

The Sea Pines Resort History

- Finding inspiration from a Yale law school private land management class, Georgia native Charles Fraser developed the idea of creating an innovative resort/residential community that would be low-impact and environmentally friendly.
- By the time he graduated from Yale, Fraser had become a “champion beachcomber,” having walked the sand of nearly every commercially developed beach on the Atlantic coast.
- At the age of 28, Fraser and his equally-young associates drafted an area economic impact study in hopes of getting financial backing from banks and lending institutions, but initial responses were less than enthusiastic.
- Fraser’s plan eventually convinced South Carolina legislatures that a bridge was needed to connect Hilton Head Island with the mainland, and the swing bridge was built in 1956.
- From the outset Fraser insisted that at least 25 percent of the 5,200 acre Sea Pines Resort would never be developed.
- The original Sea Pines master plan by famed Harvard professor Hideo Sasaki received international honors and awards.
- Almost every high quality resort-oriented community built in America since 1960 has used Sea Pines as a template.
- No building at The Sea Pines Resort is taller than the tallest magnolia or oak tree.
- The world-famous yacht basin at Harbour Town was designed in an environmentally-friendly manner, to save as many trees as possible.
- Fraser also developed Kiawah Island Golf Resort near Charleston and the celebrated Amelia Island Plantation, near Jacksonville.
- The Sea Pines Resort received the prestigious “Best Large Scale Recreational Project” award by the Urban Land Institute in 1985, and in 1996, the Kiawah Island Golf Resort was honored a similar fashion.
- Sea Pines is home to the first golf course on Hilton Head Island. The Ocean Course was designed by George Cobb in 1962.
- The Ocean Course was redesigned in 1995 by 10-time PGA Tour winner Mark McCumber, and is designated as a “Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary”
- The decision to build the par-72 Sea Marsh Course, also a “Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary,” came in 1964 when the game’s burgeoning popularity created demand for a second golf course.

- The Pete Dye-Jack Nicklaus collaboration known as Harbour Town Golf Links was completed in 1969. It has been named repeatedly as one of the nation's finest golf courses by publications such as Golf Magazine, Golfweek and Golf Digest.
 - Hilton Head Island's first sporting event was held on the Ocean Course, where Bruce Devlin and Jack Nicklaus competed in an exhibition match in 1966.
 - Bruce Devlin was the first golf star to represent both the Sea Pines Resort and Hilton Head Island as a touring golf professional.
 - The first Heritage Classic tournament, now known as the Verizon Heritage, was held in 1969. It was South Carolina's first PGA Tour event, and to this day remains one of only four PGA Tour Invitational events on the annual schedule.
 - Former Wimbledon and U.S. Open champion Stan Smith was the first touring tennis professional to represent both Sea Pines Resort and Hilton Head Island.
 - The CBS Tournament of Tennis Champions was broadcasted from Sea Pines Resort in 1971. It was the first nationally televised tennis tournament broadcasted from a resort location,
 - CBS returned to Sea Pines in 1972 for the first CBS Tennis Classic.
 - The first nationally televised women's tennis tournament, called the Family Circle Magazine Women's Tennis Cup, was also broadcasted from The Sea Pines Resort in 1973. Sea Pines hosted the event until 2000.
 - More network televised tennis tournaments have been played at Sea Pines than any other resort in America
 - In 2005 Sea Pines Resort was showcased in a major motion picture starring Gregg Russell and Lea Thompson, titled *Come Away Home*.
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