

## **Secret's out: Hilton Head a perfect place to live**

By Jean Beck

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We say it all the time; this is paradise! From the beautiful beaches, to the magnificent oak trees, swaying palms and abundant arts and culture, it is all the community has to offer that makes the Hilton Head Island area an exceptional place to live.

Realtors have the opportunity to brag about our lifestyle every day, and they feel proud to be able to work and play in this unique and exceptional community. Realtors who have been here many years talk about all the changes they have seen.

There was a time when people thought no one would ever live on the north end of the island, a time when there were dirt roads, and only a hand full of restaurants.

Then the secret got out: Hilton Head Island was the place to be. New homes in new gated communities, villas, and resort communities changed the demographics, and buyers came to purchase residential and vacation homes.

Those that purchased vacation homes and have enjoyed the beauty of the area have created wonderful memories for their families. They look back and say they are glad they purchased when they did, not because of price, but because of what they have shared with family and friends.

You can do that today too, because the inventories are high with motivated sellers and historic low interest rates. Don't think that all vacation homes are located on the Atlantic Ocean.

Many mainland communities offer superior amenities, and just a short drive to the beach.

In today's market, don't do it alone; hire a Realtor. They can help you make an informed decision on what meets your lifestyle, location, price and amenities needs. Then you can make your vacation home worth it all.

According to the National Association of Realtors, investment and vacation homes accounted for 33 percent of overall property sales in 2007, which is close to historic norms, down from 66 percent in 2006. And don't forget to ask your agent if he or she is a Realtor and a member of the Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors.

Now is a good time to say thank you for all that we have in our community, and to those that have helped form and develop it. And despite what real estate cycle we are in, Hilton Head Island is paradise!

Jean Beck is the executive vice president of the Hilton Head Area Association of Realtors.