

## Vineyards History

Highway 85 was just a wide piece of empty land when the Vineyards was built, but its future existence was factored into the construction plans. The reason why most of the homes on the Highway 85 side of the Vineyards did not have their garages attached to or near to their units was because the designers of the complex wanted to keep the homes as far away from the future highway as possible, for noise suppression. The garages were put on the freeway side to distance the condos from the freeway.

The clubhouse pool was built as part of the first phase of construction, before there were any actual residents. The larger second pool was first shown to the then residents before it was built. The proposed design was similar to the clubhouse pool. However, at the meeting presenting it to the residents, it was suggested that it would be better if the pool were simply rectangular, so that it could be used for swimming laps. The builders agreed, and the design was changed.

The homeowners dues for the original owners were set at just above \$40.00 a month. Every owner knew that this fee was too low to actually meet the expenses managing the Vineyards, but obviously, no one protested the low fee. The fee was established by a vote of the owners, but at that point, the builders owned a majority of the units. It was to the builder's advantage to be able to advertise low monthly maintenance fees to prospective buyers. The builder kept the fee low and covered the shortfall.

There is one three bedroom two and a half bath unit that does not have a fireplace in its master bedroom. The couple who originally planned to purchase that particular unit specifically requested that the master bedroom not have a fire place. Then, after construction was complete, the buyers changed their minds and never took occupancy, leaving the unit with no fireplace.

The first full map of the Vineyards that greeted visitors at the entrance to the complex was drawn not by the builders, but by an octogenarian resident whose residence was deep inside the complex. Before the advent of GPS, residents had a great deal of difficulty providing visiting friends and family adequate instructions for reaching their particular condominium. The map was one old man's contribution to making it easier to find one's way around the complex.

The one unit that has solar panels on its roof top owes the panels to a storm that happened back in the early 1970's. That particular storm blew one of the newly planted Redwood trees down on top of his house. The tree was not large enough at that point to damage his condo. It was simply cut up and removed after the storm subsided. However, had the tree not blown over, the house with the panels would instead be a house shaded by a towering redwood.

The ponds that dot the complex, including the pond by the Club House, were once all filled with Japanese Koi fish in brightly colored varieties.

The Vineyards complex was originally marketed and sold as an Adults Only complex. Because of this restriction, there was no federally guaranteed financing for any home buyer and all units requires a minimum of 20% down payment.

The original marketing of the various units labeled each unit with the name of a wine, with the exception of the largest units which were called "champagne". Both the wine and the champagne designations were paying homage to the Paul Masson Cellars, a local tourist attraction, which was located just across the street.

The original units were all provided with a combination washer/dryer in a single machine. The advantage was both washing and drying were combined in a single action. The two main disadvantages were: First, a single load of laundry took forever. Second, the machine did not include any external venting, so that when the machines were eventually replaced with separate washers and dryers, there was no venting in the units to which to connect the dryers.

The original air conditioner systems for the condos were mounted on the roofs in a specially built platforms behind each chimney. Access to the air conditioning units was provided by a ladder attached permanently to each connected set of condos.

Air conditioning was not included as part of the base unit sales price and had to be purchased separately. The main sales person for the initial stage of the development, while the units were still under construction, discouraged people from requesting the air conditioning option for their units. She said Saratoga did not have enough hot weather to warrant the additional expense of air conditioning. She, herself, owned one of the condos and bragged that her unit was not going to have air conditioning. Owners more familiar with summer weather in the South Bay ignored her advise and had the builder add the air conditioning.