

JIMMY BUFFETT INSPIRED LIVING

Minto Communities and singer-businessman Jimmy Buffett join forces to create a new line of active-adult housing, called Latitude Margaritaville.

> BY ANNETTE FULLER, Editor

Forty years ago. In 1977, an aspiring singer-songwriter named Jimmy Buffett produced an album called "Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes." Song No. 6 on the album was "Margaritaville," personifying relaxed coastal living, with mentions of blown-out flip-flops, shrimp boils and blenderfuls of frozen drink.

That song and album made Buffett a superstar household name, and he eventually parlayed the

enormous popularity of the song and the image it conveyed into Margaritaville Holdings. The business today lends its name to restaurants, resorts, furniture, flip-flops and more.

In mid-February, the company and Minto Communities announced a new brand of active-adult housing, called Latitude Margaritaville, with the first neighborhood opening in Daytona Beach, FL. Home sales begin this fall of the planned 6,900 homes, starting from the low \$200,000s.

"We met with the Margaritaville people back in October, and in the very first meeting, we knew it was a good fit," says William Bullock, senior vice president for Minto Communities. "The result is the biggest response we've ever had with any community launch in our history."

Bullock reports that 12,000-plus people requested information online in the two weeks after the announcement.

Turns out, the 40th anniversary of the song merged perfectly with the 55-plus housing venture.

"Forty years ago, the Margaritaville state of mind was born," says Tamara Baldanza-Dekker, chief marketing officer of Margaritaville. "A lot of our fans are entering the time in their life when they are thinking about a place to retire."

The companies chose Daytona Beach as the first location because of its proximity to Interstate

95 and two urban centers (Orlando and Jacksonville). It also has two hospitals and plenty stores and restaurants. "The icing on the cake is the warm climate and being close to the beach," Bullock says.


Other communities are planned under the Latitude Margaritaville name, and some of them may not be on the coast.

"We will be thoughtful in our placement and will put them only in opportune locations," Bullock says. "We want to take this brand as far as the consumer and the demand will allow."

The amenities that reflect the Buffett image will include bands and musicians playing in the communities on a regular basis as well as tropical-style architecture, food, drink and furnishings.

"It's a lifestyle brand, it's an aspirational brand," Baldanza-Dekker says. "Who doesn't want to live like Jimmy Buffett? He inspired this lifestyle and he's the reason this lifestyle exists."

Retirement relocation, indeed, means changes in latitudes and changes in attitudes. "The song 'Margaritaville' has that instant association with something fun," Bullock says. "You transport yourself back to the time when you heard that song. Now, people have the chance to live inside Margaritaville full time."

More information can be found online at LatitudeMargaritaville.com. 



A rendering of the Latitude Margaritaville sales center shows the neighborhood's emphasis on tropical-style architecture.