

# GEORGE RANCH: ONE OF SONOMA'S BEST KEPT SECRETS



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## A GATED COMMUNITY OF 51 LUXURY HOMES 3 MILES WEST OF SONOMA PLAZA

Originally part of General Vallejo's Sonoma land grant, George Ranch entered modern history when, in 1942, it was acquired by James P. George.

Mr. George, having made his fortune in the oil and gas business, moved from

Southern California to the property, which he called home for over 40 years. He named it "The Lazy Bar G" and operated it as a long horn cattle ranch. The 1000 acres ranch is conveniently located 3 miles west of Sonoma Plaza.

In the late 1970's a group of Dutch investors expressed an interest in purchasing the George property. After some back and forth negotiation, Mr. George sold the Lazy Bar G Ranch to Damstraat Investors for \$2.1 million.

Damstraat Investors (named for a street in Amsterdam) subsequently invested a significant amount of capital to conduct site, soil, geological and archeological evaluations, which took a number of years to complete. Finally, in 1982 the County of Sonoma approved a major subdivision of 56 lots to be developed in four phases. During this time, due to financial difficulties, the property reverted to Centennial Savings and Loan.

The County endorsed the developer's vision of a low-density subdivision with underground utilities, private roads, scenic easements, and agricultural activities. Specifically, several large agricultural lots were delineated for cattle or sheep

grazing and vineyards. Home building lots were prepared with scenic easements to preserve views from the valley floor and easements for hiking and equestrian trails. The open and natural concept included a recreational area with a pond and clubhouse.

When marketing began in 1983-84 the George Ranch consisted of 51 residential building lots varying from 3 to 20 acres. Two large properties, each averaging several hundred acres, were reserved for agricultural purposes and scenic preservation. Three other lots were allocated to vineyard development. The Georges kept their original farmhouse and its 15 acres. This parcel was only later incorporated into the George Ranch.

As a California Community Interest Development, George Ranch is governed by its homeowners through a 5- person elected Board of Directors. The Board supervises several committees whose responsibilities include maintenance of common areas, management of the George Ranch Mutual Water Company, as well as the review and approval of building plans. Their mandate is to preserve the rural nature and aesthetic characteristics of the Ranch.



Today all but a few lots have been developed. George Ranch is a beautiful and interesting area that has fulfilled the original concept of a low-density subdivision with a rural character, agricultural emphasis, environmental sensitivity and largely secluded homes. Andy Ardila with the ACT Team at Compass, who currently has a listing within the HOA compound at 3430 Hawks Beard Rd for \$4.5M commented "George Ranch is an upscale wine country community like no other. All of the homes are situated on spacious lots distant from each other. If you are looking for a place with amazing views, abundant

hiking and biking trails and maximum privacy, George Ranch checks all the boxes."

Source of historical information: Danny Kaplan

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