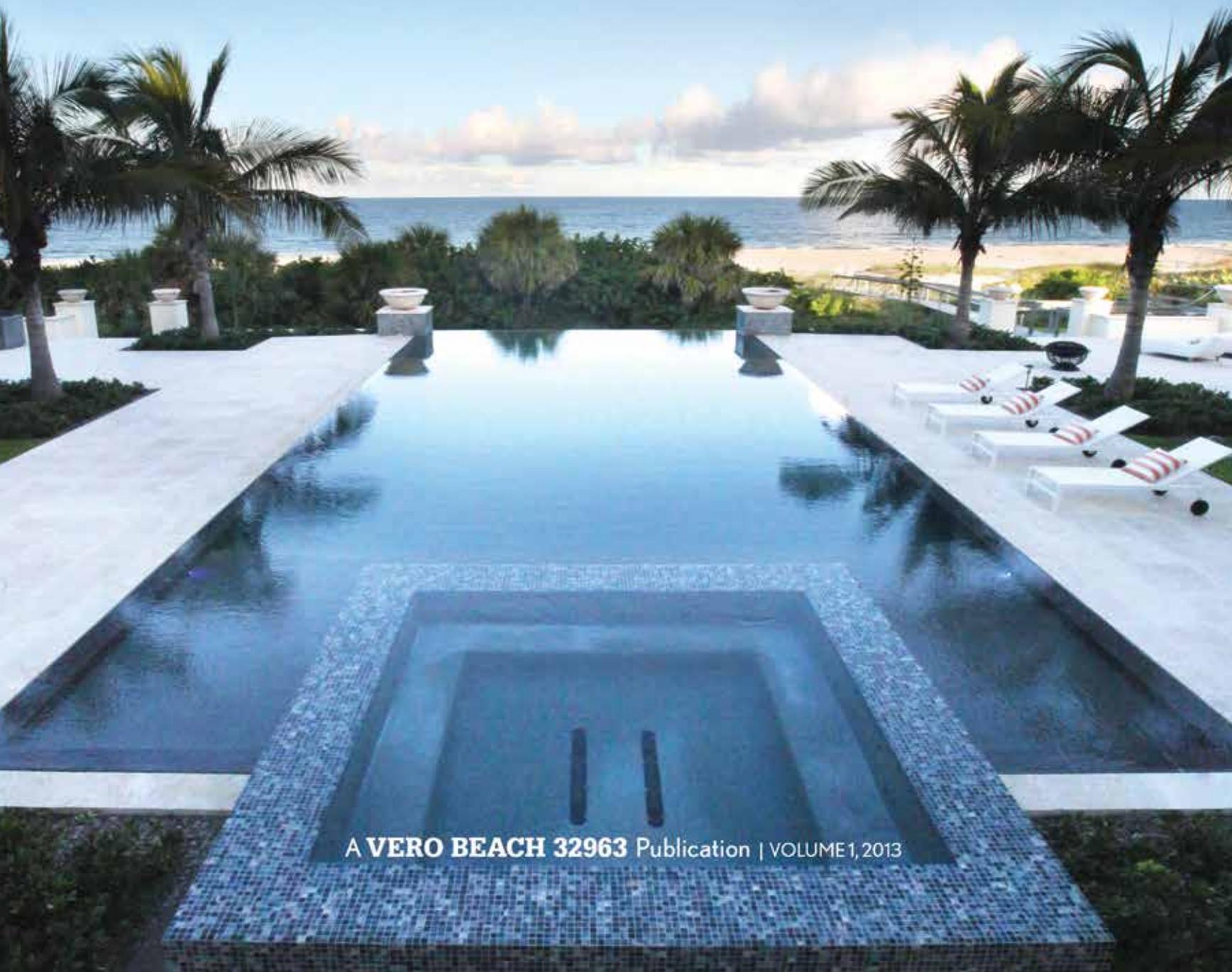


# 32963

LUXURY REAL ESTATE



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# CLUB COMMUNITIES

The 32963 barrier island is home to some of Florida's most beautiful and prestigious private clubs and communities. Each issue of 32963 Luxury Real Estate will profile one of these enviable residential enclaves, providing a brief history and description of its amenities.



## ORCHID ISLAND GOLF & BEACH CLUB



Relaxed, laid-back north-island club offers world-class amenities in a beautiful subtropical setting.

BY STEVEN M. THOMAS 📷 ORCHID ISLAND

The unique appeal of Orchid Island Golf & Beach Club combined with a recovering real estate market have made 2013 the best year for home sales in the community since 2006, according to Orchid Island Realty President Bob Niederpruem.

"We have had a fantastic year," Niederpruem says.

The 600-acre private community, which occupies the entire town of Orchid, was founded by Robert Haines III of Avon, Connecticut in 1990. He was determined to build exceptional amenities for the seaside enclave he envisioned.

"History has it there was not a set budget for the beach club," says Niederpruem. "Haines simply wanted the very best, regardless of cost. He also built a phenomenal golf course. It was designed by Arnold Palmer and they brought in massive amounts of fill to make the undulating fairways and elevated greens in an area that had been a flat orange grove."

In 1994, Orchid Island was bought by W. Galen Weston, developer of the adjacent community of Windsor. It thrived under his leadership and more than 300 homes were sold by the time Weston turned the community over to its members in 2007.

### SELLING A LIFESTYLE

Niederpruem operates his business from a suite of offices at the magnificent West Indies-style beach clubhouse. "We only sell property in Orchid Island Golf & Beach Club, and this is the best place to do it from," he says. "When a client drives in our main gate, which is manned 24 hours a day, and parks and walks up to our office, that really sets the tone."

The short stroll from the parking lot takes visitors along a stone-columned walkway, between two fountains and up a set of steps into the main courtyard between the clubhouse and ocean.

"First impressions mean so much," says Niederpruem. "By the time they walk in this door and get seated here in the conference room, they are almost ready to sign a contract."

After a presentation about all the community has to offer, Niederpruem or one of his associates take prospective buyers on a tour of the property. "The tour is so important, because we are selling

# ORCHID ISLAND GOLF & BEACH CLUB

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## ORCHID ISLAND REALTY, INC.

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One Beachside Drive, Vero Beach, Florida (772) 388-3888 Bob Niederpruem, President/Broker Heidi Levy, Broker-Associate

\*View luxury oceanfront, riverfront, golf course and preserve properties by visiting [www.OrchidIslandRealty.com](http://www.OrchidIslandRealty.com)

*Visit our onsite Sales Office located at the Beach Club.*



\*Prices and features subject to change without notice. Offer void where prohibited by law. Broker cooperation welcomed.



lifestyle first,” says Niederpruem. “We are not trying to compete house for house with other communities. You can buy a house anywhere – but not with the features and benefits we offer.”

Those features include the 25,000-square-foot beach club with a fine-dining restaurant open on weekends and for special events, a deluxe pool with tropical landscaping and 27 private cabanas, a pool grille and a resort-style spa offering a wide range of massages, facials and other skin treatments.

“The pool grille is open every day,” says club general manager Robert Tench, who oversees a staff of 125. “The cabanas are 300 square feet with one bedroom, one bath and a small kitchen. They are basically daytime retreats owned by members. Some people have made them into art studios or offices. Others use them just to get away to relax or take a nap when the grandkids are in town.”

The money Haines sunk into the beach club is evident at every turn in the quality and fit of materials and the ideal proportions and design details of the West Indies architecture.

“From the conference room, I take clients directly to the elevator and up to the third floor where they can get an overview of the club,” Niederpruem says. “Up there they can see the beach and river and get a sense of the intimate size of the community. There are only 376 homes here in

total and we think that is one of our strongest selling points. This is a relaxed, laid-back place where you aren’t in the middle of a crowd.”

ALL ABOUT GOLF



From the observation area, Niederpruem takes guests down through the beautifully furnished beach club and then across A1A to the lush Palmer-designed 18-hole golf course.

The course has hosted a U.S. Open qualifying tournament and was co-host of the 67th Florida Open Championship in July. “That is a mark of a championship club,” Niederpruem says.

Each hole has multiple tees so players of all levels can enjoy the course. The large, gracious

homes along the course follow the West Indies lead of the beach club and are situated so they do not face each other across the fairways.

The golf clubhouse includes a full-featured pro shop and an upscale casual-dining restaurant that serves lunch and dinner every day during the season. Membership director Jackie Kennedy says clubhouse upgrades are being planned to make the facility even more attractive and convenient for members.

“Orchid Island is always looking to keep properties and amenities up to date,” Kennedy says.

From the clubhouse overlooking the golf course, Niederpruem takes clients to the recently expanded tennis and fitness center.

‘NOT YOUR GRANDFATHER’S CLUB’

“The new fitness center is 8,200 square feet compared to 3,500 square feet before,” says Tench. “We added a large group exercise room, a private Pilates room and stretching areas, and doubled the size of the equipment room.”

The facility has a fulltime fitness and wellness director and staff of trainers who teach yoga, spin, Pilates and other popular exercise activities. There are steam rooms for relaxing after a workout, a

tennis shop and eight perfectly conditioned Har-Tru tennis courts.

“I have sold homes on the basis of the new center,” says Niederpruem. “Fitness is a much higher priority than it was 10 years ago. The mid-fifties crowd we seem to be attracting want great golf and tennis, obviously, but they ask right way about the fitness facilities, too. They want to know what we offer.”

“This is not your grandfather’s club,” says Kennedy.

Only after they have seen all the club houses and the golf course do potential buyers get to see an actual home, and apparently they like what they see.

“Our sales so far this year are 20 to 25 percent above our projections,” Niederpruem says. “We anticipate continued strong sales momentum.”

Most sales at Orchid Island Golf & Beach Club are resales, though there are 29 single-home lots left, ranging from \$150,000 to \$5 million, and several new spec homes built by HOA approved builders.

Resale offerings include golf cottages, courtyard homes, large single-family homes along the golf course, riverfront homes with docks, oceanfront condominiums and small number oceanfront estates. Home prices range from \$750,000 to more than \$10 million.

“We have good availability in most price ranges,” Niederpruem says.

A YOUNGER GROUP OF BUYERS

Buyers are coming to the club mainly from the eastern seaboard, especially Connecticut. There are also a number of people from the Midwest and Canada buying primary residences or second homes at Orchid Island. Many buyers are five or 10 years away from retirement, according to Niederpruem.

“They are buying now for the future while prices are still relatively low,” he says.

New residents are drawn both by the range of activities and amenities and by the friendly, relaxed atmosphere.

“People enjoy all the dining options and clubs within the club that we offer,” says marketing coordinator Shirley Reul. “There is a yacht club, gun club, art club, kayaking, bridge – even a choral group.”

“People love the scale of the club,” says Niederpruem. “It is small enough that you can meet everyone. I just had a new family move in and they received a number of e-mails from other club members welcoming them, saying things like, ‘Glad you are here. We are looking forward to meeting you!’ A lot of friendships are made here.”

NEW EXECUTIVE CHEF JACQUES LARSEN BRINGS WORLD-CLASS CULINARY SKILLS TO ORCHID ISLAND GOLF & BEACH CLUB.



Orchid Island got a new executive chef in September when Jacques Larsen was hired to oversee the Club’s three dining venues, as well as catering and special events. Prior to joining Orchid Island’s team, Larsen served as

executive chef at the Burning Tree Country Club in Greenwich, Conn.

Larsen has studied with a number of world-renowned chefs at many of the great cooking schools in Europe, Asia and South America. He has wide experience as a chef at five-star hotels, exclusive private clubs and fine dining establishments.

“I am looking forward to creating new and exciting dishes using fresh, local ingredients,” Larsen said. ❖

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