

# THE BEACH AND BEYOND

IN FAST-GROWING  
**VOLUSIA COUNTY,**  
HOMEBUYERS CAN FIND THE  
IDEAL FLORIDA LIFESTYLE.

BY MICK LOCHRIDGE



1-2. The Old Spanish Sugar Mill, in DeLeon Springs State Park, is also a rustic restaurant where you can make your own pancakes and enjoy a swim in the adjacent spring-fed lake, where the water is always 72 degrees. 3. At Cassadaga, a historic spiritualist retreat, you can have a more otherworldly experience and find out what the future holds in store. 4. The SunRail commuter train makes its northernmost stop in DeBary. 5. Highly rated Stetson University in DeLand is one of the most beautiful collegiate settings in the country, and Elizabeth Hall is one of the most picturesque buildings on the campus. 6. Like fishing? You'll love Volusia County, with great fishing spots like the Ocean Pier. 7. Hatch Seafood Company is one of many colorful eateries near the 175-foot-tall Ponca Inlet Lighthouse. 8-9. Volusia County offers many opportunities for outdoor activities, such as kayaking in the marshes or enjoying family time at Lake Beresford Park in DeLand.



**V**olusia County, in many ways, epitomizes the ideal Florida lifestyle. Encompassed in its 1,200 square miles are world-famous beaches, lovely inland rivers, excellent public and private schools and colleges, and a convenient transportation network that includes commuter rail and even NASCAR. What's not to love?

Among the county's 16 municipalities, DeLand and Deltona to the west, and Daytona Beach, Ormond Beach and Port Orange to the east, are the largest.

For years a vacation destination anchored by Daytona Beach, Volusia offers a comfortable home for its 500,000-plus year-round residents as well.

"Volusia County, and especially West Volusia, is a great place to live," says Gerald Fieser, a longtime resident of picturesque DeLand, which he says "still has the small town feel so many of us grew up with."

Fieser, whose family owns and operates Fieser Dairy in DeLeon Springs, notes that from West Volusia you can get to the St. Johns River in 10 minutes, the beach in 30 minutes or downtown Orlando in 45 minutes. "And we have two beautiful state parks with natural springs and the Lake Woodruff National Wildlife management area only minutes away," he adds.

Although much of the agriculture that once dominated West Volusia is gone, the areas north and west of this very cool small city — home of Stetson University — still have a quiet, rural ambiance that's hard to find anymore in fast-growing Central Florida.

Just a few miles up the road, East Volusia also lures potential homebuyers. That's where the beaches are, for one reason. But not the only reason, of course.

"Daytona Beach and Volusia County have a great mix of amenities, ranging from exceptional healthcare, public and private educational opportunities and a wonderful quality of life," says Nancy Keefer, president and CEO of the Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce.





The Estates at Verano, located in the master-planned golf course community of Venetian Bay, is being developed by Platinum Home Builders. There are seven models from which to choose, and 191 homesites available. Shown is the Berkshire model, with 2,672 square feet of living area. Homes in the community are priced from the \$370s.



staff and the community.”

After high school, students have numerous higher education choices, including Daytona State College, the University of Central Florida, Bethune-Cookman University, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Keiser College, Stetson University and Nova Southeastern University.

Volusia’s 47 miles of Atlantic Ocean beaches stretch from Ormond Beach south to New Smyrna Beach and the Canaveral National Seashore. In between, there’s the Daytona International Speedway, home of the Daytona 500.

Sportspersons have their choice of fishing offshore or in the rivers and lagoons. And there’s no shortage of golf courses, or places to hike, bike, canoe and kayak.

Or, it seems, to shop for a new home.

“Volusia offers a broad range of options, from beachside cottages and condos to neighborhoods of single-family homes,” says Keefer. “In addition, there are a number of apartments and new developments on the horizon.”

Among those new communities are three being developed by Geosam Capital ([geosamcapitalus.com](http://geosamcapitalus.com)). Venetian Bay and Coastal Woods are in New Smyrna Beach, with Cornerstone Grove in Port Orange.

Builders of both production and custom homes are hard at work in all three, offering homes priced from about \$200,000 to more than \$1 million, says Martin Pham, vice president of operations for Geosam.

Venetian Bay ([venetianbay.info](http://venetianbay.info)), by far the largest of the three, currently has 1,895 homes, with a total of 3,763 planned at build-out. Model homes are under construction at Coastal Woods, where plans call for 1,250 homes. Site work just started

this summer at Cornerstone Grove, which will have 64 homes.

“You’ll find apartments, townhomes, duplexes and single-family homes of all types and styles,” notes Pham. “Our communities include amenities like golf courses, town centers, swimming pools, spas, nature trails and acres and acres of conservation areas. I think there’s something for everyone across our communities.”

The Venetian Bay Golf Club includes an 18-hole semiprivate championship course as well as a clubhouse with a full-service restaurant and bar and a pro shop.

Geosam owner George Arnoyan visited New Smyrna Beach back in 2011 “and instantly fell in love with the place,” Pham adds. “The weather, the people, the beaches, the lifestyle — it’s all wonderful.

Continues Pham: “He saw the opportunity for growth here, and we’re now establishing roots. We’re confident that the success we’re seeing will continue, as more people take notice. Ultimately, I think a homebuyer lands here because they will find the same charm in the area that we have.”

That same charm can be found in West Volusia, which encompasses DeLand, the county seat. Stetson, one of the top-rated private liberal-arts universities in the Southeast, is there, as well as a nationally known skydiving training facility.

DeLand is likewise near Blue Spring State Park, where the manatees hang out, and Cassadaga, one of the oldest active spiritualist communities in the country.

The St. Johns River and lakes George, Monroe and Harney provide opportunities for boating, fishing and other water

## NOBODY WILL WASTE AWAY AT THIS MARGARITAVILLE



A bountiful blend of Buffett, beaches and boomers could be as strong a combination as a pitcher of top-shelf margaritas. At least that’s the hope of the companies developing Latitude Margaritaville, a 55-plus, active-adult community underway in Daytona Beach.

Work started earlier this year at the 1,600-acre site, located west of Interstate 95 at LPGA Boulevard. Plans call for a master-planned community packed with first-class amenities, a tropical theme and plenty of retail choices.

Single-family homes and townhomes in Latitude Margaritaville will be priced starting in the low \$200s, with the first models ready in early 2018. Plans call for up to 3,000 homes — but expansion possibilities mean the community could eventually accommodate up to 7,000 homes.

While Latitude Margaritaville is about 10 miles from the Atlantic coast, residents will have access to a private beachfront club at Ormond Beach, just north of Daytona.

Developer Minto Communities teamed up with Margaritaville Holdings, which is part of the retail, entertainment and development empire founded by singer Jimmy Buffet, who is said to be one of the wealthiest entertainers in the U.S.

“We believe this relationship will redefine lifestyle destination living in Daytona Beach,” says John Cohan, chief executive officer of Margaritaville.

“With Minto’s expertise in creating master-planned developments and Margaritaville’s inherent ability to deliver fun and escapism, Latitude Margaritaville will have the exact coordinates for those looking to live the Margaritaville lifestyle as they grow older, but not up,” he adds.

The community will offer a long list of amenities, from walkable neighborhoods to workout classes. And with a nod to Parrotheads, there’ll be a band shell for live music.

A town center will feature a fitness center with an aerobics studio, a spa and an indoor lap pool. Plans also call for indoor and outdoor dining with signature Margaritaville food and beverage choices.

In addition to the homes, Sutton Properties, a real estate development and management company, has signed on to develop 200,000 square feet of retail space at the entrance to the community. Its first phase will include a supermarket, retailers and, of course, a Margaritaville restaurant.

— Mick Lochridge





Kolter Homes (kolterhomes.com) recognized the area's potential in 2000 when it launched Victoria Park, which includes the 55-plus Cresswind Victoria Gardens. Shown is the Siena model, which has 2,162 square feet of living area and is priced from \$270,900.

Homes in Kolter's communities are priced from the low \$200s to the \$500s, and range in size from 1,500 to 3,600 square feet. Floorplans include two to five bedrooms, dens, bonus rooms and extended garages. Currently there are 1,985 homes; plans call for 3,400 at build-out.

Mattamy Homes (mattamyhomes.com), also has started building in DeLand. Its Bentley Green community was launched in 2016 with plans for 153 homes. It's about one-quarter sold out.

Homes in Bentley Green are priced from about \$200,000 to more than \$300,000, and range in size from 1,735 square feet to more than 3,500 square feet. Community amenities include a pool and cabana, pocket parks and a tot lot.

"The charm of historic DeLand's quaint boutiques, antique shopping and world-class restaurants appeal to millennials as well as their boomer parents," says a Mattamy spokesperson. "Our homeowners can spend the day on the beach or enjoy one of Central Florida's many theme parks. Natural beauty is abundant, with many national and state parks within a short drive."

From the oak canopies of West Volusia to the sandy beaches along the east coast, Volusia County serves up a long list of good reasons to relocate. ■

recreation. The SunRail commuter train makes its northernmost stop in DeBary.

Kolter Homes (kolterhomes.com) recognized the area's potential in 2000 when it launched Victoria Park, which includes the 55-plus Cresswind Victoria Gardens and Victoria Hills, a golf-course community.

"DeLand is a beautiful town full of history and activities," says Mark Bines, Kolter's vice president. "It allows people to experience culture, fine dining and entertainment minutes from their homes. The proximity to beaches and Orlando also makes this area a plus for adventure and travel."

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