



Spot Light On:

# Vacation Ownership Choices

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**By Kevin Mattoni:**

Over the past few years, you have probably read about the new RCI Points Program in their publications or here in this Chronicle. Many owners have listened to the points sales presentations when they visit other resorts. Many families own intervals at other resorts and are members in not only the major exchange companies, but also vacation clubs and discount plans. What do these all have in common? Why are we spending so much time on discussing these programs?

The industry has introduced these products to offer members flexibility, choice, and value. The industry also sees the potential for substantial profit. We feel it is very important for management to take a lead role in analyzing these products and informing both the individual members and your representative Board of Directors. Management can help by gathering all the information, communicating the information, negotiating contracts and pricing, and assisting in your decision of which or any of these offers truly have value to you and

your family's vacationing. Each of your resorts are currently considering these available options and they may or may not be available to you at this time.

**Exchange Companies**

To offer vacation exchanges to individuals involving a Florida destination, companies must register with the appropriate state regulatory agency. Several have registered and a few have not. The two largest companies are RCI and II. They offer members the best chance to fulfill your desire to travel to other locations. All Cunningham managed resorts are affiliated with RCI. Little Gull & Longboat Bay Club are also affiliated with II. This year, the Boards of Directors at other CPMC managed resorts will consider dual affiliation. The result would be individual owners choosing whether they want to belong to any exchange service, which one or maybe both if you really

want to get around. II fees are slightly lower, RCI is bigger with more resorts, while II may have more international availability. Although other companies have lower pricing and promise extraordinary vacations, they rarely deliver. Be careful with the smaller companies and carefully read their contract, as your vacation could turn out to be memorable for all the wrong reasons. If you own at more than one resort, analyze your family's needs and if a resort has dual affiliation, consider saving money with one membership. Unless you want to exchange to other resorts or benefit from discounted travel services, you may not need to belong to any exchange company.

**RCI Points**

New? Yes. Flexible? Yes. Complicated? Can be. Expensive? Often. Most of your Boards of Directors are reviewing the approval process to allow owners to enroll in the RCI Points Program. Cunningham has been compiling

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## VACATION CHOICES CONTINUED

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owner surveys and comments along with negotiating with RCI and providing information to your Directors. The programs bottom line is after an owner pays an enrollment fee, their interval will be assigned credit points that can be used for exchanging to different size units, trading for less than a full week, trade for a cruise or airline tickets or even be used to purchase non-vacation products. Points conversion should only be done after you understand the whole program. Be careful when considering the sales presentation. Read the material and ask questions. Don't fall for the hard sell. The program is very flexible and beneficial for those who can use it. Cunningham will offer points at resorts approved by their Boards of Directors. We will be able to provide discount pricing, however we feel it is important for everyone to fully understand the program. In other words, you are going to have to set some time aside to talk to us. Call us or stop in if you want info.

### Vacation Clubs

This form of vacationing has grown in the marketplace because of its lower initial costs. The idea is to fix the price on a group of vacations, commonly 3-5 years or 5-20 vacations, and use the seller to arrange for the accommodations and travel services. There may be a maintenance or service fee. Clubs are basically a lease program. Often the seller secures inventory at resorts and uses the exchange companies to fulfill member requests. Although the purchase price may be attractive, the buyer owns nothing and generally will receive accommodations in older resorts in the off season. The plan may be useful for families who want to try vacation

ownership before committing to a purchase. Generally, you could probably rent the same accommodation if you want to have the experience prior to making a purchase commitment.

### Owner Services

The growth of vacation ownership/timesharing has grabbed the attention of large corporations. The potential for profit is above average and many different organizations are trying to get a slice of the proverbial pie. Some deliver valuable services, many do not. The majority of these services can be broken down into two categories:

- 1) Real estate services related to selling, renting, and appraisals
- 2) Travel agent services related to exchanging, cruises, airline tickets and car rentals.

As with anything involving money, be careful with what you are agreeing to and with whom you are contracting. The majority of companies offering real estate services for selling, renting, and

appraising your property request upfront fees. After you pay the fee, good luck obtaining the services. The companies do an excellent job of selling you, too bad their sales agent doesn't do as well representing you. Our experience has been that none of these companies are doing even a mediocre job. That goes for Century-21, Re-Max, Coldwell Banker, ERA and all the other companies with reputations of success in other areas of real estate. Be careful of their promises. Do not send your money first!

For travel agent services, the larger exchange companies do a good job and are very convenient when using them with your exchange requests. Most times they do provide savings that more than pay for your membership. Be careful when using the smaller companies. Your local travel agent or the internet will probably do a better job.



**BEAU GARRETT CUNNINGHAM: 03/26/02, 8 lbs. 10 oz., 21 inches. Proud parents Rich & Kristen and grandmother Sharon are all doing great!!**

# THINGS TO DO AND SEE

\$15 million dollars later, the historic 1926 home of John & Mable Ringling, Ca d'Zan (Home of John), re-opened in April to rave reviews. The home originally cost \$1.5 million to build with another \$400,000 to furnish. 30 rooms, including 14 bathrooms have been restored to their original splendor.



You can tour the home, art museum, circus museum, and spectacular grounds 7 days a week. This is a must see for those of you in the Sarasota area! For more information visit [www.ringling.org](http://www.ringling.org).

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens recently opened the first North American Canopy Walkway at Myakka River State Park. Along the 100 foot walkway, 25 feet in the air you have an opportunity to glimpse another world.

Downtown Sarasota now boasts the Museum of Asian Art. The current exhibit represents 2000 years of history with artifacts from Nepal, Burma, China, Thailand, Cambodia, and the famous "Yangtze River Collection" of Chinese jades. For more information call 941/954-7117.

**6/3–6/23 Sarasota Music Festival:** Acclaimed artists & students from around the world gather for a chamber music celebration. 941-953-3434

**6/8 18th Annual Antique Car**

**Show**—St. Augustine—904-471-5262

**6/22 Greek Landing Day Festival**—St. Augustine 904-829-8205

**6/29 Jazz Club Jam—Sarasota**—West Coast Symphony—941-316-9207

**6/29– 7/7 18th Annual Suncoast Offshore Grand Prix Festival**—Sarasota—Powerboat racing, fishing tournaments, parades, golf. [www.suncoastoffshore.org](http://www.suncoastoffshore.org)

**7/3 Bradenton Beach Fireworks Celebration**—Beach House Restaurant. 941-779-2222

**7/4 Sarasota, Siesta Key, Downtown Bradenton, Venice & St. Augustine Fireworks**—check with your resort

**7/26–7/29 Kingfish Challenge**—St. Augustine. Huge tournament! 904-824-8322

**7/30–8/4 29th Annual Florida State Dance Sport Championship**—Sarasota. Hundreds from around the world will gather at the Ritz for this intense ballroom competition. 888-684-7717.

**8/7–8/11 Desoto Fishing Tournament.** Bradenton 941-747-1998

**8/17 20th Annual Conch House Challenge**—St. Augustine. Marlin & sailfish catch and release tournament. 904-824-4347

**9/7–9/9 St. Augustine Birthday Festival.** Celebrate the Nations Oldest City's 437th Birthday. 904-825-1010

**10/5–10/7 Oktoberfest**—Downtown Bradenton— A celebration of German food and entertainment. 941-747-1998

**10/12–10/13 St. Armands Art Festival**—Sarasota—941-388-1554

**10/12–10/13 Siesta Key Sea Fest**—Sarasota—941-349-3800

**11/2–11/3 Art Fest**—Venice—941-484-6722

**11/10 Sandfest at Siesta Key**

**Beach**—Sarasota—"The World's Finest, Whitest Sand". 941-349-3800

**11/17 : "Art on the Avenue"** 9—4 at Avenue of the Flowers - Longboat Key— 941-383-2345

## ON-GOING EVENTS

### **Sarasota**

First Friday of each month—Palm Avenue Art Walk— Historic Palm Avenue downtown. 6—9 941-955-1122

Fourth Friday of each month— St. Armands Stroll. 6—9 941-388-1554

Every Saturday Farmer's Market— Main Street—7—noon

### **St. Augustine**

Nightly Walking Tours—Ghosts, romance, scandal, murder, politicians & pirates. 800-OLD-CITY

Every Saturday Old City Farmer's Market—St. Augustine Amphitheater—8:30—12:30 904-824-8247

First Friday of each month Art Walk (July—Aug.) 5—9 904-829-0065

Every Wednesday Farmer's Market—St. Johns County Pier 7—12 904-471-8267

Toll free number for owners in the United Kingdom requesting rental and sales information:

**0800-840-6564**

## Resort Rap

**Gulf Tides of Longboat Key** looks great! Outside building work is nearly completed and we have had rave reviews from owners and guests alike. We have contracted with a landscaping company to design a plan for our staff to begin planting the Gulf side and add some more color to the bayside.

The Board still wants to hear your comments on all the work that has been taking place over the past 2 years. If you did not receive a newsletter last month, please contact our office and we will be glad to send you a form. You can also download the questionnaire from the *Owners Only* section of our website ([www.VacationFLA.com](http://www.VacationFLA.com)).

We would like to remind everyone that maintenance fees were due by January 31st. Late fees and penalties started on February 1st.

RCI has informed us that our 12 month average is only 1/10th of a point away from Resort of International Distinction and 3/10th away from Gold Crown. Our 3 month average puts us over on both. We see gold in our future!!

Be sure to watch your mail and the website for new inventory coming soon!

**Calini Beach Club** There is a new addition to Calini Beach Club!!!! The new paver patio deck is terrific. The grills are stainless steel and the patio furniture and umbrellas are new. The deck was finished in January 2002 and all the owners and guests have enjoyed using it this winter. There is finally a great place to have the Wednesday cookouts and family picnics. The landscaping around the grills will be completed this summer. Hope you enjoy the pictures!!!



Ralph, Russell & Mac



The deck around the therapy pool has the same paver bricks placed on it to match the new patio deck. The paver bricks are almost maintenance free since the decks need to be sealed only twice a year.

**The Beach Club at St. Augustine Beach** The first phase of the concrete restoration project at The Beach Club was completed in March. Poolside and oceanfront units in our Phase II building received completely new balconies, new carpet and extended tile, ceiling coatings, wallpaper, a stove, refrigerator and dishwasher. Although it was not part of the concrete restoration, during the same time period, a new roof was installed on the commercial building that includes the lobby, game room, laundry and offices. Phase I units also received new stoves to finish up the appliance replacement started in that building a couple of years ago. New landscaping was also installed around the Phase II building and throughout the property.

The second and final phase of the concrete restoration project will begin at the end of October and run through mid-April 2003. This phase of the project will start with the walkways and balconies on our Phase I building and finish up with Phase II walkways. After the concrete work is complete, Phase I units will also receive new carpet and extended tile, ceiling coatings and wallpaper. While the resort will remain open to owners during this time, if you are planning your vacation during this time period, please remember that construction will be on going and the pool area will be closed. Incidentally, this phase was completed on

schedule and in budget.

**Longboat Bay Club** We have been very busy remodeling the property internally and externally. New mattresses with fitted sheets, pillows, telephone equipment with voicemail and a data port, silverware, pots and pans, butcher block knife sets, and some upgraded TVs are just a few of the new amenities you have to look forward to when coming to stay in your unit. Also, an added feature in each unit is an information binder for your use as well as a memory book in which you may share your vacation experiences.

Outside, some changes that have been made include a children's playground and picnic area with two brick encased gas barbeque grills. (Please DO NOT bring grills.)

Some new items we have available for use are a handicapped bathtub grip and bench and a DVD player. We now have Longboat Bay Club t-shirts and towels for sale in the office. These make great gifts for family and friends!

With these changes and more to come in the future, we know you will be proud to be owners at this beautiful resort. Bring your family for a memorable vacation!

Just in from RCI! We are back to being Gold Crown!!

**Little Gull Cottages** This year is really going fast! Here is what's been happening at Little Gull: In January we replaced the pool fence and built a new gazebo at the pool. We also purchased two tables and eight chairs for the gazebo. We are receiving rave reviews on the project! We have been working on the landscaping of the property. We put nightstands in bedrooms that only had end tables and we replaced all pillows in the units this

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year.

We are planning on refinishing more dining room chairs soon. We are going to repair some of the brick driveway/walkways where needed.

Heather Rines is once again helping us at the front desk while Lisa Foley is out sick for a short period of time.

We have again maintained our Gold Crown Status with RCI. Way to go staff!!!

**Siesta Sands** We have been working hard to improve our property. The condo garage underhang has been completed, and lights and sprinkler heads were replaced in the garage. Exit signs were installed on Building C to replace signs damaged by the tropical storm. The grill project by the condo pool was completed. A bar was installed on Build-

ing C to protect the new underhang. New storage bins for all owners have been completed. The painting of all railings on the property has been completed. Also, a new roof was put on the office building.

Dropped ceilings in the kitchens and bathrooms were torn out and the walls were finished to match the rest of the units in the timeshare building. In the process, new light fixtures and electrical outlets were installed. All grout lines on the floor in the units were cleaned and restored to their original color.

We have exciting improvements planned this year including brick pavers on both pool decks, remarketing the timeshare pool, new couches and mattresses in the timeshare units and an entrance gate that will help secure the property. Our staff will continue to work very hard to make sure Siesta Sands remains a high quality vacation desti-

nation.

**Sea Oats and Englewood Beach and Yacht Club** Sea Oats--New living room and dining room furniture including much more comfortable pull out sofa beds and lounge chairs highlight the changes at Sea Oats Beach Club.

Englewood Beach and Yacht Club--The story at EBYC is the completion of phase one and three outside renovation and painting projects. The buildings look great and the view from the lanais is improved as well.

**Cunningham Property Mgmt. Corp.** We are sad to announce the resignation of Denise Hamilton as Administrative Assistant/Accounting Clerk. She has been a wonderful asset to CPMC for the past 5 years. Denise and her daughter Caitlynn are moving to Tennessee where they will be closer to family and friends. Denise also plans to go back to school. We will miss her and wish her the very best!!



## FAMILY FUN

**Story & photo submitted by Alma & John Draper (Calini Beach Club owners).**



**Grandsons Cory Pleasant, 11, Brendan Ames, 4, and Grandpa.**

"This picture was taken in late October in the Rouge Valley ten minutes from our home in Toronto. We had wonderful weather throughout the fall and the day this picture was taken the salmon were running along the Rouge River. It was a

sight to behold. Grandpa thought he would try to catch one with his hands, slipped on a rock, and landed face down in the water! Some grandfather's go to such lengths to entertain the grandchildren!

**Story and photo submitted by**

**Donna Schoepp (Calini Beach Club owner).**

I thought you might enjoy a picture showing how we spent our time at Calini. I call it "Sister Act". My husband Linus and I have owned a month at Calini since 1992 and return each year in February. We enjoy Calini's hospitality so much that I

introduced my family to the area. We all have been getting together for the past 5 years.

On one of our shopping excursions to the flea market I found these cover ups and thought they would be fun for entertaining. So we put on a show for our husbands. I persuaded my sisters to put on our bikinis and prance out to the living room and put on a dance. We were making such a racket in the

bedroom while trying on our outfits that our husbands decided to have a camera ready. The enclosed photos are the results. We've had lots of laughs about this fun time and know this is the closest we'll ever come to wearing a bikini.

Submit a vacation adventure or photo, have it printed, and receive an RCI Bonus Certificate.



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## MIXED NUTS

Longboat Bay Club has made **RCI GOLD CROWN!** This is not only good for owners wanting to exchange out, but also helps rentals and resale's!

Some resorts are considering **dual exchange company affiliation**. In other words, becoming both RCI and II (Interval International) members. Little Gull and

Longboat Bay Club are already members of both. Calini and Gulf Tides are considering II affiliation. Many owners have an interest in other II resorts. You may join both exchange companies for a greater resort selection or this may allow some savings if you want to subscribe to only one.

Remember, we are offering owners **rental discounts!** It's a

great time to try out other resorts! These discounts will not last!

Check out the new **virtual tours** for Calini, Gulf Tides, Siesta Sands, Little Gull, Sea Oats and Englewood Beach & Yacht Club! They are great. We can also send you what's called an eBrochure. Very cool. Go to [www.VacationFLA.com](http://www.VacationFLA.com) and click on the resort name listed on the right. We are waiting for the Longboat Bay Club tours until we get the units

painted. Hopefully, we will have one completed soon.

As some of you know, Sarasota's **Ringling Bridge** is under construction. The old draw bridge is being replaced with a fixed span bridge. As someone who crosses the bay everyday, I can tell you it has not been a problem. However, you can check the weekly bridge update on our website. Click the link located in the middle of the