

# Ave Maria Sun



COURTESY PHOTO  
The Gyrenes stampede the field, kicking off their first home game of the season.

## Gyrenes Football Eyes Another Run to the Championship Title

BY Nanci Theoret  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Ave Maria University’s football program has a knack for bringing out the best in first-year players. Last year Andrew Lege, a redshirted freshman from Louisiana, led the Gyrenes to a 6-3 season record, the NAIAs 2022 Sun Conference championship and a narrow 27-21 loss to in-state archrival Keiser University. Wide receiver Joshua Jenkins smashed team and single-game records as an NAIA All-American freshman in 2021, was named first team All-Sun division receiver, and continues to dominate the gridiron as a junior. Senior offensive lineman Jose Fernandez was tapped for center his freshman year and has started in 25 of the Gyrenes’ 26 games in his three-season college career.

Lege, Jenkins and Fernandez not only possess talent and the accolades to prove it, they’re also team leaders and role models for incoming freshmen aspiring to stand out during their inaugural season wearing the Gyrene jersey. This year’s freshman lineup sports seven local rookies hailing from Ave Maria and high schools in Collier and Lee counties, eager to play for Southwest Florida’s only collegiate football team and an avid hometown crowd overflowing Gyrene Field’s 1,000-seat capacity.

“It’s a well-rounded team with depth and returning players,” said head coach Joe Patterson, in his eighth year wearing the navy blue and kelly green. “We have key starters on both sides of the ball,” Patterson said during a

SEE FOOTBALL, A12 ►



BY Nanci Theoret  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

WHENEVER A GROUP OF friends, families or cyclists take to Ave Maria’s miles of bike lanes, walking paths, parks and playfields, they exemplify the town’s commitment to health, wellness and social engagement – whether intentional or not. Opting for a salad instead of a steak at a favorite Town Center restaurant, attending a community activity or spending just a moment on precious me-time are also the many ways residents illustrate the town’s Blue Zones Project partnership focused on living longer, better lives.

*It’s that simple.*

And Ave Maria makes it easy with a community design emphasizing bikes and hikes, a welcoming small-town spirit that knows no strangers, year-round opportunities to connect with nature and each other, and comradery interlaced in the community’s fabric. It’s also among the eight local towns

SEE ZONE, A2 ►

Town’s Blue Zone practices better health and well-being



Ave Maria residents visit along Rosary Lake’s walking and biking path.

COURTESY PHOTOS

“Ave Maria is a walkable, bikeable community encouraging all homeowners to commit to adding healthier options to their lifestyle.”

— Carol DiFlorio, AMMA lifestyle director

### Girls Just Wanna Have Fun

What life is like for teenagers living in Ave Maria  
A22 ►



### Dolphin-Inspired Beer A Hit

Oil Well Craft Beer donates proceeds to animal-assisted therapy  
A23 ►



### Indoor Playtime

Kids stay cool playing inside Town Center’s Kibitz N’ Play  
A24 ►







COURTESY PHOTO

Ave Maria residents enjoy a game of golf while strategizing their putts.

## ZONE

From page 1

in the Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida, which received certification as a Blue Zones community in 2022 – the first in Florida and the southeastern U.S. The Southwest Florida region is only the seventh U.S. community or city confirmed by the global wellness initiative, backed by nearly 25 years of research identifying longevity hotspots.

Certification is the pinnacle of Blue Zones success, and it doesn't happen overnight. The program and its mission of decreasing chronic disease and helping people live happier and longer was brought to Southwest Florida in 2015, by NHC Healthcare System

and through the years, has demonstrated data-driven change in how towns, communities and people think about sustainable health.

"When a project gets started, the goal is to reach and engage a certain number of worksites, organizations, schools, businesses and people," said Megan Greer, worksite/policy lead for the Southwest Florida project. "Approved worksites, schools, HOAs and organizations in Ave Maria made a commitment to better health and acted. It's about improving the environment to ensure there are healthy options."

The Ave Maria Master Association (AMMA) has spearheaded the town's years-long initiative guided by lifestyle director Carol DiFlorio and residents Victor Acquista and Beatrice Sanford. Blue Zones is represented in the physical: networks of trails and

natural venues, ballfields, resident-organized soccer games and Del Webb Naples' community garden and extra bike racks installed in 2018 encouraging biking over driving. It's also defined by the intangible: – a sense of community, spirituality and the feeling of belonging to something bigger.

Blue Zones was introduced during the AMMA's new homeowner orientations, promoted in walking groups and cardio-based activities, farmers markets and health fairs. It's an underlying theme in the town's beloved parades, festivals and community celebrations elevating social engagement and featuring vendors offering healthy food options... Even at annual steak cook-offs and barbecues.

"Ave Maria is a walkable, bikeable com-

SEE ZONE, A4 ►

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From page 2

Acquista was vaguely familiar with Blue Zones when he moved to Ave Maria six years ago. A retired primary care physician, medical executive and author of two books on holistic health and integral medicine, he soon learned it espoused his own philosophies, echoed from his experiences when



**Grandfather and grandson fish at Ave Maria's Rosary Lake.**

"I've always been a strong advocate of encouraging healthy behaviors," he said. "Good health is more than exercise. It's faith-based, for instance, and not just about individuals but gathering with friends and families for a common purpose like a walk-

“Blue Zones” was coined in 2000 and introduced in the 2008 bestseller by Dan Buettner, who as a globetrotting National Geographic fellow, collaborated with researchers studying regions where people thrived, led longer happier lives and boasted

more centenarians per capita than anywhere else on the planet. A partnership between Blue Zones and Sharecare, the initiative is not about deprivation nor driven solely by food and exercise – only three of its mantra-guiding Power 9 pillars concentrate on those issues.

SEE ZONE, A6 ►

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# ZONE

From page 4

Instead, it advocates realistic and sustainable change and the healing powers of positive people, nature and faith. Although the principles urge participants to move more naturally; eat mindfully and stop when 80% full; and load dinnerplates with more fruits and vegetables, it also highlights the psychological and social benefits of faith-based communities which demonstrate, life purpose, addressing stress, enjoying a glass of wine with good friends, putting loved ones first and initiating positive behavior.

Waking up with purpose every day adds up to seven years of life expectancy, attending faith-based services regularly averages close to 14 years, and investing in time with family up to six years.

The master association also offers programs underscoring Power 9. It's partnering with town fitness and dance instructors for January's Power 9 Wellness Day featured bocce and badminton, lakeside walks and nature, plus free exercise classes for adults and children, plant-based supplements and food trucks serving healthy breakfast options.

The benefits of Blue Zones extend beyond health and well-being.

"Knowledge of certification often helps home and real estate sales, community investment and engagement in well-being activities," Greer said.

DiFlorio shared Ave Maria's Blue Zones focus has attracted new residents, including one homebuyer who relocated from Canada after reading about the town's certification.

"Blue Zones as a branding aspect makes Ave Maria more attractive to people who may be considering moving here," Acquista said. "I'm also of the belief being named a



COURTESY PHOTO

Residents browse a variety of locally sourced produce at the Ave Maria Farmers Market, running November through April.

Blue Zone community may raise property values."

The Southwest Florida Blue Zones Project continues to evolve. Regular Zoom meetings with other partners in the region, an area spanning Marco Island north to Estero, fosters collaboration and ultimately new avenues for improvement. Acquista and Sanford are Ave Maria's liaisons.

"We talk about what's working, share ideas and brainstorm so everyone is all rowing in the same direction and the goal of making people healthier," Acquista said.

With certification now in the rear-view mirror, Greer adds local efforts are geared to stress and anxiety reduction and steering

more residents to the RealAge test, offered free by registering online at [bzpsouthwestflorida.sharecare.com](https://bzpsouthwestflorida.sharecare.com). The test calculates activity level, health history, sleep, nutrition and other factors affecting health and life

expectancy. The Southwest Florida project's Unwinding Anxiety initiative offers online stress-relieving mindfulness practices, video lessons, expert-moderated community support and weekly calls with professionals addressing individual challenges.

As a community promoting pedal- and pedestrian-powered mobility over autos, Ave Maria has created an environment where walking and biking are the first choice for getting around town, whether patronizing Town Center's stores and restaurants, its amenities, grocery shopping at Publix or attending events and activities. "The town also offers basketball and tennis courts and is adding pickleball," DiFlorio said.

Ave Maria's growing cadre of physicians, specialists and medical offices advances the Blue Zones mission, and the association has arranged mobile dermatology services on-site, enhancing convenience and access to healthcare.

"The town is also uniquely positioned to elevate its Blue Zone IQ as it develops," Greer commented.

"As new houses and neighborhoods are being built, Ave Maria continues to build a people-focused community. You can't underestimate the value of being outside and moving your body, when you live in an environment that facilitates natural movement by natural choice." 🌞

"Blue Zones as a branding aspect makes Ave Maria more attractive to people who may be considering moving here. I'm also of the belief being named a Blue Zone community may raise property values."

— Victor Acquista, resident



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# FUN AROUND THE TOWN

## ¡Viva la Fiesta! Capturing the Vibrant Spirit of Ave Maria’s Latin Festival Celebrations



1



2



3

- 1. Luciano Serrato, Thiago Aliaga and Christian Aliaga
- 2. Reina Del Mar and Alexandra Garcia
- 3. Harmony 2 performing at Lozano’s Mexican Restaurant
- 4. Best friends Hayden Estes (left), Jonah King, Elijah Lebrun and Max Gieger sell lemonade to raise money for a trip to Universal Studios
- 5. Priscilla Blondet cooking the taco meat at Lozano’s Mexican Restaurant
- 6. Maddison Aguilar, 6 and Haydee McDougall



4



5



6

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# FUN AROUND THE TOWN



7. Ave Maria residents enjoy the Latin Festival vibe  
8. Tunia Rodriguez in the parade  
9. Jorell Seda, 7, shows off balloon art  
10. Joe Gutierrez and Drew Howard co-owners of Superior Standard Cigars  
11. Tunia Rodriguez and Katiana Duran  
12. Dan Romanoski of Del Webb and Danee Williams, owner of The Secret Ingredient  
13. Raul Rios and French bulldog Zafiro  
14. Julianna Perez and Andry Marquez, owners of Tia Razas Açaí Bowls  
15. Ana Peña



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# Here We Grow Again! Ave Maria Adds 1,000 Acres for More Single-family Homes and Retail

BY Nanci Theoret  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

The addition of 1,000 acres along Ave Maria’s town limits has paved the way for more single-family homes and commercial opportunities, plus property for an academic golf course and opportunities housing at Ave Maria University. The expansion, approved by Collier County commissioners in June, brings the town’s total footprint to nearly 5,000 acres and accommodates an increase in single-family homes from 60% to 80% of the residential mix, shared David Genson, president of development for Barron Collier Companies (BCC), the town developer of Ave Maria.

The adjustment, Genson explained, reflects demand for single-family homes and Ave Maria’s growing appeal to national brands and big box stores, as the master-plan stakes as the main commercial center in eastern Collier where several new residential communities are underway.

Other revisions to the town plan reallocate 510,000 square feet of designated office space to other uses, much of which reassigned to goods and services in a series of new town centers.

“Right now, we have more than 4,000 closed homes and with that many rooftops now have the attention of national companies,” Genson said. “We have the magic number to sustain national business.”

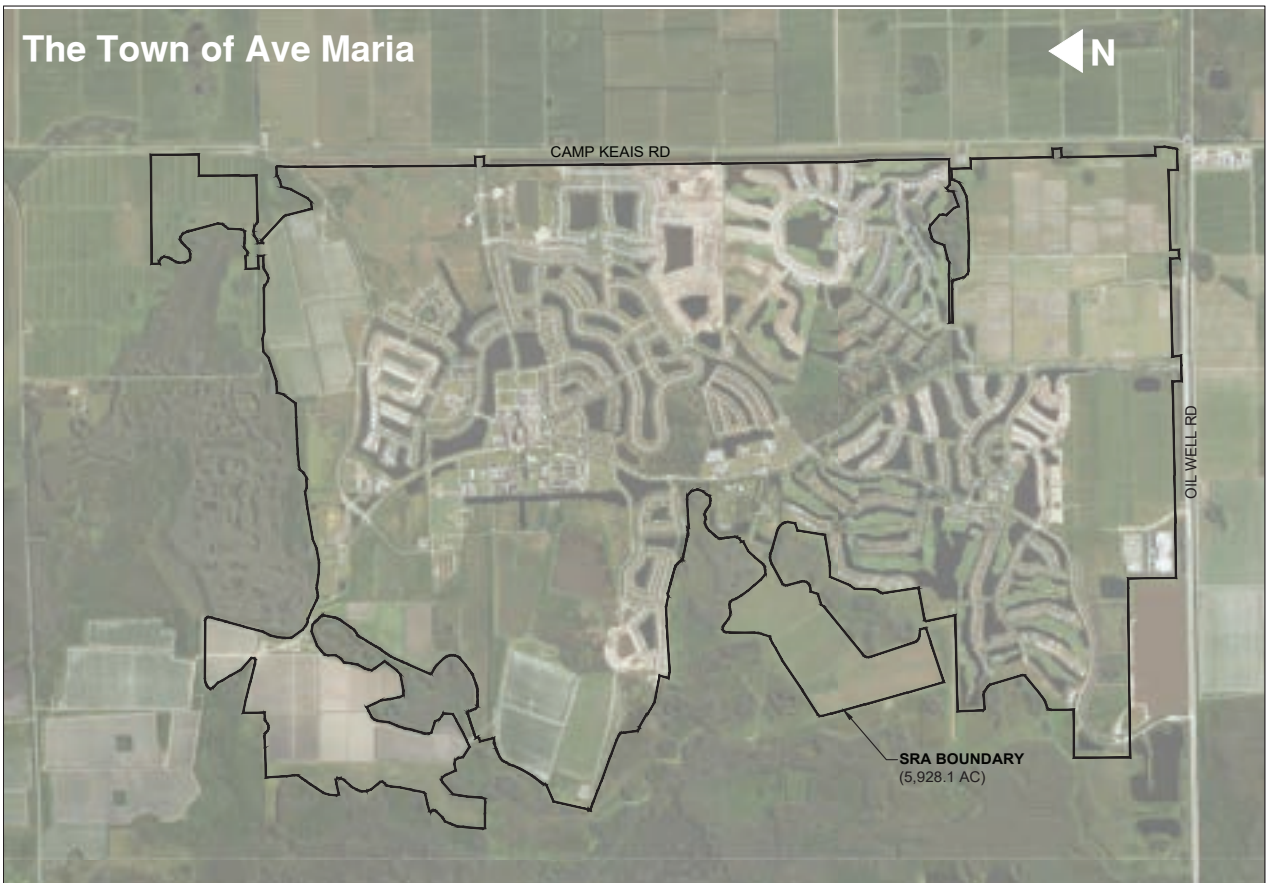
Also elevating Ave Maria’s national cache is the county’s recent 80% reduction in transportation impact fees for commercial construction. “A typical McDonald’s, for example, would now pay \$120,000 in fees compared to \$600,000,” Genson explained. The reduced fees are based on the town’s business growth and the range of in-town retail, restaurants, employers, professional services and medical offices, all dramatically decreasing the need for residents to travel elsewhere.

“We’ve made the case for a long time that Ave Maria isn’t impacting county facilities,” Genson said. “Residents have everything they need in town and don’t have to go out on county roads.”

The newly annexed properties bookend three corners of the town are owned by Barron Collier Companies and were used primarily for agricultural. The expansion includes 325 acres to the northwest, part of which will be gifted to the university for golf and student residences, and 100 acres on the northeast corner planned for single-family homes.

The largest tract, a 540-acre sod farm at the town’s main entrance, extends Ave Maria’s boundaries to the intersection of Oil Well and Camp Keais roads and is planned for single-family units and towns centers east of Ave Maria Boulevard, the latter reflecting the increase of goods and services use from 690,000 to over 1.07 million square feet.

“As Ave Maria and eastern Collier grows and more retail comes out of the ground, the big box stores are going to look for sites there,” Genson said. “It’s a logical site. Ave Maria is the commercial retail hub for the surrounding areas. We have a new retail center under



PENINSULA ENGINEERING / COURTESY IMAGE

Current aerial view of Ave Maria as of January 2023

active construction with national tenants.”

The 21,000-square-foot Midtown Plaza at Ave Maria Boulevard and Anthem Parkway is aimed for completion by mid-2024, and will be home to Dunkin’, Sunshine Ace Hardware, Cold Stone Creamery, Maryland-based Ledo Pizza and a 6,000-square-foot NCH Immediate Care Center.

“For a community like Ave Maria, it takes time getting to the critical mass meant to support retail,” said Brian Goguen, chief investment officer for BCC. “We were fortunate to get a Publix as early as we did. Now, there are so many commercial businesses interested in Ave Maria. We’ve also had residents come in with ideas and open their own businesses.”

“We’re talking to a couple of businesses looking to establish a presence in Ave Maria,” Genson added. “They need larger tracts of lands and Ave is one of the only places in the county with available property to do that.”

There are also active negotiations with light-manufacturers and Naples-based Arthrex, a global medical device manufacturing company with 460,000 square feet already in Ave Maria, “is looking at other things to support employees,” Genson said.

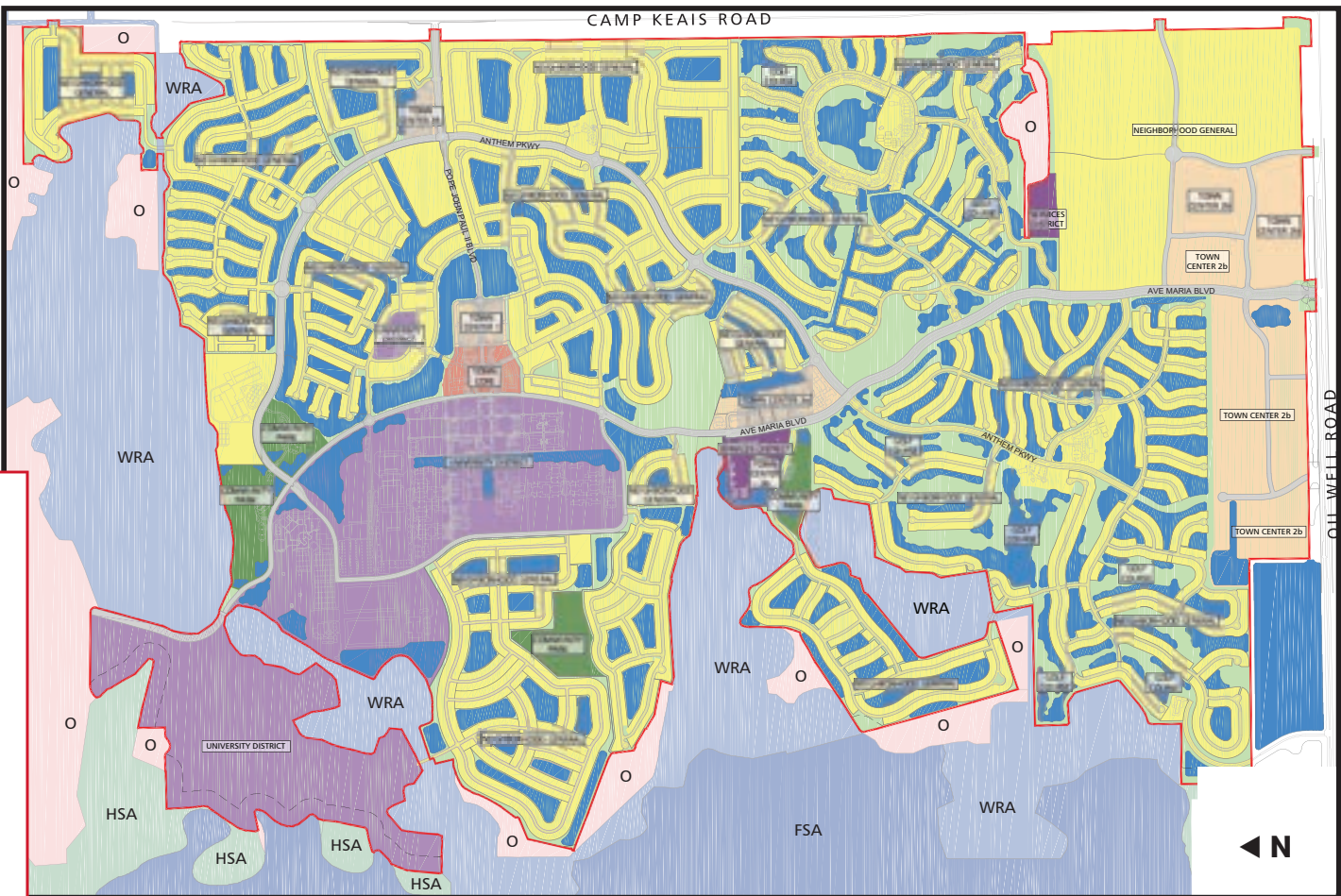
The town’s strong home sales are also expediting construction of a new public elementary school. The new facility is expected to open in 2026 for the area’s, more than, 500 students who attend Golden Gate 15 miles away.

While Ave Maria’s revised residential mix reduces multi-family units to 2,200, future opportunities will be available. “Lennar currently offers multi-family homes in The National, a golf course neighborhood, and BCC plans to introduce market-rate apartments in the next few years,” Genson said.

“Right now, we have more than 4,000 closed homes and with that many rooftops now have the attention of national companies. We have the magic number to sustain national business.”

— David Genson, president of development for Barron Collier Companies

Land Use Summary	
--- 300' FSA / HSA Buffer	
University District	846 Acres
Town Core	24 Acres
Town Centers	411 Acres
Neighborhood General	4,321 Acres
Services District	47 Acres
Community Parks	105 Acres
Other	174 Acres
Total	5,928 Acres



Approved SRA amendment of Ave Maria masterplan

COURTESY IMAGE



# FUN AROUND THE TOWN

## Christmas in July 2023







The team gathers around their coach, fueled by camaraderie and strategy.



The tension rises as both teams face off at midfield.

COURTESY PHOTO

# FOOTBALL

From page 1

pre-season interview. “This is the most complete team we’ve had in each phase: offense, defense and special teams. We’ve laid a great foundation and we’ll be competitive against other Sun conference teams.”

The program also filled three coaching slots during the off-season, welcoming former NFL wide receiver and the University of Miami’s 2011 standout receiver Tommy Streeter as tight ends coach in July.

“Tommy’s been a great addition to our staff,” said John Klacik, offensive line and assistant head coach.

“He’s played in the NFL and brings a different experience level to our players. It’s also his first coaching job.”

Willie Tillman, who’s coached at his alma mater Perdue as well as Florida A&M and Valdosta State, was named linebackers coach and director of football operations. New secondary coach Matt Millhouse led Indiana’s University of Saint Francis to back-to-back national NAIA championship titles in 2016 and 2017.

### Players to Watch

As the rising star of this year’s Gyrene team, starting quarterback Lege, a 6-foot-2 sophomore, was headed for the Ivy Leagues but landed on Florida turf after national athletic associations extended player eligibility during the coronavirus pandemic.

“What separated us from other schools for Drew was our emphasis on Catholic education,” Patterson shared. “Drew is a talented and smart quarterback, able to run our offense, go up tempo and go very quickly.”

At the helm of the Gyrenes’ offense, Lege played in eight games his freshman year,

started in all five conference games and was named the Sun Conference’s freshman of the year and second team All-Sun quarterback. He’s also been recognized as an NAIA scholar-athlete and was named to the 2022 conference academic team.

Lege often connects with Jenkins, a junior from Miramar, Florida, who led the team with 46 receptions for 603 yards and caught four touchdown passes as a sophomore in 2022. Jenkins also set a single-game school record with 165 receiving yards and returned five kickoffs for 98 yards to earn a second consecutive nod as first team All-Sun Conference wide receiver.

The 2022 season was merely an encore to Jenkins’ outstanding rookie year. Claiming the football program’s greatest single season on record for a wide receiver, the 5-foot-7, 173-pound star gained 987 receiving yards and scored 10 touchdowns, earning offensive freshman of the year and NAIA All-American

honorable mention.

Then there’s senior Roman Newkirk, a wide receiver who is also a punter and kickoff returner from Mount Dora, Fla. “He’s unique,” Patterson said of the 2022 team MVP. In the receiver slot, Newkirk caught 40 passes for 416 yards and three touchdowns on special teams and amassed 558 return yards as a 2021 sophomore. He was named the conference’s 2022 “Special Teams Player of the Year,” first team All-Sun Conference all-purpose player his sophomore and junior years, and first and second team All-Sun return specialist in the 2021 and 2022 seasons.

“Drew is a talented guy, Josh is a big-play receiver and it’s exciting whenever he gets the ball,” said Klacik, Patterson’s right-hand man and offensive line coach. “Roman is like a Swiss army knife – he can do everything. They’re all dynamic and skilled players. I work with the big guys on offense who block for them.”

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Offensive linemen are among football's unsung heroes, their stat boxes devoid of numerical glories. There's seldom any data at all; no yards gained, touchdowns, sacks or interceptions recorded like those of their fellow teammates on offense and defense.

Two Gyrene senior standouts clear the way for Lege, Jenkins and Newkirk to make the headlines and rack up their stats. It's Jose Fernandez, a 6-foot, 277-pound lineman from Miami, who facilitated the offense line's 34 points and over 422 yards per game average in the 2022 season. He's a back-to-back first team All-Sun Conference offensive lineman, NAIA scholar-athlete, and a Sun Conference and College Sports Information Director of America all-academic team star.

Senior Bryce Shevak was integral in the team's top 15 nationally ranked offensive line based on time of possession in 2021. As a freshman, the 6-foot, 281-pound lineman, who hails from Fort Pierce, Fla., took over right guard after his first two games. He's also a two-time NAIA scholar-athlete and a member of the Sun Conference and Mid-South

Conference all-academic teams. For Patterson and Klacik, coaching at Ave Maria University stands out in their collective experience spanning over a half century. "Our players are very hardworking and joyful," Patterson said. "Their pursuit of excellence is inspiring, and they're unique in a sense there's a tremendous effort to be really good human beings."

Klacik, whose career includes 15 seasons at Youngstown State and stints at Wake Forest and Miami University (Ohio), added, "Coaching at AMU has been a blessing for me because of the kinds of student athletes we get to work with. They have tremendous confidence in themselves, and the faith aspect of the school helps them develop beyond weightlifting and football."

Hometown Pride

The comradery on the field spills over to the community, the campus and the town of Ave Maria. Since installing permanent lights in 2018, all home games are played on Saturday nights with kickoff at 7. It's a familiar

albeit Florida-style homage to college towns across the country that live-and-breathe weekend football for a few months each fall. "It's not just a game," Patterson said. "There's a lot of great interaction with the community." Players participate in Ave Maria's annual Hometown Christmas parade, help at the parish church and Donahue Academy, the town's private Roman Catholic K-12 school.

The lights also brought more crowds, some games drawing 2,400 fans to a field with bleacher space for 1,000. Residents of Ave Maria often arrive by golf cart, pulling right up the roped barrier to take in the game. The growing fanbase is a good problem to have, sparking serious conversations about expanding capacity.

"I've coached at every level, division 1, 2, 1-AA and tell my friends in the business our game day atmosphere at Ave Maria is unbelievable," Klacik shared. "To me, there's no difference between the excitement level at Wake Forest or Florida State. From the crowd, the student body, and the community, everyone gets into it. It's one of the best in our

conference as far as home field advantage." The lights and the crowds have also attracted donors, whose most recent contribution debuts during the Gyrenes' Sept. 23 home opener against the University of Fort Lauderdale Eagles. It's a video scoreboard ushering AMU into the era of high-quality live shots, graphics, replays, highlight reels and player profiles filmed during Media Day in August. The board also live streams each home game – "a big deal for us," Patterson said. Links are available on the team's online schedule (ave-mariagyrenes.com/sports/football/schedule). The team kicked off the 2023 season Sept. 2 with a two-game road trip to Michigan and Texas. Conference play begins Sept. 30 at Gyrene Field. Homecoming, always the most heavily attended game, is Oct. 14 and includes a town pep rally. The Gyrenes also host games Oct. 7 and the home closer Oct. 28, a rematch against Keiser.

Local Ave Maria and Regional Players

This year's Gyrenes lineup boasts six native sons from Ave Maria, including three returning players: junior wide receiver Joseph Klucik, a Donahue Academy alum and Benedict Niewald, a junior wide receiver, and sophomore running back Derba Boivin, who were both homeschooled. Donahue is also represented by freshmen Samuel Schneider on the defensive line and kicker/punter Noah Gordon. They're also joined by fellow freshman and Ave Maria resident Michael Buccheri, a homeschooled running back. The team also fields six players from Southwest Florida: sophomore defensive linemen Gavin Lepore, a North Fort Myers High graduate from Cape Coral and Fort Myers, Zion Chase, an alum of Cypress Lake. Riverdale High, plus three freshmen: tight end Tucker Devaney and linebacker Colton Flint, both from Alva, and Tayllon De Paula, a kicker/punter from Lehigh Acres. Freshman quarterback Ty Keller from Naples attended First Baptist Academy. 🌟



The Gyrenes football team stands united in front of the Ave Maria Catholic Church.

COURTESY PHOTO

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# AVE MARIA COMMUNITIES



# AVALON PARK

## About the community

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one- and two-story single-family homes that combine Pulte Homes' signature quality construction and personalized design opportunities. With home designs including up to seven bedrooms and 6 1/2 bathrooms in 5,000-plus square feet of living space, you are sure to find your dream new home to fit your family's needs now and in the future.



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- Starting from the low \$600s
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- Five bedrooms
- 3½ to 4½ bathrooms
- Two car garage

**Avalon Park at Ave Maria**  
**4364 Washington Place, Ave Maria, FL 34142**  
**239-842-1657**





# About the community

From the \$300,000s - \$1,000,000+

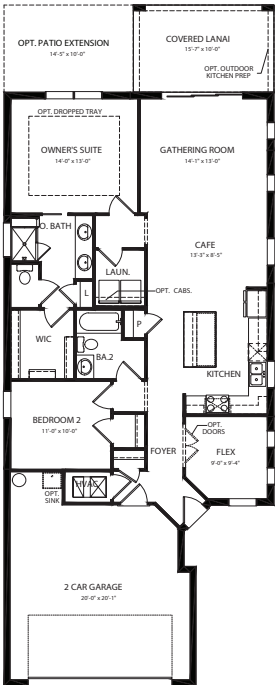
Del Webb Naples brings premier resort-style amenities and a lifestyle nothing short of extraordinary to Ave Maria. Here, daily possibilities for new adventures await. Where every day is different – and entirely up to you. From a dip in the pool to a friendly game of pickleball, in Del Webb Naples you’ll find countless opportunities to grow, thrive, and enjoy those new passions you’ve been waiting to explore. Del Webb Naples provides amenities, programs, and support needed for health and wellness,

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## 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 along with Mr. Andres Miyares 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 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 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.

**New contemporary homes available now at Maple Ridge. Tour new models today.**



**Starting from the \$300,000s**

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.



### Harbour

- 3,522 a/c square feet
- Four to six bedrooms
- 3½ to 5½ bathrooms
- Ground floor owners suite
- Two- or three-car garage

**Maple Ridge**  
**5009 Alonza Avenue, Ave Maria, FL 34142**  
**833-729-1783 | 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 Huntington is a new construction, one-story home with three bedrooms, two baths, great room, eat-in kitchen, storage, master suite with walk-in closet and attached garage. Premium features included that are standard include designer brand faucets and fixtures, and tile flooring. Gourmet kitchens have stainless steel appliances, European-style wood cabinetry and quartz countertops. A spa-like master bathroom features double sinks with quartz vanity tops and a spacious shower.



### Select homesites available. Inquire today!

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### Huntington

- Model home is now open for viewing.
- 1,630 a/c square feet
  - Three bedrooms
  - Two bathrooms
  - His and hers walk-in closets in master bedroom
  - One-car garage

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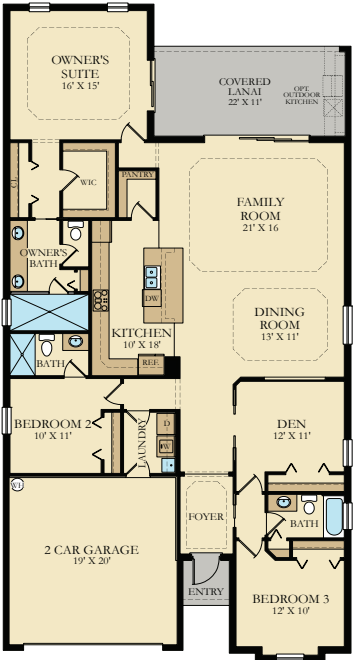
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About the community

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, coach homes, and executive and estate single-family homes. The National Golf & Country Club will

feature its own clubhouse with a pro shop, formal and casual dining, a resort-style pool and spa, 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, a putting green, chipping area, and a driving range. This all-encompassing amenity campus is designed to bring the community together, with spaces for friends new and old to gather. Whether you are a seasonal resident or looking to lay down roots, The National Golf & Country Club has the ideal home for you.



Maria

- Starting from the \$500,000s
- 2,247 square feet
- Three bedrooms + den
- Three bathrooms



From the upper \$200,000s - \$800,000s+

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# MEET THE TOWNMAKER

## Ave Maria’s infrastructure gets a boost from director Sal D’Angelo

BY SANDRA YEYATI  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

There’s a new face in town, and he’s poised to make a significant impact on the future of Ave Maria. Started in mid-July, Sal D’Angelo has been named director of operations for Special District Services (SDS), a full-time, onsite position and the newest addition to a team of professionals that helps build and maintain public thoroughways in Ave Maria.

The SDS is a specialized management company hired by the Ave Maria Stewardship Community District (AMSCD), the five-member taxing body that makes decisions about roads, sidewalks, common-area landscaping and master irrigation systems in the community. Homeowners pay for this vital infrastructure in their taxes, so it is a hot topic among residents.

Stationed in Ave Maria, D’Angelo works closely with the AMSCD, as well as with Ave Maria Development and the Ave Maria Master Association (AMMA). Under his supervision, three other staff members will be added shortly, including an operations manager and two grounds technicians. D’Angelo has quickly become a valuable liaison for residents—the person that homeowners can contact to answer questions and find solutions related to district-owned roadways.

“We’re in the business to be passionate and provide an excellent level of customer service for the residents of Ave Maria, and also the people that come through on special events,” he said.

D’Angelo continued, “I oversee day-to-day operations, so if the citizens of this community have an issue with Ave Maria Boulevard or Anthem Parkway or if there’s an issue with signage, sidewalks, the asphalt, the striping, the trees, I’m here to help. The onsite team we’re building right now is going to take care of any issues in a proactive manner to make sure that the community stays presentable and fully functional.”

In addition to maintaining existing infrastructure, D’Angelo will be integral in the buildout of new roadways as Ave Maria continues to grow. “The [AMSCD] board just approved at last month’s meeting a bond to improve other parts of the community that aren’t developed yet. So, we’re getting ready to expand and put in more infrastructure that requires oversight and making sure that everything is getting done properly,” he said.

D’Angelo is a highly educated, experienced government official. He holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Florida International University, a master’s degree in public administration from Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and a doctorate in public administration from Florida Atlantic University. As an adjunct instructor at



Sal D’Angelo

COURTESY PHOTOS



Sal D’Angelo and Family

“I have a strong knowledge base in independent fire control districts, which are similar to the Ave Maria Stewardship Community District. We are set up to deal with specific tasks and operate very much like a city or a county.”

— Sal D’Angelo

FGCU, he teaches a leadership class for public administration students.

For 26 years, D’Angelo was in fire rescue, starting out as a firefighter in Franklin, Tennessee, and moving his way up the ranks to fire inspector, deputy chief and fire chief, as he transferred to different locations, including Cape Coral, Pinellas and Collier Counties. He also spent close to two years in a Cape Coral city management position.

“When I became a fire chief, I oversaw all the facilities, the fire stations, the fire apparatus, fire prevention and logistics. All that experience parlays into what I’m doing here for Ave Maria, just on a different scale. Here, we’re dealing with putting in and maintaining new roads so that the builders can come in and build more homes as they start to devel-

op certain areas of the land.”

D’Angelo is a dedicated family man. He met his wife Shawn in high school in Miami, where they both grew up, and they’ve been married for three decades. Before having children, they spent a couple of exciting years in Tennessee while Shawn pursued a singing/songwriting career. “We were young, and we had a blast,” he recalls. Shawn has been a Lee County school teacher for the last 15 years.

The couple has two daughters. Alana studies at FGCU and Ayla is at Fort Myers High School. Taking after their mother, both kids are musically talented. Ayla has a beautiful singing voice and often performs the national anthem at public events, and Alana is a concert violinist. She played for the Naples Philharmonic Youth Orchestra for five years and

will be performing with the FGCU orchestra while she pursues a math major.

“I’ve truly been blessed with a wonderful family,” D’Angelo said. “I love spending time with them, and I enjoy being outdoors. I love the Florida Keys. I love attending live music events. But really, spending time with my family is the best. The older I get, the more I enjoy being outside with nature, just spending time with my kids watching the birds.”

*Until a more permanent office is set up, D’Angelo will be in the AMMA building at 5080 Annunciation Circle. Walk-in inquiries are welcome; he is happy to meet with people in person. Residents may also email him at [sdangelo@amskd.org](mailto:sdangelo@amskd.org).*



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SEPTEMBER 28

· LATINOS ·  
**UNIDOS**  
MÚSICA · COMIDA

**TITO NIEVES**  
**ROBERTO TORRES**  
**CACHAO'S MAMBO ALL-STARS**  
**CORTADITO**  
**BAJO ZERO**  
OCTOBER 7

**JOSH BLUE**  
**THE FREAK ACCIDENT TOUR**  
OCTOBER 28

**HERE COMES  
THE MUMMIES**  
WITH SPECIAL GUEST PERPETUAL GROOVE  
NOVEMBER 4

AN EVENING WITH  
**BRUCE HORNSBY**  
SPIRIT TRAIL: 25TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR  
NOVEMBER 16

**SAWYER BROWN**  
NOVEMBER 18

**JOSE FELICIANO**  
DECEMBER 5

**MARIE OSMOND**  
DECEMBER 12

**THE LALAS  
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**MINUTES AWAY  
FROM MORE**







Donahue Academy students set forth on their morning walk through town before the first bell.

# Ave Girls Just Wanna Have Fun!

**BY ERICA FISH**  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Growing up in a small town has its quirks, especially when you're a teenager making memories with friends. From cul-de-sac barbecues, water balloon fights in the front yard, weekly Friday movie nights and joy rides in the golf cart to Town Center, Ave Maria teens have found plenty of action when forming new bonds with neighborhood families.

Seventeen-year-old resident Sera Sanchez notes that, despite being homeschooled, her and her siblings do not struggle with meeting other teenagers with the help of countless opportunities in-town activities have to offer.

"Ave Maria really has been a blessing when making new friendships. Everyone is like a family," said Sanchez. "There's a diverse network of people, young and old, who live in our community. I haven't met one person who isn't motivated to try something new or spontaneously join in on an activity taking place."

With weekend farmers markets, large-scale festivals and a variety of clubs to join, the Sanchez fridge calendar gets quite colorful marking what days the kids will be at so-and-so's house or when the first tailgate kicks off the Ave Maria University football season.

"Everyone is always saying it, but it's really true, I've never felt so involved in a community as I do here in Ave Maria," Sanchez said. "My advice to teens struggling to connect is to just do the impulsive thing by walking up to a group and introducing yourself. I will admit it can be daunting, but it becomes easier because the conversation usually ends with someone saying, 'Oh my gosh! I know that person too!'"

Countless town youth note the steep number of amenities and events have even benefitted their parents. "My dad shares all the time that golfing at The National has been his outlet in meeting other fathers who live in



Sisters explore fashion and friendship amidst shopping, while Ave Maria tweens bike in the Town Center.

Ave Maria. He now has a buddy to go to Oil Well Craft Beer with for bingo nights," shared resident LaQuisha Jones, 19.

A sense of belonging is beneficial to any community member, and in essence, proves like-mindedness goes a long way when making memories. As for teenagers, they work to develop their personalities and interests during a time of great change – completing high school, participating in extracurricular activities, prepping for college – it's a great feat when tackling on responsibilities that prep for other milestones... So, what seems to be the common denominator in keeping them grounded to their values?

"Maturity," Jones said. "Being committed to making friends that have similar interests and goals has improved my outlook on the young adult I am. Putting yourself out there is just one piece to the puzzle, but I'm the happiest when I'm surrounded by others my age who want me to succeed and also have

achievements they want to reach."

But the fun never ceases when responsibilities take the lead. With the summer weekends being quite hot, the Ave Maria Water Park has been the definite solution to cooling off, so cannonball competitions coupled with endless hotdogs and popsicles, have been the ultimate staple for friend groups linking up for sleepovers, bake sales and gaming nights.

"Some of my most favorite memories have been late nights with friends. Simple plans like going to Tropical Smoothie Cafe are just as special because laughing cures everything," said Sera's sister Sienna, age 12. "Everyone just seems to be more wholesome where we live."

Sienna's friend Angie Cardona, age 12, shares proximity to neighborhood hangout spots and large-scale festivities have been the perfect solution to do something if boredom ever sets in when inside the house.

"When we say everything is close, every-

thing is close. You can walk or bike to wherever in town. Want to get sunset photos? South Park is not even four minutes away from my house. Want to grab food and get your face painted? There's that in Town Center, so we just hop on the golf cart and go!" shared Cardona.

The quirks of growing up in Ave Maria is defined by the momentous abilities of residents – of all ages – instilling companionship among their peers. A childhood filled with memories has been an appreciated comfort by young adults like Sera because nothing is better than good times with good people.

"I'm a firm believer that this community has helped me become who I am today," she commented. "People show up for each other here. Being a close-knit town has its advantages because we all want the same thing... Connection." 🌻



# Dolphin-Inspired Brew a Hit with Oil Well Craft Beer Customers

**BY SANDRA YEYATI,**  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Oil Well Craft Beer (OWCB) has named one of their artisanal beers after Tashi, a therapy dolphin that helps heal people with anxiety, autism, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Formulated by head brewer Ross Wright, with the enthusiastic support of OWCB co-owner Matt Williams, the Tashi



**WRIGHT**

Tangerine Wheat was released as a limited run in April with a portion of sales going to Island Dolphin Care, a nonprofit in Key Largo, where the 11-year-old bottlenose lives. Island Dolphin Care combines traditional treatment methods with in-water animal-assisted therapy. Guided by experienced dolphin trainers and therapists, patients can interact with these majestic sea creatures in water or from a dock. The center's approach is to stimulate joyous enthusiasm while providing the potential for growth and development.

Island Dolphin Care Executive Director Luke Bullen recently told WSVN News, "We have a team of human therapists, and then we have the dolphins, so they really are the heart of Island Dolphin Care. They are motivational and they're inspirational. We call them our co-therapists."

Wright's cousin-in-law Brittany Cosgrove is Tashi's trainer. The idea to name a beer after the dolphin was first casually proposed while Wright was spending time with his aunt and family.

"At the time, Oil Well was thinking about creating a tangerine wheat beer and my aunt didn't know that breweries are constantly collaborating with other companies," Wright continued, "I thought that the words 'Tashi' and 'Tangerine' went well together."

When Wright shared the idea with his boss Matt Williams, the process started to move quickly. It was Williams' idea to approach Island Dolphin Care and see if Oil Well Craft Beer could support them in any way. "I simply wanted to name the beer after Tashi, but he was the one that took it a step further," said Wright.



COURTESY PHOTOS

**Tashi, the therapy dolphin, embodies a soothing presence that resonates alongside the water.**

"I like Island Dolphin Care's mission," said Williams. "It's a great facility with a great purpose, and I'm glad we can do our small part to help them."

After speaking on the phone with people at the Island Dolphin Care, Williams made a personal donation and created a campaign to raise money for the nonprofit during the Tashi Tangerine Wheat limited run in April. Brewery customers were invited to visit the Island Dolphin Care website and donation page, and one dollar of every Tashi Tangerine

Wheat sold was donated to the treatment facility. A second limited run of the popular craft beer is planned for October.

The Tashi Tangerine Wheat is a traditional American beer made mostly with malted wheat rather than all malted barley, which is what most beer is made from. "The American wheat is pretty plain on its own, and that's why it's popular to add fruits to it. We went with tangerine. As far as flavor goes, it's just very citrusy. We use real tangerine puree, so it's got a quite natural flavor, with a bit of tart-

ness," Wright explained.

Wright has worked at Oil Well Craft Beer for more than two years and became head brewer six months into his career. In February, the brewery participated in another collaboration. At the invitation of Shy Wolf Sanctuary, in Naples, Wright created the Misun Pale Ale, named after one of the resident wolves. Their crafted beer was part of a slate of original beers by local brewers at the fourth annual WolfStock Brewfest held at the Paradise Coast Sports Complex, in Naples.

"It was a good time. If the Shy Wolf Sanctuary reaches out to us in the future, we'd love to do it again," Wright said. "In general, it feels good to help in any way we can but being able to help people and organizations with craft beer, something that we love to make, drink and share, is really fulfilling."

Located at 5334 Ave Maria Blvd., Oil Well Craft Beer is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. For more information, visit [OilWellCraftBeer.com](http://OilWellCraftBeer.com).

For more information about Island Dolphin Care, visit [IslandDolphinCare.org](http://IslandDolphinCare.org), call 305-451-5884 or email [katherine@idckeylargo.org](mailto:katherine@idckeylargo.org). 🍷

"I like Island Dolphin Care's mission. It's a great facility with a great purpose, and I'm glad we can do our small part to help them."

— **Matt Williams**, Oil Well Craft Beer co-owner



**When seated at OWCB, customers will see a photo of Tashi with the Tashi Tangerine Wheat and a celebratory cake.**



# Indoor Playtime at Kibitz N’ Play

BY SANDRA YEYATI

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Coming out of a hot and humid summer, Sabena Black feels good about her decision to open Kibitz N’ Play in the heart of Town Center last November. The brightly colored indoor playground shields families from oppressive temperatures and afternoon showers while providing children with ample opportunity to play, socialize, move their bodies, laugh, giggle and guffaw.

A mother of two, Black loves to be around youngsters. “Kids are the happiest human beings. Nothing bothers them and they’re always happy,” she shared. “If kids love you, you must be a great person. I love being around children, and they have always loved being around me.”

Before she moved to Ave Maria in 2021, Black was a part-time event planner for children’s parties in Pembroke Pines, Miami and Atlanta. She would travel to families’ homes and organize elaborate gatherings to celebrate birthdays and other milestones. Whether it was a tea party, cupcake-decorating activity or adorable fashion show for little girls, Black’s favorite part was to watch the kids smile.

As that business grew, she began to fantasize about opening a storefront and inviting families to come to her for fun and parties. This would mean less travel for her and a better-equipped setting to entertain little ones. Upon moving to Ave Maria in 2021, she saw the potential to make this dream come true. “Especially after COVID, when kids were locked away for such a long time, their interactive skills weren’t up to par anymore, so I thought it would be a great opportunity to have something like this in Ave,” Black recalls.

Kibitz N’ Play is equally entertaining for infants that can sit up unassisted, rambunctious toddlers that have a lot of energy to burn and grade-schoolers up to 8 years of age. The front room is equipped with a slide, merry-go-round, ball pit, climbing features and mini trampoline, all made with padded vinyl for safety and easy cleaning. It’s fun and great exercise, too.

A multisensory fun room in the back is dedicated to interactive playtime and parties. “This is a very popular area. We have jackets, hats and glasses that the kids can put on over their clothes and play dress-up, including a doctor’s lab coat and fireman’s jacket,” Black explained. “This is all about creative play. They get to explore different professions and make up stories about

“If kids love you, you must be a great person. I love being around children, and they have always loved being around me.”

— Sabena Black, Kibitz N’ Play owner



SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN

**Kibitz N’ Play opened last November in the heart of Town Center.**

who they are going to be when they grow up. Their favorite thing to do is to go to the little grocery store we have with little shopping carts. Kids love to be the checkout professional and ring up the customers’ groceries.”

For parties, parents can book the playground, including both the jungle gym and activity room, for a two-hour romp with up to 15 children. Families are encouraged to decorate the space and bring a cake or order pizza from The Pub nearby. For an additional fee, a life-sized cartoon character will make an appearance and visit with the kids. Kibitz N’ Play is open Tuesday through Saturday from 2 to 6 p.m. Playtime is divided into four, one-and-a-half-hour sessions per day. Once a month, they host a creative party with a fun project, such as birdhouse painting, Play-Doh crafting and story time with Miss

Janice (a local certified reading tutor).



The jungle gym is cleaned and sanitized after each session with eco-friendly products and microfiber cloths. Shoes are not allowed in the play area. They sell socks with slip-proof grip bottoms, or people can bring their own socks. Per-session rates start at \$16.95, while a membership package beginning at \$90 per month allows unlimited play during business hours, with no appointment necessary. Party rentals begin at \$450. Children must always be accompanied by a parent or adult. 🌟

— Visit [KibitzNPlay.com](http://KibitzNPlay.com) to learn more and subscribe to their newsletter for updates and upcoming events.



**In the multisensory fun room kids get to play dress-up.**

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# Search for Beach and Family-focused Lifestyle Leads Long Island Family to Ave Maria

BY Nanci Theoret

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Former Long Islanders and parents of three, Amelia and William Conte, searched for a different lifestyle and a slower pace that took over two years. They experienced a couple of close but-just-not-right calls and the insightfulness of a kind stranger before finding the perfect fit in Ave Maria. Trips to Naples’ sun-soaked Gulf of Mexico beaches are the Florida version of the family’s favorite summertime sojourns to the Hamptons, with an easier commute and the bonus of year-round beach days.

The Contes’ quest started simple enough. They knew back in 2019 they wanted a change of scenery and realized it should happen within a few years. Their daughters, now 8 and 10, were still at the resilient age where it’s easy to acclimate to new surroundings and make new friends. And three years would also give Amelia, an in-demand New York City portrait photographer, time to phase out her full slate of clients and fulfill a booked-solid schedule – all while welcoming a son, now 3, into the family fold.

For a while, the family thought the Lone Star State was in their future.

“We decided Texas wasn’t for us because we couldn’t be away from the beach,” said Amelia. “We’re beach people. We love the Hamptons in the summer and realized our best memories are from the beach. We’d been to Florida for family vacations but never considered it as a place to live.”

With the Sunshine State in their sights, the Contes started their hunt in earnest, methodically searching coastal cities along the Atlantic Ocean and planning trips to test out the waters,



AMELIA CONTE PHOTOGRAPHY

so to speak. They considered Ormand Beach just north of Daytona, visited the venues popular with other northeasterners – Palm Beach, Jupiter and Boca Raton in South Florida. Only Wellington came closest to their ideal.

“Nothing really felt right, though,” Amelia recalled. “Friends insisted we look at Florida’s west coast. It wasn’t even a question for us, we thought we were east coast people.”

The Contes were exploring Tampa and Wesley Chapel when a day trip took them farther south. In Naples, a stranger and serendipity

worked their magic.

“We met a woman who used to live in Long Island and by chance was at the beach that day. She told us, ‘This is where you need to be. You’re only going to be happy here.’ She was a sweetheart and I honestly felt like my legs were glued to Naples.”

The random stranger even connected them to a local real estate agent. Back in New York, Amelia continued house hunting online, looking for a Naples home that “spoke to us.” When she happened upon a former model home

which had just hit the resale market in Ave Maria’s Maple Ridge neighborhood, it not only spoke to her, but it also shouted.

“I knew we could turn it into everything we envisioned for our home,” she said. “We toured the house on Facetime, made an offer and visited in person a few days later.”

The Contes relocated to Ave Maria in August 2022 – four days before the girls started the school year. Now settled in, the family is venturing out into the community, attending fairs and festivals, enjoying the water park and savoring ice cream from Meltz in the Town Center. Beach days are almost always on the agenda.

“Everyone has been really welcoming and kind to us,” said Amelia. “The kids love just being able to ride their bikes and play outside. I love shopping in the Town Center. It’s a very, very easy lifestyle and everyone says hello.”

Amelia is often behind the camera lens, shooting town events for Ave Maria. She also opened her portrait studio and re-launched her website: [www.AmeliaConte.com](http://www.AmeliaConte.com). William has received his licensing in the state of Florida and officially launched his painting business, MAPA Painting, LLC. [www.MAPA-Painting.com](http://www.MAPA-Painting.com).

“We’re excited to be part of this community and watch our children grow up here,” said Amelia. “We couldn’t have found a better place.”

And Amelia is still in touch with the woman from the beach, hoping to catch up with the stranger who defined the family’s future.

“She really changed the course of our lives.” 🌻🌻

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# Ave Maria Resident Wins International Book Awards for Two-novel Series

BY Nanci Theoret  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Before “fake news” became part of the American lexicon or people started questioning the truth as anything but, retired medical executive and primary care physician Victor Acquista had already penned his first fiction novel delving into the manipulation of facts, the nuances of perception and propaganda, and the power of enlightenment with a dash of mysticism.

The Ave Maria resident continued the storyline introduced in the 2020-released *Serpent Rising* with the prophetic follow-up *Revelation*. Although it wasn’t published until 2022, Acquista completed the sequel in 2019, its plot echoing the not-so-distant future with a worldwide pandemic and suspicions about vaccinations.

The novels won 2021 and 2023 International Book Awards for best new age fiction. *Revelation* is also a finalist for the 2023 Killer Nashville Silver Falchion Award for best action adventure.

“The whole premise is mankind’s difficulty sorting truth from falsehood and how it makes them vulnerable to the powerful elites who have their own agenda,” said Acquista.

With hints of Dan Brown à la *The Da Vinci Code* meets *Star Wars* and young Jedi Rey in



ACQUISTA

The *Force Awakens*, the books portray the Illuminati as the antagonistic elites, and a vulnerable 21-year-old flawed heroine, Serena Mendez, in the time-immemorial quest for fact versus fiction.

Don’t let the “new age” label fool you. Both are genre-busting novels weaving in mystery, thriller and adventure as well as the so-called new age elements of chakra balance, reiki, mystical experiences, spirituality and conspiracy theories. Subjects which on first blush may seem counterintuitive given Acquista’s science and medical background.

With the tagline “writing to raise consciousness” and a website of the same name, the physician’s goal is to entertain, educate and address social themes.

“I don’t view science and spirituality as in opposition, as a thesis and antithesis,” he said. “In healthcare, western allopathic medicine diagnoses, treats the diagnosis and is often depersonalized. The antithesis is holistic therapy, looking at the person more broadly. Integral theory combines the truths of both. There’s a point where truths need to be recognized and not pit one against the other.”

In the Amazon reviewed 4.5-star *Serpent Rising*, Serena’s path to enlightenment begins with chakra balancing, releasing the blocked energy she’s been harboring from a traumatic childhood experience.

“Book one is the narrative structure of the heroine’s journey, going through an awakening in order to realize her destiny as a warrior for the truth, a Lightbringer,” Acquista said. “The Illuminati wanted to establish a new



world order.”

The two-novel series follows the crusades of Serena and a secret society against the Illuminati and the struggle between opposing philosophies and dogmas – those who want the truth and those guarding it at all costs to manipulate the masses. Its war-of-two-serpents theme represents the conflicting metaphors of serpent – an ancient symbol as carriers of wisdom and benevolence predating religion versus religion’s interpretation as the embodiment of evil.

“Writing from the perspective of a young woman is also symbolic,” said Acquista. “It’s the story of the suppression of the divine feminine and the masculine-dominated forces withholding knowledge.”

Before the book awards and foray into fiction, Acquista was already an Amazon bestselling healthcare author. While still

working, he wrote 2006’s self-help “Pathways to Health: An Integral Guidebook,” providing a holistic roadmap to better health and well-being. Its Danish translation led to lectures in Denmark.

As a health and wellness columnist, Acquista borrowed dispatches as the basis for “Health Wise: Integral Lessons in Transformation,” a mini book elaborating on the holistic benefits of integral medicine for personal growth through a combination of philosophy, psychology, medicinal and spiritual perspectives. A second edition was released in 2020.

Bitten by the writing bug and driven by a desire to dig deeper into consciousness and spirituality, he stepped away from medicine. “I had a sci-fi book in my head I wanted to write.”

The result was “Sentient,” a sci-fi thriller exploring the telepathic abilities of collective consciousness, sensory perception and response. Translated to German, it’s a nod to the validity of occurrences and phenomena which can’t always be explained by science.

Acquista, a Brooklyn native, airs the Podfobler podcast, described as a thoughtful and engaging mashup of fiction, nonfiction, ideas and commentary. He’s also been interviewed by radio and podcast hosts interested in the author’s views of science and spirituality.

Acquista is a member of the Authors Guild, the Mystery Writers of America, the International Thriller Writers and the Florida Writers Association. His forthcoming sixth book is a satire; the seventh a contemporary fiction novel. 🌟

## FUN AROUND THE TOWN

### Oil Well Craft Beer Bingo



COURTESY TO AVE MARIA SUN



# Sixty Minutes Saves \$600,000 on Luxury Single-family Homes in Maple Ridge

**BY Nanci Theoret**  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Tucked between Naples and Fort Lauderdale, exists Ave Maria - a community ideal for future residents who want more home for their money, an easy hourlong work commute and a lifestyle centered on small-town values and a slower pace. Homebuyers considering a move are taking stock of Ave Maria's affordability factor compared to the other two city markets where median sales prices for existing homes – not new – are the highest in Florida.

"Price is the major motivation and ranks as the top reason behind a home purchase in Ave Maria," said Chelsea Kimmey, director of marketing for CC Homes, which offers single-family homes and estates in Maple Ridge and Silverwood. "People want to escape South Florida's prices, its population and congestion."

Maple Ridge offers a choice of 18 floor plans, homesites along lakes and winding streets, and a lakefront amenity and recreation center overseen by a full-time lifestyle director enhancing the multigenerational community's vivacious spirit through events and activities for all ages. Although the neighborhood attracts out-of-state buyers and nearby folks from Naples and Fort Myers, newcomers from South Florida are driving home sales.

"Sales have been tremendous in terms of volume. It's been a summer to remember," Kimmey said. "Month over month, we're blown away by how much the community has grown. There's nothing like Maple Ridge in the area."

Rated among the nation's top 50 luxury single-family homebuilders, Coral Gables-based CC Homes builds new communities throughout Florida. Many share the same floor plans and top-shelf features like contemporary European-style cabinetry, granite and quartz countertops, designer floor tile and a suite of stainless-steel appliances. A modern twist on the classic tale of two cities, the difference between here and there equates to serious savings: the two-story Harbour floor plan was listed at \$1.2 million in a Broward County community west of Fort Lauderdale; and its Maple Ridge counterpart at \$635,990.

"The prices reflect tremendous savings for a similar if not the same home in Ave Maria," Kimmey said.

CC Homes arrived Ave Maria in 2017, and is on track to build 3,000 homes – larger estates in Maple Ridge and smaller single- and two-story homes within the Silverwood neighborhood. The Silverwood collection features two- to four-bedroom homes with two-car garages, 1,700 to 2,700 square feet under air and pricing from the \$330,000s.

Maple Ridge offers a variety of one- and



COURTESY PHOTOS



two-story floor plans with two to six bedrooms and up to 5.5 bathrooms in 1,500 to nearly 4,000 square feet. CC Homes' personalized approach to building gives homebuyers options for three-car garages, guest casitas and extra bedrooms in lieu of dens and lofts. Homes start in the low \$400,000s and highlight spaciousness with volumed ceilings, open-concept floor plans, breakfast nooks and a natural flow to covered lanais. All CC homes feature smart-home technology and are built to stringent Miami-Dade codes with second-floor concrete block construction and impact-rated glass.

The modern builder is also tapping into

the demand for move-in ready homes catering to buyers who want to live in Ave Maria sooner than later. The unfurnished homes offer luxury finishes, designer-selected features and expedited occupancy – just in time for the holidays. A recently completed home showcases a stunning all-white kitchen with hardwood floors, sleek ceiling-flushed cabinetry and a bold navy-blue center island accented by a dramatically cantilevered white quartz countertop – a color palette repeated in the well-appointed owner's bathroom.

Featuring an on-site resident-only amenity campus and a walkable location close to Ave Maria's Town Center, water park, parks and

schools, Maple Ridge celebrates community connections and an elevated social lifestyle. Neighborhood amenities include a pool with a lap lane, a colorful playground and a clubhouse providing multi-use spaces with card and billiards tables, and a spacious clubroom. A meandering cloverleaf sidewalk creates an alfresco destination for mindfulness, walking meditation and bike-riding youngsters learning to navigate corners.

Strong home sales in Maple Ridge are fueling expansion and growth. "We're working on site plans for future phases," Kimmey shared.

The Maple Ridge sales gallery is located at 5009 Alonza Ave. 🌟🌟

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# Save the Dates! Here Comes Season

BY SANDRA YEYATI

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Next month, neighbors that have been summering up north will begin to return to their Ave Maria homes, and Town Center will bustle anew with increased activity and excitement. Organizers are hard at work planning colossal festivals, enthralling musical performances, shopping extravaganzas and themed parties that don't just bring neighbors together, but also introduce newcomers to this Big Kind of Small Town.

"We always try to make events better and better, year after year," said events coordinator Donna Marquez. "We have an amazing team of people that come together to make things happen, including our events and marketing teams at Ave Maria Development, the lifestyle staff at the Ave Maria Association, all of the interesting vendors and entertainers, and scores of wonderful volunteers, including the delightful student volunteers from Ave Maria University."

Here comes season! It's time to dust off our dancing shoes and fancy outfits, because Ave Maria is about to turn into a festive, Hallmark town. Make sure to save these days!

## Farmers Market

Saturdays, November 4, 2023 - April 27, 2024

A Town Center favorite, the Ave Maria Farmers Market, keeps growing every year. It's fun to socialize with neighbors, shop for the freshest, locally sourced foods and support the many small-business owners that live in the area. Live music and fun activities for kids add a cheerful, family vibe.

Numerous artisanal food vendors offer delights that you won't find in any store, including European-style breads and pastries; homemade jellies, jams, guacamole and



Taste of Ave attendees will experience a vast selection of mouth-watering foods.

flavored oils; and premium meats and seafood. This is also the perfect place to get to know your farmer at the produce booth and purchase plants and flowers for your home garden.

Also in the mix are merchants of creative

products, including handcrafted soaps and beauty supplies, Indigenous home goods, T-shirts with fun sayings and inspiring quotes, fashion-forward accessories and beautiful works of art. Expect an array of local service professionals, too—people you can meet and talk to about real estate, interior design, financial planning, solar energy and Earth-friendly cleaning supplies.

## Sunshine State Steak Cook-Off

Saturday, January 27, 2024

Formerly a Donahue Academy fundraiser, and now organized by the Knights of Columbus, this popular event returns to Town Center Saturday, January 27, with scores of grill teams competing for prize money and trophies, plus live music, arts and crafts exhibitors, exciting raffles, vendor booths, kids' activities and, of course, scrumptious steak dinners.

In the coming months, the planning com-

mittee will announce which charities will benefit from the proceeds.

## Taste of Ave

Saturday, February 3, 2024

This year's Taste of Ave was a great success, proving that Ave Maria residents really have everything they need right here in the community. It will return to the Town Center in 2024 from noon to 5 p.m., Saturday, February 3.

The event will include booths from small businesses, local charities and Ave Maria University, as well as the Biz Kidz Expo, a showcase of products and services by young, emerging entrepreneurs that call Ave Maria home. Expect live music by everyone's favorite hometown bands, Steinbeck Way and the Back Country Boys.

This is a fantastic opportunity to boost the local economy and forge meaningful relationships within the community. Whether you're looking for an interior decora-

COURTESY PHOTOS

Navigating the farmers market's treasures, from fresh produce to artisanal crafts.

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**Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival**  
*Saturday, February 17, 2024*

Every year, thousands of blues aficionados come from far and wide to enjoy full sets by South Florida's biggest names in blues entertainment. Past performers have included Deb and the Dynamics, Old School and Little Eddie and the Fat Fingers.

Clear your calendar from noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday, February 17, 2024, for Ave Maria's biggest in-season party. The fun includes vintage and high-performance car exhibits, finger-licking-good barbecue and quenching libations, plus a great selection of arts and crafts vendors, face painters and kids' activities. Bring your lawn chairs and dancing shoes to Town Center for this must-see (and hear) extravaganza.

**Margarita & Taco Festival**  
*Saturday, March 16, 2024*

Ave Maria takes on a carnival atmosphere for this annual shindig that includes Latin music performers, dancing in the streets, outrageous Mexican wrestling, exotic animal encounters, face painting, balloon artists, kids' games, arts and crafts vendors, a car show, adult beverages and scrumptious Mexican cuisine. Town Center comes alive from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 16. Your face will hurt from so much smiling. 🌮🍹



A couple enjoying a refreshing beverage at the Margarita & Tacos Festival.



Crowds swarm for the variety of eats from the grills, restaurants and food trucks during seasonal Town Center events.

# Home Sales Tracking to Another successful year in Ave Maria, the Nation’s No. 18 Top Community

**BY Nanci Theoret**  
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Brian Goguen, chief investment officer and 27-year veteran of town developer Barron Collier Companies (BCC), has observed Ave Maria's transformation from literal nothingness to a town with over 4,000 homes and a national ranking among the 20 top-selling master-planned communities in the United States. He and other senior management members of BCC continue to meet monthly, as they have since 2004, with Tom Monaghan, the founder of Domino's Pizza, whose vision for Ave Maria University was the catalyst for a town in remote Collier County. Today, Ave Maria has the businesses, services and commerce to support annual home sales which this year could reach 600 to 700.

As a witness to history, Goguen has also seen the highs and the lows – the success of first-year sales in 2007 quickly eclipsed by a lingering national recession that hit South-west Florida's housing market particularly hard between 2008 and 2013.

"We did pretty well the first year, sold a few hundred homes," said Goguen. "Then nothing was happening anywhere in the real estate industry throughout the country."

Although sales fell to a fraction of that promising inaugural year, those who bought saw the vision, the potential of what Ave Maria would become – a place with small-town values, where children rode their bikes everywhere and every holiday was commemorated by a parade through the center of town or a festival.

"Our residents are one of the reasons people move here," said Michelle Mambuca, Barron Collier Companies' public relations and



marketing manager. "There's an opportunity to thrive and live a connected and active lifestyle, to know your neighbors who share the same values. There's always something fun going on. We organize events throughout the year, have outdoor recreation, a variety of amenities and there's more to come."

With year-to-date new-home sales at 441 by early August, Ave Maria is positioned for another successful year. Homebuyers represent a diverse demographic, those who on their first visit enjoy the indelible experience of a welcoming, friendly small-town vibe and the sustainability of a big town where amenities, schools and businesses provide everything they need. Nestled between Naples and Fort Lauderdale, Ave Maria also offers attractive home pricing than its bigger-city counterparts.

"The cost of homes in Ave Maria is more attainable compared to Naples and South

Florida," said Mambuca. "People are changing their situation to afford more home, and escape the chaos for a peaceful, simpler way of life."

The developer started Ave Maria by bringing in national builders Pulte Homes and its affiliated Del Webb brand, a pioneer in amenity-filled communities for active adults 55 and older. Starting in 2013, BCC partnered with CC Homes, which will be building more than 3,000 of Ave Maria's planned 11,000 homes. In 2020, Lennar was added as a homebuilder and they developed The National community, which includes amenities and a golf course open for year-round public play.

The additions expanded Ave Maria's choice of lifestyles, neighborhoods and residential mix of single-family homes, low-maintenance attached villas and carriage homes and condominiums in low- and mid-rise

buildings. Prices start in the mid-\$200,000s to \$800,000s.

Since debuting at No. 39 on national real estate advisory firm RCLCO's annual list of the nation's best-selling communities in 2020, Ave Maria continues to move upward, holding steady in the top 20 the past year. It ranked 19th place this summer based on mid-year sales of 355 new homes through June 30. As the early August numbers indicate the town recorded another 57 sales in a little over a month.

Mambuca encourages visitors to plan a day in Ave Maria, arrange a tee time, enjoy lunch or dinner at the town's restaurants, talk to residents and tour furnished model homes. Both Del Webb and The National offer championship golf for visitors and residents – a big draw for golf enthusiasts who can play golf without living in the neighborhoods.

"Once you're here, you get a sense of the community and our residents," Mambuca said. "We have a water park, walkable amenities and there's always something to do. You can be as busy as you want or as quiet as you want."

Goguen believes sales could hit upwards of 650 in 2023 as more homebuyers discover the town's vision.

"Ave Maria is unique from other residential communities because it's a whole town," he said. "Kids ride their bikes everywhere. The Town Center has a variety of dining and retail options, there are great schools for every age and homes are more attainable. Ave Maria is relaxed and chilled, especially for families. I just think it's the quality-of-life Ave offers, its hometown feel. I'm proud of Ave Maria." 🌴🍹



# ALL AROUND AVE MARIA

Dates and details are subject to change. Visit [www.avemaria.com](http://www.avemaria.com) and the [www.avemariamasterassociation.com](http://www.avemariamasterassociation.com) calendar before venturing out and call the Welcome Center at 239-352-3903 for more information. Follow Town Center businesses on social media for updates and special promotions.

## ■ OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

### Small Business September

Each day in September, a different Ave Maria business will be celebrated on social media (Facebook @avemariaflorida and Instagram @avemariafl), and on [www.avemaria.com](http://www.avemaria.com) blog and events page. Follow on social media for special promotions, refreshments and other surprises, and plan to explore the town's restaurants, shops and services.

### Trunk-or-Treat in Town Center!

You won't want to miss the Oil Well Craft Beer Annual Trunk or Treat on Oct. 28 in The Ave Maria Town Center from 3-6 p.m.! This is an AMAZING event that has grown in popularity every year. Partygoers are welcome to compete in the Kid's Costume Contest and The Best Trunk Contest! There will be candy, games, prizes, Oil Well craft brews, music and more! Follow Oil Well Craft Beer on Facebook for updates.

## MERCHANT EVENTS

### Lozano's Mexican Restaurant

Happening every Wednesday from 6-8 p.m, Lozano's Mexican Restaurant is hosting "Domino Nights." Participants can enjoy playing Dominos with others, raffles and drink specials! For more information, please call 239-658-5858.

### Way Out Toys & Games

Kids and adults of all ages and skills are invited to participate in the Pokémon Pack Wars, a fast-paced, bingo-style game, every Tuesday from 6:30-7 p.m. For \$20, each player receives three packs of new Pokémon cards to keep and use over four rounds of play. Winners receive Pokémon prizes.

### The Pub & Grill at Ave Maria

Happy Hour: Join us at The Pub Monday through Friday from 2-5pm. Buy One Get Free on Select Draft Beers, Well Liquor, and Wine!

### The Bean at Ave Maria

Paint and Pour: Unleash your inner artist as you sip on wine and paint your masterpiece with step-by-step guidance from our talented artist on Wednesday, Sept. 27 at 6 p.m. All supplies will be provided, including the 12x 16 canvas, paint, and brushes. Just bring yourself and your creativity, and we'll take care of the rest. Book your spot now and check out their Facebook page at "The Bean at Ave Maria" for more information and events.

Check out The Bean's new drive-thru coffee cart located in front of The Pub at Ave Maria every day from 6:30-8 a.m. and swiftly purchase muffins, bagels, coffee and more!

### Oil Well Craft Beer

Brew & Paint: The amazing J&J Creations 4U will be back out to host Brew & Paint! Join us for a fun night of painting whilst sipping on our finest brew in town on Sept. 12, Oct. 10 and Nov. 14 from 7-9 p.m. It's only \$35 to secure your seat and includes one drink. Seats fill up quickly, so R.S.V.P. to 239-354-4454.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Gathering generations and savoring moments in Ave Maria. A night of great food, laughter, and endless memories.

Every Monday through Saturday from 5-8 p.m. there is at least one food truck at the Park of Commerce serving scrumptious food to go with Oil Well Craft Beer's libations.

Ave Maria Realtor Sara Callahan will be hosting the ever-popular Family Friendly Bingo on Sept. 2, Oct. 7 and Nov. 4 from 6-8 p.m.

Our Adult Bingo, hosted by the Cruise Planner's Team of Jackie and Dan Rategan 7 p.m. on Sept. 13, Oct. 25 and Nov. 15.

Test your general knowledge during Trivia on Monday, Sept. 18 at 7 p.m.

Please join OWCB for Music BINGO with DJ DiFlo on Sept. 26 from 7-9 p.m.

The OWCB Oktoberfest is going to be better than ever this year! We will feature an OWCB Oktoberfest beer, a German inspired dish by Chef Global, Pretzel and Meat necklaces, and more on Saturday, Sept. 30 from 5-8 p.m.

Follow Oil Well Craft Beer on social media to find out how you can sign up for the beer stein holding competition!

### The Secret Ingredient

#### Thirsty Thursday

Come shop and enjoy complimentary wine every other Thursday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Secret Ingredient!

Every Monday is 55+ and Fabulous Day when shoppers ages 55 and over save 10% off one of their favorite items.

On Wednesdays, check Facebook.com/shopthesecretingredient for the Weekly Wednesday Sale announcement detailing which item will be discounted that day.

Every Monday at The Secret Ingredient is 55+ and fabulous. Shoppers 55 and older will receive one regularly priced item at 10% off.

Every Wednesday, we have a Weekly Wednesday sale. Follow The Secret Ingredient on social media to find out what particular item will be discounted.

Shop for a cause! 10% of our proceeds will go directly back to Alzheimer's support network out of Naples on Saturday Sept. 9.

All scarves are 25% off for National Scarf Day on Wednesday, Sept. 27.

On Saturday, Oct. 7, 10% of our pro-

ceeds will be donated to the Cancer Alliance Network (CAN) out of Naples!

On Saturday Nov. 18 from 4-7 p.m., we are hosting a Christmas Boutique Crawl in the Town Center! There will be live music, shopping specials, a huge basket raffle and more! Follow The Secret Ingredient on social media for more updates and details on this annual event!

Shoppers will receive 40% off one regular priced item on Black Friday, Nov. 24 between 6-10 a.m.

### Ave Maria University Athletics

Schedule is subject to change, check [www.avemariagyrenes.com](http://www.avemariagyrenes.com) for away games and updates.

#### Saturday, Sept. 9

Women's Soccer vs. Thomas, 12 p.m.  
Men's Soccer vs. Johnson, 7 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Sept. 13

Women's Soccer vs. #11 Southeastern, 7 p.m.

#### Saturday, Sept. 16

Volleyball vs. Coastal Georgia, 2 p.m.  
Men's Soccer vs. Florida Memorial, 7 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Sept. 20

Women's Soccer vs. Webber, 7 p.m.

#### Saturday, Sept. 23

Men's Soccer vs. SCAD, 1 p.m.  
Volleyball vs. Florida Memorial, 2 p.m.  
Football vs. Fort Lauderdale, 7 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Sept. 27

Women's Soccer vs. #3 Keiser, 7 p.m.

#### Thursday, Sept. 28

Volleyball vs. Florida National, 7 p.m.

#### Saturday, Sept. 30

Women's Soccer vs. Warner, 11 a.m.  
Volleyball vs. Webber, 2 p.m.  
Football vs. Florida Memorial, 7 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Oct. 4

Men's Soccer vs. #11 St. Thomas, 7 p.m.

#### Saturday, Oct. 7

Cross Country vs. Sun Conference

Preview, TBA

Men's Soccer vs. Southeastern, 7 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Oct. 11

Volleyball vs. Warner, 7 p.m.  
Women's Soccer vs. Florida Memorial, 7 p.m.

#### Saturday, Oct. 14

Women's Soccer vs. #17 SCAD, 11 a.m.  
Football vs. Webber, 7 p.m.

#### Monday, Oct. 16

Volleyball vs Florida College, 6:30 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Oct. 18

Volleyball vs. Keiser, 7 p.m.  
Men's Soccer vs Warner, 7 p.m.

#### Saturday, Oct. 21

Men's Soccer vs. #9 Keiser, 7 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Oct. 25

Volleyball vs. RV St. Thomas, 7 p.m.

Women's Soccer vs. St. Thomas, 7 p.m.

#### Saturday, Oct. 28

Men's Soccer vs. Webber, 1 p.m.  
Football vs. #2 Keiser, 7 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Nov. 1

Volleyball vs. Southeastern, 7 p.m.

#### Sunday, Nov. 5

DEV MBB - WHITE vs.  
Pasco-Hernando State, 3 p.m.

#### Sunday, Nov. 12

DEV MBB - WHITE vs. St. Thomas, 1 p.m.

#### Tuesday, Nov. 14

Men's Basketball vs. Johnson, 7:30 p.m.

#### Friday, Dec. 1

Men's Basketball vs Florida College, 7:30 p.m.

#### Sunday, Dec. 3

DEV MBB - WHITE vs Westlake Prep, 2 p.m.

#### Monday, Dec. 11



# ALL AROUND AVE MARIA

Men's Basketball vs New College of Florida, 7:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Dec. 12**  
Men's Basketball vs Florida National, 7:30 p.m.

## ■ AVE MARIA RESIDENTS ONLY

Organizers request preregistration for these resident-only events via the Ave Maria Master Association (AMMA) calendar at [www.avemariamasterassociation.com](http://www.avemariamasterassociation.com). For more information, call 239-867-4322.

**Coffee with a Twiss**  
This casual gathering with AMMA Executive Director Kim Twiss held from 10-11 a.m. every second Thursday of the month allows homeowners to ask questions and get updates pertaining to the master association and community news. Next dates are Sept. 14, Oct. 12, Nov. 9 and Dec. 14.

**Poetry & Conversation with Esther Rose**  
On Thursday, September 7 from 10:30-11:30 p.m., join resident lead and Esther Rose, a skillful poet, emerging author, humanitarian and compassionate philanthropist, who has been inspiring women abroad with her unique Haiku style (essays & stories) poetry writing class. Feel free to bring your own poetry writings or come to listen & learn as she teaches with tenacity, grace and wisdom!



The crowd goes wild during the 2023 Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival concerts!

COURTESY PHOTOS

## SPORTS AND FITNESS (RESIDENTS ONLY)

**Zumba Classes**  
Staying fit is pure joy at Zumba class in the AMMA event room. The high-energy workout mixing salsa, cha cha and samba movements begins at 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays. Contact [vanezumba@gmail.com](mailto:vanezumba@gmail.com) to register.

**Swimming Lessons**  
Through August, the Ave Maria Water Park is offering swimming lessons sanc-

tioned by the American Red Cross for water babies (6 months-3 years old), preschoolers (3-5 years old) and youth (6-12 years old). Weekday morning and weekend classes available. Cost is \$65 per student for eight lessons. Must register in person. For more information, call 239-348-8384.

**Water Exercise Classes**  
Mondays through Thursdays and Saturdays from 9-10 a.m., the Ave Maria Water Park offers water exercise classes alternating between cardio and muscle-strengthening routines for residents

(and their guests) ages 13 and above. All necessary equipment is provided, including resistance gloves, noodles, pool buoys and barbells. Cost is \$65 for 20 lessons or \$5 per lesson. For more information, call 239-348-8384.

**Men's Pick-up Soccer**  
Players 16 and older looking for a good workout and team camaraderie are welcome to join these resident-organized games at 6 p.m. Wednesdays and Sundays on North Park's soccer field #2.

**Co-Ed 55+ Softball Sunday Games**  
Friendly softball games for neighbors ages 55 and older are held from 1-3 p.m. at South Park biweekly on Sundays. Players at all levels are welcome to participate. Contact Artie Ginsberg at [agins@hotmail.com](mailto:agins@hotmail.com) or 516-314-1351 for specific dates.

**Leon Fit Free Fitness Class**  
This fall, Leon Fit fitness classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:15 a.m. at the South Park Pavilion #3 and at 6:45 p.m. at Mercato at Ave. For more information, call Mr. Leon at 786-436-3323. Text the same number to register.

**Quest Martial Arts Academy Classes**  
Led by veteran instructor Kenny Quintero, these martial arts classes start at 5 p.m. Mondays and at 9:30 a.m. Saturdays in the AMMA event room. For more information, call Crystal at 239-371-6073 or visit [www.questmartialartsacademy.com](http://www.questmartialartsacademy.com). ■

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