

# Ave Maria Sun

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ANNALEE HALL / AVE MARIA SUN



**INSIDE: It's a new year:** A full calendar of things to enjoy around Ave Maria. **A21 ►**



AVE MARIA SUN COURTESY IMAGE

## 'Community of the Year' Ave Maria breaks sales records

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

For the sixth consecutive year, the town of Ave Maria has received the prestigious Community of the Year award for the under \$500,000 category presented annually by the Collier Building Industry Association as part of its Sand Dollar Awards.

"Receiving this award six years in a row is a testament to the lifestyle, amenities, and home value that buyers are attracted to in today's real estate market," said Cee Cee Marinelli, director of development for Ave Maria. "Since the pandemic, we've seen an increased interest in home buyers focused on healthy and sustainable living."

The award news is coupled with record-breaking sales of 488 homes in Ave Maria through the middle of December 2020. This year marks the strongest sales since the opening of the development in 2007. Home sales were reported from the four residential builders in Ave Maria—CC Homes, Del Webb Naples, Lennar, and Pulte Homes.

"The sales activity and demand for new homes in Ave Maria this year is at an unprecedented high," said Ms. Marinelli. "Sales continue to climb as new home buyers are attracted now more than ever to our hometown lifestyle and the many floor plans with home office options."

Nico and Laura Herrera are among those who found exactly what they were looking for in Ave Maria. The couple and their two young sons moved from California to Ave Maria in October.

SEE AVE MARIA, A21 ►

"Since the pandemic, we've seen an increased interest in home buyers focused on healthy and sustainable living."

— **Cee Cee Marinelli**, director of development for Ave Maria

# Fun for all

There's always plenty to do in  
and around Ave Maria

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

**F**rom music to dining to special events, Ave Maria is filled with exciting activities for the whole family year round.

"We are thrilled to host several upcoming events in outdoor venues with ample space ensuring visitors and residents can safely enjoy having fun," comments Donna Marquez, event coordinator for Ave Maria Development. This year's events, like many things, will look a little different, but we are looking forward to carrying on traditions."

SEE FUN, A18 ►

**Above: Dancers from the Celtic Spirit school of Irish dance perform at a holiday event at Ave Maria in Town Center.**

**At right : The annual fall festival offered hayrides, field games, pumpkin painting, cornhole and more at Ave Maria's North Park.**



COURTESY TO THE AVE MARIA SUN

## The giving spirit:

Volunteering opportunities in Ave Maria. **A6 ►**



## AMU sports:

AMU sports teams offer excitement and achievements. **A8 ►**



## New in town:

Maxwell Grace store carries home and gift ideas. **A9 ►**





## New executive suites opening doors to a shorter commute

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

When the Loyola Professional Suites open next spring, Ave Maria business owners will have another option for working close to home.

Thirteen executive suites ranging from 120 square feet to 250 square feet are being created on the second floor of 5072 Annunciation Circle. The suites will be ideal for financial planners, accountants, attorneys, digital marketing specialists, and salespeople.

"We saw a need in the last 12 months of people moving to Ave Maria who were working from home but looking for professional office space nearby," said Cee Cee Marinelli, director of development for Ave Maria. "Some people live here and work remotely or commute to Naples or the east coast. Most people don't need a thousand square feet on their own."

The new suites have a modern industrial aesthetic with high ceilings, wood floors, and lots of natural light through many glass windows.

Features include common sitting areas and meeting areas, a small conference room, a large conference room, and a kitchen and break area with coffee service. Furniture can be provided for an additional fee.

Suites are leasing quickly and annual leases range from \$600 to \$850 a month.

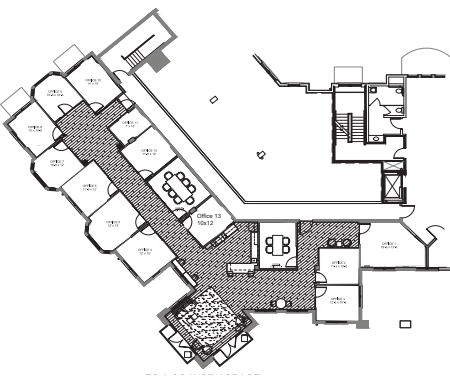
Ave Maria Development also has seven executive suites on another floor in the same building that it has leased for many years.

"These new offices provide even more opportunities to have it all – a great place to live and a great place to work," said Tarren Bragdon, president and chief executive officer of the Foundation for Government Account-



COURTESY IMAGES

**The new Loyola Professional Suites will have a modern industrial aesthetic with high ceilings, wood floors, and lots of natural light. The 13 executive suites range from 120 square feet to 250 square feet.**



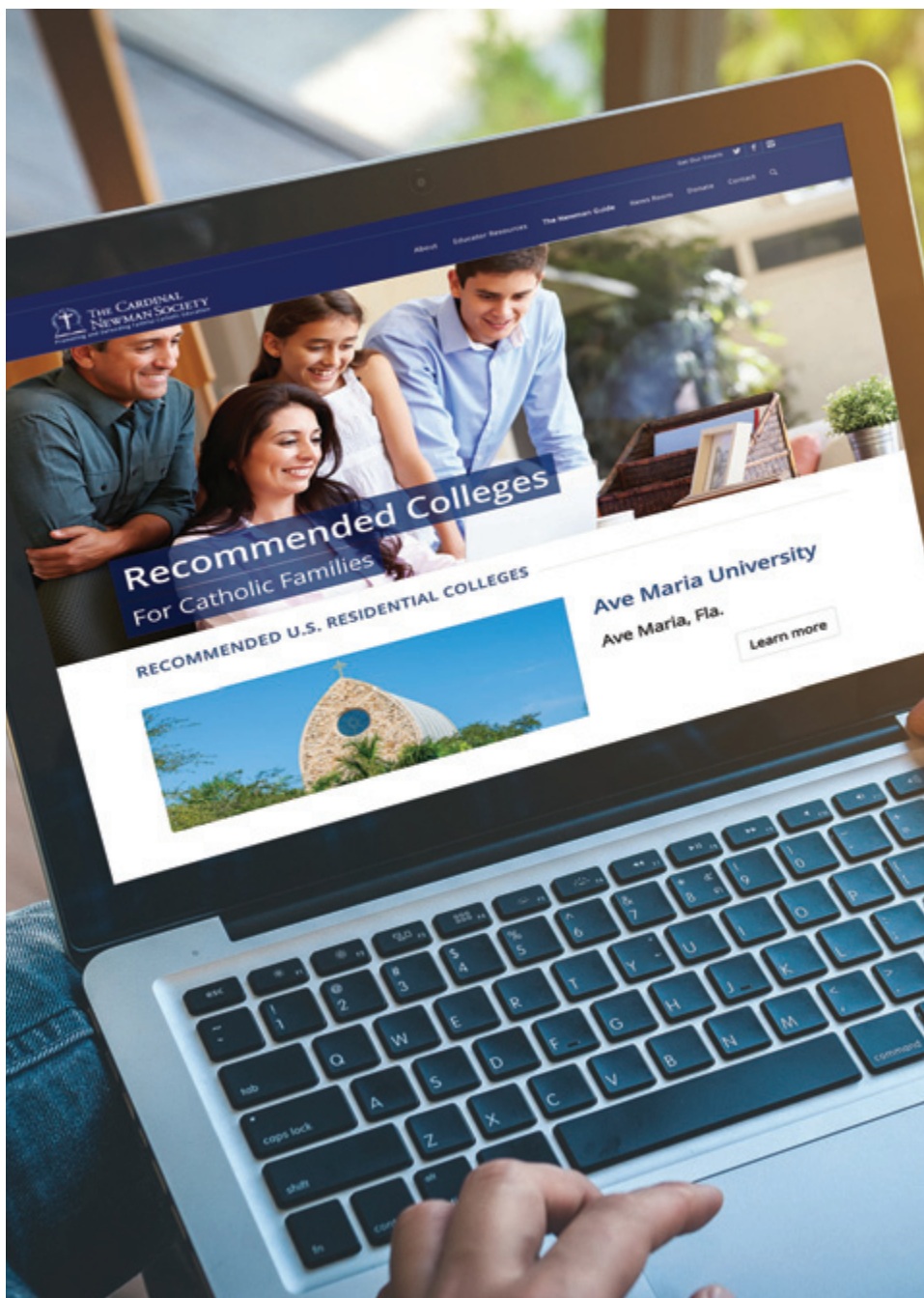
ability, a Florida-based conservative think tank he created in June 2011 after moving to Ave Maria the month before. He has leased an executive suite from Ave Maria Development ever since and finds many advantages.

"We have four children," he said. "It's good

mentally and physically to have a space where you can walk to work and then turn off work when you come home and enjoy your family."

Mr. Bragdon, whose staff of 35 plus 50 contractors all work virtually, said he looks forward to working in the new suites location and knows of several other professionals who recently moved to Ave Maria and plan to lease executive office space.

For more information about leasing at either executive suites location, contact Cee Cee Marinelli at 239-262-2600. 🌟



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# New golf course a main feature at ‘The National’ by Lennar

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Golfers have a new option for playing and living in Ave Maria.

The National Golf & Country Club at Ave Maria by Lennar Homes will have 1,400 homes and an 18-hole golf course as well as many other amenities.

Model homes, the sales center and the golf courses are expected to open this month.

“We will have three single family models to show for the Maria, Victoria, and Bougainvillea plans,” said Christina Traver, director of marketing. “Then we will be adding three Veranda models and three Terrace models in mid-2021.”

New homes in The National Golf & Country Club at Ave Maria are expected to range from the high \$100s to \$400s. Floor plans will include Terraces, Verandas, Coach Homes, Executive Homes, and Estate Homes. Most homes will have a golf course, water or preserve view.

The golf course will anchor the neighborhood along with a clubhouse and amenities that include dining facilities, tennis, pickleball, bocce, a resort-style pool, fitness center, day spa and putt-putt course.

All floor plans include Lennar’s Everything’s Included® program of standard features.

“The nice thing about Lennar’s Everything’s Included® is that you walk out the door knowing today what you’re going to spend because you don’t need a design appointment,” said Scott Schilling, area sales manager. “Three options of cabinets are included in the price, and quartz is a standard option for countertops in kitchens, bathrooms and the laundry room.”

Mr. Schilling noted that the bundled golf is also attractive as well as the fact that membership transfers to renters, which appeals to investors who are purchasing a home for



COURTESY PHOTO

An aerial view of hole 11 at The National Golf & Country Club.

rental income.

Because the golf course is a premier attraction of the new community, it was built first and will open before other amenities. Initially, it will be open to the public.

Famed golf course architect Gordon Lewis, who has worked on many Lennar Homes communities in Southwest Florida, created the layout.

“Gordy makes it fun but challenging,” Mr. Schilling said.

Mr. Lewis found some novel ways to make The National stand out.

“I think one of the neat things is variety on this course,” said Mr. Lewis. “Our hole #13 is one of the shortest holes in the world, which is

really similar to #12 at the Masters (at Augusta National).” The length from the back tee is 116 yards with a well protected green at a diagonal. “You have to pick the exact right club with the exact right line. Those kind of shots are really hard because it takes a lot of precision.”

Mr. Lewis also designed some very long holes, including #16 which he said “is one of the longest holes in the world at 701 yards, where most par 5s are 500 yards.”

He thinks #8 “is going to be one of the most fun.” He designed it as what he calls a “z hole,” requiring golfers to hit a tee shot, make the next shot to the left and another shot to the right like the letter Z.

Because he wants the course to be player friendly, he has included some short par 4s and par 5s as well.

“It’s always fun when everybody gets to use every club in their bag,” he said. 🌻

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# The giving spirit: Volunteering opportunities in Ave Maria

BY SANDRA YEYATI  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Ave Maria resident Marjorie Beane was manning a food drive at the Fall Harvest Festival, in North Park, when she saw two of the most inspiring sights of her life: children offering bags of canned goods for the families of Immokalee migrant workers and a senior citizen on a tricycle, her front basket full of donated comestibles. “We were overwhelmed with food,” she recalls. “It was the most incredible experience. Hour after hour, seeing these families matching the needs of other families at a very real level.”

Generosity and kindness abound in this town, especially during the holidays, according to Lifestyle Director Carol DiFlorio of the Ave Maria Master Association (AMMA). She founded and spearheads Ave Cares, a hub for philanthropic organizers and volunteers to exchange information, pool resources, collect donations and communicate to the community at large. “Volunteering really helps people,” she says. “It gives them a sense of purpose, especially in some of the communities where we have residents that are retired, looking for things to do and wanting to help others.”

“When you’re in a community that’s so focused on helping each other, not only does it feel good but you can see it helping your neighbors. It’s not like sending a check someplace and hoping that it does good,” says Kristina Ribali, a financial advisor at Modern Woodmen Fraternal Financial, which recently completed a successful food drive to benefit the PACE Center for Girls.

The need is great in Immokalee, where, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 42.4 percent of residents—mostly migrant workers and their families—live in poverty, and 51.1 percent of people under 65 go without health insurance. “This is not poverty that is coming because people don’t want to work. We’re serving families that are working, and they still can’t make ends meet,” says Beane, who has volunteered to collect diapers, masks and children’s books this year.

As the holidays rolled in and after a difficult year with the COVID-19 pandemic, the call to kindness flourished in December. The AMMA social committee collected handmade and hand-signed Christmas cards for elders in nursing homes across Collier County, spreading Yuletide cheer to lonely seniors that did not have family or friends visiting them this year. The Ave Maria Veterans Association (AMVA) collected unwrapped toy donations, which were delivered to Immokalee children in partnership with Guadalupe Social Services, a charitable organization based in Immokalee. Also benefitting Immokalee migrant families, the Del Webb Naples Veterans Club collected diapers and related items such as baby wipes, baby powder and Vaseline, while the AMMA accepted donations of canned foods and dry goods.

Another popular effort involves volunteers of the AMVA, which is raising money to donate and



COURTESY PHOTOS

Volunteers at the Fall Harvest Festival food drive. Back row, left to right: Vanessa Gaitan, Virginia Melendez. Front: Tom Fournier, Walter Holmes, Marvin Gaitan

“When you’re in a community that’s so focused on helping each other, not only does it feel good, but you can see it helping your neighbors. It’s not like sending a check someplace and hoping that it does good.”

– Carol DiFlorio, Lifestyle Director, Ave Maria Master Association, right

install American flags at the homes of veterans and first-responders living right here in Ave Maria. “This is a generous community,” says John Bestul, president of the AMVA. “I think there are a lot of patriotic people here, a lot of people that it strikes the right chord. We do have a fair amount, probably a higher number of veterans than you might find in a lot of other communities — from World War II, Afghanistan, Iraq and Vietnam — and this

is a way to thank them for their service.” Donations for flags can be made at: [gf.me/u/y6y5pu](https://gf.me/u/y6y5pu). Since June 2020, when they started this campaign, the AMVA has already installed 180 flags, 60 of which were donated, and there is a waiting list for other recipients. A wall-mounted flag costs \$50 and a ground-mounted, 20-foot, lit flagpole with the flag is \$160. For more information, visit [www.AveMariaVets.org](http://www.AveMariaVets.org).



The Ave Maria Veterans Association's toy drive collection.



Veterans prepare the ground for a flag pole installation.



Flag recipient Robert Hatten.

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# AMU sports teams offer excitement and achievements

BY GLENN MILLER

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Lilly Witkoski knows she was part of something special this fall. It's not only that she played on the best volleyball team in Ave Maria University history. It's not only the 15-4 record and not even reaching the championship match of the Sun Conference Tournament.

It was how they achieved all of that. "What makes it most special is that we were playing for the team," said Ms. Witkoski, a sophomore accounting major from Rochester, N. Y. "We were playing for each other."

The indoor volleyball team's success may be the highlight of the fall in the athletic department but it is far from the only glittering development.

The achievements came as the nation battled a pandemic and restrictions were placed on social gatherings and athletic competition.

It wasn't an easy semester for anybody but football coach and athletic director Joe Patterson was impressed how athletes on all teams handled the challenges.

"What struck me this semester was the lack of complaints," Mr. Patterson said.

The athletes may have been prepared for the pandemic.

"Sports have a great way of manufacturing adversity," Mr. Patterson said.

Growing up playing sports and losing games and matches may have taught Ave Maria University athletes how to cope and bounce back.

"A can-do atmosphere of resiliency that is inspiring," Mr. Patterson said.

Cross-country coach Liz Feger's comment about how her athletes coped may apply to all Gyrenes.

"They faced adversity with joy," Ms. Feger said. More athletic joy is headed to campus.

The university recently announced plans to overhaul the Golisano Field House, build a 6,500-square foot locker room facility and a new outdoor, open-air recreational facility called Judi's Gym.

The university, which competes in the NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics), will also immediately add swimming and diving teams and add junior varsity squads.

Those developments add to the excitement of what is happening with the Gyrenes.

Much of the recent excitement, of course, was focused on volleyball. Coach Sonya Leszczynski is in her third season at Ave Maria and upon arrival set about developing the right culture to get the program where she wants to see it.

That's what Ms. Witkoski meant and helped propel to the cusp of a conference title.

The Gyrenes won the first set of the championship match 25-19 against 19-0 Keiser University in the tournament finale in West Palm Beach. This time, the Gyrenes couldn't quite reach the status of conference champions. Not yet. Keiser ended up winning the next three sets.



Above: Ave Maria University's volleyball team had the best record ever last year. Player Zelig Kessler, above, was named the conference's Freshman of the Year. Inset: Victoria Schein was named Libero of the Year. At right: Ave Maria University Cross-country athlete Joseph Perreault competes.

But the Gyrenes got closer than ever before.

"I keep telling recruits I'm building a program," Ms. Leszczynski said.

Indeed. Mr. Patterson said the volleyball team's success this year was in many ways "unprecedented."

When Ms. Leszczynski took over the program her goals included what she calls changing the team culture. She recruited athletes with exceptional character. She wanted not only players who could leap and set and spike and dig but ones who would be "very close and supportive" to one another.

"We like to call it a family," Ms. Leszczynski said.

When the team gathered at the start of the term, Ms. Witkoski and her teammates sensed something special was building.

"Right from the start we knew we could do something," Ms. Witkoski said.

Indeed they did. After opening the season with a loss to Keiser, the Gyrenes rattled off a stretch where they compiled a 15-2 record before the season finale.

They won all those matches with some of the conference's best players.

Zelig Kessler was named the conference's Freshman of the Year.

"I honestly did not expect that at all," Ms. Kessler said.

Ms. Kessler had played on travel teams while younger in Ohio and was used to high levels of competition but collegiate volleyball proved to be something of a revelation.

"The players were a lot taller than I expected," Ms. Kessler said.

The honors rolled in for the Gyrenes. Ms. Witkoski was named the conference Setter of the Year, Sophomore Victoria Schein was named Libero of the Year.

Madelyn Haut and Ms. Kessler were Ave Maria's first-ever selections to the Sun Conference's all-tournament first-team.

All that talent goes a long way toward explaining how the Gyrenes won 15 matches.

For Ms. Kessler, who is from Avon, Ohio, the year was magical. She committed to attend Ave Maria not knowing her teammates or their level of talent. She soon realized that not only are her teammates good players but they are good people.

"We don't have any drama on the team," Ms. Kessler said.

The volleyball team isn't the only one on campus that excelled in the fall.

The men's and women's cross-country teams were both runners-up at the Sun Conference championships.

Joseph Perrault finished fourth at the meet, was named first team all-conference and the Sun Conference Freshman of the Year.

Like athletes on all Ave Maria teams the runners dealt with studying, training and competing under the cloud of the coronavirus pandemic, "Students persevered," said Ms. Feger, who coaches both the men's and women's teams.

It was a time of adjustment for various reasons.

Mr. Perrault is from Sanford, Maine. The climates in Maine and Southwest Florida are vastly different, to say the least. Last January, the average low and high in Sanford are 13 and 33. Here the averages are 53 and 76 in January.

But it wasn't climate data that intrigued Ms. Feger about this talented runner.

"I knew he had a lot of potential," Ms. Feger said.

The adjustment from running 5K races in high school to 8K races in college did not faze Mr. Perrault.

Not even Florida summer heat fazed the freshman, who was used to running the hills of Maine in cool and often cold weather.

"What we lack in hills we make up in heat and humidity," Ms. Feger said.

The Ave Maria University community has not heard the last of Joseph Perrault.

"He will be chasing school records," Feger said.

The football team posted a 3-4 record. The gridiron Gyrenes opened and closed the season with losses to Southeastern. In between, though, they were 3-2.

The football team adjusted like other teams in the fall. In January a preliminary schedule called for the team to play 11 games but that was trimmed to eight after the pandemic hit



## Ave Maria University Athletics

4810 Kelleher St., Ave Maria  
239-280-1675

- » **Composite sports schedule:** [www.avemariagyrenes.com/calendar](http://www.avemariagyrenes.com/calendar)
- » **Spectators in Gyrene Field:** Restricted to AMU students, faculty, staff and players' guests.
- » **Spectators at indoor games** (at Donahue Academy): AMU-affiliated spectators reserve first come-first served tickets online.
- » **Health protocols:** Spectator temperature checks; masks required; socially distanced seating groups; no spectators near playing surface.
- » **Screaming while streaming:** Watch the games online at [www.thesundigitalnetwork.com/avemariagyrenes](http://www.thesundigitalnetwork.com/avemariagyrenes)

## Donahue Academy Athletics

4955 Seton Way, Ave Maria  
239-842-3241

» **Spectators:** Must obtain ticket from player.

» **Health protocols:** Mask or face shield required; socially distanced seating groups; opposing team spectators seated separately.

» **Screaming while streaming:** At this time, the academy does stream games online.

## Ave Maria Little League

973-650-4732

[www.avemarialittleleague.com](http://www.avemarialittleleague.com)

- » **Games played** at both North Park and South Park.
- » **Spectators:** Bring own lawn chair to watch games from outside the fence.
- » **Health protocols:** Maintain six feet distance between spectator groups.
- » **Screaming while streaming:** Coaches input real-time game statistics into GameChanger app for people to follow games; download from [www.gc.com](http://www.gc.com).



# New Maxwell Grace store carries home and gift ideas

BY ROBIN F. DEMATTIA

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Bridget Corcoran said naming her new store was like naming a child. It was not easy. “I thought about ‘Ave Gifts’ or something with ‘home’ or ‘design’ in it,” she explained. “But I didn’t want to limit the name to one type of product.”

She selected Maxwell Grace for two reasons. Her son’s middle name is Maxwell. And, she said, “I’ve always loved God’s grace. It felt appropriate to include grace in the name.”

An Ave Maria resident since August, Ms. Corcoran and her son moved here from a suburb of Buffalo, New York, to be closer to her brother and his family, who live in town. “I love the sense of community,” she said. “I love that it feels very safe. It’s a beautiful place. The people are very friendly.”

Most recently, Ms. Corcoran worked for a New York state senator who was elected to Congress. She said the pandemic made her reevaluate her priorities and that politics no longer appealed to her. With her son ready to enter high school, she felt now was the time for a change in location and career.

Her niece owns a retail store where Ms. Corcoran helped out with window displays, and that prompted her to open Maxwell Grace.

“I’ve worked in retail and always had a passion for it,” she stated.

She reached out to Cee Cee Marinelli with Ave Maria Development about space for a store and found positive reception to her concept.

“It seems to be a fit for Ave Maria,” Ms. Corcoran said. “There’s not a lot of retail, but there are a lot of beautiful homes that need to be decorated.”

The store carries home decor, seasonal merchandise, gift items, and custom silk floral



VANESSA ROGERS/ AVE MARIA SUN

Ave Maria resident Bridget Corcoran is the owner of Maxwell Grace.

arrangements made by Ms. Corcoran.

She purchases from vendors who participate in AmericasMart Atlanta, a large trade show, and she looks for “things you won’t see at the bigger box stores.” One of her goals is to work with smaller companies and support small stores.

She has handmade hats and purses, hand-poured soy candles, and a large assortment of Acacia wood, a sustainable material from Australia, including salad bowls, chip ‘n dip trays, and serving trays.

There are practical as well as whimsical cooler totes, beach totes, aprons and pillows.



VANESSA ROGERS/ AVE MARIA SUN

Maxwell Grace store carries home decor, seasonal merchandise, gift items and custom silk floral arrangements made by Ms. Corcoran.

Noticing a lot of dogs and cats in Ave Maria, Ms. Corcoran carries collars, leashes and pet toys.

“I really want to be the store that people stop in to see what’s new and that has the perfect gift or item for their home,” she said.

Offering flower arrangements was also a natural fit for Ms. Corcoran, who grew up as the youngest of 10 children.

“I come from a large family and they’re always asking me for a new wreath for their doors.”

With most items displayed on the Maxwell Grace website, Ms. Corcoran is offering free shipping and same-day delivery to addresses in Ave Maria. 🌻

## Maxwell Grace

- » **Where:** 5064 Annunciation Circle, Suite 107, Ave Maria, FL 34142
- » **Online:** shopmaxwellgrace.com
- » **Contact:** 716-462-9147
- » **Hours:** Open Tuesday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Closed Sunday and Monday

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# Oil Well Craft Beer: Craft beer in a cozy setting

BY SANDRA YEYATI

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Bringing casual entertainment to Ave Maria, Oil Well Craft Beer (OWCB) is the neighborhood taproom where everybody knows your name. “We’re the new-age Cheers,” co-owner Danee Williams says, referring to the ’80s TV sitcom. Come once, she boasts, and soon you’ll become a regular. Thanks to a loyal clientele, OWCB was voted Great American Beer Bar for the state of Florida at CraftBeer.com in both 2019 and 2020.

“It’s a very cozy atmosphere, almost like a coffee bar,” says Williams. “We’ve got a leather couch, leather chairs and a coffee table in one area, plus high tops and low tops with very distressed metal and wood chairs. Very cozy.” Four televisions, board games, shaded outdoor seating and food truck fare add to the home-away-from-home vibe.

With 20 tap lines, a three-barrel brewery and bottled and canned options, OWCB offers variety and invention in the beer department. On tap, five to seven options are their own creations, including bestsellers Easy Drilling IPA and Shallow Water Pilsner, as well as tangerine wheat, amber and porter varietals. The remaining taps are dedicated to well-known and hard-to-find crafted beers from around the country, as well as Florida breweries like Momentum Brewhouse in Bonita Springs, Hop Life Brewing Company out of Port Saint Lucie and Tampa Beer Works.

“People like to try new things, and every person has a different palate,” Williams says. “Some people like really hoppy, bitter beers, and others like sweeter or smoother ones. We have something for everybody, and we’ll always give you a little sample before you get a full pint.”

According to Williams, the allure of crafted brews is not just imaginative flavor profiles. “They’re getting something with better, fresher ingredients that’s brewed in smaller batches. It’s not mass produced, and they’re helping a small business owner,” she notes.

For adventuresome drinkers, OWCB offers flights with 5.5-ounce pours of four different beers. Also on the menu are ciders, wines and gluten-free beer, plus homemade sangria every Friday and the occasional batch of mimosas some Saturdays, just to change things up and keep it fun for guests.

Wednesday through Saturday, OWCB welcomes a rotating lineup of food trucks for the dinner hour, including Vesuvius for handmade pizzas cooked on a wood-burning fireplace; H-Anger Management featuring shrimp and lobster rolls, waffled chicken sliders and black bean hamburgers; Dynamite Street EatZ with flavorful burgers, tacos and fries; and JewBan’s



**Oil Well Craft Beer owners Matt and Danee Williams. Oil Well Craft Beer was voted Great American Beer Bar for the state of Florida at CraftBeer.com in 2019 and 2020.**

Deli Dale, a husband-and-wife team that mixes Jewish and Cuban cuisine. “What’s fun about food trucks is that they have a normal menu but also add specials when they come out, so you’re not always having to eat the same thing,” says Williams.

OWCB caters to the lunchtime crowd, too, with handmade submarine sandwiches. On Mondays and Tuesdays, a sub purchase earns you \$3 lagers and \$1 off draft beer. Wednesdays, wine is \$1 off, and Thursdays feature

ladies’ drink specials all day long.

December events included a Christmas Cookie Bake-off and an Ugly Holiday Sweater Contest, followed by Christmas Karaoke. “Since we’re in Florida, we accepted T-shirts or vests as long as they were holiday themed and ugly,” Williams quips. Before COVID, the calendar was busier. As times normalize, they plan to reintroduce bingo nights, themed parties, painting classes, and beer and wine tastings.



Williams’ husband and co-owner, Matt, had been dreaming about owning a beer bar for 10 years, but it was only after the couple and their three children moved to Ave Maria from Arizona in 2015 that his dream seemed attainable. “As I got a feel for the town and the people, I could tell that something was missing—some kind of entertainment—and that Matt’s amazing dream would do fantastic here,” she says.

Matt had dabbled in home brewing, but installing and learning how to craft beers on large-scale equipment was an exciting leap of faith. With instruction from friends at Bone Hook Brewing Company, in Naples, OWCB’s first beers were crafted in September 2019. Matt researches and curates all flavor choices, while Chris Buccheri, head brewer, and Dave Altomare, assistant brewer, make the magic happen.

The Williams kids are into the business, too. When Cole turns 21 next year, he wants to go to brewing school. Daughter and middle child Peyton is studying business marketing in college and plans to return after graduation to help out. And the youngest, Reese, is OWCB’s official sandwich maker. January 23, 2021 will mark OWCB’s four-year anniversary, which they plan to commemorate all day with live music, several food trucks, giveaway prizes and special releases of beer. There’s much to celebrate for this hometown beer bar—a family business, through and through.

Located at the Ave Maria Park of Commerce, OWCB is open Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., 11 p.m. on Saturdays. Visit [OilWellCraftBeer.com](http://OilWellCraftBeer.com) for more details. 🍷

## Finding a new home at The National in Ave Maria

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Elizabeth and Scott Tenison are among the newest homeowners in one of Ave Maria’s communities, The National Golf & Country Club by Lennar Homes. The Chicago couple have visited or vacationed in Southwest Florida for more than a decade.

At ages 51 and 50, the Tenisons are still amidst their working life in Chicago and look forward to coming down to the region for annual vacations and long weekend getaways. Eventually, they plan to retire here.

Mrs. Tenison’s parents already live in Bonita Springs, where she and her husband are selling a home in a similar Lennar golf-club community after discovering Ave Maria. For them, Ave offered a winning combination, at once a community they would be familiar with and a new town to get to know. Finding a home with a pool — long on their wish list — and a beautiful view of the 18-hole, Gordon Lewis-designed golf course did not hurt either.

“We trust the Lennar golf community and what they’re known for and what they stand for,” Mrs. Tenison said. “We just know it’s

going to be a win win.”

Lennar’s National is an exclusive community that offers a world in itself, with luxury country-club amenities. Beyond it, the town of Ave has its own milieu with a growing number of shops and activities that they’ve just begun to explore.

“I like the downtown, the Mexican restaurant there (Lozano’s),” Mr. Tenison said. “We’ve eaten there a couple times, it was really, really good. We walked around a little bit. We just really liked the community and Lennar does a fabulous job with these golf communities.”

They appreciated that the cathedral is a central part of the town and Ave Maria’s dog park is a “bonus”, since they have a friendly golden retriever named Cooper.

“I love being in the bundled golf community but also having access to the Ave community,” Mrs. Tenison said.

They chose Lennar’s Maria model, which has an open-floor plan that Mrs. Tenison said would be ideal for entertaining. The home comes with three bedrooms, plenty for guests or when their two children visit from college. 🌻



“I love being in the bundled golf community but also having access to the Ave community.

— Elizabeth Tenison, resident

COURTESY IMAGE  
**The National Golf & Country Club residents Elizabeth and Scott Tenison with Cooper.**



# AVE MARIA COMMUNITIES



## AVALON PARK

### About the Community

**From \$240s-\$600s**

It's easy to stay active and have family fun at Avalon Park. Located within the highly sought-after Collier County School District, Avalon Park attracts families looking for exceptional schools, close proximity to neighborhood parks, plenty of living space, and walkability to downtown Ave Maria. Avalon Park offers spacious homesites, unique architectural exteriors,

and 18 consumer-inspired 1- and 2-story single family homes from the mid-\$200s that combine Pulte's signature quality construction and consumer-first designs. With 2-6 bedrooms and 2-6.5 bathrooms in 1,500 to 4,800 square feet of living space, you are sure to find a new Pulte home to fit your family's needs now and in the future.



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easy personalization options and versatile living spaces make everyday moments easier and more enjoyable. With a focus on quality construction and a simplified buying experience, Pulte will help you get into your new home easily, without the headaches. That's More Life Built In®, and that's exactly what you'll find at Avalon Park.



### Driftwood

- Starting from the \$300,000s
- 2,470 Sq. Ft.
- 3-5 Bedrooms
- 2.5-3.5 Bathrooms
- 2-Car Garage

**Avalon Park at Ave Maria**  
**4972 Seton Street, Ave Maria, FL 34142**  
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# Del Webb<sup>®</sup> NAPLES

## About the Community

**From the Low \$200s - \$600s**

The pioneer in 55+ active-adult communities and America's leading builder of new homes for pre-retirement and retiring boomers, Del Webb brings premier resort-style amenities and a lifestyle nothing short of extraordinary to Ave Maria. Del Webb Naples has redefined retirement, boasting an optional 18 holes of pristine championship golf, 18 sports courts, resort and lap pools, a community garden, full-service, community-exclusive restaurant and bar, 2 beautiful clubhouses, and a full-time Lifestyle

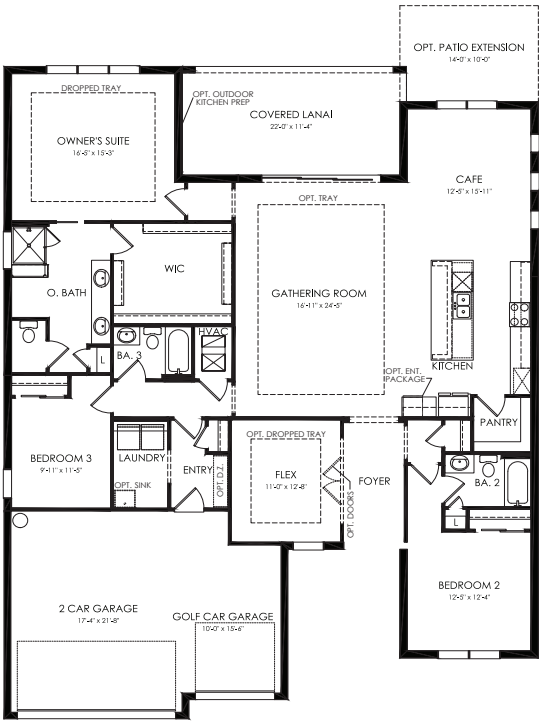
Director who plans clubs, classes and events all year long. With so many ways to stay active and have fun, it's easy to see why Del Webb Naples neighbors become long-time friends. Offering 21 home designs to choose from including carriage homes, villas and single family, starting from the \$190s to \$600s, you are sure to find a home where you can create an inspired, personalized design to fit your style, and budget. End your search for your ideal Florida oasis...it's all waiting for you at Del Webb Naples.



# Del Webb<sup>®</sup>

No one understands the importance of community like Del Webb. Del Webb communities are an extension of the homeowners who live there – a collection of passions and activities you love to enjoy with others. When you choose to build in a Del Webb 55+ active adult community, you get the benefit of more than six decades

of homebuilding experience. With homes designed for how you live, including the features that matter most to you, all backed by a warranty you can rely on, you'll feel secure now and in the future. And, a streamlined process makes it easy for you to build the home you've always wanted, in the vibrant community you've been looking for.



- Stellar**
- Starting from the \$350,000s
  - 2,483+ Sq. Ft.
  - 3-4 Bedrooms
  - 3-5 Bathrooms
  - 2-3 Car Garage

**Del Webb Naples**  
**6028 Victory Drive, Ave Maria, FL 34142**  
**239-842-9643**





## About the Community

Maple Ridge at Ave Maria is a thoughtfully designed community with a myriad of home designs, all of which combine beautiful curb appeal with impressive interior layouts built for modern lifestyles. CC Homes is the builder behind this community and they are among the many reasons Ave Maria has become such a rapidly growing neighborhood attracting new residents from the Gulf Coast, Southeast Florida and beyond. With more than 75 years of combined experience in South Florida real estate, Mr. Armando Codina and Mr. Jim Carr have set a new standard for quality new construction homes in desirable communities, with a wide range of pricing from entry-level to prestigious exclusivity. CC Homes communities

throughout the State of Florida have been recognized for their incredible market appeal, outstanding quality, and resident satisfaction time and time again, having built thousands of homes and residences. Homes built by CC Homes are designed to improve people's lives. Modern features, smart floor plans and upscale amenities combine for the ultimate South Florida lifestyle. Homeowners at Maple Ridge are pampered with high-end designer features included in the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.



### Harbour

- 3,522 a/c square feet
- 4 to 6 bedrooms
- 3.5 to 5.5 bathrooms
- Ground floor owner's suite
- 2 or 3-car garage

**New Contemporary Homes Available Now at Maple Ridge, Tour New Models Today!**



**Starting from \$252,990 to \$417,990**

CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria's Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features included in

the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.

**Maple Ridge**  
**5009 Alonza Avenue, Ave Maria, FL 34142**  
**855-280-4648 | www.MapleRidgeFL.com**





## About the Community

As part of the highly sought after new home community, Maple Ridge at Ave Maria-Silverwood offers exciting residential choices to buyers. Silverwood provides homeowners the perfect home at a great value. All of these single-family homes are beautifully designed with Mediterranean-inspired architecture and an inviting array of designer features included as well as some custom options available. Both Silverwood and Maple Ridge have a superb location within Ave Maria, so residents benefit from a great school district and sense of community.

Floor Plan Spotlight: The Encinitas is a new

construction, two-story home with 4 bedrooms, 3-and-one-half baths, great room, eat-in kitchen, upstairs laundry room, loft, storage closet, downstairs master suite with walk-in closet and attached garage. 5th bedroom or a wet bar in the loft are available options. Premium features included standard, such as designer brand faucets & fixtures and tile flooring. Gourmet kitchens have stainless steel appliances, European-style wood cabinetry and granite countertops. A spa-like master bathroom features double sinks with marble vanity tops, a spacious shower. Best of all, this master suite is conveniently located on the ground floor.



**Starting from \$229,990 to \$269,990**

CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria's Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features included in

the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.



### Huntington

*Model home is now open for viewing.*

- 1,630 a/c Sq. Ft.
- 3 bedrooms
- 2 bathrooms
- His and her walk-in closets at master bedroom
- 1-car garage

**Maple Ridge**  
**5009 Alonza Avenue, Ave Maria, FL 34142**  
**855-280-4648 | www.MapleRidgeFL.com**





THE NATIONAL  
GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB  
AT AVE MARIA, FLORIDA

About the Community

Lennar is excited to bring its popular Everything's Included® homes and resort lifestyle amenities to the charm, convenience, and values of Ave Maria. The National Golf & Country Club will offer a fresh coastal aesthetic throughout the home designs and on-site amenities including an 18-hole Gordon Lewis-designed golf course, complimented by world-class amenities for the entire family to enjoy. A variety of floorplans will be offered in Terrace and Veranda Condominiums, plus Executive and Estate single family homes, starting from the upper \$100s.

The National Golf & Country Club will feature its own Clubhouse with a pro shop, formal and casual dining, a resort-style pool and spa, state-of-the-art fitness center with yoga/aerobics room, spa treatment rooms and beauty salon. Active residents can take advantage of Har-Tru tennis courts, pickle and bocce ball, putting green, chipping area, and a driving range. This all-encompassing amenity campus is designed to bring our community together, with spaces to congregate with friends new and old.

Whether you are a seasonal resident or looking to lay down roots, The National Golf & Country Club has the ideal home for you!



Bougainvillea II

- 2,799 Sq. Ft.
- 3 Bedrooms + Den
- 3 Bathrooms
- Starting at \$529,999

LENNAR®

Starting from the upper \$100,000s

Lennar is one of America's leading builders of quality homes since 1954, and is one of the biggest homebuilders in Southwest Florida.

Experience unprecedented value through Lennar's Everything's Included®, simply including quality features and finishes that homeowners want and need, at no extra charge.

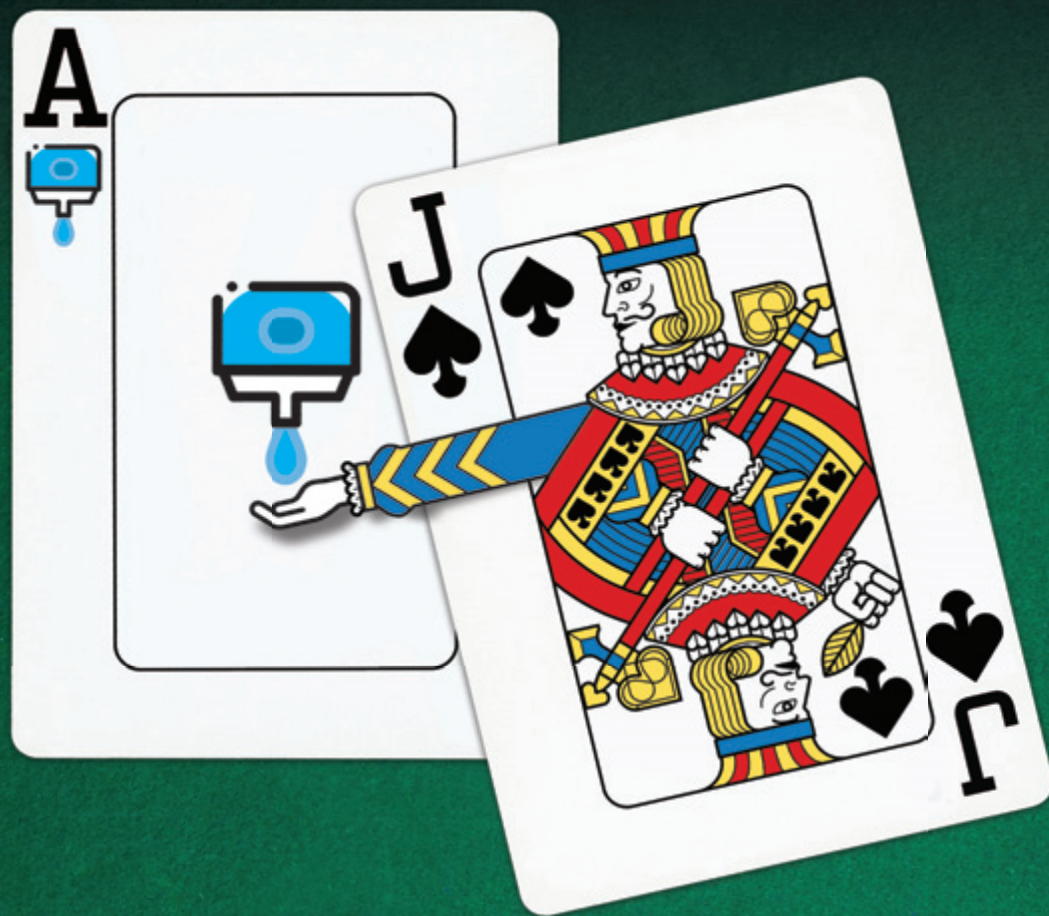
Simplify your home buying experience by including everything you need in a new home and community. And once you find your perfect home, our family of companies are there to assist you every step of the way with your mortgage, title and insurance needs for an enjoyable and hassle-free closing.

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FUN

From page 1

Here are just some of the many ongoing and one-time events to enjoy during the next few months.



■ Town Center Farmers Market

Grab healthy fixings for dinner at the farmers market which takes place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Saturday through May 1. Vendors offer a variety of local produce and citrus, fresh seafood, breads, local honey, soaps, oils, flowers, candles, jewelry, crafts, and clothing. The event is managed by SW Florida Markets.

■ Arts & Crafts Festivals

Find something for your home, or as a gift for someone or even yourself, from a diverse array of artists and crafters who come to Ave Maria from throughout Florida and northern states. They will be displaying and selling photography, paintings, ceramics, jewelry, soaps and other handmade items. The festivals take place around Annunciation Circle from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Jan. 23 and 24 and again on Feb. 27 and 28. Free parking, free admission and live music each afternoon. These festivals are managed by TNT Events, which organizes festivals as far north as St. Augustine.



■ Trolley Tours

Tour the town named “Community of the Year” for the past six years during a 45-minute narrated tour and discover all that’s new for 2021. Tours are offered Tuesday from January 12



through March 30 and depart every hour from the Town Center at 11 a.m., 12 p.m., 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Reservations are encouraged and can be made by calling 239-352-3903.

■ Blues, Brews & BBQ

Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy an afternoon of free live music from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 20 at Annunciation Circle. Featuring live music by Little Eddie & the Fat Fingers, who describe themselves as “true blues to the core with a rock and roll heart,” & the seven musician Fort Myers-based, classic R&B, soul, rock, blues, jazz and popular dance music band, Deb & The Dynamics, delicious food trucks; Smokin R’s BBQ, Jonesz BBQ, Currie’s Smokin’ Hot BBQ, Pub of Ave Maria, Tropical Smoothie, Lozano’s and Teriyaki Madness, children’s activities & a car show. Everyone in the family is sure to have a good time. The day includes vehicles displayed by members of the Bonita Corvette Car Club and of Cool Cruisers.

■ Margarita & Taco Festival

Say Olé to this free festival being held from



noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 20 at Annunciation Circle.

There will be tacos and margaritas for purchase, children’s activities, lucha libre wrestling, pet adoption opportunities, and more. The band West Side Tropic keeps the energy high by performing salsa, merengue, cumbia, vallenato, bachata, boleros and other Latin music.

■ First Fridays

Food and drink specials along with outdoor games and prizes make this monthly event one to remember. Upcoming dates are from 5 to 7 p.m. on Feb. 5 and March 5, 2021.

The event location rotates from being located in the Town Center and at Oil Well Craft Beer, located in the Mobil plaza.

Find details on the events calendar at [www.AveMaria.com](http://www.AveMaria.com) or 239-352-3903 for more information.

■ Live Music

Shopping or dining along Annunciation Circle is enhanced many afternoons by free live music on select Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays from January 12 through April 1.

- Jan. 12 from 12-3 p.m. – **Mason Williams Duo**
- Jan. 14 from 3-5 p.m. – **Blackburn**
- Jan. 19 from 12-3 p.m. – **Steely Pan**
- Jan. 21 from 3-5 p.m. – **Harmony 2**
- Jan. 23 from 12-3 p.m. – **Earth Sign**
- Jan. 24 from 1-4 p.m. – **Blackburn**
- Jan. 26 from 12-3 p.m. – **Mark & Marlo**
- Jan. 28 from 3-5 p.m. – **Wendy Renee**
- Feb. 2 from 12-3 p.m. – **Earth Sign**
- Feb. 2 from 3-5 p.m. – **Steely Pan**
- Feb. 8 from 12-3 p.m. – **Mason Williams Duo**
- Feb. 11 from 3-5 p.m. – **Harmony 2**
- Feb. 16 from 12-3 p.m. – **Earth Sign**
- Feb. 18 from 3-5 p.m. – **Chris Stultz**
- Feb. 23 from 12-3 p.m. – **Blackburn**
- Feb. 25 from 3-5 p.m. – **Mark & Marlo**
- Feb. 27 from 12-3 p.m. – **Earth Sign**
- Feb. 28 from 1-4 p.m. – **Steely Pan**
- March 1 from 12-3 p.m. – **West of Galway**
- March 4 from 3-5 p.m. – **Earth Sign**
- March 9 from 12-3 p.m. – **Steely Pan**
- March 11 from 3-5 p.m. – **Harmony 2**
- March 16 from 12-3 p.m. – **Wendy Renee**
- March 18 from 3-5 p.m. – **West of Galway**
- March 23 from 12-5 p.m. – **Blackburn**
- March 25 from 3-5 p.m. – **Earth Sign**
- March 30 from 12-5 p.m. – **Mason Williams Duo**
- April 1 from 3-5 p.m. – **Chris Stultz**

■ Ave Maria University

Fans of the Ave Maria University Gyrenes can find their favorite sport and home games through the end of March at [www.avemariagyrenes.com/calendar](http://www.avemariagyrenes.com/calendar).

■ Ave Maria Catholic Church

The Mass schedule for Ave Maria Catholic Church through April is Sunday at 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m. (Extraordinary Form) and 7:30 p.m.; Monday through Friday at noon and 5 p.m.; and Saturday at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Sunday Vigil).

The church is live streaming Masses on Sunday at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday at noon, and Saturday at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Saturday evening Mass and Sunday Mass attendance is restricted and registration is required by noon on Fridays. Register at [www.avemariaparish.org](http://www.avemariaparish.org) or call 239-261-5555.

■ Fellowship Church

Tracing its roots back to 1916, Fellowship Church has locations in Immokalee and in Ave Maria at 5330 Ave Maria Blvd.

The worship service schedule in Ave Maria is Sundays at 8 a.m., 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Upcoming events include the second annual Great Commission Weekend on Feb. 26-28, Good Friday worship service on April 2, and Easter Sunday worship service on April 4.

The Great Commission Weekend takes place at the church’s Immokalee campus, 1411 Lake Trafford Road. This extensive three-day conference includes worship, preaching, and breakout sessions.

Scheduled speakers include Brad Jurkovich, pastor of First Bossier, Bossier City, LA; Scott Colter, executive director of the Sandy Creek Foundation; Mike Stone, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Blackshear, GA; Timothy Pigg, pastor of Fellowship Church; and Dr. Paige Patterson, chief architect of the Conservative Resurgence of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Great Commission Weekend is offered at no cost to attendees, with three meals included. Register at [www.fellowshipchurch.co/gcw](http://www.fellowshipchurch.co/gcw).

— Events are subject to change. Events will be following CDC guidelines and social distancing procedures. Visit [AveMaria.com](http://AveMaria.com) for more information.



DENIECE GIOVINAZZO/IGIO CREATIVE; ANNALIEE HALL; MICHELLE MAMBUCA; PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE AVE MARIA SUN



# One door closes, another opens for The Secret Ingredient owner

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Jeanne Weber-Rush opened the doors to her first location of The Secret Ingredient 41 years ago in Richmond, Indiana.

Now she's walking out the doors of all three locations, including the Ave Maria store she opened in 2008, to spend more time with her 100-year-old father, her children and her six grandchildren.

"I came down to Ave Maria in October with my daughter-in-law and two grand-daughters," said Ms. Weber-Rush, who has been a seasonal resident since 2007. "We had such an amazing time. We went to Everglades Wonder Gardens and the beach and out to eat. I thought, I've been here 12 years and haven't done any of this stuff. I just decided I worked hard for 41 years and it's time to make my family a priority.

"The dear Lord guided me," she continued. "I need to pray more and play more. That's my motto for retirement."

Ms. Weber-Rush plans to stay in Ave Maria and serve as a consultant to Danee' Williams, one of her former managers, who has purchased the Ave Maria store from her.

"She's such a wonderful person," Ms. Weber-Rush said. "When I hired her, I said 'Someday, when I don't want to do this anymore, you'd be the perfect person to take over.' She knows the people in the town and has such a joy about her."

The Secret Ingredient sells contemporary women's fashions and accessories from designers including Belldini, Frank Lyman, Joseph Ribkoff, and Clara Sunwoo.

But for Ms. Weber-Rush, her mission has always been about more than making a sale. She views clothes and accessories as a way to empower women, especially those with low



The Secret Ingredient owner Jeanne Weber-Rush speaks at her style show in 2019.

COURTESY PHOTO

self-esteem or who feel overwhelmed selecting clothing that flatters them.

"Our goal was to make women feel better about themselves and know that when they went somewhere they could stop about worrying about what they had on and just enjoy work or an event."

Her best advice is "Don't buy anything you don't love, because if you don't love it in the store you won't love it when you get it home."

She also recommends shopping in person, because every clothing company's sizes run differently, which makes buying something online a challenge.

"Our salespeople know how things fit, if something runs small or what is good for a

"I need to pray more and play more. That's my motto for retirement."

– **Jeanne Weber-Rush**, owner of The Secret Ingredient

petite woman. Our employees are not just sales associates but actual wardrobe consultants."

To that end, The Secret Ingredient allows women to bring in an outfit from home and ask for help updating it with a scarf, sweater, jewelry or other accessories sold in the store.

Ms. Weber-Rush's commitment extends beyond her customers to her community. She supports Ave Maria Catholic Church, Ave Maria University, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, Immokalee High School and other charities. Her style shows have been popular fundraisers, and she plans to stay involved with these causes.

"My dear mother, Angela, always said it was more fun to give than to receive, so that was why I started Angel-A-Wishes." The Secret Ingredient sells Blessing Bracelets and donates the proceeds to local charities and families near its stores.

"I was blessed with faith-filled parents," she said. "It is a joy living with a dad that still lives by that principle at 100."

As one of the first homeowners and business owners in Ave Maria, she also credits the town founders and residents for her success.

"I am glad the Collier family had faith in me when I called them in 2004. It has been a fabulous 41 years of joy and love with so many wonderful customers and employees." 🌻



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"I pretty much have a grip on what's going on in Ave Maria. We love everybody. They're our neighbors and our friends. " – **Jean Mastandrea**, Salon d'Maria owner

# Salon d'Maria is always in style

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

It's no "shear coincidence" that Jean Mastandrea has owned Ave Maria's only hair salon for the past 12 years. Hair styling is in her blood.

Ms. Mastandrea's grandfather was a barber in Brooklyn, and two uncles and one great aunt were cosmetologists.

"As a little kid, I went to what they used to call a beauty parlor," she recalled. "I always had an interest in hair, makeup and nails."

Salon d'Maria encompasses all of those skills, offering haircuts for men, women and children as well as all hair services, manicures and pedicures, skin care, waxing, massage and more.

Ms. Mastandrea moved into Del Webb in 2008 from Fort Lauderdale.

"I had heard about this beautiful town with small-town living and good morals," she said. "I wanted to get out of Broward because it was getting congested."

Her daughter, Christine, had been offered a scholarship to attend Ave Maria University. Her daughter, Laura, also graduated from AMU.

"We love the community. The people are really nice."

Though she had been a hair stylist since 1982, working for her family, moving to Ave Maria gave her the opportunity to open her own salon.

Her husband, Michael, is a general contractor who helped make the space feel special for her and for customers. He partitioned walls, made columns, created the pedicure area, put in the stations and mirrors, and fabricated a



MILA BRIDGER / AVE MARIA SUN

**Jean Mastandrea has owned Ave Maria's only hair salon, Salon d'Maria, for the past 12 years.**

custom wood counter in the barber room.

She counts on a very talented staff to provide such a wide variety of services.

"Maggie has been here about seven years, and Kathy on and off for three," she says. "Kasey joined us about five months ago and is a young stylist who is up-to-date on the latest colors and cuts." Luis is her barber, Karen the masseuse and Lisette does facials, waxing and eyelash extensions.

What makes her clients happy, Ms. Mastandrea said, is "good service, a good haircut and the fact that we get inside their head and listen to what they want."

She said the salon is also family-friendly and

a gathering place for the community.

"I pretty much have a grip on what's going on in Ave Maria," she laughed. "We love everybody. They're our neighbors and our friends. We've laughed together. We've cried together. There's a lot of warmth."

She said she is excited about the number of new people moving to Ave Maria, which has helped her get new clients.

She also values her long-time customers. "They're been very loyal, and I appreciate them with my whole heart."

With the new year here, she shares some styling trends as people may want to refresh their look.

Young girls are wearing long hair with big, flowy curls.

Coloring trends include highlights, low-lights, and very subtle baby lowlights.

Older women who have let their gray grow out during the pandemic are opting for platinum hair.

Balayage, with dark coloring on top of the hair and lighter coloring on the bottom, as well as ombre, with a graduated change from dark to medium to light, continue to be popular.

Deep conditioning treatments including Olaplex are helpful monthly, especially for people who are in the sun, pool or ocean often.

Shellac manicures and pedicures that can last 14 days are a favorite. This time of year, darker hues of burgundy, wine and red are most often requested. 🌸

## Salon d'Maria

» **Where:** 5064 Annunciation Circle

» **Contact:** 239-353-6600

» **Hours:** Open by appointment only during the pandemic.

Tuesday-Friday from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Closed Sunday and Monday;

special appointment times available

» **COVID precautions** include all stylists wearing masks, clients requested to wear a mask, chairs and surfaces sanitized before and after each client's visit, and capes put in the washer after each use.

# Batter up for Ave Maria Little League's spring season

BY **ROBIN F. DEMATTIA**

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Ave Maria Little League hit it out of the park last fall when former Major League Baseball player Josias Manzanillo held two clinics for the kids.

It's just the start of how Mr. Manzanillo and his wife, Delmaris "Dee" Manzanillo, plan to get involved, according to Nicole Green, acting president of Ave Maria Little League.

"They want to do more with us in the spring, and it's going to be the shot in the arm that our league is really going to benefit from," Ms. Green said. "He's got decades of experience. It will be a real name that will attract people to play."

The Manzanillos run Manzy's Pitching Farm in Davie for kids ages 7 through college.

But Ms. Green said studying the game is just part of the Little League's goals. She said the kids also learn skills like teamwork that they will keep for a lifetime and develop friendships with neighbors in their community.

Leagues are available for T-ball (ages 4-7), Minor coach pitch (ages 5-9), Minor kid pitch (ages 8-11), Majors (ages 10-12), 50/70 (ages 11-13), Seniors (ages 13-16) and a girl's softball team.

Registration fees range from around \$50-100 and include a shirt and hat. Each child also needs to have his or her own glove.

Practices are held at North Park and South Park. Home games are played in those parks and away games are held at fields such as Max Hasse and Fleischman Park in Naples. The league's division just changed to include Immokalee, Lehigh Acres and LaBelle, so teams will travel to those towns as well.

Ms. Green said many people visit Ave Maria for the first time when their child is playing Little League.

"They have complimented us on the beauty of the town and the fields," Ms. Green said.

The town's amenities, as well as the church, attracted Ms. Green to Ave Maria from New Jersey two years ago. Her son, Thomas, plays in the league.

She said the spring 2020 season was off to a



COURTESY PHOTOS

**Ave Maria Little League players at practice. Registration is open until Jan. 15 for the spring league, and Opening Day is Feb. 20.**

great start, with 150 people at opening day, making it the highest level of participation since the league was formed about 10 years ago.

However, because of the pandemic, the season ended one week later.

This fall, 60 children played in the league. Ms. Green expects more to play in the spring, especially with all the new families that moved into Ave Maria this year.

More players requires more parent support.

"The league literally can't run without

coaches and volunteers," Ms. Green said. "I can't do this singlehandedly."

She credits head coaches LaWayne Cheney, Dave Gawron, Dr. Cait Raiger and Chase Rivera as well as all the assistant coaches for their dedication.

And she invites other parents to help as coaches, umpires, concession stand help, and team moms.

"One thing that unites everybody is baseball."

Registration is open until Jan. 15 for the spring



**Acting president of Ave Maria Little League Nicole Green speaks at spring 2020 opening day.**

league. Opening Day on Feb. 20 will include a parade of athletes, invocation and blessing, singing of the National Anthem, reciting of the Little League Pledge, introduction of officials and noted guests, guest speaker's remarks, and throwing of the ceremonial first pitches.

Learn more by visiting:

[www.avemarialittleleague.com](http://www.avemarialittleleague.com). 🌸



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ONGOING & UPCOMING

The National Golf & Country Club by Lennar – Public Golf Course Grand Opening

- » **January 8, 2021**  
5909 Double Eagle Court  
Ave Maria, FL 34142  
239-867-9090 for tee times

The National Golf & Country Club-Model Homes Grand Opening Event

- » **February 5, 6, 7, 2021**  
6098 Artisan Court  
Ave Maria, FL 34142  
877-455-3662

Ave Maria Trolley Tours

- » **Every Tuesday beginning Jan. 12, 2021, through March 30, 2021,** from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Enjoy a free trolley tour in Ave Maria, the town named “Community of the Year” for the past six years during a 45-minute narrated tour and discover all that’s new. Tours depart every hour from the Town Center at 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Reservations are encouraged; call 239-352-3903.

Ave Maria Farmers Market

- » **Every Saturday through May 1, 2021, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.,** Ave Maria will host a Farmers Market with fresh, local produce and citrus, fresh seafood, breads, local honey, soaps, oils, flowers, candles, jewelry, crafts, clothing and more.

Winter Festival

- » **Saturday, Jan. 16, 2021 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**  
Family fun outdoors event! The Winter Festival event will include a ‘Frozen characters’ theme along with dessert trucks, the Electric Lipstick live band, The Cool Cruisers Car Show, and the Ave Maria Farmers Market.

Ave Maria Arts & Crafts Festival

- » **Saturday & Sunday, Jan. 23 and 24, 2021, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**
- » **Saturday & Sunday, Feb. 27 and 28, 2021, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**  
Ave Maria, Annunciation Circle, Ave Maria  
The event features sculptures, paintings, one-of-a-kind jewels, photography, ceramics and more. Produced by TNT Events, this is a free event with free parking. There will be musical entertainment starting at noon on Saturday and 1 p.m. on Sunday. For event information, call 239-352-3903. For vendor information, call TNT Events at 352-344-0657.

Live Music

- » **From Jan. 12-April 1, 2021**  
**Tuesdays noon – 3 p.m. and Thursdays 3 – 5p.m.**  
Ave Maria, Annunciation Circle, Ave Maria  
Enjoy live music in Ave Maria’s Town Center, with free admission and free parking.

Ave Maria Master Association Events

- (resident only)
- » **Country Style Pig Roast at the Water Park**  
Feb. 6, 2021 6 p.m.- 8 p.m.
  - » **Health, Wellness and Education Festival at the North Park**  
March 6th - 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. .
  - » **Annual Easter Event at South Park**  
March 27, 2021 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
  - » **Garage Sale & Community Day at North Park**  
April 17, 2021 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Oil Well Craft Beer

- » **Free Bingo Jan. 9, 2021 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**
- » **4 year anniversary celebration Jan 23, 2021 5 p.m.-9 p.m.**  
Food Trucks, prizes, giveaways, drink specials, music and more!
- » **Free Bingo Feb. 6, 2021 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**
- » **Feb. 13, 2021 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**  
Wine and Chocolate pairing and Beer and Chocolate pairing. food trucks and drink specials.
- » **Free Bingo March 6, 2021 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**
- » **Saint Patrick’s Day Celebration March 13, 2021 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.**  
Live music, Drink Specials, photo Booth and more. St. Patrick’s Day costume contest- 7 p.m. sharp!

Blues, Brews & BBQ

- » **Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021, 12:30-5:30 p.m.**  
Ave Maria, Annunciation Circle, Ave Maria  
Featuring live music by **Little Eddie & the Fat Fingers** and **Deb & The Dynamics**, the event includes a car show, children’s activities and food trucks Smokin R’s BBQ, Jonesez BBQ, Pub of Ave Maria, Tropical Smoothie, Lozano’s Mexican Restaurant and Currie’s Smokin’ Hot Barbeque. Free admission and parking. Bring lawn chairs for seating. For information, call 239-352-3903.

Margarita & Taco Festival

- » **Saturday, March 20, 2021, noon-3 p.m.**  
Ave Maria, Annunciation Circle, Ave Maria
- » Featuring live music, tacos and margaritas, pet adoptions, children’s activities, lucha libre wrestling and more. Free admission and parking. Bring lawn chairs for seating. For information, call 239-352-3903.



Sports

- SATURDAY, JAN. 9, 2021**
- » Women’s Basketball vs. Warner 2 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Men’s Basketball vs. Warner 4 p.m. Ave Maria.

- SATURDAY, JAN. 16, 2021**
- » Women’s Basketball vs. Southeastern 2 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Men’s Basketball vs. Southeastern 4 p.m. Ave Maria.

- TUESDAY, JAN. 19, 2021**
- » Women’s Basketball vs. Keiser 5:30 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Men’s Basketball vs. Keiser 7:30 p.m. Ave Maria.

- TUESDAY, JAN. 26, 2021**
- » Women’s Basketball vs. St. Thomas 5:30 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Men’s Basketball vs. St. Thomas 7:30 p.m. Ave Maria.

- THURSDAY, JAN. 28, 2021**
- » Women’s Basketball vs. Coastal Georgia 5:30 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Men’s Basketball vs. Coastal Georgia 7:30 p.m. Ave Maria.

- SATURDAY, JAN. 30, 2021**
- » Women’s Basketball vs. Thomas 2 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Men’s Basketball vs. Thomas 4 p.m. Ave Maria.

- TUESDAY, FEB. 2, 2021**
- » Baseball vs. Keiser 11 a.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Baseball vs. Keiser 2:30 p.m. Ave Maria.

- THURSDAY, FEB. 4, 2021**
- » Softball vs. Florida National 1 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Softball vs. Florida National 3 p.m. Ave Maria.

- SATURDAY, FEB. 6, 2021**
- » Men’s Tennis vs. St. Thomas Ave Maria.
  - » Women’s Tennis vs. St. Thomas TBA Ave Maria.
  - » Softball vs. Pasco-Hernando 1 p.m. Ave Maria.

- » Softball vs. Pasco-Hernando 3 p.m. Ave Maria.

- FRIDAY, FEB. 12, 2021**
- » Baseball vs. Webber 2 p.m. Ave Maria.

- SATURDAY, FEB. 13, 2021**
- » Baseball vs. Webber 11 a.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Softball vs. Barry 12 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Softball vs. Barry 2 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Women’s Basketball vs. Webber 2 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Baseball vs. Webber 2:30 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Men’s Basketball vs. Webber 4 p.m. Ave Maria.

- SATURDAY, FEB. 27, 2021**
- » Men’s Tennis vs. Keiser Ave Maria.
  - » Women’s Tennis vs. Keiser TBA Ave Maria.
  - » Softball vs. Calumet (Ind.) 12 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Softball vs. Calumet (Ind.) 2 p.m. Ave Maria.

- MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2021**
- » Baseball vs. Cleary (Mich.) 11 a.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Baseball vs. Cleary (Mich.) 2:30 p.m. Ave Maria.

- FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2021**
- » Baseball vs. Florida National 2 p.m. Ave Maria.

- SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 2021**
- » Baseball vs. Florida National 11 a.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Baseball vs. Florida National 2:30 p.m. Ave Maria.

- MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021**
- » Baseball vs. Lawrence Tech (Mich.) 11 a.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Baseball vs. Lawrence Tech (Mich.) 2:30 p.m. Ave Maria.

- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021**
- » Women’s Soccer vs. Webber 4 p.m. Ave Maria.

- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021**
- » Softball vs. St. Thomas 2 p.m. Ave Maria.
  - » Softball vs. St. Thomas 4 p.m. Ave Maria.

- SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2021**
- » Men’s Tennis vs. Coastal Georgia Ave Maria.
  - » Women’s Tennis vs. Coastal Georgia TBA Ave Maria. 🌸



## AVE MARIA

From page 1

“We liked big cities,” said Mr. Herrera of the years he and his wife lived in Manhattan, the San Francisco Bay area and Washington, D.C. “But with children and what’s happening in society, we became more aware of finding a community that shared our values and getting away from the culture in urban areas.”

The couple owns a national law practice and could work from anywhere, so they considered many options. Ultimately, Mr. Herrera

said, “nothing compared with the beauty and sense of community that Ave Maria has.”

He said the couple likes the fact that so many new people are moving to the town and are all establishing new friendships, which he said felt similar to starting college together with new social circles.

The Community of the Year award recognized the robust recreation and amenities in Ave Maria that give residents a variety of leisure and fitness activities as well as socialization.

These include more than 100 miles of walking and biking trails with pause points at lakes and benches; baseball, softball and soccer fields; basketball, tennis and bocce

ball courts; a playground; a dog park; picnic pavilions; an amphitheater; and the Ave Maria Water Park with two water slides, interactive water playground, shoreline-edge pool, resort and lap pools, spa, beach volleyball court, and concession area.

Residents also enjoy an active social calendar organized by the Ave Maria Master Association that includes outdoor live music, arts and crafts festivals, farmers markets, happy hours, family socials, and holiday-themed events.

Ave Maria offers various housing types from condominiums and attached villas to single family homes with 2-6 bedrooms featuring lake, preserve, and golf course views.

Eighteen model homes are open daily for viewing with over 75 floor plans to choose from and prices ranging from the high \$100,000s to over \$500,000.

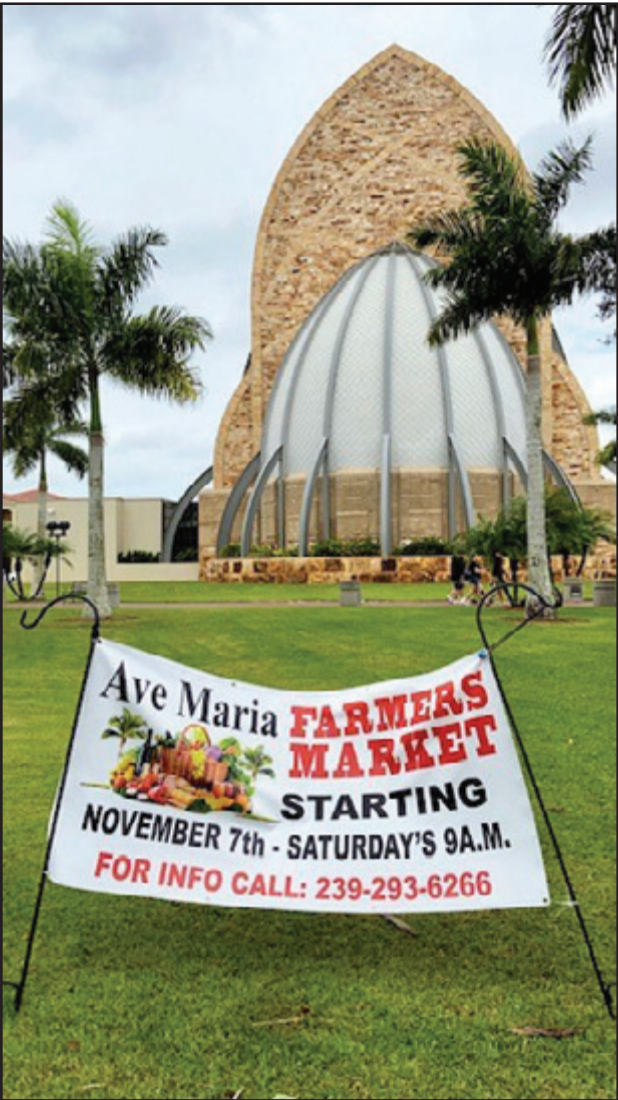
In addition to being named 2015-2020 Community of the Year, Ave Maria has been recognized as the Top Selling Single-Family Home Community in Southwest Florida, and a Top 35 Master Planned Community in the United States. Its active adult community, Del Webb Naples, has been named a Top 20 Places to Retire.

At its build out, the town will include up to 11,000 residences and 1.7 million square feet of retail, office, and business park uses in its 4,000 acres. 🌸



# AROUND AVE MARIA

## Ave Maria Farmers Market in Town Center



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# Ave Maria Sun

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# AROUND AVE MARIA

## Holiday celebrations in Town Center



ANNALIE HULL / AVE MARIA SUN

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**Del Webb - Cascadia**

**5856 Mayflower Way \$272,900**  
MLS#220075523

**NEW**



**Del Webb - Gray Myst**

**5821 Declaration Court \$262,900**  
MLS#220022390

**NEW**



**Del Webb - Pine Spring**

**5780 Declaration Court \$251,900**  
MLS#220039158

**NEW**



**Del Webb**

**5702 Mayflower Way, Unit 301 \$204,700**  
MLS#220044430

**NEW**



**New - Del Webb - Gray Myst**

**7937 Guadiana Way \$231,900**

**ACTIVE**



**National - Bromelia II**

**6070 National Blvd \$248,998**  
MLS#220051166

**ACTIVE**



**Del Webb Martin Ray Model**

**6209 Victory Drive \$354,500**  
MLS#220047551

**ACTIVE**



**National - Maria**

**5977 Berwick Lane \$527,187**  
MLS#220050884

**PENDING**



**Del Webb - Dolce**

**6306 Achievement Way \$363,900**  
MLS#220066118

**PENDING**



**Del Webb - Serenity**

**5297 Juliet Court \$257,900**  
MLS#220076322

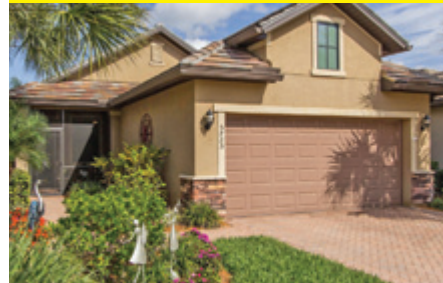
**PENDING**



**Del Webb - Tidewater Model**

**5938 Plymouth Place \$363,900**  
MLS#220061246

**PENDING**



**Del Webb - Taft**

**5725 Mayflower Way \$257,900**  
MLS#220069541

**SOLD**



**Del Webb**

**5792 Mayflower Way \$342,900**  
MLS#220038761

**SOLD**



**Del Webb - Vernon Hill Model Pool**

**5900 Constitution Street \$374,900**  
MLS#220061766

**SOLD**



**Del Webb - Martin Ray Model**

**5433 Katia Court \$341,900**  
MLS# 220064691

**SOLD**



**Del Webb - Dunwoody Trail**

**6173 Victory Drive \$389,000**  
MLS#220017389

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