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FAMILY-RUN COMPANY DELIVERS **Family-Friendly Fun**



BLUEWATER RESORT AND MARINA

BY J.B. BISSELL

There is plenty of history behind the **Spinnaker Resorts** brand. For example, yes, the Spinnaker moniker refers to the triangular sails of maritime legend. Ken Taylor, president and co-owner, spent much of his youth navigating Lake Ontario from the Royal Canadian Yacht Club. So when it came time to name his first purpose-built timeshare property — after roughly a decade of working in finance and land development for a handful of companies — he decided to figuratively connect his childhood passion to his grown-up passion project.



That first resort was simply called Spinnaker. It was built in 1983 on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, and had 48 two-bedroom units. More Hilton Head construction followed before Taylor eventually moved on to Ormond Beach, Florida, and Branson, Missouri.

And while the history of how all those projects came to fruition certainly is interesting, what might truly shed the most light on the inner workings and philosophies of Spinnaker Resorts is this: “We grew up with our friends referring to us as the Griswolds from *National Lampoon’s Vacation* because we spent so much time traveling as a family,” says Carolyn Oliver, a Spinnaker Resorts executive director — and one of Ken and Joan Taylor’s daughters.

Indeed, Spinnaker is the definition of a family-run operation. Joan continues to act as co-owner, daughter Christine Taylor is an executive director, and Shawn Oliver (Carolyn’s husband) serves as executive director of sales and marketing.

“We’ve traveled with three generations and that experience produces lasting memories that are invaluable,” continues Oliver. “Family vacationing was instilled in us because we really enjoyed all that ‘Griswold’ time. Ultimately, we hope that the enjoyment of vacationing can be one that all Spinnaker owners experience.”

Strive for Extraordinary

A mere enjoyment of vacationing, however, seems to be a bit of an understatement. Perhaps a more accurate description of what the Spinnaker Resorts team aims to offer is an “overall extraordinary resort experience.” As a matter of fact, the phrase is used on the company’s website and it’s not a case of dramatic hyperbole.

“Having traveled extensively around the world, we’ve had firsthand experience with what we feel is required to deliver an overall extraordinary resort experience,” says Oliver. “We strive for that at our resorts.”

It starts with the booking process. Spinnaker utilizes a centralized reservations center with an owner services manager always on-site and available to answer questions. This makes it easier for the customer service team — whether responding to inquiries via telephone or email — to be up-to-date and consistent with their messaging.

To owners, of course, informed efficiency while making a reservation is just the beginning. They surely appreciate it, but what really matters is what happens when they arrive at their selected property. The extraordinary experience may start when the owner books their reservation, Oliver says, “but it carries through their entire stay, from interaction with the resort staff to the overall maintenance of our properties to the amenities offered.”

At most of Spinnaker’s resorts, the standout amenity is the swimming pool and its surrounding area. This isn’t to say that the water

features are overblown aquatic playgrounds with corkscrew slides, faux pirate ships, and splash fountains pre-programmed to soak every passerby who comes within a 10-foot radius.

Spinnaker’s swimming areas are essentially the opposite. They’re relatively simple spaces: typically an amoeba-shaped pool with plenty of loungers lining the deck. Some have a basketball hoop or other sort of recreational add-on, and some feature a unique design element, such as a lazy river or a mellow version of those splash fountains. But the general lack of sensory overload is exactly what makes them wonderfully inviting to everyone.

“People of all ages can use our pools for swimming, pure fun, fitness, or body therapy,” says Joan Taylor. “Both Ken and I are Aquarians [the zodiac’s water sign], and swimming has been important in our family for many generations. We believe water vistas are essential for pleasure, good health, and pure enjoyment. And you can see how important water is in all of our projects, whether that’s accomplished by a fantastic view of an ocean, lagoon, the Intracoastal Waterway — or the pool.”

Architecturally Distinct

Comfortable accommodations are crucial to the owners’ pleasure, good health, and enjoyment, too, so Joan Taylor — an accomplished interior designer — has always made sure that no matter its location, the property was being built in the mode of Spinnaker Resorts’ distinct vision. And like the all-inviting swimming pools, that means developing living quarters that cater to all members of a traveling party.

“We’ve designed our units to be family friendly with a bright and airy feeling,” Taylor explains. “We have an open-concept design with living and dining areas set together instead of in separate rooms, and many have modern countertop eating areas that allow the cook to be included in family discussions.”

Spinnaker accommodations also are known for being larger than average. Many of the company’s resorts offer large three-bedroom suites. “Each bedroom has its own spacious bathroom,” says Taylor. (The non-master bathroom also typically has an entrance from the living area.)





ROYAL FLORIDIAN RESORT



PALACE VIEW RESORT

Given her particular background, it's not surprising that Taylor is perhaps most proud of the interior design elements that grace each of the complexes. "Some units have attractive wood-like tile in the living space, but comfortable carpet in the bedrooms," she says. "Artwork at each property represents the part of the country where they are — South Carolina, Florida, or Missouri. And the units aren't cookie-cutter beige. The rooms are painted in unique bright colors, often with different colors in each room."

The point is that while Spinnaker's construction concept truly is distinct, a lot of creative consideration goes into the design details to ensure that every resort makes owners and guests feel regionally at home.

Playing Favorites

Families rarely are willing to play favorites, but when it comes to the Taylors, it seems fairly obvious that the Bluewater Resort and Marina on Hilton Head Island is the indisputable darling. It's the flagship property of the Spinnaker Resorts brand — constructed around a peaceful lagoon, with multiple swimming pools and other leisure facilities — and home to one of the most unique amenities in all of timesharing: a private dock on the Intracoastal Waterway that's right on property.

"People love the tranquility of water, and that's what the dock provides, as well as making a host of recreational activities available that some people might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience," says Oliver.

In other words, Bluewater's private dock (and, honestly, the entire property) provides access to a whole other world. Just steps from their one-, two-, or three-bedroom unit, guests can explore the mesmerizing Intracoastal in a simple kayak or by harnessing the wind to power their sailboat.

Or, they can simply sit back and watch the sunset, says Taylor. "Watching all the boats during the day is great, but the most spectacular scenes happen nightly, with the fantastic sunsets."



PALACE VIEW HEIGHTS

Sailing Into the Future

Whether it's the sunsets, private dock, or homelike accommodations, consumers obviously agree that Bluewater Resort and Marina is a standout property. The demand for ownership recently led to the construction and opening of a new 41-unit building that includes 25 two-bedroom, two-bathroom suites.

Still, Bluewater isn't the only Spinnaker location where things are happening. In fact, contrary to many family-run businesses that seem to reach a certain plateau and then are content to rest on their laurels, the Taylors are definitely committed to the future — and committed to delivering an overall extraordinary resort experience.

A new 16-unit building at the Palace View Heights complex in Branson opened in late June. "We're always looking at ways to add new and various amenities," says Oliver. "The bottom line is that the original vision of providing affordable great family vacations continues to drive and influence our company." []

Spinnaker Resorts

Developer:	Spinnaker Resorts, Inc.; Ken and Joan Taylor, owners
Headquarters:	Hilton Head Island, South Carolina
Product:	Deeded weeks (various fixed and floating products)
Resorts:	Hilton Head Island, South Carolina: Bluewater Resort and Marina, The Carolina Club, Egret Point, Southwind, Waterside Ormond Beach, Florida: Royal Floridian Resort, Royal Floridian South Branson, Missouri: Palace View Resort, Palace View Heights
Website:	spinnakerresorts.com

FAST FACTS

