

Escape To Emerald Greens Golf Resort And Country Club

By Karen McBride

Dale Mabry Highway is one of the busiest streets in Tampa. Numerous restaurants and stores parallel this multi-lane highway with bumper-to-bumper stop and go traffic. It is hard to believe that just one block away from the hustle and bustle of Dale Mabry is a hidden oasis of tranquility.

Emerald Greens Golf Resort and Country Club is a 250-acre resort, complete with a 27 hole golf course, eight tennis courts, a junior Olympic size pool and more. The site was originally built in 1973 and known as the Carrollwood Country Club, and later redesigned in 2007. The new owners, Convergent Capital Partners purchased the property in July of 2011 and have been transforming the area ever since. Santosh Govindaraju is one of the partners in the investment group, a local resident who attended Gaither High School, and has always been actively involved in the community. Emerald Greens is just another way he gives back to the community.

The resort is more than just a golf course. Two bedroom, two bathroom condos can be rented starting at \$995 per week, with nightly rates available. The price is comparable to most hotels, but with much more space. The upscale resort includes all the amenities, including spa treatments and room service. If you prefer to do your own cooking, the condos have a full size kitchen with stove, microwave, full size refrigerator, along with pots, pans, plates, cups and utensils. The condos are beautifully decorated and come complete with flat screen TVs, high speed internet access, and after a full day of swimming and golf, you can enjoy falling asleep on the king size memory foam mattress.

Emerald Greens has thought of everything you need for your stay. In addition to the complete



supply of kitchenware, pool towels are furnished in each room so that you may enjoy the Olympic size pool. Palm trees and cushioned patio furniture were recently added to enhance the comfort and beauty of the Aquatics Center. Large umbrellas can be opened to provide a shady place to read a good book. Conversation areas are scattered throughout the pool deck with outdoor fireplaces, for those cooler nights, to keep warm while gazing at the stars on a peaceful night, or enjoying good conversation with your family and friends. The newly renovated pool hosts the Carrollwood Swim Team and members with rooms facing the pool can even enjoy the events right from their own screened balcony.

The resort wants to encourage families to visit, and this is evident in all areas of design. One of the more popular places by the pool is a large, rectangular soft patch of grass. "You always see kids doing cartwheels and rolling around. It's great to see dad's kicking the soccer ball around with their kids or throwing Frisbees," said Drew Dosek, Golf Sales Manager. The splash pad with the mushroom-shaped fountains keep children busy as they enjoy getting cooled off by the spouting water. DiveIn Movie theatre is held monthly (weather permitting) where

members and guests of the resort are treated to a movie out by the pool. The Oasis Bar and Grille offers family-friendly cuisine with the convenience of umbrella-covered picnic tables so that guests do not need to change out of their swim clothes in order to grab a bite to eat.

Emerald Greens has spared no expense to enhance this golfers paradise. They are in the process of replacing the greens on the golf course, designed by the legendary course architect, Dan Maples. With 27 holes to play, golfers will still be able to enjoy a round of golf while the process is underway as they are making every effort to be un-intrusive by working on nine holes at a time, always leaving 18 holes available to play. The process should be complete by the end of the summer, ready in time for the perfect golfing weather in the fall.

In keeping with the family-friendly theme, the resort offers cheerleader classes in the Oasis Recreational & Aquatics Clubhouse. Dance classes can be fun at any age and are held on Mondays, from 7-8 pm for ages 3-6, Wednesdays from 7-8pm for ages 7-11, and Ballroom dance on Tuesdays at 5 pm and Thursdays at 6 pm for all ages.

The fitness enthusiast will enjoy the state-of-the-art fitness center, complete with treadmills, free

weights, flat screen TVs and more. Kickboxing, Zumba, Boot Camp, Stretch and Yoga classes are held throughout the week, starting at \$10 per class and up.

There are eight clay Har Tru tennis courts at Emerald Greens. The resort has thought of every amenity including a shoe wash and brushes for members and their guests to use after leaving the courts. Guests are invited to rent a tennis court for \$10per session, there is no additional cost to play with a member. Tennis players can use the Playmate ball machine, borrow training equipment and then workout in the fitness center adjacent to the tennis courts at no additional cost.

Summer Tennis Camps are offered by Chris Cary, the Director of Tennis. The Full Morning Camp is \$185 per session and held 9 am - 1 pm Monday through Friday. Tournament Tough Camp is \$135 per session and held 11 am to 2 pm Monday through Friday. For more information, go to www.emeraldgreentennis.com.

Beyond the tennis courts, is the 25,000 square foot Mediterranean styled clubhouse. It has a restaurant, pro shop, and several ballrooms for special events such as weddings, business meetings, and other large gatherings. The experienced chefs will prepare delicious and unique cuisine perfect for any occasion. Weddings can be held in a terraced grassy area in a shady nook near the clubhouse. The enormous oak tree and rolling greens serve as the perfect backdrop for pictures. The outdoor veranda is covered to allow members to relax and enjoy the outdoors and be protected from the elements.

The resort offers several membership options to fit your lifestyle. The Tennis Membership includes unlimited tennis, camps, clinics and lessons for kids, adult lessons, dining and social privileges, swimming pool, aerobics studio,

kid's activity room, fitness center, discounted use of resort condos and use of the banquet and meeting rooms. The initiation fee is \$1,250 plus \$166 per month.

Grand Emerald Golf Membership includes all of the items above, as well as unlimited golf, men's and ladies' locker room and card rooms, custom club fitting, Golf Associations, Tournaments and PGA Professional lessons available. The initiation fee is \$3,500 plus \$390 monthly.

Not interested in golf or tennis? Enjoy all the events at Emerald Greens with the Social Membership. Benefits include dining and social privileges, use of banquet and meeting rooms, swimming pool, aerobics studio, kid's activity room, fitness center, discounted use of resort condos, and limited golf and tennis. An initiation fee of \$750 plus \$109 billed monthly.

"We want to encourage the younger generation to join by



offering a Junior Executive Plan for people 40 and under" said Amy Spencer, Director of Membership and Marketing. Membership has additional benefits including a reciprocal membership at places like Harbour Island Athletic Club, Hunters' Green G&CC, The Tampa Club, The Vinoy Club in St. Petersburg, Sandpearl Resort and Countryside Day Spa in Clearwater. For more information about the Junior Executive Plan

and other memberships, contact Amy Spencer at 813-961-1381, extension 123.

The resort schedules events throughout the year to give their members the opportunity to socialize. The events are included in a bimonthly newsletter available to all members. Recent events include a Memorial Day pool party; Father's Day golf tournament, pool party and barbecue bash; tennis mixers; wine tastings; cooking

classes and most recently the fourth of July party, complete with inflatable obstacle courses, a dunk tank and fireworks. One of the upcoming events is the Emerald Stars Kids Talent Show. It will be held poolside on Saturday, August 18, from 6-8 pm. Talents include singing, instrumental and dancing. The show will be limited to 40 acts, each lasting 3 minutes. In order to participate in the talent show, they must be children or grandchildren of Emerald Greens members.

Emerald Greens is conveniently positioned just 15 minutes from Tampa International Airport and Busch Gardens and 30 minutes from beautiful Gulf beaches. The resort is located at 13941 Clubhouse Drive, Tampa, FL 33618. If you are looking for a place for your family and friends to stay, information on Stay and Play Packages or if you just need a weekend getaway visit www.emeraldgreensgcc.com for more information or call 813-961-9400.

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