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Habersham

ON A SUNNY SPRING DAY WHEN THE AZALEAS ARE BLOOMING purple, fuchsia and white, take a drive out Joe Frazier Road to Habersham.

Located just minutes from downtown, this new community – recently named “Best Neighborhood Design in America” by the National Association of Home Builders – is reminiscent of small coastal Southern towns where neighbors smile and wave from their porches and are quick to offer each other a glass of cold lemonade.

The parks, town center and wooden dock on Habersham Creek are less than 10 years old, but the community’s planners and builders have done a remarkable job making Habersham feel like a long-established neighborhood. New cottage-style homes blend in beautifully among hundred-year-old oaks and

By Carol Weir

acres of green and golden marsh grass alongside deep water.

Raised off the ground and grouped around small parks, the homes, townhouses and condos of Habersham take their architectural cues from Charleston, Savannah and the Caribbean.

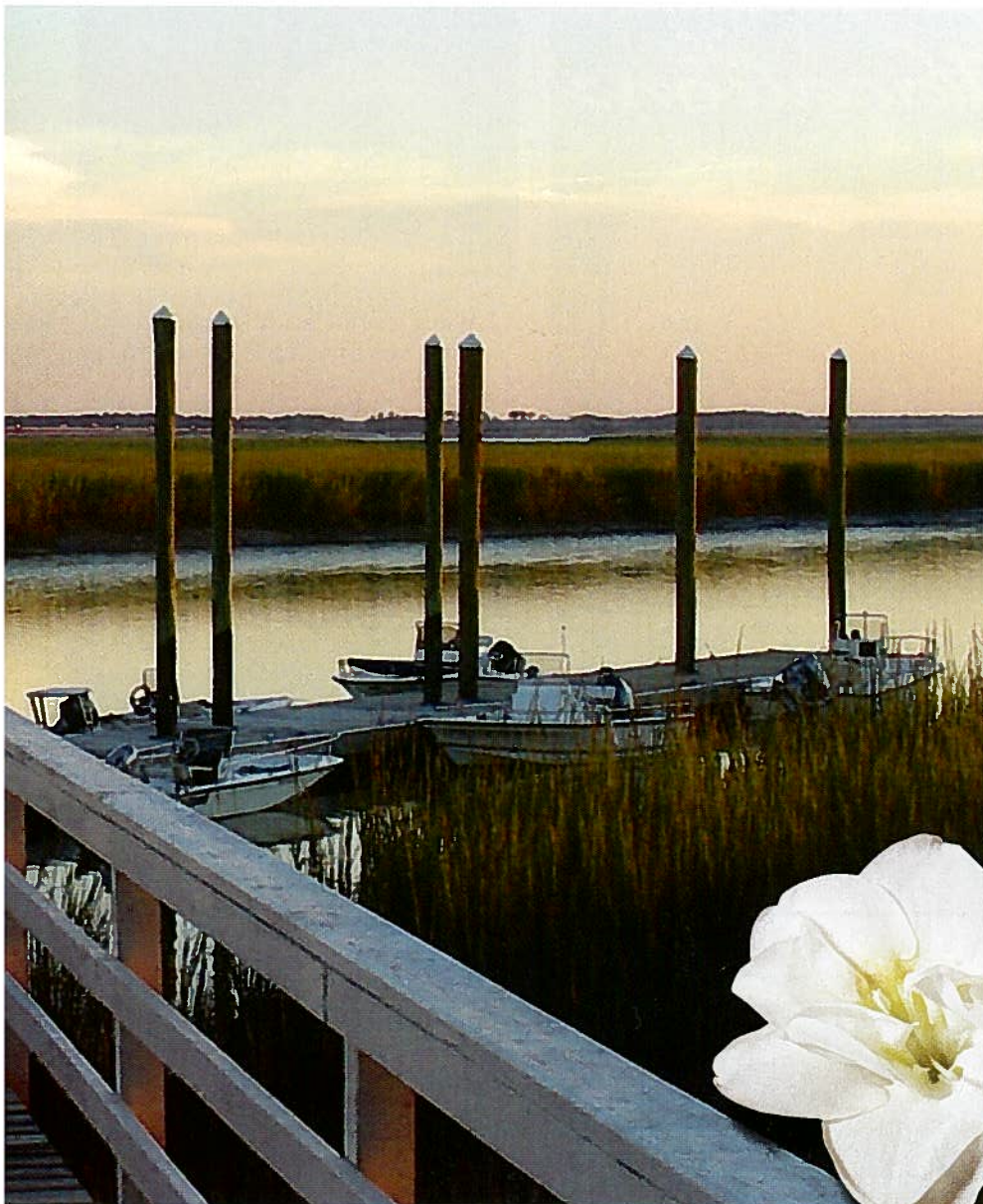
The community is part of the New Urbanism movement, which promotes walkable, master-planned neighborhood development with sidewalks, alleys, houses positioned close together and prominent open and shared spaces.

Residents can walk to “downtown Habersham,” and get their hair done, join friends for a beer, order pizza or pick up a few staple (or gourmet) grocery items. The

attractive town center also features several small shops, a post office, a real estate office and a fire station.

Habersham developer Robert Turner, who is also managing partner of Beaufort’s acclaimed Newpoint neighborhood, purchased the large tract of land and began building homes in 1999. Although the property was originally slated for development as a Hilton Head Island-style gated community, Turner had other plans. His vision was to create a community featuring a mix of housing styles and price ranges with commercial outlets within walking distance of the homes.

To protect the sensitive natural environment that surrounds the community, engineers carefully constructed a system of swales and ponds to slow down and filter rainwater before it flows into the adjoining marsh and Broad River. Roads were built to meander



new Beaufort
community
captures the
spirit of
a small
Southern
coastal town

around massive oaks and houses have been placed on lots to accommodate the preservation of mature trees.

Walking paths and a two-lane road line the riverbanks, offering sweeping water views for all residents to enjoy. There is no gate at the entrance to Habersham, and non-residents are welcome to visit the commercial section of the neighborhood.

The community also features a large swimming pool, children's pool, clubhouse pavilion, boat dock and "sunset tower," where residents gather to take in the view and share cocktails. Other amenities for residents include a playground, soccer field and tennis, bocce ball and croquet courts.

Living in Habersham

But it's the neighbors that make Habersham a real neighborhood. Many

Habersham homeowners are involved in planning Riverside Charter School, scheduled to open this year in a temporary location not far from the community. The public school is designed to accommodate kindergartners through eighth graders from diverse backgrounds and economic levels.

One of the most active homeowner groups manages the community garden, which features two dozen plots available for rent. Every Saturday morning in the summer, the plots' planters set out their excess lettuce, tomatoes, beans, peppers and herbs in front of the Habersham post office to share with their neighbors.

Muriel Eingurt, the garden group secretary, moved with her husband Norman to Habersham two and a half years ago from Pomona, N.Y. They discovered the community on a visit to Beaufort in 2002.

Above, kayakers, fisherman and pleasure boaters head out from this dock on Habersham Creek.

Below, raised off the ground and grouped around small parks, the homes, townhouses and condos of Habersham reflect the architectural styles of Charleston and Savannah.

Next page, surrounded by azaleas, the post office at Habersham is part of the community's town center.



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"At that time the area was very rural," said Eingurt, a retired teacher. "There was no town center. It was just beautiful."

Some of Habersham's residents are former military officers who retired in the area near the military bases where they were stationed as young men.

The community's diverse population also includes young families eager to participate in neighborhood activities. Jody Hayward, the mother of two preschool-age girls, organizes an old-fashioned family fun day for residents every fall with wheelbarrow races, a cake walk, tug-of-war and musical chairs.

"The kids get all excited about it," Hayward said. "It's a slice of Americana."

For day visitors

If you're visiting Beaufort, Habersham is worth a stop. In the small town center just eight miles from downtown, you can snack on a pizza, visit the corner market or neighborhood pub and browse specialty shops. There's also a farmer's market open from 4-6 p.m. Fridays, seasonally.


Southern Living home

A cottage-style house in Habersham is one of four homes being given away in the 2009 *Southern Living* Choose Your Home Giveaway. Beginning March 23, you can enter online at www.myhomeideas.com.

Habersham real estate

Single-family homes range in size from 1,200 to 5,000 square feet. Two-bedroom, two-bath condos, offering 1,100 to 1,600 square feet of living space, are grouped six units to a building in structures designed to look like Lowcountry mansions. Three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath condos are about 2,050 square feet, and traditional townhouses are 1,300 to 3,000 square feet. Lofts in the town center range in size from 2,160 to 3,400 square feet. Town center buildings have commercial or retail use on the first floor and residences on the second and third floors. Home sites with park, woodland and water views are priced from the low \$100s to \$800s. Habersham homeowner association fees are \$895 per year. For more information, call (843) 542-2377 or visit www.habershamsc.com.

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