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Printed from the Charlotte Observer - www.CharlotteObserver.com

Posted: Thursday, Aug. 21, 2014

SouthPark – Commerce booms where cattle once roamed.

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PUBLISHED IN: ENTERTAINMENT

Sometimes I wonder what Cameron Morrison, North Carolina's governor 1921-1925, might make of SouthPark, my stomping grounds since I moved to Charlotte in 2001.

In 1926, SouthPark was where Morrison had more than 4,000 turkeys, 5,000 chickens and a herd of Jersey cattle roaming free on his 3,000-plus-acre farm. And while his 14,000-square-foot manor house Morrocroft still stands, this lively part of town has changed a mite since his day.

I've got enviable city-wide access and amenity-laden living that suits me perfectly. My wife and I enjoy casual and fine dining, upscale shopping, recreational outlets and proximity to uptown – a 15-minute drive most times of the day.

Carmel Crescent, my home since moving here, is a nifty development of patio homes. No lawn care for me – I'm too busy. For those who want a lawn, try neighboring SouthPark developments such as Barclay Downs, Beverly Woods, Dovewood, Foxcroft, Governor's Square, Heydon Hall, Montibello, Morrocroft Estates, Stonecroft and Quail Hollow.

For many years, I've volunteered at nearby Quail Hollow Club, home to the Wells Fargo Championship since 2003. Top guns such as Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy and Rickie Fowler are all past champs. I'm psyched for 2017, when Quail Hollow is set to star as the site of the 99th PGA Championship.

Banging the ball on the clay courts at the Charlotte Indoor Tennis Center is easy on my aging knees. Two-time Australian Open winner and '80s tennis icon

- Favorite spots

The patios at Cowfish Sushi Burger Bar and Chuy's (both at 4310 Sharon Road): Al fresco eating (and drinking) are very popular in SouthPark, and these two places offer wide-ranging menus, great people-watching and handsome patios – side by side, off Sharon Road, adjacent to the mall. Cowfish's (www.thecowfish.com) outdoor space seats 80 comfortably, and 112 of your closest friends can join you for fresh air and Tex-Mex at Chuy's (www.chuys.com).

The "Tajma Teeter" (6701 Morrison Blvd.): The Harris Teeter grocery store at Morrocroft gets its nickname because it's the largest store in the entire chain. Great artisanal cheese selections, a dry-age meat locker for hand-cut ribeye and a deli where you get to taste EVERYTHING. What could be better? 704-364-1245.

Regal Phillips Place Stadium 10 (6911 Phillips Place Court): A first-rate theater with extra-comfy seating and an occasional art-house flick. 704-556-0896. Stop over at neighboring Pinkberry (6908 Phillips Place Court C) for a tangy pre- or post-film fro-yo. www.pinkberry.com.

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Johan Kriek runs a top-flight academy there, training future stars. He's always willing to share battle stories about former contemporaries like Jimmy Connors and Michael Chang – as well as give me a pointer or two.

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Many of my pals hang out at the “J,” an affectionate nickname for Charlotte’s Jewish Community Center. The vast facility is located in a 55-acre tract known as Shalom Park. “J” members (almost half are non-Jews) can choose from Pilates, yoga, weight training, basketball, aquatics, softball, soccer and a number of fitness and recreational activities.

The “J” is an active community gathering spot and home to the Charlotte Jewish Film Festival, community theater, a vibrant senior center and a wide variety of cultural and education programs.

For all the midday and evening dining in SouthPark, the real discovery is what a great breakfast hub it’s become.

Another Broken Egg in Morrison Place tees up “biscuit beignets”; Sunday family standby Original House of Pancakes (at Sharon Corners) numbers pancake varieties in the dozens; and Piedmont Town Center’s Terrace Café has Red Velvet Waffles and S’mores French Toast to satisfy the kid in all of us.

SouthPark’s eponymous mall is of course the region’s gold standard, with more than 1.6 million square feet and hundreds of retailers.

But don’t overlook SouthPark’s Specialty Shops on the Park, home to fine linens at Bedside Manor, the Italian tailored look at Amina Rubinacci or Pickles & Ice Cream for maternity fashion.

Some of my wife’s favored retailers include Mole Hole gifts at Colony Place, Mephisto Shoes at Sharon Corners and Phillips Place stationer Paper Source. For handmade jewelry and funky art, try FABO coffee and art bar at Quail Corners.

While Cameron Morrison may not recognize his property today, there’s no doubt he’d be proud of its evolution.



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