

SOUTH CAROLINA HOMES & GARDENS ^{\$4⁹⁵}



— *S e p t e m b e r O c t o b e r 2 0 0 3* —

Anne Moore

HARBOUR WATCH ON LAKE MURRAY

LAKE LIVING AT ITS FINEST

This is the place.

A place on the lake, a place where you can fish, picnic, play tennis, swim, practice a little golf, and boat year-round. It is a place where children can run, explore, see the natural world up close, and still catch fireflies at night. This is a place of quiet solitude and neighborhood gatherings.

This place is lake living at its finest.

Photography: Ted Borg. Developer: Phil Savage.

When developer Phil Savage decided to create a community on 130 acres adjacent to Lake Murray, the first thing he did was hire a tree surveyor to catalog all the big hardwood trees on the property. It was costly but before he could determine where the roads, houses, and lot lines were going to be placed, he felt he needed to know the type and location of all of the landmark trees. Every hardwood tree over six inches in diameter was pinpointed on a plat map.

The property was so tightly packed

with trees that they could not grow properly. Savage says it was so thick that a deer with antlers could not traverse the property. Throughout this dense, spindly pine forest, the tree survey revealed a plentiful supply of large-diameter hardwood trees. Savage talks of the trees like old friends, calling them by number, as they were originally denoted on the plat. He has constructed the roads and lot lines to meander around the big, old trees, leaving them as corner accents or as focal points down an allee of pines.

Even after the engineer first







designed the entrance road, it was shifted to stay away from a large, old white oak tree that now stands proudly alongside the curbed boulevard. "We moved the road over another ten feet," Savage says, because he was worried that the land might be disturbed under the canopy of the big tree. "If you do that," he says, "you risk damaging the root system. According to Savage, land disturbance can be well away from a tree and still do damage. "Simply

building a road on the uphill side of a tree can change the drainage pattern and kill a mature tree," he says.

"Harbour Watch is a water oriented community," Savage says. Although lakefront homeowners are able to construct their own private docks, a popular amenity for off-water owners is the availability of private boat slips that allow them to keep their boats conveniently docked in their own neighborhood. The property came

with a pre-existing 200-slip marina permit which makes this possible. Thanks to a pre-existing commercial marina permit, that Savage decided to convert into a private Harbour Club for property owners, up to 200 owners in Harbour Watch will be able receive deeded boat slips along with the purchase of their lot. "Right now, anyone who buys a lot in here can get a deeded boat slip at the Harbour Club," he says. "Even if owners do not



own a boat, the boat slips will add value to the property. When they sell their lot, the slip goes with it. Even with the current draw down of Lake Murray for the construction of a new back-up dam, residents at Harbour Watch will have convenient access to deep water at the Harbour Club.

The subdivision has more amenities than you will find just about anywhere. The clubhouse, available to homeowners, has a beautifully decorated upstairs

gathering room with a gas operated fireplace, big screen TV, and comfortable furniture on one end and a pool table on the other. A small, well-equipped kitchen makes it perfect for parties. On the lower level a bar area and an exercise room back up an inviting swimming pool. Nearby is a chipping and putting green constructed with high quality artificial turf. The two clay tennis courts are large enough to have a low fence

separating them down the middle. A short distance away, a small, shady island shelters picnic tables and a courtesy dock.

When you pass through the private, gated entrance there are barrier curbs and no driveways on this stretch of street. A gentle curve bounded by shades of green spaces leads you to a magnificent fountain centerpiece. You immediately know you have arrived at someplace special. At night, there are

The azure waters of the community swimming pool mimic the blue waters of Lake Murray beyond the shoreline. Residents are able to launch their boats using the nearby boat ramp. Trees saved from the bulldozer fill many functions. Here they create shade and reflect serene beauty on the still blue water, while providing privacy for lakeshore homeowners. The clubhouse first story is fashioned of plum-colored Pennsylvania field stone, adding country charm to the common areas. Upstairs the large, open area has a gas operated fireplace, big screen TV, pool table, and small kitchen. Downstairs a bar, exercise room, and shower rooms serve the swimmers at the pool.





no glaring streetlights along the entryway instead there are over 100 uplights accenting the fountain and the beautiful tree canopies.

The entire neighborhood is an environmental oasis. Most of the interior lot owners can walk out their back door and step into a system of nature trails that goes all the way

through the community. At the water's edge, each cove has a green space set aside as a natural area protected with restrictions. No one has ever cleared the banks of these coves. "We consider the environmental stewardship areas to be our best assets, something you can't replace," Savage says.

"When I look into the future what I

think people are going to miss is mature trees, bunny rabbits, fireflies, and the songs of the birds, things that are only found in natural environments," Savage says. "We encourage the fronts yards be landscaped with lawns and shrubs." But the back is a different story. There are natural areas behind most homes that

Homes come in all shapes and sizes, adding to the diversity of the neighborhood. Lot purchasers may choose their own builder and must abide by the covenants and restrictions put in place to protect the environment and maintain neighborhood values. Top left: Morning mist rises off of the lake, signaling another beautiful day. Lake Murray beckons to come and greet another sunrise. Bottom left: The chipping and putting green is a perfect place for resident golfers to put their golf game in order. The artificial surface is maintenance free and ready for play. Bottom right: The weathered wood of the boardwalk and docks stretch out to the deep water boat slips. Lake Murray is just a few steps away and accessible year around to residents of Harbour Watch.



*From the moment you enter
Harbour Watch,
you notice the woods, the birds
singing, and the green spaces
behind the houses.*





Above: The majestic lion fountain is the first thing you see when you enter through the Harbour Watch gate. Surrounded by sabal palmettos, it characterizes the melding of formal and informal styles in this neighborhood dedicated to environmental protection.

Right: The gated community maintains security electronically. Gate openers, much like garage door openers, can be carried in residents' cars. Gates can also be activated from inside a home to admit guests. Plum-colored Pennsylvania field stone is repeated on the gatehouse and walls. Thick asphalt roads are curbed throughout the neighborhood.



are not sodded or 'landscaped'. These areas are kept natural with environmental covenants. "This buffer is intended to remain somewhat natural," Savage says. "If the rabbits want to live there, then that's their place."

Beautiful, unusual homes fill the wooded lots on the quiet streets and cul-de-sacs. Buyers may choose their own builder. Homes are subject to architectural guidelines in place to preserve the integrity of the neighborhood. Homeowners appreciate

the natural resources that have been left intact.

Phil Savage was determined to create something unique in his development, permanent green spaces for the families who settle there. If you love nature, you will want to stay. Harbour Watch is on a peninsula about ten minutes west of Lexington. The sales center is located at 2618 Highway 378, just west of Lexington. Telephone (803) 808-5677 or (800) 805-9997. Visit them online at www.lakemurrayliving.com. ↑