



(Andre Vierira for the NYT)

## Keeping cool on Brazil's coast

By Sue Chester

Published: January 23, 2009

**BUZIOS, Brazil:** Buzios was international right from the start, when French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English pirates arrived in search of New World riches back in the 16th century.

It then settled down to become a quiet fishing village and whaling station until Brigitte Bardot popped up in 1964 to escape the paparazzi. Paris Match got wind of the actress's visit and Buzios was turned into a star. Celebrities followed, buying land for luxurious holiday homes among the cacti and flame-red flamboyant trees. Ronaldo plays golf here and Mick Jagger and Keith Richards pitched up at Ferradura beach after their Rio concert in 2006.

In June 2003 Susan and Matt Marshall of San Diego bought a waterfront property in Ferradura, surrounded by the homes of Brazilian soap opera stars and affluent industrialists. "It's the most residential beach in Buzios, and I like that aspect of it," explained Susan Marshall, 47. "I like being on the beach but I also like being in the nature, too, up here on the hill."

The Marshalls' property overlooks a rocky channel that leads into the sweeping, sheltered bay. Ferradura, Portuguese for horseshoe, is one of the most exclusive locations on Buzios, which actually is a peninsula with a total of 23 beaches.

Matt Marshall's job as a project manager in the communications industry took the couple all over the world. It was while he was stationed in Rio de Janeiro, from 1999 to 2002, that they discovered Buzios, about 165 kilometers, or 102 miles, east of the city.

### Today in Properties

[Swiss market defying global downturn](#)

[Building a beach house in the snow](#)

[Once sizzling, Toronto feels sudden chill](#)

They were back in Buzios on vacation in spring 2003 when Susan Marshall starting looking for property. The couple had been thinking about buying a place that was big enough to rent a few rooms so Matt Marshall, now 42, could give up his job and travel less.

Susan Marshall recalls the moment she saw the house: "When I came through the front door here, the view was just breathtaking. The owner was traveling for a few days and invited us to stay in the house to see if we liked it while he was away. He was very smart because once I stayed here a few days, I wanted it and signed on the dotted line right away.

"The sea turtles, swimming by out front and into our little cove right here, sold me," she said. "They swim out here every day. We've even seen sting rays passing by."

Patricia Judice Araujo, sales director of the Rio-based real estate agency Judice & Araujo Imóveis, says Buzios is interesting because a lot of different kinds of properties are available. "It's possible to buy a very small two- to three-bedroom house for \$80,000 at Rasa, on the mainland at the end of the peninsula. Or \$1.4 million would get you an oceanfront property at Manguinhos on the peninsula," which Judice Araujo said includes 20,000 square meters, or 215,280 square feet, of land; a 600-square-meter, three-bedroom house; two guest houses with two bedrooms each, a housekeeper's house, two pools, an indoor pool and a fitness room.

Judice Araujo said she believed Buzios' properties would continue to do well in comparison to the United States and European housing markets. "The market in Buzios did suffer a little in October and November 08, according to the world crisis, but now it's high season and we're busy. I don't expect a huge loss in values in Buzios as it's such a well-known beach resort internationally; values might go down by 10 percent in 09 from April-May when the high season here ends."

The Marshalls paid around \$360,000 for the 1,100-square-meter property and another \$55,000 on various taxes and fees related to the purchase. As for the renovation, which took five years, they spent more than twice their estimated \$1 million budget as they virtually gutted the house, replacing the electrical system, plumbing, floors, roofs and walls.

The added expense also was due, in part, to Matt Marshall's landscaping, which became a labor of love, evolving and expanding after a retaining wall had to be reinforced. "When it rained, the mud would come down and run through the house and down the hill," Susan Marshall said. "None of the landscaping was planned or architecturally drawn. Once the retaining wall was put up, that began opening up areas, which we then decided to landscape."

Over the last five years those additions have included a labyrinth of terraces, paths, decks, waterfalls, caves, streams and pools spread over five levels on the way down to the cove.

The three-story house is roofed in terra cotta tiles, which keeps the interior cool. And large glass windows allow the light to flood in while providing a spectacular ocean panorama across the inlet.

The 630-square-meter house has a total of eight levels, five bedrooms with baths, a large open-plan living area, kitchen, office and a self-contained two-bedroom apartment for the live-in housekeepers.

The outside space includes two large veranda areas, one with a pool, and six terraces, one with a Jacuzzi and another with a small pool and waterfall. The Portuguese word for waterfall prompted the name for the guesthouse, the Cachoeira Inn.

Inside, the house is cozy despite its size. "We used as many natural Brazilian products as we could such as bamboo, coconut, cork, local stone, white crystal granite, wood and a sand-paste we concocted," Susan Marshall said. "This was mainly because of maintenance, because the sea air is so aggressive on paint, but also because we like the natural look."

"That's what I love about the tropics; the bamboo and coconut feel. It's lovely and warm when you use it in a house," she added.

The couple's hobbies include kayaking and snorkeling in the bay, and Matt Marshall enjoys surfing at nearby Geribá beach, host to an annual national surfing competition.

There also is no shortage of social life to enjoy, they say. "What I love about Buzios is that it is eclectic. There's every walk of life here. You have a completely international community," Matt Marshall said. "We go to lots of neighbors' parties. It's like the United Nations of Brazil where you might find six different languages being spoken."

Although local real estate agents have offered them \$3 million to \$4 million for the house, Marshall said they won't sell. "I think there are three prices on this home: the price of the actual land, of the actual structure we have put here and the price of our hard work - the time and effort we put into this dream. That's the priceless part. And it has no price tag."

- [E-Mail Article](#)
- [Listen to Article](#)
- [Printer-Friendly](#)
- [3-Column Format](#)
- [Translate](#)
- [Share Article](#)
- [Text Size](#) - +

- [E-Mail Article](#)
- [Listen to Article](#)
- [Printer-Friendly](#)
- [3-Column Format](#)
- [Translate](#)
- [Share Article](#)
- [Text Size](#) - +