

  
 B A B C O C K R A N C H  
**TELEGRAPH**

MARCH 2019

www.BabcockRanchTelegraph.com

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“This is truly going to be a country club ... It’s going to have its own entrance and its own lifestyle, in addition to everything Babcock offers.”

— David Meyers, Lennar Southwest Florida director of operations

# Fore!



**BABCOCK NATIONAL TEES UP THE GOLF LIFESTYLE**



▲ Babcock National on Lake Babcock will be similar in concept to Lennar’s Bonita National golf and country club.

BY **EVAN WILLIAMS**

Babcock Ranch Telegraph Correspondent

**P**LANS FOR BABCOCK RANCH’S first country club golf course community are set to begin construction in March. Babcock National will include a private entrance to its condominiums and estate homes, a clubhouse and restaurant with a coastal-country aesthetic and an 18-hole champion golf course designed by architect

SEE FORE, A10 ►

BABCOCK RANCH / COURTESY PHOTOS



**Around Babcock**

Bark in the Park brings out pooches and their people. **A8-9 ►**



**Farm-to-table**

Babcock Garden yields fresh bounty. **A26 ►**



**Food scene**

The grub’s all good when it goes up in smoke at Table & Tap. **A28 ►**

**TELEGRAPH**

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**BABCOCK BRIEFS**

**Come on by  
Curry Creek**

Next time you're in the Discovery Center, be sure to check out the great new merchandise at Curry Creek Outfitters, including Babcock Ranch T-Shirts for men and women, women's tank tops, and cool new looks for the kids.

**See you  
at the park**

Jack Peebles Community Park is open to the public every day for free sunshine and exercise. Come for pickleball every Saturday morning until March 23, and try your hand at bocce ball any day of the week.

Youth soccer camp starts on April 27 and runs for consecutive Saturday mornings on the community field. Register at [www.babcockranch.com/events](http://www.babcockranch.com/events).

**Live music  
on tap**

Babcock Ranch offers live music Thursday-Sunday on the Oak at Table & Tap. Live Music on the Oak brings musical performances from some of Southwest Florida's best bands. Table & Tap offers a farm-to-table focus featuring fresh ingredients and an ever-evolving menu. Guests can enjoy great food and great music near Founder's Square,



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

**Table & Tap patrons enjoy live music along with great food and drink Thursday-Sunday.**

the heart of Babcock Ranch.

Live music is from 5-8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday and noon to 3 p.m. Sunday during brunch.

**Take a solar  
field tour**

Saturday morning tours have returned to the Babcock Ranch Solar Energy Center, the FPL-operated field where the town gets its power.

Setting out at 10 and 11 a.m., the tours

are free and require online preregistration on a first-come, first-served basis, as capacity is limited to on each outing. The tours will run most Saturdays through the spring, departing from the Discovery Center in Founder's Square and taking visitors to the solar center's three-story observation tower for a view of the panel fields. Access for minors is restricted to ages 12 and up with a parent or guardian.

To sign up for a solar field tour, visit [www.babcockranch.com/fpl-solar-field-tours](http://www.babcockranch.com/fpl-solar-field-tours).

**ESTATE PLANNING**

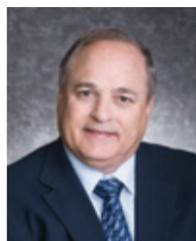


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Babcock National will be a stunning new golf and country club community in the premiere master-planned community of Babcock Ranch. Situated on the northeast side of Founders Square across Lake Babcock, the new Babcock National will boast a breathtaking location combined with a wide array of home designs and luxurious on-site amenities.

Residents in Babcock National will enjoy an extraordinary lifestyle with a sophisticated array of amenities including an 18-hole golf course designed by Gordon Lewis, a resort-style pool with waterfall, a state-of-the-art fitness center with sauna, a tennis center and a community clubhouse that embodies a modern coastal design aesthetic.

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**Welcome Home Center Hours: Monday-Saturday 9am-6pm | Sunday 10am-6pm**

**For more information, please visit [BabcockNational.com](http://BabcockNational.com)**



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# BABCOCK RANCH EVENTS

For more information about what's coming up, follow Babcock Ranch on Facebook or visit [www.babcockranch.com/events](http://www.babcockranch.com/events).

## FOUNDER'S SQUARE

- 5-8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday  
Noon to 3 p.m. Sunday  
**Live Music on the Oak Table & Tap**
- 4-7 p.m. Saturday, March 16, 23 and 30  
**Sangria Sunset Saturday**  
Table & Tap  
\$5 red or white sangria
- 6 p.m. Saturday, March 16  
**Family Movie Night**  
"Brave"
- 6-9 p.m. Friday, March 29  
**Food Truck Friday**  
SWFL's most popular food trucks come together at Babcock Ranch on the last Friday of the month. This month, we'll have live music by Mad Soul, and three lucky guests will win \$100 gift cards to our Founder's Square stores. RSVP to win at [www.babcockranch.com/events](http://www.babcockranch.com/events).
- 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 6  
**Slater's Outdoor Produce Market**  
Fill your basket with a variety of veggies from Babcock Garden harvested at their peak of perfection.
- 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 20  
**Easter Eggstravaganza** including Easter egg hunt for children 2 -10 years old, face painting, photos with the Easter Bunny and a butterfly

release. \$5 per child (wristbands required).

- 6-9 p.m. Friday, April 26  
**Food Truck Friday**  
In addition to a variety of food trucks, we'll have live music with SOULXER and a \$100 gift card to give away. Check [www.babcockranch.com/events](http://www.babcockranch.com/events) for more details and to register as the date nears.

## LEE HEALTH HEALTHY LIFE CENTER

- 10-11 a.m. Thursday, March 14  
**The Truth about GMOs**  
Learn about the most common GMO food crops and hear arguments for and against the use of genetically modified organisms. RSVP: 424-3210.
- 10-11 a.m. Tuesday, March 19  
**What is a Medical Alert System?**  
Learn about Lee Health's medical alert monitoring system that enables you to continue to live comfortably and independently in your own home knowing help is available 24/7 with just the press of a button. RSVP: 424-3210.
- 1-1:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 19  
**Whole Food Plant-Based Nutrition**  
Hear from family medicine Dr. Miri Shlomi about the benefits of a plant-based diet. RSVP: 424-3210.

## THE LAKEHOUSE

- 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday, March 19  
**Kids on Canvas**

## ■ Easter Eggstravaganza

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, April 20. Easter egg hunt, face painting, photos with the Easter Bunny and butterfly release. \$5 per child (wristbands required).



4.20



3.29

## ■ Enjoy the monthly Food Truck Friday

6-9 p.m. Friday, March 29, at Founder's Square.

With a simple step-by-step instruction method, kids ages 6 and older will learn how to paint on canvas while socializing and enjoying cookies. Parents are welcome to join in

## ■ Sangria Sunset Saturday

4-7 p.m. Saturday, March 16, 23 and 30 at Table & Tap. \$5 red or white sangria.



3.16, 23, 30

painting a memory with their child, or just to observe the creative process. \$15 for residents \$18 for non-residents. Register at [www.babcockranch.com/events](http://www.babcockranch.com/events).



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# Lake Timber residents feel right at home

BY **GLENN MILLER**

Babcock Ranch Telegraph Correspondent

The real Bridge of Sighs is in Venice. That's the Venice in Italy, not the one north of Port Charlotte in Southwest Florida.

Perhaps someday the Babcock Ranch entry bridge will also be called the Bridge of Sighs — because of the sighs of relief and joy it elicits as people cross it and head toward town.

Something happens when folks travel across the short span. Stress evaporates. The vista opens up.

Ed Hanney recalls the first time he and his wife, Janet, drove over the bridge. "We crossed the bridge and it said this is home," he says. "We weren't in a concrete jungle."

The Hanneys moved from Gresham, Ore., to become Babcock Ranch residents.

Kelli and Tom Vokaty, their daughters Chesney and Chloe and the family Labrador named Lola aren't moving across the country for this new adventure. They're merely crossing the Florida peninsula, from Pembroke Pines on the east coast.

Like Mr. Hanney, Mrs. Vokaty recalls a special feeling coming over her as they crossed that bridge for the first time. "I felt grounded," she says. "A weight lifted off me. It felt natural. It was effortless."

On the third day of a three-day trip to Lee County, the Vokatys made a down payment on a home in Lake Timber, the Babcock Ranch neighborhood that nestles between the entry bridge and Founder's Square, within easy walking distance of both.

Jim and Candy Hebert moved from a gated community in Lee County to their Lake Timber home overlooking Bullhorn Lake in September. Their 2,782-square-foot home is the Marathon IV design built by Stock Classic Homes.



**Chesney, Chloe, Kelli and Tom Vokaty with Lola the Labrador retriever. The family is among the newest residents of Lake Timber.**

COURTESY PHOTOS

Although they loved their previous home and neighbors, the Herberts' new residence with its expansive lanai a few steps from the lake is something special in a special place to them. They love the openness of Babcock Ranch, the sky and the lake. Mr. Hebert, a retired TWA pilot, often steps out his backdoor to go fishing in the mornings.

But it's more than the environment that ensures the Herberts that Lake Timber specifically and Babcock Ranch in general is the right place for them. They've connected

swiftly with their neighbors, who are all also new to Babcock Ranch.

"It feels like we've known them forever," Mr. Hebert says.

The Hanneys closed on their Lake Timber home on Jan. 17, began moving in the following day and were pretty much settled within days.

"It has everything we were looking for," Mr. Hanney says about their Brandywine home that was built by Homes by Towne. And nearly everything he and his wife need is within walking distance. "I can look out the front



**Jim and Candy Hebert**

window and see Founder's Square," he adds.

The Hanneys love that their new neighbors welcomed them with open arms and that they weren't moving into a place "where everybody has been there for 20 years" and has long-established friendships, Mr. Hanney says, adding, "I've met more great people here in six months than I've met in my life."

Lake Timber residents all seem to agree that they're found more than houses. They've found homes.

The Herberts' four adult daughters are scattered around the country, from Estero to Texas, Alaska and Hawaii. The women all are doing well, but as Jim and Candy revel in their new home, they can't help but think what it would have been like to raise their girls in Lake Timber and Babcock Ranch.

"I would have given anything to raise them in a community like this," Mrs. Hebert says.

As some of the Herberts' newest neighbors in Lake Timber, the Vokatys consider themselves fortunate, indeed, to be looking forward to their 12- and 13-year-old daughters growing up in Babcock Ranch — just across Southwest Florida's own version of the Bridge of Sighs. 🏡

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# New Homes at Babcock Ranch

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# AROUND BABCOCK RANCH

## Pups and people at Bark in the Park



Renat Liranzo and Izzy Valenzuela with Chiquita



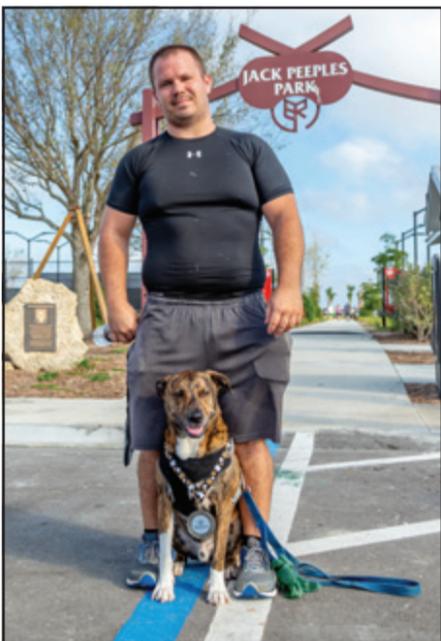
Beth Howlett with Ozzie and Bubba



Christopher Gray and Audi



Jenny Nowicki and Brenda Lee



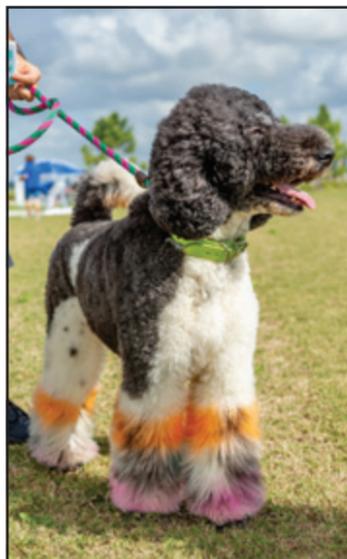
Brandon Baxter and Tiger



Elli, Holli Fleming and Heidi Maddox with Eil the dog and baby Anya Maddox



Zara Richter, Ruth Ann Richter and Sean Richter with Marley



David Patton, Lotus Patton, Dayne Patton and Jaeda Wilson with Duke

# AROUND BABCOCK RANCH

## Pups and their people at Bark in the Park



Lisa Winter, Ally Winter, Erin Brown and Mary Loucks with Maggie, Dolly, Lou Lou and Dudley



Cassie Furst and Prisca



Natalie Goshorn and Aubrey Worth with Buster and Rex



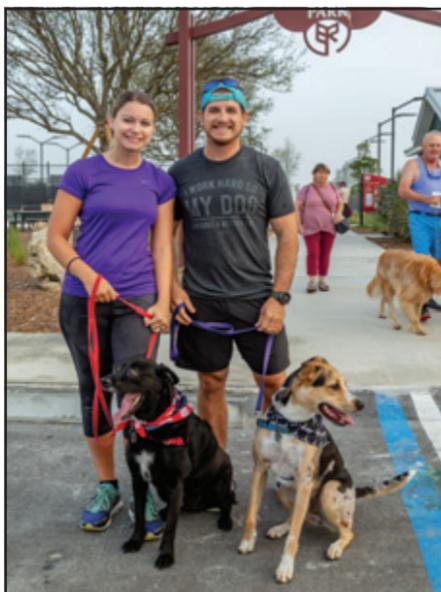
Veronica LeBlanc and Bella



Raedyn Ward and Kyle Southern with Perkins



Lisa Button and Bella



Tiffany Marinack and Mitch Marinack with Chip and Blue



Anthony Mortellaro and Remy



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# FORE

From page 1

Gordon Lewis. A resort-style pool with a waterfall, state-of-the-art fitness center and a tennis facility will be among the community's other features.

Lennar began pre-sales for homes in Babcock National in February. Late this month the company will open a temporary sales office in Founder's Square.

Perched on the northeast side of Lake Babcock, the community of about 1,000 residences will offer buyers at least 18 home designs to choose from, with pricing starting in the \$190,000s. Multi-family and single-family homes will include terrace and veranda condominiums, as well as coach, executive and estate-style designs.

"Babcock Ranch is one of the most highly sought-after master-planned communities in Southwest Florida, and we are delighted to partner with the community to create an unparalleled lifestyle for its residents," said David Meyers, Lennar's Southwest Florida director of operations.

Babcock National's golf course and other features will combine Babcock Ranch's vision with Lennar's expertise in creating an upscale, highly-amenitized lifestyle — all while complementing the existing architecture and green building designs the master-planned community has become known for, Mr. Meyers added.

Babcock National is a similar concept to Lennar's other lifestyle Communities in Southwest Florida, including Lakewood National in Bradenton and Treviso Bay in Naples.

"This is truly going to be a country



BABCOCK RANCH / COURTESY PHOTO

**Babcock National on Lake Babcock will be similar in concept to Lennar's Bonita National golf and country club.**

club," Mr. Meyers said. "It's going to have its own entrance and its own lifestyle, in addition to everything Babcock offers."

Of course, it's good news for golf lovers. The golf course will be open to other Babcock residents and the public, with the understanding that Babcock National neighborhood residents get first draw on signing up for tee times.

"We're very excited," said Laura Keller, senior vice president of marketing and sales at Babcock Ranch. "A good percentage of our folks are interested in that golf lifestyle, and it just brings more residential offerings for people moving into the town of Babcock."

In a survey last year of roughly 3,000 people who visited downtown Babcock's Discovery Center at Woodlea Hall, more than 25 percent indicated golf as an interest, Ms. Keller said.

In addition to Babcock National, Lennar is the builder for Babcock's Trail's Edge neighborhood. Other Babcock builders are Florida Lifestyle Homes, Fox Premier Builders, Homes by Towne, Pulte Homes, Solara Homes and Stock Classic Homes.

While Babcock National will follow Lennar's models, it will also be unique per Kitson & Partners' specifications. That includes coastal Florida-style architecture and homes certified

"green" by the Florida Green Building Coalition to at least its bronze level.

"Babcock National will follow the guidelines and vision of what Babcock Ranch has set out to be, which is a healthy green community," Mr. Meyers said.

Every floor plan will include Lennar's signature Everything Included program that provides customers with standard features including quartz countertops, stainless steel appliances and designer cabinetry.

The base price of all Lennar homes at Babcock National also includes commercial grade Wi-Fi in a residential setting with the industry's leading-edge



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speed and data capabilities of one gigabyte fiber via CenturyLink.

“Every home we build is what we call Wi-Fi certified,” Mr. Meyers said. “You have the fastest service, and the home is heat-mapped to make sure there are no dead spots.”

These are among the features that appeal to many people looking at Babcock as a place to live, work and play, said Christina Traver, Lennar’s Southwest Florida vice president of marketing.

“Everyone who moves here is very green-focused, environmentally friend-

ly, loves the concept of the solar and being a better human on the planet for what they’re able to contribute through Babcock Ranch. To combine a luxury, country club lifestyle with being green and the overall town atmosphere — I think it’s going to be one of the most unique combinations we’ve seen in this area and even nationwide.”

Ms. Traver added that residents often tend to move within Lennar-built communities, each of which offers a distinct lifestyle brand. For instance, the company is behind Babcock’s Trail’s Edge

neighborhood, which is geared more toward intergenerational buyers, families and full-time residents. Babcock National might appeal to snowbirds, retirees or vacation homebuyers looking for a “lock-and-leave” property.

“Babcock National is going to gear toward the purchaser who wants a country club-type feel with lots of amenities,” Ms. Traver said. “What we’ve found over the last few years is that has changed more from an older demographic to a baby boomer type of demographic.”

Whoever ends up living there, Babcock’s new golf course community will make a unique addition to a singular town —though it won’t be the last golf course here. Babcock Ranch is planned to include up to 54 holes, so that leaves open the possibility for two more 18-hole courses somewhere on this property that is expected to one day hold some 19,500 homes and 50,000 people.

“Babcock National fills a buyer profile that is needed at Babcock Ranch,” Mr. Meyers said. “I think having a golf course will only help increase the interest level as well.”

For more information, visit [www.babcocknational.com](http://www.babcocknational.com).



BABCOCK RANCH / COURTESY PHOTO

Babcock National will be the first of three planned 18-hole golf courses in the master plan for Babcock Ranch.

“Babcock National fills a buyer profile that is needed at Babcock Ranch ... I think having a golf course will only help increase the interest level as well.”

— David Meyers, Lennar  
Southwest Florida  
director of operations

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# Babcock is abuzz with news about The Hive

BY **GLENN MILLER**

Babcock Ranch Telegraph Correspondent

*"Great art picks up where nature ends."  
— Artist Marc Chagall*

Much of Babcock Ranch life focuses on nature. Glorious sunrises and sunsets. Flowers and pine and palms trees. Eagles and bass. And people out and about, enjoying the great outdoors.

But communities aren't built solely around exercise and nature, no matter how pristine the setting or breathtaking the sunrises and sunsets.

Art and culture help makes towns complete, as Mr. Chagall pointed out a long time ago.

A recently announced initiative to turn the second floor of the original Babcock Neighborhood School into something called The Hive is an example.

The Hive will be an artists' retreat, a place where residents and visitors can make art or watch it being made or learn how to dance, perhaps. The options are practically endless.

The buzz is just beginning to build.

Within a chip shot of The Hatchery and Slater's Goods & Provisions, two rooms on the second floor of the old BNS have been designated for The Hive. The first floor of the building is now a day-care center called Bloom Academy.

Each room in The Hive is designated a studio and has windows bringing in lots of natural light and providing panoramic views



of Founder's Square and Lake Babcock.

One of the spaces has been dubbed the Movement Studio and is intended for activities such as dancing, acting and music classes.

The other is a visual arts studio Babcock Ranch officials have named the Creative Studio. It offers long worktables and stools for use by artists in various disciplines to create art, from paintings, pottery pieces and photographs to jewelry making, flower arranging and much more.

Both studios are available for rent.

Use of The Hive by artists will follow the same format as at The Hatchery, which is used by business people.

"No major commitments," Natalee Burns, manager of The Hatchery said, adding that

memberships in The Hatchery are all by the month, as will memberships in The Hive.

"You're not committing to something long term."

A summer camp with creative and visual arts courses will also be part of life in The Hive as part of a partnership with the Babcock Ranch Residential Association.

While details are still being hashed out, Ms. Burns said The Hive's future also includes an Artist in Residence program in which artists in various fields will be able to use the space for two to four weeks to develop a work or works they could share with the town.

"We are seeking qualified artists who might be interested in the program," Ms. Burns said. "We are looking to select artists who work

in mediums such as photography, painting, sculpture... At the end of the residency, we will display their work somewhere at Babcock Ranch as public art."

Nurturing and developing the arts in America's first solar-powered town is the mission of The Hive.

"It's something we've been missing," Ms. Burns said. "We think The Hive is a great way to start."

The first Babcock Ranch Art Show was held March 2 and brought 45 artists to Founder's Square. ArtFest Fort Myers helped organize the event (see photos on page A20).

As buzz about The Hive heightens, more art shows, art and artists are sure to be on the way. 🐝

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# HOMES AT BABCOCK RANCH

MARCH 2019

www.BabcockRanchTelegraph.com

| A15



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

**INSIDE:**

**BABCOCK RANCH  
Builder Profiles**

**A16-A17**

## Babcock Ranch has homes for everyone

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turing one- and two-story plans, two to six bedrooms, and 1,120 to nearly 5,000 square feet of living space. Homes appeal to young millennials, families, empty nesters and retirees alike, with prices rang-

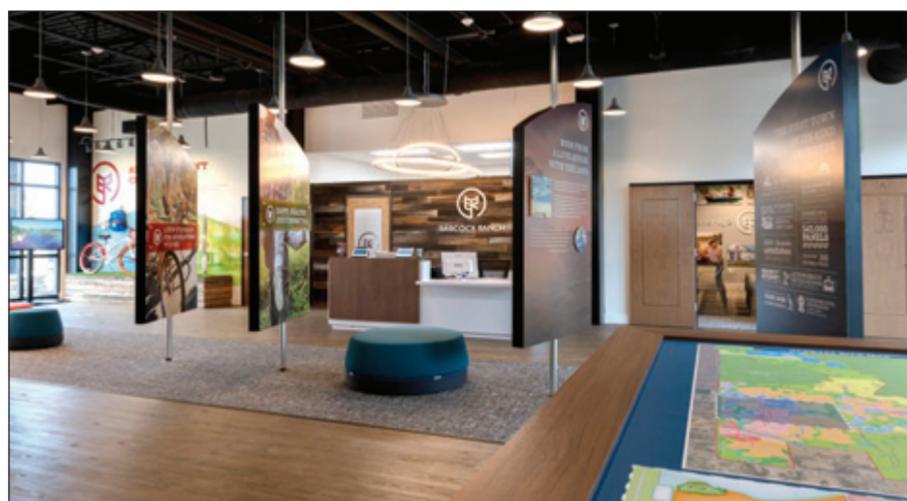
ing from the \$190,000s to \$1 million. Homes are built to Florida Green Building Coalition bronze standards, emphasizing energy and water conservation.

More than 30 model and quick-delivery homes are now open or under construction by participating builders. Models are open for viewing daily. 📍



## Visit Babcock Ranch's Discovery Center

Your first stop on a visit to Babcock Ranch should always be the Discovery Center at Woodlea Hall. The Discovery Center's new and improved space offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy a more experiential introduction to the town and homes of Babcock Ranch. Features include a theatre room for group demonstrations and tours and bold, dynamic informational graphic panels that detail Babcock Ranch's unique attributes, and a large timeline that encompasses an entire floor-to-ceiling wall detailing the rich history, present happenings and future plans for America's first solar-powered town. Interested homebuyers will want to peruse the



ED CHAPPELL / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

additional display area that has been dedicated to telling the story

of the neighborhoods and builders at Babcock Ranch.

Town Ambassadors are available seven days a week to provide overviews and tours of the new Discovery Center. Guests may also pre-register for Saturday morning tours to the FPL Solar Energy Center. To book a Solar Energy Center Tour, visit, [babcockranch.com/fpl-solar-field-tours](http://babcockranch.com/fpl-solar-field-tours). 📍

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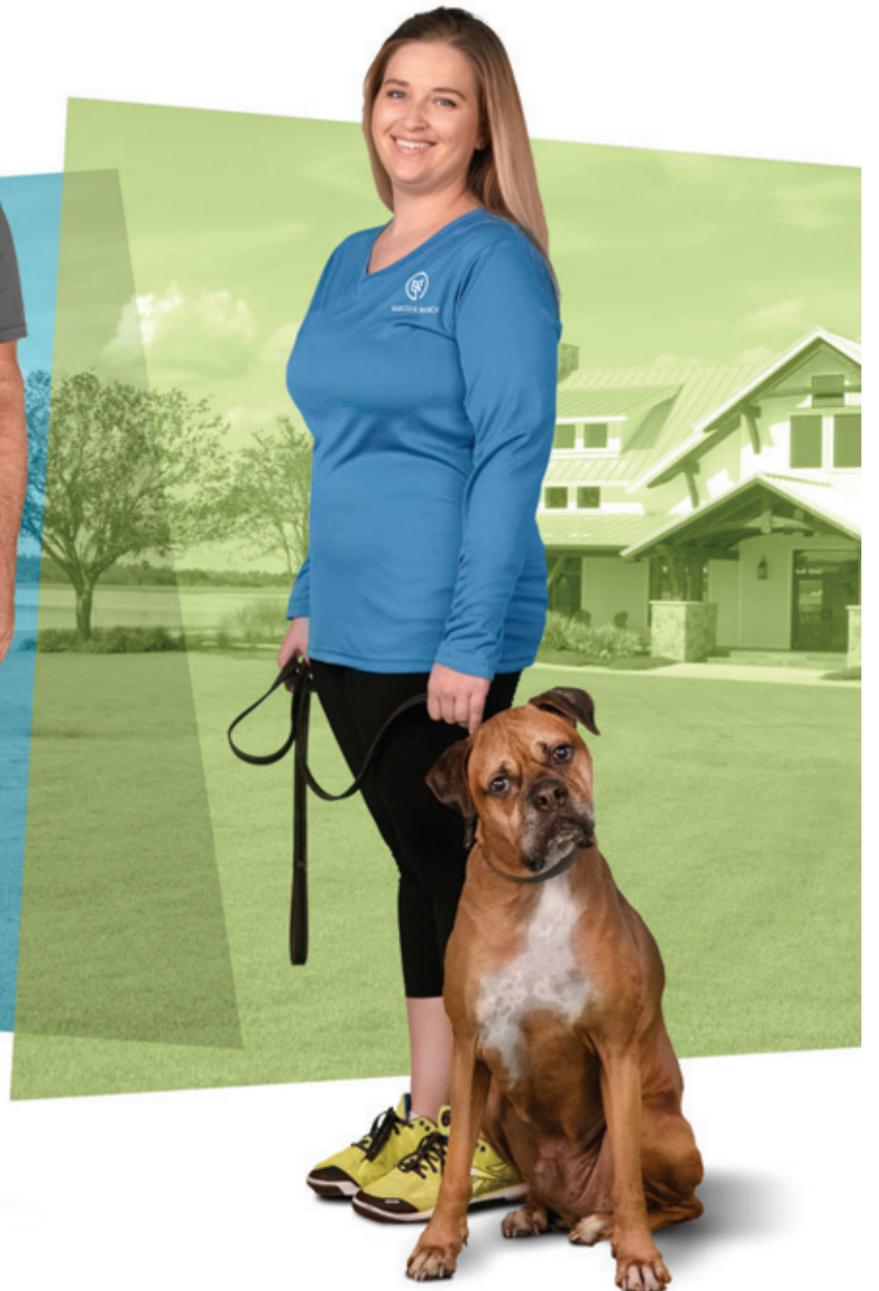
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# AROUND BABCOCK RANCH

## The inaugural Babcock Ranch Art Show



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- 2. Cathy Flickinger, Teri Goble, Sandra Shanahan and Maryellen Tansey
- 3. Jan Bartley, Susie Bartley and Vicki Loarte
- 4. Megan Tramonte and Sharon McAllister
- 5. Elizabeth Beans and Alec Cohn
- 6. Elli Merchant, Emily Wissmach, Kylie Keeling, Sarah Stewart. Back row: Gracie Garanich, Kailey Ogden and Kacy Ogden
- 7. Abram Fennell, Alette Fennell, Jehan Fennell, Ari Fennell and BNS assistant principal Chris Fennell
- 8. Angela Katz, Janet Munns, Karen Hargrove and Nakia Evans
- 9. Jay Lana
- 10. Jane McCool, Leslie Ryan and Marilyn Johnson
- 11. Rick Werner, Rose Bartlett and Kate Lynch
- 12. Alyssa Murphy, Kyle Murphy, Melissa Eisnaugle and Melissa Cicero
- 13. John Brady



# Hit the trails

BY **GLENN MILLER**

Babcock Ranch Telegraph Correspondent

Babcock Ranch's system of multi-modal trails, which will eventually total more than 50 miles, continues growing for all who enjoy walking, running, hiking and biking. Many of the trails will use existing cattle runs, fire breaks and logging roads created during the town's former life as part of the sprawling Crescent B. Ranch.

The next sections to be added should be completed sometime in the second quarter of this year, according to Babcock Ranch land planner Amanda Staerker.

"Telegraph Park Trail is underway," Ms. Staerker said. "Curry Creek Canal Trail is queued up and awaiting permitting approval."

As a signature element of the trail system, Curry Creek Canal Trail will run north/south through the center of Babcock Ranch and wind through a natural setting. Those who

use it will also be able to enjoy observation platforms, places to picnic and links to the town's expansive trail system.

Meanwhile, miles of cycling opportunities already are attracting Babcock Ranch residents and visitors.

Dick Cuda Trail, a 2-mile loop beginning and ending in Sunset Park, passes pine trees and skirts wetlands before arriving at a water-spanning boardwalk with an observation deck. Visitors are likely to see wading birds foraging for dinner and fish performing those mysterious leaps fish are known to do.

Miles of safe cycling and walking/running are also available on bicycle lanes that are part of Babcock Ranch's roads. All trails and roadways are open for cycling to residents and visitors alike.

Even people who don't own bicycles or tourists who left theirs up north can still pedal around Babcock Ranch. Curry Creek Outfitters in Founder's Square has bikes for rent. 🚲

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# Babcock residents create a new hometown

SPECIAL TO BABCOCK RANCH

While there are many reasons young families, empty nesters and retirees alike chose to make Babcock Ranch their home, residents agree on one thing: There's something truly special about being part of a brand-new hometown.



WINTERS

At Babcock Ranch, they've discovered the quintessential hometown experience and a place to celebrate beloved traditions and create new memories — like gathering to light the town Christmas tree, hunting for Easter eggs and listening to live music in the fresh air.

An emergency department nurse, Sharon Winters grew up in a small town in upstate New York. She wanted her children to have that same feeling of belonging to a community.

Ms. Winters and her husband, Steve, were seeking a more rural location to raise sons Landon, 4, and Kennedy, 4 months, but they also wanted conveniences close to home.

Since moving to Babcock Ranch from Cape Coral, the Winters family finds themselves spending a lot of time outdoors exploring their new town.

"We use the nature trails and walk to Founder's Square to play with our kids and other families," Ms. Winters says. "We enjoy concerts and movies downtown. It's a great place for us to be."



BABCOCK RANCH / COURTESY PHOTO

## Babcock Ranch residents find it all at Founder's Square.

Babcock Ranch residents find it all at Founder's Square, from farm-to-table fare and craft beer at Table & Tap and fresh produce at Slater's Goods & Provisions, to ice cream and espresso at Square Scoops Coffee & Creamery. Curry Creek Outfitters offers bike and kayak rentals, while the lakefront bandshell hosts concerts, talent shows and even exercise classes.

Fitness-minded folks can also head to Lee Health's Healthy Life Center for its cardio and strength-training equipment, lap pool and a half court. They can visit primary care physicians and schedule rehab sessions at the Healthy Life Center, too.

"I really like that everything is right here, and we can walk everywhere," Ms. Winters says.

And when Landon and Kennedy are ready for kindergarten, they'll attend Babcock Neighborhood School, which earned an A from the state for its unique approach to project-based learning.

But for now, Ms. Winters says, the boys' favorite place is the splash pad at Founder's Square, where families with young children gather to catch up and cool off.

"Everything about Babcock Ranch focuses on 'home' and the social fabric of a close-knit community," says Syd Kitson, Chairman and CEO of Kitson & Partners.

As the town grows and evolves, Babcock Ranch welcomes input from its residents.

"Syd invited a bunch of families to have dinner with him to talk about all the great things happening here at Babcock Ranch," Ms. Winters says, adding, "Being part of a new town is pretty exciting."

The Winters live in the Parkside neighborhood. Their four-bedroom, 2½-bath Pulte Home, the Citrus Grove floor plan with 2,885 air-conditioned square feet, offers plenty of room for a growing family. Ms. Winters especially appreciates how the design balances living space with bedroom sizes. "We didn't have to compromise on anything," she says.

For most residents, their Babcock Ranch experience began touring a selection of the more than 30 furnished models and quick-delivery homes that evoke the distinct sense of place that defines this burgeoning new hometown. Homes here reflect the spirit of the community, with welcoming front porches, great rooms for family gatherings and large outdoor living spaces.

"Our builders have done a wonderful job bringing the Babcock vision to life, including embracing our architectural standards with things like porches that help foster neighborhood friendships," Mr. Kitson says.

Babcock homes offer two to six bedrooms, 1,142 to more than 4,000 square feet of living space and distinctive architecture that nods to Southwest Florida's historic vernaculars in one- and two-story designs. Homes exceed Florida Green Building standards and boast one gigabyte of fiber-optic connectivity, offering lightning-fast downloads and internet capabilities. And it's all powered with help from the sun, courtesy of the 440-acre FPL Babcock Ranch Solar Energy Center.

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# Babcock Neighborhood School earns national recognition

BY THOMAS BUCKINGHAM AND LAURA TICHY-SMITH

Babcock Ranch Telegraph Correspondents

Babcock Ranch has once again racked up some national recognition, this time for Babcock Neighborhood School. The school has become a Summit Learning school and earned Summit Grant from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

“We’re the first — and only — elementary and middle school in Florida to get the grant,” Principal Shannon Treece said.

And now, less than two years after the school opened its doors, it has been recognized as one of the top performing schools in the Summit program.

The Summit Learning platform allows schools to individualize student learning and develop needed skills. It was developed by Mark Zuckerberg’s leading software engineers from Facebook in conjunction with education experts from Harvard and the Carnegie Foundation, among others.

Babcock Neighborhood School was ranked in the top 13 out of 400 schools that have implemented the program in their instructional practices and with their students, Principal Treece added.

The Summit Grant brings with it an innovative web-based learning platform, a curriculum featuring project-based learning, student-based performance metrics and teacher support.

“What we want to be known for is our high level of student engagement and academic rigor. We want both, and we think you can have both if you have the right tools and the right platform by which to offer both,” Principal Treece said. “We feel our students are getting a high academic rigor application and ... a very hands-on approach to learning.”

## Forming good habits

The platform is just the beginning of the educational curriculum for BNS. What distinguishes Summit Learning is the application of new knowledge and skills in a project-based format.

“There are habits of success, or now they’re called essential skills,” the principal explained. “We used to call them soft skills, but they’re not soft. They are essential.”

“If you can’t communicate, take notes and be on time, you’re probably not going to be very successful. All of those are embedded in our students’ projects and make up 70 percent of their grade. The majority of their grade is the application of the content versus content knowledge.”

Project-based learning is an initiative that applies student learning to community interests and issues.



Teacher Lori McLain (center) with her seventh grade science class.

VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

Community partners work with the students on their projects.

“And we also want reflective pieces as they go through the process,” Principal Treece said. “We’re looking for some type of change in the community. We’re looking for our students to be able to take the knowledge out of the classroom and apply it to something in the community to create change.”

Sometimes community partners reach beyond Babcock Ranch or Charlotte County.

Teacher Lori McLain’s seventh grade science class is currently investigating the geography and climate of Mars toward selecting landing sites on a project in cooperation with Arizona State University. Principal Treece said 10 years ago this would have been unsuitable as a project because it would have been “make believe”; however, with the vision and goal of Elon Musk toward a Mars landing and the leadership of a major university, BNS is able to incorporate this futuristic project into its curriculum.



Principal Shannon Treece

Along with what’s going on with BNS students, the teaching staff has benefited greatly from the Summit Grant. The two main ways are state-of-the-art, intensive professional development and ongoing weekly feedback about the performance of the students.

Another honor that comes with the national recognition is an invitation for BNS to pilot the new Summit Learning third grade curriculum and platform. It makes BNS one of the first schools in the country to implement the curriculum.

“We feel like we can handle implementation and get feedback from students and develop a product that is solid in regard to personalized learning,” Principal Treece said.

Parents who are interested in enrolling their children in BNS can apply at [www.babcock-neighborhoodschool.org](http://www.babcock-neighborhoodschool.org). Admission is via a lottery system. 📞

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# GREEN TEAM

## Babcock Ranch's approach to restoring its wetlands

Dear Land Lovin' Larry,  
 "What is Babcock Ranch doing to restore its wetlands?" — AB

To answer this question, we will need to look back at the history of Florida development and explore how Babcock Ranch is coming full circle from its humble beginnings of a wild wet landscape, to its restorative efforts today.

Were you aware that the earliest Florida drainage laws were written in the late 1800s? At that time, the Florida landscape looked very different than it does today. Characterized by wetlands, marshes and vast swaths of land prone to seasonal flooding, the land was practically uninhabitable. Native Americans were able to successfully settle and utilize this unforgiving landscape to seek cover from the invading Europeans more than 500 years ago. But in the late 1800s, populations were not flocking to the 'Sunshine State'; rather Florida was thought of as a hot, humid, wasteland.

The dramatic transformation of Florida's landscape began in the early 1900s when Florida landowners were draining Florida. At that time, Florida lands were selling for as little as \$0.25 an acre. Once purchased, the lands were drained and sold for a profit of up to \$5.00 an acre. After the 1928 Okeechobee Hurricane caused massive flooding in southern Florida and killed thousands of people, more drastic alterations to the landscape were undertaken. To reduce the flooding caused by redirected waters for development and farming, the Lake Okeechobee dyke was built and the Caloosahatchee River was dredged.

Around that same time, in 1914, Edward



BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH COURTESY IMAGE

At left, Curry Lake Preserve prior to installation of Hercules Weir. At right, Curry Lake Preserve after installation of Hercules Weir.

Vose Babcock purchased Babcock Ranch — a 91,000-acre property east of State Road 31 — for logging and agriculture. Like so many others around the state, the Babcock family made many modifications to the overall drainage including many miles of ditches, swales, and culverts to drain the land for agriculture and manage the water on-site. These modifications were significant enough to decrease the hydroperiods (or the amount of time a wetland or other water body stays wet throughout the year) across the Ranch.

In the 1970s, after noticing significant changes to the health of the wetlands on-site, the Babcock Family began to reverse these trends. First, they designed, permitted, and built a dyke that was over 7,000 feet long to extend hydroperiods within Telegraph

Swamp (located just east of the Babcock

Ranch Community). The dyke was also designed to control the water downstream, reduce flooding occurrences, and restore some of the natural water storage that had previously existed in the swamp prior to the ditching of the property.

This trend of restoring the natural functions of the land at Babcock Ranch continued in 2010, when Babcock Property Holdings (BPH) obtained permits from Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) and South Florida Water Management District

(SFWMD) to develop approximately 18,000 acres of the Ranch (the rest of the property was placed into preservation by the State). To offset the impacts of the development, BPH proposed and provided several means of mitigation including prescribed burning, exotic vegetation removal, ditch blocking, installation of

weirs, and conservation easements that will allow much of the 18,000 acres to remain in preserves for perpetuity.

One example of a completed mitigation project is the installation of a weir along Curry Lake Canal. The Babcock Family dug the more than six-mile canal in the early 1900s to facilitate drainage of areas throughout the property. This led to the draining of a 'seasonal lake' or 'long hydroperiod wetland' — an area that once naturally remained wet throughout most of the year. Once drained, the lake's hydroperiod was drastically reduced to only about three months of the year. This environmental stress on the native plant and animals allowed exotic species to take over, and the overall profile of species that inhabited the area began to change. In 2012, BPH designed and installed a weir to hold back water that had previously drained too quickly from the lake. Today, the hydroperiod of Curry Lake and portions of the canal is year-round. Please see the before and after posted below.

The effects of ongoing mitigation and restoration efforts continue to become apparent. As BPH monitors the completed improvements, we have observed extended hydroperiods, recruitment of native fish and vegetation, and foraging of wading birds across the Ranch. While Babcock Ranch is no longer the "uninhabitable" lands it once was, some of its wildness is returning at last. 🌿

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# From farm to table, Babcock Garden yields bushels of fresh bounty

BY KATHY GREY

Babcock Ranch Telegraph Correspondent

There's a remarkable synergy happening in Babcock Ranch among its eco-friendly garden and providers of produce. Once solely a gardening incentive for employees, Babcock Garden has evolved into a 2-acre, September-to-May sustainable paradigm that literally feeds into Babcock Ranch's restaurants and food purveyors.

In the past year, this initiative has expanded the role of Fred Taylor, the 19-year Babcock employee who manages Babcock's well-established sod farm. Today, he also oversees Babcock Garden.

Mr. Taylor is a sixth-generation farmer who helped his dad farm 1,000 acres of tomatoes in days gone by, and whose great grandparents' names, Felix and Ida, were truncated to become Felda, the name of his Florida hometown.

## Growth venture

A three-person team of sod laborers, including Mr. Taylor, till, plant and harvest the Babcock Garden. Administrative assistant Toby Smith is hands-on, too, recording production and distribution of the garden's yield.

"It's a joint venture," Mr. Taylor says. "We tested it this year to see how much and what we want to plant."

Ms. Smith confirms that on a single day in February, Babcock Garden shipped 254 pounds of freshly harvested cauliflower to Slater's Goods & Provisions and Table & Tap restaurant. "We've been burying them in cauliflower," Mr. Taylor notes.

To paraphrase the "Forrest Gump" character Benjamin Buford (Bubba) Blue: "You can barbecue it, boil it, broil it, bake it, sauté it. There's cauliflower kabobs, cauliflower creole, cauliflower gumbo. Pan-fried, deep-fried, stir-fried ... There's ... cauliflower soup, cauliflower stew, cauliflower salad, cauliflower and potatoes, cauliflower burger, cauliflower pizza crust. And that's about it."

We visited Table & Tap to sample the veggies of the joint venture's labor.

Mr. Taylor recommended the shrimp po' boy sandwich (and Bubba surely would have been pleased), but we opted for the lettuce



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

**Above: Fred Taylor has been the sod manager at Babcock Ranch for 19 years. From first reporting to the Babcock family, his duties have expanded to managing the community's entire farm-to-table concept.**

wraps, featuring chopped Babcock Garden squash and zucchini, with farro, cherries, walnuts, hemp seeds and microgreens, made to be scooped into a tender shell of hydro bibb lettuce. As with all things fresh from the farm, the squash was more crisp and flavorful than traditional market produce. The restaurant also incorporates Babcock Garden produce in its soups, salads, sandwiches and entrees. Even the steaks and chops are served with Babcock Garden veggies.



KATHY GREY / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

**A ladybug safeguards the farm's produce in an eco-friendly way.**

## Rolling along

Before we embarked on a garden tour, Mr. Taylor was greeted in the office by a couple of local men seeking sod.

"You sell to the public?" one man asked.

In sotto voce deadpan, Mr. Taylor responded, "You got any money?"

In reality, the zoysia sod the visitor sought is not grown at Babcock. But Mr. Taylor knows the local landscape well and directed the visitor to a sod farm a few miles up the road.

We then set out in Mr. Taylor's truck to Babcock Garden and the surrounding sod acreage. This is gardening at its roots, where gorgeous produce was sampled from the stalk: cherry heirloom tomatoes, ripe and fragrant broccoli and, of course, the cauliflower, flavorful and crunchy. "Everything in this garden tastes good," the farmer said.

Babcock Garden takes a hiatus from May-August. "Too hot, too wet, too buggy," Mr. Taylor says.

In March, toward the end of Babcock Garden's inaugural farm-to-table year, he and his crew will likely be "burying" Slater's and Table & Tap with its harvest of eggplant.

"You can barbecue it, boil it, broil it, bake it, sauté it. There's eggplant Parmesan, eggplant creole, eggplant gumbo. Pan fried, deep fried, stir-fried ..."

You get the picture. 📷

## Babcock Garden planting schedule

### First planting, early September:

- Beets
- Bell pepper
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Collard greens
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Heirloom tomato
- Kale
- Patty pan squash
- Radish
- Yellow squash (crook- and straight-necks)
- Zucchini

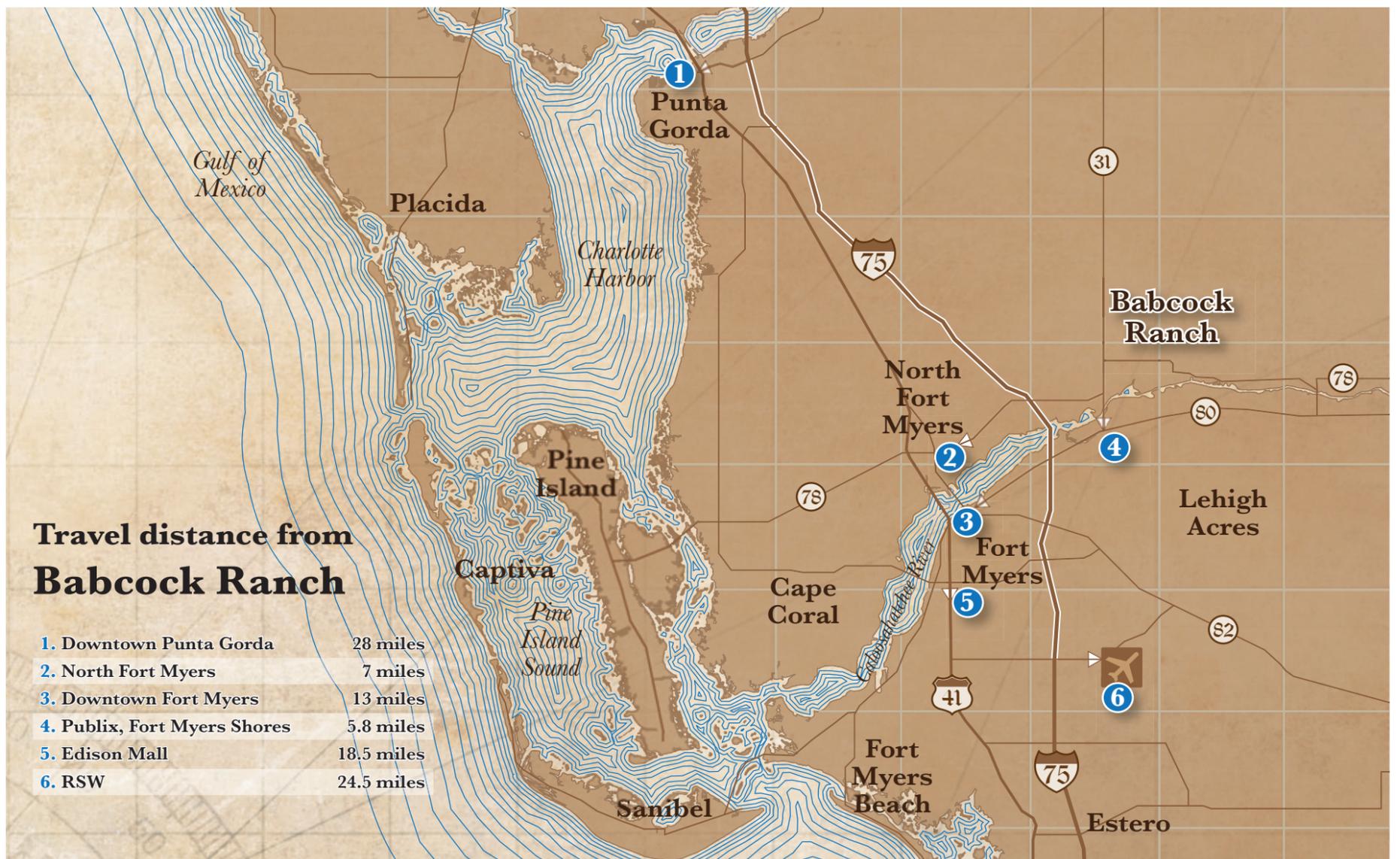
### Second planting, early January:

- Acorn squash
- Bell pepper
- Broccoli
- Buttercup squash
- Butternut squash
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Collard greens
- Eggplant
- Heirloom tomato
- Onion
- Spaghetti squash



VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

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# It's all good when things go up in smoke at Table & Tap

BY **KAREN FELDMAN**  
Food & Wine Editor

On a recent weekday, Tap & Tap Executive Chef Julian Cardona was grappling with a problem: Babcock Garden had just yielded 500 pounds of cauliflower and he was trying to figure out what to do with the massive heads that were piled up in the kitchen.

His solution, to at least a portion of the dilemma: "We'll smoke them."

And that's just what they did, turning those singed heads into mashed cauliflower to which they added Boursin and Parmesan cheese. Needless to say, it was a big hit in the dining room that night.

The chefs at Babcock's restaurant have been smoking a whole lot of things since acquiring a Yoder competition smoker late last year. And it's prompted Food and Beverage Manager Tom McGregor to adopt a new motto: "Smoke 'em if you've got 'em."

Mr. Cardona and Executive Sous Chef John Innarelli are doing that with a vengeance.

"We smoke every day," Mr. Cardona says. "Wings, pork butts, briskets, mahi, chicken wings, ribs."

While he's had experience smoking meats at previous jobs, he is busy overseeing Table & Tap and Slater's Goods and Provisions and so has designated Mr. Innarelli the chief smoker.

"John is the smoking expert," he says. "He's really good at it and so he is in charge of smoking."

The result: a lot of dishes on the menu now that include smoked products. And we aren't just talking meats here. The cauliflower as



Table & Tap serving street tacos at Food Truck Fridays.

VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH

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VANDY MAJOR / BABCOCK RANCH TELEGRAPH



The restaurant's Pigtail Mac and Cheese contains house-smoked pork. And those who really want to pig out on pork can also order the Pork with Pancakes entree.

Because a lot of visitors are from the Midwest, Mr. Cardona believes they are big meat fans, particularly when that meat is smoked. But they aren't the only ones who seem to be enjoying it.

On a recent Food Truck Friday (the fourth Friday of the month), the Table & Tap kitchen entered the fray with smoked brisket and pulled pork tacos. After smoking the meat, they shredded the pork then added ancho pepper aioli and cojita cheese, some Babcock Ranch tomatoes and onions.

They set up a little white picket fence and a table and served the tacos outside near the smoker along with the assembled array of food trucks.

Although the smoker is situated at Table & Tap, diners at Slater's also reap the benefits. The smoked pulled pork winds up on flat-breads there and the smoked brisket becomes sandwich meat.

While the smoker already is going just about full time, expect that the kitchen will continue conjuring up some new ways to use it to add still more smoked items to the menu.

There's smoked salmon on the menu now, for example, but they don't smoke it in house — at least not yet. "We hope to start doing that soon," says Mr. Cardona.

well as things like tomatoes and onions get smoked and added to various dishes.

For ArtFest in downtown Fort Myers in early February, they smoked spaghetti squash, which Mr. Innarelli says was "like a vegan pulled pork."

The smoker is a competition size — about 6 feet long, "with nice big wheels," says Mr. Cardona. "They went all out. It cranks out some serious meat. We smoke everything."

Mr. Innarelli confirms that.

"There's a constant rotation on the smoker," he says. "We do ribs, pork butt for the wild game-balaya (Table & Tap's nod to jambalaya) and smoked tomatoes for the vegan jamba-

laya. I make my own wild boar sausage and we smoke that, too. Whatever we can do to use the smoker, we're doing.

"Everybody loves it. Customers tell me that all the time."

Mr. Innarelli says he has enjoyed smoking foods for some time now, experimenting at home to figure out what works and what doesn't. He fills the big red-and-black smoker with hickory or oak, both of which impart a woody flavor to what's being cooked, and applies a rub to the meats before placing them on the smoker.

"We make our own rub in house," he says. "It's smoked paprika, chili powder, brown

sugar, salt. It's very simple, but it's delicious. I pre-rub all the meat for 24 hours when doing any kind of ribs or pork butt." The chicken wings get a two-day brining, he adds.

"The wings are a huge hit," Mr. Cardona says. "They're becoming a huge staple."

Mr. Innarelli estimates they go through between 120 and 200 pounds of wings every week.

The smoked fish dip, made with lightly smoked mahi, has become a signature dish as well.

"The ribs are amazing, too," says Mr. Cardona. "We smoke them, then cool them, then glaze them with a sauce we make."

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