



Market snapshot: Resort-style living in Stoneybrook Golf & Country Club in Palmer Ranch, Sarasota

By Chris Angermann / Correspondent

Posted at 5:52 AM

Golf course community offers upscale amenities and activities for residents

Stoneybrook Golf & Country Club in Palmer Ranch is much more than an upscale golf course community, offering a plethora of active lifestyle choices among beautiful surroundings. More than 160 acres of wildlife refuges, ponds and wetlands provide scenic, natural settings for the 18 fairways of the Arthur Hill designed links.

Wildlife abounds, from bobcat, deer, coyote, osprey, red tail hawks and oodles of ducks. “There is a bald eagle nesting in a tree in my backyard,” said Ken Ipox, an agent with Premier Sotheby’s International Realty. “Everyone loves it when the sandhill cranes have babies in March. It’s hilarious to watch them grow from eight inches to two feet over the course of two weeks.”

Having lived in the golf community for 16 years, Ipox has made it his bailiwick. Fourteen of the 27 current listings in Stoneybrook are his. “It’s an absolutely gorgeous neighborhood — like a small village with individual enclaves,” he said. “A lot of the subdivisions have their own private tennis court and swimming pool.”

Developed from 1994 to 1999 by U.S. Homes (now part of Lennar, the nation’s largest homebuilder), Stoneybrook has 26 distinct communities which are laid out around a large circular road, Glen Meadow Drive. Divided boulevards with attractively landscaped median strips lead into the neighborhood from the entrances on Central Sarasota Parkway and McIntosh Road.

There are 940 living units in Stoneybrook. About a quarter are two-, three-, and four-bedroom single family homes, many situated on lakes or backing onto preserves and ranging in size from 2,200 to almost 3,000 square feet. The rest are two-bed, two-bath villas, small condos in 3-stories buildings, and larger condos — called verandas — which provide from just over 1,000 to 1,800 square feet of living space. A number of the subdivision are maintenance-free.

As an equity owned, or “bundled” community, Stoneybrook has mandatory, annual golf or social club membership dues of \$4,655 and \$3,167, respectively. The fees take care of security at the main gate on Central Sarasota Parkway, upkeep of the roads and common areas, and the running of the club. New owners must also make a one-time capital contribution of \$3,000. If they subsequently move within the community, they don’t have to pay the initiation fee again.

“Some owners upgrade to a larger home while keeping their original property for guest overflow or as an investment,” said Ipox. “The smaller condos are more likely to be vacation spots.”

Units can be rented out for a minimum of one month, 12 times a year. But over the last eight years, the rental market has contracted, just like on Siesta Key, where homeowners who bought properties a while back in anticipation of retiring have become permanent residents.

The club’s management keeps Stoneybrook on sound financial footing. Extensive planning committees map out future needs and schedule renovations and improvements. Over the past two years, the 20,000 square foot clubhouse has received a new roof and paint job. Hundreds of live oaks, crepe myrtle trees, and palms have been planted along the interior roads and to beautify the entrance way leading to the marquee of the clubhouse. In 2018, the golf course completed a \$2 million overhaul that included a state-of-the-art irrigation system.

About a third of the people in Stoneybrook live there year-round. The rest are snowbirds or part-time dwellers who make their home their primary residence but travel elsewhere during the hot summer months.

They all enjoy numerous amenities besides the premier golf course. There are tennis courts, a large, heated swimming pool, a fitness center and bocce ball courts which were recently redone. Many people like to walk and bike and use the Legacy Trail, which runs along the eastern border of the community.

The clubhouse has a restaurant and grille, as well as a grand ballroom which can be rented for weddings and other events. The social calendar of the club brims with activities, including theme parties throughout the year, Bingo and trivia nights, beer and wine tastings, all kind of card games, as well as Euchre and Mahjong.

Other benefits include shopping and restaurant opportunities at the Westfield Sarasota Square Mall, with a Costco and AMC movie theaters. The nearby Tamiami Trail provides easy access by car to Venice, downtown Sarasota, Oscar Scherer State Park and the Gulf beaches on Siesta Key and Casey Key.

“In many ways, Stonebrook is like a resort,” said Ipox.

According to Zillow, there are 27 homes on the market — six single family residences ranging in price from \$445,000, to \$689,9000; four attached villas, from \$309,000 to \$359,000; and 17 condos from \$165,9000 to \$259,900.