

Notorious Pirate's 7-Acre Island off the Florida Panhandle Hits the Market for \$50 Million



Hannah Frishberg

A 7-acre resort island on Florida's Gulf Coast that was once the domain of the 18th century's notorious "Robin Hood of Pirates" has just been listed for \$50 million.

Black's Island, which is in Port St. Joe's Bay off the coast of the Florida panhandle, is a four-star resort with 26 waterfront barrel-shaped bungalows, a clubhouse, a cabana and a pool with sundecks, all of which are connected by an elevated 1,200-foot cedar boardwalk. The next owner could continue to run the island as a commercial resort or turn the property into a lavish family compound.

The secluded, private island, which is 10 minutes from the mainland and is accessible only by boat, seaplane or helicopter, "is for adventure seekers, and there's no other like it in the state of Florida

that has been developed," said Jon Kohler of Jon Kohler & Associates, who co-listed it last week with colleagues Erica Kohler and Lori Bembry Weldon. "Few people know it exists."

The seller, Atlanta developer Scott Seymour, said he will sell the entire island or individual bungalows, starting at \$1.5 million to \$1.6 million each.

Seymour, who specializes in industrial development in Atlanta and hospitality projects in the Florida Panhandle, bought the property in 2018 and began remodeling the existing bungalows and adding amenities. Recently, he has been renting them out to vacationers.

"The uniqueness of the island attracted me," said Seymour, who also is developing a complementary

\$20 million hotel on the mainland that pays homage to the island and its namesake pirate. “It was an opportunity to be involved in something that cannot be duplicated.”

The island, which has over 3,700 feet of shoreline, gets its name from Black Sam Bellamy, who, according to legend, was the wealthiest pirate in recorded history.

He plied and pillaged the seas in the 18th century, and from 1715 to 1717, he called the island home. In 1717, he went down with his ship, the *Whydah*, and his 4- to 5-ton treasure off the coast of Massachusetts in a nor’easter.

He got a second life of sorts in 1982 when the wreckage of his sunken ship, which was said to have carried indigo, ivory, gold and tens of thousands in pounds sterling, was discovered.

To date, some 200,000 objects, including a cannon filled with precious gems and gold, have been recovered. Many of them are on exhibit in the *Whydah* Pirate Museum in West Yarmouth, Massachusetts.

Just like the pirate, the island is “one of a kind,” said Weldon, who added that “because of current building and code restrictions, it can’t ever be recreated.”

Self-sufficient, Black’s Island has two underground utility lines and its own well and sewer system.

The turnkey bungalows, which are furnished and stocked with everything from linens to kitchen dishes, are hurricane-resistant, having survived



severe poundings from 2018’s Hurricane Michael, which made landfall as a Category 5 storm.

At 1,225 square feet, the one-story models have two bedrooms, a loft bedroom area, two full bathrooms, a kitchen, a living room, a dining area, a laundry

room and a balcony. The two-story models, which are 1,425 square feet, have an additional half bathroom.

“The bungalows have 360-degree views, which is rare,” Kohler said. “Every which way you look, you can see the sunrises and sunsets. It gives a feeling of overloaded senses.”

The resort’s four-story clubhouse is designed for high-style entertaining. It has indoor dining tables and high tops, a bar, a lounge, games tables and two

balconies with additional seating. Other features include a gift shop and a cabana that has a bar, outdoor covered seating and games like ring toss and cornhole for children.

There’s also a 40-foot by 16-foot swimming pool, a floating water trampoline, white-sand areas for volleyball games, and a

dock that accommodates jet skis and boats up to 40 feet. Other pursuits include bird watching—the island has peacocks, turkeys and guinea fowl—duck hunting, kayaking and paddleboarding.

“The island is in the middle of a marine estuary,” Kohler said. “The water is gin clear—it’s like going on vacation to the Bahamas without leaving Florida.”

