in the second round and Syracuse safety Andre Cisco in the third are perhaps the best indicators of Meyer's long-term approach. Little is a massive athlete who was highly regarded before a 2019 knee injury shelved him and the Pac-12's decision to not play football cost him 2020. The Jaguars have two talented offensive tackles ready to play in the fall and don't need Little this season, but the value of a potential starting tackle at that point of the draft was too great to pass up and, if he's as good when he does return to the field as he was when he left it two years ago, the Jaguars will have a steal. Same with Cisco, who looked like a first-round pick at Syracuse in 2020 before tearing ligaments in his knee. He's a big safety who can run and hit but has the instincts and change of direction skills of a cornerback as evidenced by his 13 take-aways in just 20 games for the

**JAGUARS** continues on **Page 32**

## Atlantic Beach lifestyle and only a block to the ocean



Enjoy the ultimate beach lifestyle, only one block to the sand! If you're an early riser, you can grab your coffee and experience a magnificent sunrise. Or, if you feel like browsing or a bite to eat, you're only six blocks away from the Beaches Town Center! You can't blame local residents who would rather keep this special place a secret.

Arriving at 698 Beach Avenue in Atlantic Beach, you'll find a spectacular two story cedar shake home situated on a corner double lot; truly a rarity here. Upon entry, expect a thoroughly refined yet relaxed interior that blends the finest of today's finishes with Florida mid-century flair. Built originally in 1926, this down-to-the-studs renovation is spectacular.

The 3,729 square foot interior begins on the main floor, as you enter into a spacious foyer that blends seamlessly with the formal dining area and beyond, to an expansive kitchen with

custom white cabinetry and stainless steel appliances. The pantry with barn door closures is an especially thoughtful design feature as it allows for all the necessities but also the ability to close it off when entertaining. An informal dining area has french doors leading to a charming patio herb garden.

To call this dwelling an absolute retreat would not be an understatement. Space and privacy are at a premium but you wouldn't know anyone else exists as you step through the front door where your eyes are immediately drawn to the outdoor living area.



There's a serene feeling of seclusion created by a zen-inspired pool area nestled in a surrounding landscape that is unmatched; you'll think you've arrived at a spa resort.

Upstairs, the second level contains a spacious owner's suite with large walk-in closet and bath area complete with His & Hers sinks, a luxurious soaking tub, and glassed in shower. It has its own east facing balcony as well. Also on the second floor is the laundry room and three additional bedrooms and bathrooms. It should be noted that on the main floor, a large flex space could be used as an additional entertainment area or could be turned into a ground floor owner's suite. There is nothing left to be desired here and could be the dream home you've always imagined.

This property is presented by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, listed by Elizabeth Hudgins and Sarah Alexander.



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Photos provided by Lisa Barton



# Harbour Island home features thoughtful design, natural beauty

**By Lisa Barton**

When Susan and John Ryzewic were selecting locations for their new home, this magnificent lot on Admirals Way in Marsh Landing’s Harbour Island, stood out. The location at 189 Admirals Way in Harbour Island, Ponte Vedra Beach, offers 140 feet of Intracoastal Waterway frontage and unobstructed views of water, beauty, and nature as well as a 60-foot boat slip directly across the street.

The home they built there has an elegant, traditional floor plan, which incorporates the natural light and boasts spectacular views of the Intracoastal Waterway. The

sweeping, floating staircase and lovely living room with a soaring two-story ceiling showcases these views perfectly. Designed for entertaining, the spacious formal dining room opens to the foyer, living room, kitchen and a large wet bar and wine closet.

The layout of the home was thoughtfully designed with five bedrooms (including two master suites, one upstairs and one down). The floor plan includes a “children’s suite” with two en-suite bedrooms and a family room upstairs on the south side. The Ryzewics knew they wanted to work from home, so they incorporated two private studies and a reception area on the north side. This decision was fortuitous

since today, home offices are particularly appealing to the many buyers needing ample space to work remotely. A guest suite downstairs is perfect for the in-laws or a nanny.

The outdoor living spaces are stunning with a large, screened balcony overlooking the lagoon where the 60-foot floating boat slip awaits. An oversized screened porch with a summer kitchen and outdoor fireplace faces the Intracoastal Waterway. This outdoor living area opens to the recently updated swimming pool and spa. Outside, the Ryzewics enjoy a lovely sitting area and fire pit overlooking the beautiful water.

This custom home includes ample storage space as well as four garage bays. The circular driveway provides plenty of parking for both family and guests. The private boat slip is directly across the street, affording quick access to deep water boating.

The Ryzewics have had many memorable moments over the years and know that this home and boating lifestyle will be much enjoyed by a new family.

This property is listed by the Lisa Barton Team, represented by Keller Williams Atlantic Partners, Luxury International Specialists and offered for \$3,600,000. Contact the Lisa Barton Team at (904) 705-1382 for more information.



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\*Source: Keller Williams Multi-Trend Report & MLS



# RECIPE SPOTLIGHT

## Summer food vibes: Tequila lime shrimp with zoodles



**Alice Hickox**  
Lettuce Do Dinner

Few recipes scream “bring on summer” quite like a refreshing and satisfying seafood dish, especially one where shrimp takes center stage. Shrimp is not just a nutrient-dense superstar (packed with protein, selenium, B12, choline, iodine and zinc, while being light in calories and fat), it’s incredibly versatile and mild in flavor, making it the perfect dance partner for a good marinade or sauce. If you want to treat your taste buds and your health to a dance they won’t soon forget, give my tequila lime shrimp with zoodles a try. It combines shrimp with

refreshing citrus, fresh herbs and spices over zoodles; a light satisfying food swap that takes the place of traditional noodles. If you don’t love the idea of swapping zoodles for traditional pasta, I promise I won’t judge! This recipe is equally delicious using traditional or gluten-free pasta.

In addition to nutrition, this recipe is quick and easy; all while weighing in with a whopping 33 grams of protein and only eight carbs and 300 calories per serving! With Memorial Day right around the corner, it makes a wonderful addition to your party, as well as a perfect and light weekday meal. Be sure to check out my incredibly delicious margarita recipe as well with no mixers or refined sugar, that won’t let the rest of that tequila go to waste!

When I cook with alcohol, I always use something I would drink personally in a beverage. But your favorite (or any) tequila you may already have on hand should work for this recipe. Pure agave tequila (100% agave) is low in sugar. With only 69 calories per ounce and no carbohydrates (thanks to the distillation process), this is a solid choice for health-conscious individuals. This tequila is Teremana Tequila. If you can’t find it, my next recommendation and favorite is Resposado.

So, crank up a little salsa music and let’s get this cooking party going!



### TEQUILA LIME SHRIMP WITH ZOODLES

(Servings 4)

#### Ingredients

- 3 Tbsp. grass-fed butter or real butter
- 2 shallots, minced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup tequila
- 2 tsp or zest of one lime
- 3 Tbsp. lime juice
- 1-pound uncooked shrimp, peeled and deveined (recommend fresh local Mayport)
- 2 medium zucchini spiralized (or store-bought pre-spiraled)
- ¼ cup fresh parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### Instructions

Heat 1 Tbsp. of butter in a skillet over medium heat.

Add shallots and cook for 1 minute until semi-translucent. Add garlic and cook for another 60 seconds being careful not to overcook or it will burn.

Remove from heat; stir in tequila, lime zest and lime juice.

Cook until the liquid is evaporated.

Add remaining butter, shrimp and zucchini noodles

Continue cooking over medium heat until liquid is almost evaporated (2-3 minutes).

When all shrimp are pink in color, it is ready to go.

Garnish with parsley and lime zest, and additional lime wedges if desired.

And let’s not forget that margarita!

### TEREMANA OR RESPOSADO MARGARITA

#### Ingredients

- 2 oz. Teremana Blanco
- 1 oz. fresh squeezed lime juice
- ½ oz. agave nectar
- 1 oz. fresh pineapple or orange juice

#### Instructions

Shake with ice in a cocktail shaker. Strain into your favorite margarita glass over fresh ice. Garnish with a lime wheel, pineapple leaves and sea salt as desired.

Bon appetit!

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Photos provided by Mike Rolewicz

# Roscoe Boulevard home offers plenty of space, amazing views

By Mike Rolewicz

What's better than a great day on the boat with friends and family? Coming home to this waterfront beauty on the Intracoastal. We are excited to share this luxurious, yet comfortable, home at 5 North Roscoe Blvd. in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Custom built in 2014 with no detail overlooked, this gorgeous pool home with almost 5,000 square feet of living space situated on a 1-acre lot is the perfect place to call home and enjoy all that Ponte Vedra Beach has to offer — A-rated schools, several restaurants within walking or paddle-

boarding distance. Sip your morning coffee on the dock or balcony, watching birds forage on the shoreline with an occasional visit from dolphin and/or manatee.

Enjoy afternoons tubing or wakeboarding or a lazy day by the pool watching boats go by with friends. Enjoy a sunset cruise or jump in the boat for dinner at several award-winning waterfront restaurants nearby.

When you enter this open and airy stunner with 12-foot ceilings, your eyes are drawn to the water views from every angle. Thoughtfully designed to take advantage of the 100 feet of water front-

age, direct water views are enjoyed from three of the four bedrooms, each with an en suite bath, as well as the office, living and dining and, of course, the state-of-the-art kitchen with two islands that opens to a large gathering space with pocketing sliders that bring the outside in.

Upstairs a flex room opens to a 12-seat theater room complete with small wet bar area for all the drinks and snacks needed for movie night or to watch your favorite team on a 10-foot screen along with two large bedrooms and a balcony with breathtaking views of the backyard and Intracoastal. It's a great place to catch the

amazing sunsets over the water.

The expansive outdoor space includes several covered seating areas as well as a large summer kitchen with beverage fridge. The dock features a 10,000-pound covered lift and another 1,500-pound lift perfect for a kayak, jet ski or small flats boat. The commercial-grade concrete and steel bulkhead will provide peace of mind for years to come.

Move-in ready. Call today for a private showing.

This property is exclusively listed by Mike Rolewicz of the 904 Home Guide Team and brokered by eXp Realty.



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Sarah Huckabee Sanders holds a party favor at the event.



Katie Johnson, David Johnson, Janet Westling, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Vernon Jones, Allison Ferebee, Dale Westling, Drew Westling and Greg Westling



Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Monica Jacoby



Pam Shore, Drew Westling, Vernon Jones and Patsy Shields

# An evening with Sarah Huckabee Sanders

By Janet Westling

On March 13, my husband Dale and I hosted a dinner at our home in Sawgrass Country Club with Sarah Huckabee Sanders, former press secretary to President Donald Trump from 2017-2019, author of “Speaking for Myself” and candidate for governor of Arkansas.

Huckabee Sanders has been an ardent supporter of President Trump and his MAGA agenda, and this event was filled within days of sending out invitations to friends in our community. Over 50 friends attended and had the opportunity to dine with Huckabee Sanders and pose for photos.

The springtime temperatures made the perfect garden setting for an open-air venue with outdoor dining on the terrace under the trees. The alfresco dinner catered by Alice Hickox of Lettuce Do Dinner included a wonderful menu of cast-iron seared beef tenderloin, baked parmesan-and-sundried-tomato-crust salmon and shrimp scampi with risotto. A special dessert of Arkansas possum pie was served along with a signature cookie with the logo of “Sarah for Governor” as a party favor.

Huckabee Sanders is a genuine and natural speaker and made quite a connection to all who attended. She was the third woman and first mother to hold the position of White House press secretary. Huckabee Sanders lives in Little Rock, Arkansas, with her husband Bryan, their three children, Scarlett, Huck and George, and their golden retriever, Traveler.



ABOVE: Patsy Shields, Dr. Gary Lee, Sarah Huckabee Sanders and John Shields



Kay and Steve Carn



LEFT: Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Lauri Odom

Photos provided by Janet Westling

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This 4BR/3.5BA 3,063sf home shows like a model. Oversized preserve homesite. this is the Avondale floorplan with 4BR plus a children's playroom/flex space. 6" wide plank Hemingway Oak Wood floors in all of the common areas, custom white kitchen cabinets with white Cambria quartz countertops & farm sink. The open floorplan offers many options for use and great for entertaining. Offered for \$789,900.

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Summer is almost here! This wonderful 5th floor condo with sweeping oceanfront views with balcony access from every room is awaiting you! With both family & adult-only pools, you can choose how to spend your days once the beach sand and ocean waves have worn you out! Reserved parking spot & guest parking available. Come enjoy the perks of quiet south Jax Beach!

Offered for \$700,000.

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**VILLAGES OF PABLO**

Beautiful 3BR/2BA 1828 sf single family home located off San Pablo Rd. in Intracoastal West area. Cul-de-sac with fenced back yard. Split floor plan, 2 car gar., sunroom/patio off the kitchen & master, living areas are tile or wood flooring, bedrooms carpeted. Master bath has garden tub, walk in shower, dual sinks & his/her closets. Kitchen updated with granite countertops. New roof. Offered for \$395,000.

**Call Wally Sears  
904-610-9771**

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## TRAVEL SPOTLIGHT

## Part 1: Traveling to Asia amid a pandemic

By Alex Wulbern

Preparing to travel during COVID has been no easy task. It is not as simple as packing a bag and swiping a credit card for the plane ticket.

To travel internationally, it took months of preparation along with detailed visa applications.

For my visa to Thailand, I had to prepay for my entire stay's hotel bookings, which, for me, meant three months of living accommodations prepaid even if I did not have to prepay to confirm the booking with the hotel.

I also needed to book a government-approved quarantine for 14 days. (A few days before I left, the Thai government announced the quarantine would be shortened to 10 days and I was refunded the pro-rated amount for the days I did not stay in quarantine.)

I had to purchase both travel insurance and health insurance. Despite having health insurance in the U.S., I needed to buy additional insurance from an approved provider in Thailand to cover all COVID-related expenses in the event I contracted the virus and needed to be hospitalized.

I was also required to get a background check done by my state government to prove I had no criminal record.

All of this was required before I even applied for the visa from the Thai embassy.

The Thai government provided several new visa options during the pandemic in hopes of slowing the hemorrhaging tourist industry in Thailand. I applied for the Special Tourist Visa Program, which provided me with 90 days in country with the option to extend my visa two times for 90 days each for a total possible stay of 270 days.



**ABOVE:** Watching the sun set from the All Nippon Airways lounge in Tokyo's Narita airport.

**LEFT:** The plane was nearly empty from Chicago to Tokyo, making for a pretty comfortable trip.

Photos by Alex Wulbern

The procedure to fly internationally was somewhat complicated, but due to the lack of travelers, was a rather pleasant experience. I was required to produce a negative PCR COVID test in order to get on my international flight with All Nippon Airways. The gate attendants had lists from each country with the required document travelers would need based on their destinations.

All my required documents were checked at the gate before I was allowed to board. After showing proof of a negative COVID test as well as proof of insurance and showing them the visa and my passport, I was allowed on board.

If the flight had been full, the process of checking documents would have taken ages; however, there was hardly anyone

on board. There must have been fewer than 30 passengers on the entire aircraft, including all cabins from first to economy.

On board the aircraft, we were required to keep our masks on except to eat or drink. Weird policy in my opinion because everyone on board had been tested, and since we could take the masks off during meals and snacks, there was quite a lot of time during the 13-hour flight from Chicago to Tokyo that every passenger's mask was off at the same time. The flight attendants kept their masks on the entire time and even wore gloves.

The food on board All Nippon was delicious and there was no shortage of drinks and snacks throughout the entire 13-hour journey from North America to Asia. I flew premium economy and, at 6-foot-3, it is completely worth it for a 13-hour flight.

The meals were delicious. We had several meals, not sure which was a lunch versus dinner as we flew with the sun all the way to Japan, and I found myself getting very confused about what time it was. I woke up at 3 a.m. Eastern time in Florida and landed in Japan around 3 p.m. local time almost 24 hours later. Suffice to say my body was very confused.

I was unable to sleep on the flight, perhaps from the excitement. It was a good thing too, as we flew over Canada and Alaska and were able to see some incredible mountains from the plane.

Upon arriving in Tokyo, the Narita airport was nearly deserted. There was hardly a soul in sight, and most of the shops and restaurants were closed. Luckily, I had access to the ANA lounge and was able to sit and enjoy some udon and Sapporo while waiting for the final leg of my journey.

TRAVEL continues on Page 27

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# Travel

Continued from 26

I do not remember much of my flight from Tokyo to Bangkok. I was not able to sleep much on my flight from Chicago to Tokyo, so by the time I got on my last flight, it had been almost 24 hours from when I woke up in Florida, so I fell asleep before the plane even taxied to the runway. I awoke just in time to eat a quick meal and catch a few more minutes of sleep before landing in Bangkok.

Landing in Bangkok was quite the experience. We were greeted by staff in full PPE gear from head to toe, masks with face shields and full-body Tyvek suits. Our documents were checked to verify everything was in order, and were then handed a badge which indicated where we were heading for quarantine. Once the whole plane of passengers was verified to have all documents, we went to the next station. I visited about three or four different desks, each wanting to verify a different piece of my documentation. One wanted the negative COVID test, others want to see health insurance and, one by one, each document was verified and confirmed.

After a myriad of checkpoints, we were finally directed to immigration where there were two stops. One checkpoint was verifying the declaration form we filled on the plane the final immigration desk took our photograph and fingerprints stamped



**ABOVE:** The mountain ranges of Canada and Alaska provided some incredible views on our long flight to Asia.

**LEFT:** Mealtime on board was amazing. The food was delicious. I cannot wait to fly with All Nippon again.

Photos by Alex Wulbern

our passport and sent us on our way to baggage claim.

Past baggage claim we were greeted by more Tyvek-suited personnel who directed us to the relevant transportation to take us to

our quarantines. I was the only one headed to my particular hotel, so I was taken in a small SUV with a plastic divider between me and the driver. The driver had sprayed my bags before closing the doors and setting

off for my quarantine. The hotel where I would arrive would become my home for the next 10 days, where I would have minimal contact with any humans as I awaited all clear to begin exploring the country.

All in, it would take two cars and four planes, and more than 34 hours to get me from my home in Florida to the quarantine hotel in Pattaya, Thailand. I am so happy to finally be here after all the work and time it took to get here and cannot wait to see all that Thailand has to offer and share my experiences with the world.

*Note: This is the first part of a three-part series detailing Alex Wulbern's travels to Asia. Look for the second part in the next issue of Sand Castles.*

*Alex Wulbern studied marketing and art in college and spent some time working for various boutique cannabis producers in Colorado as well as a specialty liquor distiller out West before returning home to Florida during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the aftermath of the pandemic, he decided to leave his work and pursue his passions of investing, travel and photography. He currently is starting a new website for digital nomads interested in stocks and investing called [GlobetrotCapital.com](http://GlobetrotCapital.com) and is publishing his photography on his Instagram [@Wulbern\\_Photo](https://www.instagram.com/Wulbern_Photo) and will soon be providing more of his photos through [AlexWulbern.com](http://AlexWulbern.com) Alex is currently traveling around Southeast Asia working to navigate the complicated world of pandemic travel and will be spending the next few months living in Thailand. For work inquiries and potential collaboration, you can reach him directly at [Alex@GlobetrotCapital.com](mailto:Alex@GlobetrotCapital.com).*

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# Peaceful oceanfront condo that lives like a home

By Gwinn Volen

Spacious oceanfront condominiums in Ponte Vedra Beach are a rarity. One with 10-foot ceilings, even more so. Renovated as well? Almost never.

673-B Ponte Vedra Boulevard in the private and exclusive Whitehall building checks all of the above boxes. With approximately 2,900 square feet and three en suite bedrooms, this property lives like a home with the conveniences of a condo association.

You enter this second-floor unit and are

immediately drawn to the expansive views of the Atlantic Ocean through the floor-to-ceiling sliding doors. Look up and you'll see beautiful wood-beam work. Look around, and you will be overcome by a sense of peace that only a space one-with-nature can bring.

This peacefulness is multiplied by the calming sound of ocean waves and made inviting by the elegant coastal color palette. Soft taupe coquina tiled floors, deep blues, oyster shell grays and fun aquas — a fresh take on traditional style. In 2017, Phoebe and James Michael Howard and their team

guided the renovation of this space, encapsulating all that is peaceful and serene in their esteemed signature style.

A few highlights worth mentioning! This condo is an entertainer's delight with a Sub-Zero wine fridge in the bar area, an arm's reach from a large dining space for hosting. A kitchen with a view — outfitted with Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances. Your guests have a separate living space, some might call a TV den. Relaxing bathrooms are outfitted with Waterworks fixtures.

Escape to the beach through the backdoor, only a stairway away from a "long

walk on the beach" and only a short walk to beach clubs, the closest being The Lodge & Club.

Beach chairs, beach bikes, beach umbrellas! Surfboards, kayaks, fishing gear and more! All have a place in the separate and spacious two-car garage. Again, a rarity for Ponte Vedra condos.

A timeless treasure, 673-B Ponte Vedra Boulevard, listed by The Volen Group, is offered at \$2,995,000. Furniture may be purchased as part of a separate agreement.

For a private tour, contact your real estate agent.




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## Meet Lisa Ann Loiacono

Lisa Ann has always focused her career on helping others. She is hard-working, dedicated, and a great listener. She has an approachable demeanor that makes everyone feel comfortable. Your goals become her goals, with customer service as a top priority. She understands that searching for a new home or selling your current home can be a complicated and exhausting experience. It is essential to find a real estate agent that is deeply involved in the business and loves what they do to show you the way. She will do her best to find a place for you to call home and to hang your heart. Family and home are the two very most important things to her, and if they are to you, then she is the realtor for you.



Originally from New Jersey, Lisa Ann has lived here in Jacksonville Beach with her husband and two kids for over 20 years. When she is not assisting clients, Lisa Ann, is either at a Jaguar game, or as the owner of a mobile disc jockey business, performing as her alter ego "Mrs. Bubbles."

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## Oceanfront condo boasts updated features, numerous amenities

By Michelle Mousin Anderson

Welcome to a very special oceanfront condominium home in Jacksonville Beach. The Oceania has an ideal location, a bike ride from the Atlantic Beach Town Center and walking distance to restaurants and shops. Built in 2001, the complex has been meticulously maintained. Three years ago, the building was painted and waterproofed and the railings and balcony surfaces were redone. An elevator-modernization project is also

about to start. A full oceanfront fitness center, including a sauna, is located on the second floor along with a resort-style pool. A key point of this building is the ability to have a one-week minimum rental. The building has strict rental guidelines as to provide for a peaceful residence, as there are many full-time residents. The ability to rent is available though, for an exceptional return income.

The condominium located at 1415 1st St. N, #502, has a perfect vantage point on the fifth floor to enjoy privacy and

take in the direct view and breeze from the 260-square-foot balcony that runs the entire width of the condo. There is access from the living and master bedroom from the balcony. The view from inside is just as nice due to the oversized sliders. Cook in the kitchen and you can enjoy the ocean, which can also be appreciated while relaxing in the master bedroom. The master is oversized with a walk-in closet, bath with double sinks and a large seamless glass shower. The floor plan is extremely efficient with the

guest room, which includes a full bath, located away from the master. The guest room enjoys the brilliant sunsets to the West. The kitchen, dining and living rooms feel open and airy. The home is freshly painted and has a new HVAC and water heater.

This beach residence is ready to enjoy!

This property is listed by Michelle Mousin Anderson and represented by Engel and Volkers. For more information, go to [www.mmousin.com](http://www.mmousin.com), call (904) 616-5757 or email [mousinsellsre@gmail.com](mailto:mousinsellsre@gmail.com).

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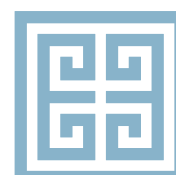
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Photos provided by Janet Westling



# A villa in Ponte Vedra Beach... a European-inspired retreat

By Janet Westling

Marsh Landing has an abundance of homes with beautiful architecture and design. Unfortunately, in this current real estate market, many are not for sale.

It has been a journey for my buyers searching for the perfect home for over a year until recently. The moment they stepped inside 105 Palm Forrest Place they knew this home was special.

I personally know the architect and builder John Shackelford, and his reputation stretches from Sea Island, Georgia, to Ponte Vedra Beach and beyond.

In a 1999 issue of Southern Accents Magazine, Shackelford was named as one of its top “Four Under Forty.” His work in design and execution of a well-built home set him apart among his peers. His design is timeless, not trendy. In its praise of Shackelford, Southern Accents Magazine described his scale of designs as “classical, austere, exuberant and baroque.” He relates his buildings to their setting, which is one of the features that my buyers were drawn to. With only six homes gracing the Marsh Landing golf course on Palm Forest Place, the large properties, their landscape design with their unique placement among the

trees, water, golf course and marsh views create the perfect retreat to call home. This beautiful setting is not only private but tranquil and protected and offers spectacular views from every room.

With over 5,787 square feet of space, four bedrooms and five bathrooms across two floors with separate wings and two staircases, this stunning home exudes a traditional European style, from its stone balcony and stucco exterior to its relaxed elegant interiors and exquisite upgrades.

With a Shackelford home, it is always the details that stand out, from the clay tile roof, details around the eaves, case-

ment windows, stone floors, Juliet balcony and grand staircase. The seashell carved out of stone above the front door entrance welcomes you to the Ponte Vedra lifestyle in Marsh Landing Country Club. The community was created in 1985 by Ponte Vedra Beach’s own “property brothers,” Jerome and Paul Fletcher. The brothers placed a huge emphasis on the conservation and preservation of the environment that included tidal marshes, natural lakes and a wide variety of native trees. They executed their plan beautifully and today, 36

VILLA continues on Page 32

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Photos provided by Jennifer Sexton



## Condo vs. single-family house in Ponte Vedra Beach ... which is for you?

**By Jennifer Sexton**

There's no "one-size-fits-all" when it comes to real estate. Your home should meet your needs and preferences, depending on what phase of life you are in.

There are advantages and disadvantages to condos vs. single-family homes. What's great is that you can choose whichever works best for you and your family. Even more specifically, you may find that each provides special benefits at different times in your life.

The oceanfront location of 621 Ponte Vedra Blvd., Unit 621C at The Breakers

V Condominiums. is unbeatable. Glorious sunrises, fresh breezes, salty air, panoramic ocean views ... this is what you'll experience living in this low-maintenance, single-level three-bedroom, three-bathroom, 2,202-square-foot condo on the ocean. This fully updated condo is a dream! It's an end unit located on the top floor with both a front door and a back door that puts you in the sand in seconds. The open kitchen, dining, living-room layout lends itself to family gatherings and the custom banquette seating is perfect for the younger generations. The owner's suite offers fantastic ocean views and has access to

an air-conditioned sunroom, which spans the entire eastside of the condo. An indoor laundry room, two assigned garage parking spaces and an air-conditioned, large storage unit for your beach toys will seal the deal for any buyer.

One of the primary advantages of living in a condo is the fact that most of the exterior maintenance is taken care of by an HOA. While single family homeowners are busy mowing their lawns, painting the house, trimming hedge and cleaning gutters, condo owners are simply relaxing at home. Another difference is the social aspect. Because condo living has a

density factor, it creates a level of intimacy that you don't typically see in the larger subdivisions.

Is a single-family house a better idea? One of the primary advantages of owning a house is having land. Yes, the property needs to be maintained, but you can make unique exterior improvements like a pool, garden or just have a little extra room to roam in your fenced yard. A single-family house can typically be easily customized or added on to for additional living space.

The perfect example is my three bed-

HOMES continues on Page 32

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# Jaguars

Continued from 19

Orangemen. The Jaguars don't need him right away, but if he returns to form they found a top-shelf defensive back in the third round.

Teams that win one game don't have much to work with in a normal year. Fans are unhappy and don't want to hear about how things are going to be better next season, and casual observers are largely uninterested. This isn't a normal year. A franchise quarterback and a Hall of Fame coach have completely transformed the outlook in Jacksonville and trust me, it's really, really hard to wash away the stink of a 1-15 season, but it's gone. Ticket sales are strong, national media attention hasn't been

this keen since Mark Brunell was throwing to Jimmy Smith and Keenan McCardell more than 20 years ago and the future doesn't just look bright, it looks stable, which isn't something we've always been able to say about the NFL franchise in one of the smallest markets in the league. Expect the renaissance of downtown Jacksonville that has been on the drawing board for years to finally rise from the banks of the St. Johns River, powered by a winning team that creates a sense of incredible possibilities thanks to a bad team which gave way to a great quarterback. Football is a team game but one player, at the game's most important position, can change everything.

**Brian Sexton is the senior correspondent for the Jacksonville Jaguars and has served more than 20 years as the voice of Jacksonville's NFL franchise.**



Jaguars coach Urban Meyer waits to address the draft party crowd on April 29 at TIAA Bank Field. The Jaguars had the No. 1 pick in the draft and selected quarterback Trevor Lawrence out of Clemson, giving the team a young franchise QB to build the future on.  
Photo by Nancy Beecher

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# Villa

Continued from 30

years later, this pristine environment is host to wildlife such as ospreys, egrets, herons, deer and, of course, residents! Believed by many to be "the best neighborhood connecting Jacksonville to the Atlantic Ocean," Marsh Landing Country Club features a private 18-hole golf course designed by Ed Seay of Arnold Palmer Course design. The par-72 course winds through some of the most scenic marshes and groves, connecting sport to nature in a nod to the biodiversity of the environment. A beautiful, enclosed lanai overlooks the heated pool and terraced private lawn, with sweeping vistas in a tranquil setting.

This property is represented by Elite Realty Group, listed by Patricia Bush and offered for \$2,650,000. It is currently under contract by Janet Westling of Berkshire Hathaway.

# Homes

Continued from 31

room, two-and-a-half-bathroom, 2,874-square-foot listing at 473 Golf View Circle, Old Ponte Vedra Beach with a 126-foot-deep lot. The previous owners, a family of three, had plenty of room in the backyard to add a spacious sunroom to enjoy the bright Florida sunshine. They also added multiple decks and patios to the exterior.

In the end, neither of these two housing types is necessarily better than the other. It ultimately comes down to where you are in life, and what your preferences are.

These properties are represented by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, listed by Jennifer Sexton. 621 Ponte Vedra Blvd, #621C is offered at \$1,885,000, 473 Golf View Circle, Ponte Vedra Beach is offered at \$1,495,000.

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# The Palms

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# Move-in ready home features ideal location, great amenities

**By Wally Sears**

Step inside 2795 Chesterbrook Court and experience a move-in ready home just minutes to the beach, shopping and the Mayo Clinic.

Villages of Pablo is a single-family home community located off San Pablo Road in the Intracoastal West area of Jacksonville. It is conveniently located between Atlantic Boulevard and Beach Boulevard, just west of the Intracoastal

Waterway. This is an ideal location which is very close to the beaches without the high cost, and is also a great investment property.

People come from around the world to visit and stay at Mayo Clinic, and often need a furnished home nearby. Schools in this area have a high A rating. Amenities in this well-kept neighborhood include a basketball court, community pool, tennis court and volleyball court.

The low HOA fees of \$36 a month

make this an affordable family neighborhood that is very well kept. This home is on a quiet cul-de-sac and has a large fenced-in backyard. This three bedroom, two bath home has a split floor plan, a two-car garage and also offers a parking pad for an RV or boat complete with electric hook up.

Special features of this home include a beautiful sunroom/patio overlooking large back yard. The living areas feature tile or wood floors, and the bedrooms are

carpeted. The updated master bath has a garden tub, walk-in shower, dual sinks and his-and-her closets. The kitchen is updated with granite countertops and new stainless steel appliances. The laundry room has lots of added shelving, great for storage. An added bonus is the roof, which was replaced in 2021 and is a must see!

This property is listed by Wally Sears, represented by Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty and Offered at \$395,000.



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# Nominations begin May 21



The Ponte Vedra Recorder, celebrating 52 years of community news excellence, will launch our third annual **BEST OF THE BEST of Ponte Vedra, 32082 and 32081.**

YOU, our valued readers, now have the chance to nominate your favorite businesses in various categories online. Online voting begins on June 15th after nominations are complete. **HURRY, last day to nominate is June 14th!**

[www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2021](http://www.pontevedrarecorder.com/bestof2021)