

Fostering the Good Life on **HYCO**

BY MONICA YOUNG
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID WILSON





Bo Foster knows a thing or two about coastal real estate. With a home in Myrtle Beach, an octagonal shaped glass beauty on Figure Eight Island and his latest venture on Hyco Lake, Foster calls his real estate holdings as “tangible investments.”

“What I like to do with my money is have something to eat in, sleep in and play in. I avoid the stock market,” the Burlington-based third generation textile mill owner says.

“When I was a little boy, my father bought a Figure Eight lot for \$5,000.”

Despite beautiful seaside homes on the coast, Hyco Lake has become the primary secondary home, an oxymoron of sorts, really. Because of the lake’s proximity to Burlington, Bo, his wife Janet and 16-year-old son Bo-Bo spend half of every week at Hyco. In the summers, Bo commutes back and forth to Burlington.

This is the family’s second home on Hyco Lake. The home, purchased from a physician out of Durham, began as an investment by Bo Foster and his partner Johnny Haymore of Haymore Landscape and Garden Center out of Danville. However, when Janet saw the pos-

sibilities, she fell in love with the house and setting. So the Fosters moved around the cover to another.

Even though Hyco’s water level rarely fluctuates more than eight inches, it was lower than usual when Foster and Haymore began working on the house. That enabled them to build a killer seawall unlike any other on the lake. It’s known as “The Great Wall of Hyco,” stretching majestically around the 4,000 feet of shoreline.

“It’s the prettiest seawall on Hyco,” says Judy LaRue of Pointer Realty, friend and realtor to the Fosters.

Johnny Haymore stuck his business sign on the seawall once it was completed.

“People have been calling Johnny and saying that they want a seawall just like it. They find out how much it’ll cost, and change their mind. I’m glad I didn’t know how much it was going to be when we started it or I probably wouldn’t have done it,” says Bo Foster.

The Great Wall of Hyco is simply great. With an understated elegance, its beauty appreciated most at dusk when the lightscaping illuminates the stonework and the lush expanse of grass running above it. Since the lake level was low, they were able to dredge (with permission granted from the lake authority and Corps of Engineers) in front of the property and transfer the dirt above the 420 line – the invisible line on lakefront property that is under the jurisdiction of the lake authority rather than the property owner.

Two hundred loads of topsoil later, the back lawn (or the front if traveling by boat) looks as if God made it level and smooth to start with. In reality, the lake view from the house was completely obscured from the forest of trees. The Fosters had to receive permission to remove the trees as well.

They rebuilt the boathouse, tweaked the interiors courtesy of Janet’s good taste and trips to Boone Furniture & Hardware, a family-owned business that began in Gibsonville.

Bo, a big believer in toys, recently added a new 21-foot Donzi to his fleet. It replaced a 27-foot Formula that Bo says was just too much boat for Hyco. He has it for sale in Charlotte.

If you aren’t familiar with Donzis, they are a synonym for fast. Sleek and svelte, Bo has a 22 Shelby GT, one of the few made. He ordered it from Tennessee in May and has been flying fast over Hyco ever since. The deep V-hull keeps it slicing through the water as easy as a sharp knife sliding through cake. Named for the racing legend Carroll Shelby, the Donzi has midnight blue body with two classic Shelby stripes that look like the proverbial icing.

Bo’s wavy hair straightens and flies back as he pushes his new boat up to 76 mph, an easy speed with a 496 Mercruiser engine with high output. Fast, then faster, the boat shoots over



the water, going airborne with a quick hit to rollers on a ski course.

“This isn’t a boat where you can have a soft drink in one hand. You’ve got to keep both hands on the wheel or one on the wheel and one on the throttle,” says Bo. “It’s very responsive.”

Bo describes his boating hair-do as looking like a “bird’s nest in a hurricane.”

“You know, I’m a pretty good looking guy when I’m not going so fast,” he laughs.

Bo-Bo has his own boat, complete with all of the documentation from North Carolina to be a teen-age boater. His mom doesn’t worry about Bo-Bo, who both parents describe as responsible. After all, he grew up riding dirt bikes with training wheels. Bo-Bo’s boat is Team Edition 210 Air Nautique, perfect for wakeboarding with his friends.

Since the power plant is nearby, the water is warm enough to ski earlier than most realize at Hyco. Bo-Bo takes advantage of the generous head-start and wakeboards as often as he can, wet-suit or not.

Janet, on the other hand, likes to watch her boys play, sometimes venturing out on the Jet Ski.

“My preference is to be still. I prefer bird-



watching and people-watching,” she says.

As for Bo’s new Donzi, she chides that it either needs seatbelts or that she needs a helmet when and if, if being a key word, she joins

Bo on the boat again.

Their joy at Hyco is just being together and enjoying the slow life. Bo-Bo shares that his favorite part of the lake is sharing his home with family and friends. Since there are limited dining options at Hyco, lunch may be tomato sandwiches that Janet makes the old-fashioned way. For dinner, the family grills out most of the time or they’ll boat to the one waterfront restaurant.

On the way home, Bo trolls for populated docks. If a light is on, he’ll stop by, introduce himself, make a new friend. He’s the friendly sort, the kind with a fast boat for fun, not to speed by people or through life.

Janet, whose parents were teachers and ran a summer camp outside of Burlington when she was growing up, explains the appeal of Hyco for her family, “Hyco is just very convenient and very family-oriented. It’s a small lake and quiet.”

It’s growing, though, as more people are discovering what a gem Hyco is.

While that’s good for business, Judy LaRue notes, it’s also good for friendships. Friends like the Fosters have been a side benefit of selling real estate at Hyco, a lake that’s really just a small town with water in the middle. 🛥️