

Introducing Great Southern Homes to Coastal Carolina

A Versatile Homebuilder with a Focus on Style, Quality & Affordability



by Susan Roush



Jack Webb (far left) and Keith Harris (2nd from left) enjoy meeting with Champions Village homeowner's Dan & Janis Blasiak in front of the Blasiak's home. Dan said, "We like the energy efficiency of the home. Great Southern Homes went above and beyond to make sure the house was sealed tight. They actually brought in a third-party tester to make sure there weren't any leaks in the house and that it met certain criteria. I also like that it is an all gas home."

Nimble and forward thinking are words used to describe Michael Nieri, founder and owner of Great Southern Homes, based in Irmo, SC. Mike Satterfield, EVP/CEO of Great Southern Homes, shared some background: Great Southern Homes was building 500-600 homes per year prior to the recession. To survive the downturn, the company slimmed down to 15 employees. Mike said, "Not many privately held companies made it through the downturn; that was one of the things that I was intrigued about."



The interior of the Great Southern Homes model in Champions Village.

Before Mike joined Great Southern Homes in 2013, he had risen up the ranks of housing giant Centex and was the Division President of the Central South Carolina division before he went into semi-retirement in 2005, "Not knowing the world was coming to an end." He continued, "In my Centex days we were typically number one or two in our markets. My goal was to see if I could manage a privately-held company and get it back to the same dominant position in the markets that Centex held. He and Michael called their effort the "putting the band back

together" campaign. Mike added, "We have been able to assemble a really special group of people, and that's been a key part of our growth."

In 2013, the company sold 180 houses in the Midlands of SC. Since then, Great Southern Homes achieved a 38% to 40% growth year-over-year. In 2017, they sold 838 houses and project to have 1200+ sales in 2018. Their markets include the Midlands, the Upstate, Florence, Aiken, coastal South Carolina [Charleston & Myrtle Beach] and Augusta, GA. Mike recalled, "In 2013 we weren't on anybody's radar." Three years later the company was ranked the 62nd largest homebuilder by *Builder Magazine* and the 3rd fastest-growing, privately-held



The master bathroom in the Champions Village model home.

builder in the country. A large part of the company's success has been driven by attracting quality people,

choosing the best markets for growth and product diversification.

A key member of the team is Keith Harris, Coastal Division Manager. Keith said, "In 2016 we expanded to the coast. In Myrtle Beach our first venture was a 7-lot infill project in Murrells Inlet called **Sterling Pointe**." The initial reaction was favorable as their Preston model won the New Home Parade Design Award for homes in the \$240K to 270K price range. Two other experienced builders have joined Keith as Project Managers in the Coastal Division.

Jack Webb is the project manager for **Champions Village, Ocean Lakes**, and an oversight manager for a townhouse development in Charleston. Jack was a self-employed custom homebuilder for 17 years and has worked with other production builders in Myrtle Beach. He said, "I wouldn't go back into business for myself. I would rather work for Great Southern; they treat everyone with total respect – employees and customers. They build energy-efficient homes and stand behind their products. Michael Nieri is willing to take chances and do things differently."

Harry Dill is the Project Manager for **Litchfield Breezes, Pawleys**



The kitchen in the Champions Village model home.

Sunset, Waterway Palms, and Wild Wing Plantation. He said, “I’ve been a builder here on the beach since 1989.” Some readers may remember Harry Dill from the Extreme Makeovers he managed in Horry County. He has been active with HGHBA for years, including serving as past president at state and local levels. Harry said, “I can attribute a lot of my success to the HBA. We have to support our industry in order for our industry to support us.”

Keith Harris provided a synopsis of current projects in the Grand Strand. The 2018 Parade of Homes will include Great Southern Homes in Champions Village and Pawleys Sunset. Keith noted, “There’s value in what we do with features not typical of other volume builders. We have a green smart home package with a two-year energy guarantee, beefed up insulation, and standard home automation with the Honeywell Lyric system.”

Champions Village

This 71-lot community is within the Prince Creek Community of Murrells Inlet. Situated along the finishing holes of the TPC course, there are interior and golf course lots and a private pool and amenity center. Homes start at 1,600 square



The master bedroom in the Champions Village model home in Murrells Inlet.

feet; priced from \$280’s. Champions Village received the Best in Residential Category from the Grant Center for Real Estate in the Economics Department at Coastal Carolina University.

Pawleys Sunset

Located off the South Causeway on Pawleys Island, Great Southern Homes offers elevated traditional beach houses that are golf cart accessible to the beach. The raised beach houses are approximately 1,800 square feet, 4 BR / 4 BA, priced from the low \$300’s. Currently there are 14 lots with 4 houses under construction.



The new Pawleys Sunset community under construction.

Wild Wing Plantation

The company just received ARB approvals for four starts, including a furnished model home and three specs. Great Southern Homes acquired 21 lots total for homes starting at 2,200 square feet and priced from the low \$300’s.

Waterway Palms

This popular Carolina Forest community, with its superb amenity center, was an attractive draw for Great Southern. They purchased seven lots where they can work their infill magic. Keith said, “All of our houses have a master on the main level.” Square footage will run from 2,500 and prices start in the upper \$370’s.

Ocean Lakes

This project reflects the owner’s nimble thinking. Great Southern Homes initially built three homes and have two more under construction. One is sold and two homes are for sale and are completely furnished and equipped for rental for \$3,200 a week through Ocean Lakes Property Management. Jack said, “This wouldn’t be on other builders’ radar, because the land is

leased, but it appeals to investors for the vacation rental income potential.”

Litchfield Breezes

In the heart of Litchfield Beach, the company acquired home-sites in the marsh front community of Litchfield Breezes. Featuring custom homes overlooking the marsh, the raised traditional homes range from 2,200 to 3,000 + square feet and the low \$400’s in price.

Keith said, “Our goals in 2018 are lot acquisition and developing our own positions. We understand that Realtors are an integral part of our business, and we appreciate what they do, and we try to make their job easy. You have to have a good partnership with all the people you work with and take care of the homeowners.”

Two families that are very satisfied with Great Southern Homes are Suzanne and Julio Ortiz and Janis and Dan Blasiak. Both couples built in Champions Village.

Suzanne Ortiz said, “We decided on Champions Village in August 2016. We liked the location, and we loved the lot. We loved that it was a small community.” Julio added,



A custom home in the Waterway Palms community in Myrtle Beach.

“Grant (the Realtor) was phenomenal; he was with us every step of the way. Jack (Webb) the builder was incredibly patient with us. We had lots of questions and he kept answering. They went out of their way to make us part of the process.” Suzanne concurred, “I’ll be real honest with you, Jack was actually more observant than we were during the walk-through before the closing.” They started with a standard layout and Great Southern accommodated the floor plan

changes they wanted. Julio said, “We were pretty picky about what we wanted. Trim out detail was really important to me.” He likes the double crown molding throughout, and the smart home package so they can control the house remotely. They are both delighted with the fully finished garage. Suzanne summed up, “I just had a wonderful experience from beginning to end. I felt they wanted my business and they wanted to make me happy.”

Janis and Dan Blasiak moved from Oahu, so it was no surprise they felt there was tremendous value for a home in Champions Village. Dan said, “I wanted a house with certain features. We didn’t want vinyl siding, we wanted the ability to customize and not have a cookie-cutter house.” The Blasiaks opted for several upgrades but did not make any structural changes. “We were happy with the layout; it flows very well,” Dan said.

Like the Ortiz family, they were attracted to the size of Champions Village. Dan added, “We like the energy efficiency of the home. They went above and beyond to make sure this house was sealed tight. They actually brought in a third-party



Three custom homes built by Great Southern Homes in the Ocean Lakes community in Surfside Beach.

tester to make sure there weren't any leaks in the house, and that it met certain criteria. I also like that it is an all gas home." For Janis's part, she is very content with her Great Southern Home and the way it came together. She laughed, "The next home is a pine box."

Since 2013, Great Southern Homes success has been most impressive. The company currently builds everything from single-family homes, town homes, custom homes and recently student housing communities. Corporately, they believe in giving back to the community. Michael and Mike hold positions with the Building Industry Association of Central SC (BIA) and strive to maintain healthy relations with competitors to address industry



The interior of a custom home in the Ocean Lakes community.

concerns. In 2017, they were both recognized with prestigious BIA awards for their contributions.

Great Southern Homes is a proud supporter of The Boys Farm in Newberry, SC. Two years ago, the company built two 5,000 square foot residency cottages on the Farm. This past year, the company broke ground on the "Nieri Cottage" project; a modern, energy-efficient structure with 6,700 square feet, 9 bedrooms and 9 bathrooms. The Boys Farm has significantly modernized and expanded its capacity to house young men who have experienced difficult family situations. These young men benefit from living together on a working farm and developing social and success skills in the farm setting. ■



A custom home in the Sterling Pointe community in Murrells Inlet.

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SUNROOMS & SCREEN ROOMS

Sunrooms and Screen Rooms Add Living Space and Versatility to Homes

by Susan Roush

Since the post-WWII 1950s influx of veterans to the suburbs, the backyard has become an extension of the house for relaxing and entertaining. Taking advantage of nature's benefits in a residential setting took root with the invention of sheet glass in the 17th century. Its appeal was immediate for use in greenhouses (conservatories) and solariums. Screened sleeping porches became popular in southern states in the early 1900s as a fresh-air antidote to tuberculosis. Today, innovative products, designs, and technologies have advanced well beyond solariums, patio slabs, and screened sleeping porches. Two well-respected HGHA members speak of products and services they offer in creating an ideal outdoor extension.

Carolina Home Exteriors is introducing a new upscale product to the Grand Strand called LifeRoom. Company owner Ted Cligrow explained, "It is manufactured by

Four Seasons Sunrooms and Windows. They looked at all the trends in outdoor living and developed LifeRoom to satisfy a demand for a multi-use, multi-function room." The structure has aluminum framing, a roof, with optional skylights, and retractable screen walls. Ted added, "The mesh is so taut it



provides a 98% barrier against pollen. Because it's so taut, it can be used as a movie projector screen to create a complete outdoor theater." Some of the coolest and hottest features, literally and figuratively, include blue LED lights that add a sophisticated vibe, a Cool Mist

(Continued on page 28)



Ted Cligrow with Carolina Home Exteriors.



The exterior & interior view of the new LifeRoom by Four Seasons. Carolina Home Exteriors is the exclusive authorized dealer in the Grand Strand for the LifeRoom.

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