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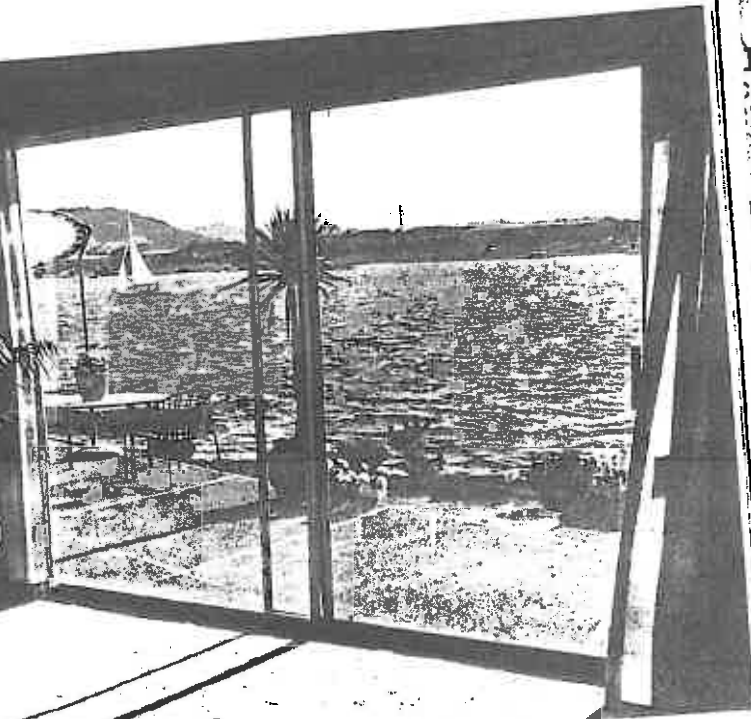
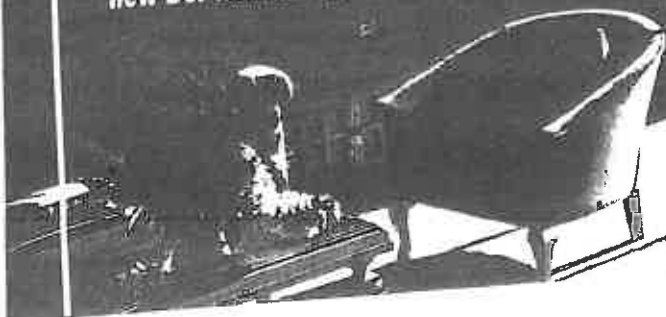
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*A private dock in every
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of living in California's
new Bel Marin Keys*

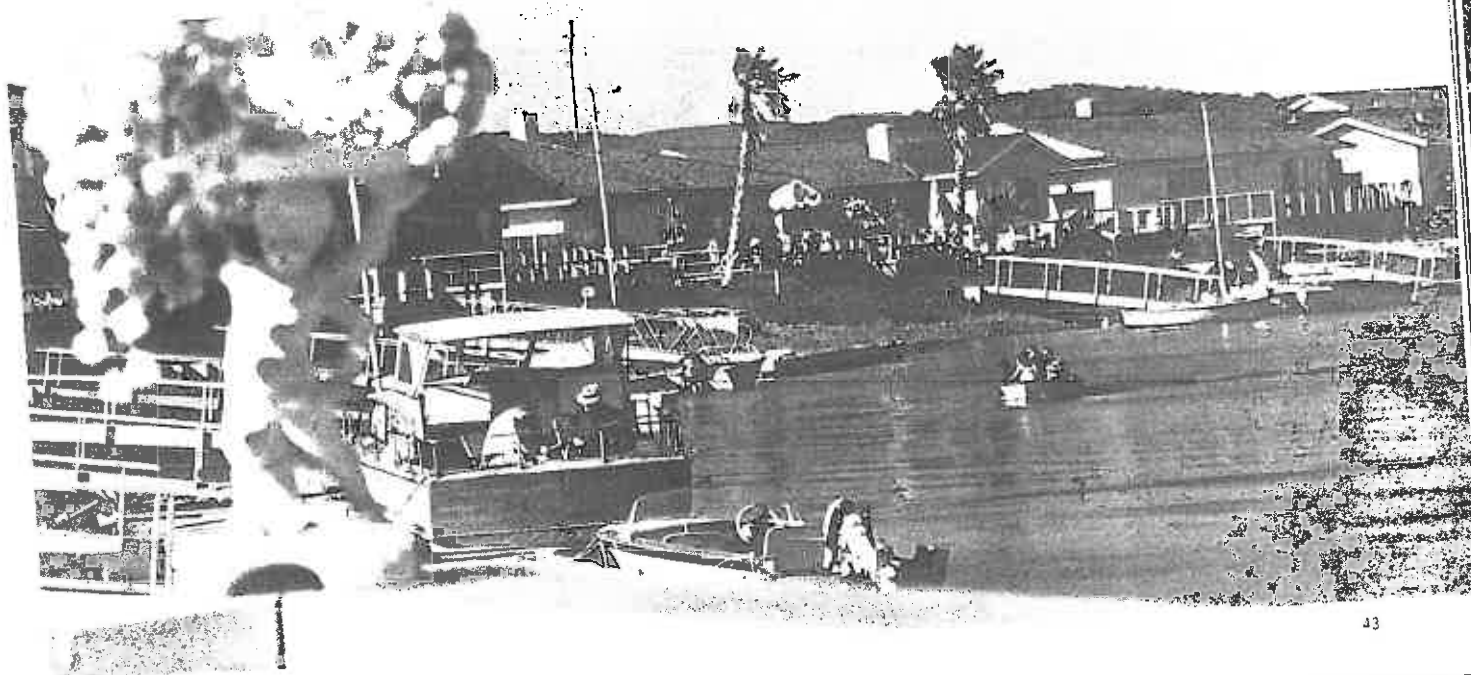


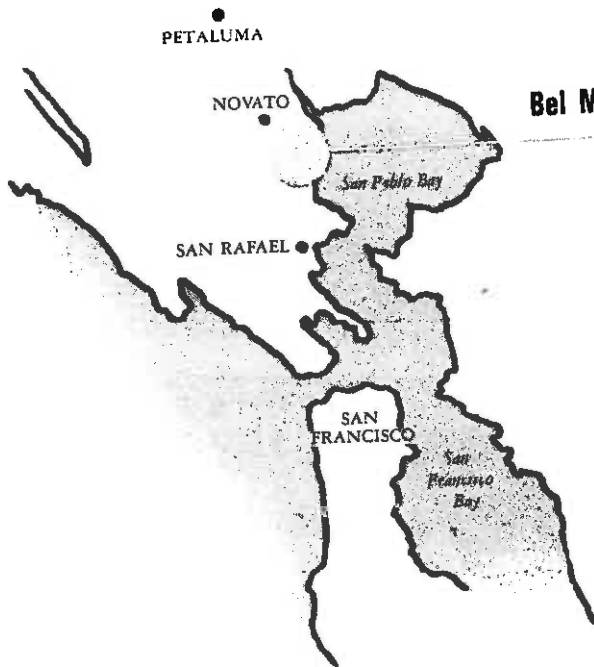
A COMMUNITY FOR BOATMEN

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY HAL PAINTER

□ That girl in the mini-bikini last seen paddling her fiberglass surfboard into the sunset, that was your teenage daughter making passage across the lagoon, hoping to catch the boat to Pleasure Island. She's not running away from home and you haven't for a moment worried whether she's going to Pleasure Island for an all-night beer bust, or worse. In fact, you're glad; it's your wife's turn to chaperone this weekend's Pleasure Island slumber party with twenty other girls from the neighborhood. This leaves you free to haul the El

Continued on next page





Bel Marin Keys...

... daytime temperatures in the 80's or 90's with cool evenings, 36 inches average yearly rainfall, swimming and boating galore, breezes for air conditioning—all just a short car ride from San Francisco

A COMMUNITY FOR BOATMEN

Continued

Toro for a coat of paint and spend an easy evening fishing from the dock. Your son won't be home till after dark. He's gone for a cruise to San Francisco Bay aboard the neighbor's 40-footer, after spending the morning waterskiing with the family two doors down the street.

Such is life at Bel Marin Keys, where the developers have created a kind of communal pad for boating nuts, one that's got everything from a private dock in every backyard to virtual deep-water access to Tahiti straight out of the livingroom.

Houses start at \$40,000, peak up to \$48,900 and more, depending on what you add—private dock included, of course. Down payment is about \$10,000, with taxes some \$900 a year. Judging by the prices, you might expect the Keys to be inhabited by retired executives. Far from it. The residents' average age is 39; teenagers by far outnumber the younger set.

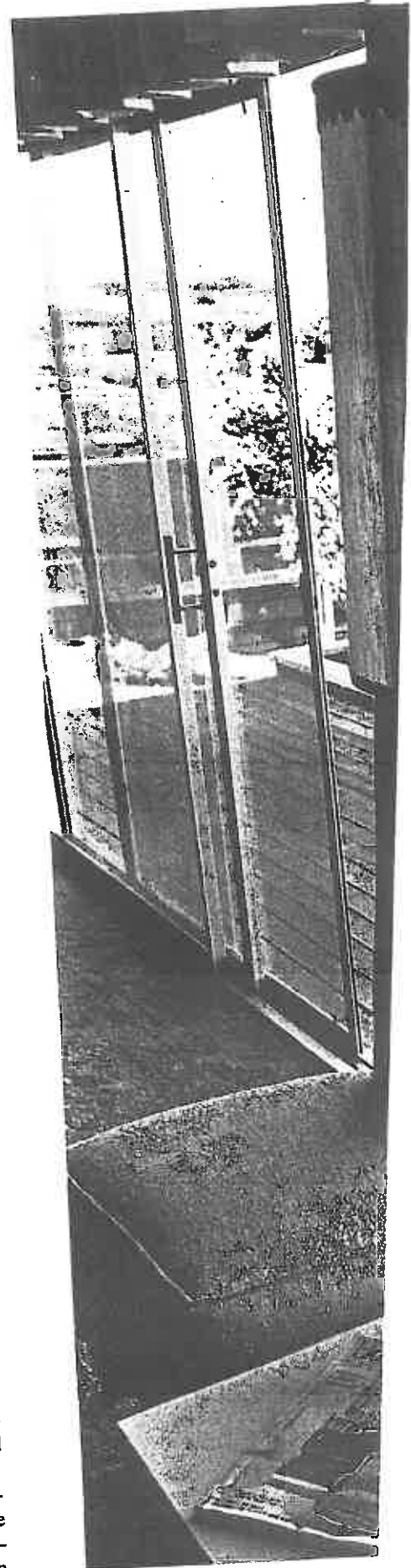
If it sounds very California, it is. The developers outdid themselves making it that way. Here, 2200 acres of farmland are undergoing magical transformation a short distance from San Francisco's Golden Gate. The waters of the bay mix with the Petaluma River to fill acres of man-made lagoons, little more than half an

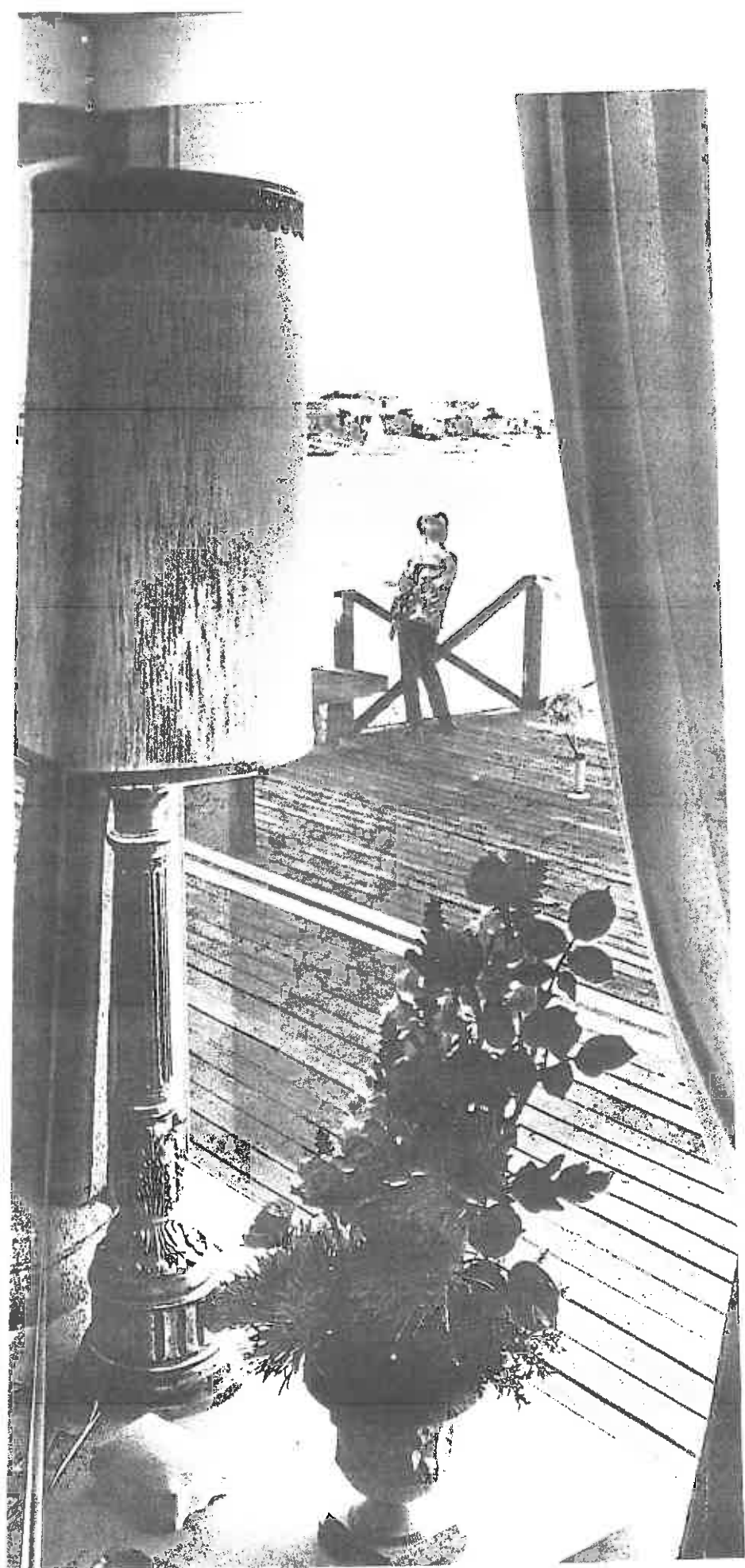
hour's commute from downtown San Francisco. The sunny Marin hills make a perfect backdrop, as if the developer had painted them in to create a picture so Californian it would pain a prospective buyer not to sign the contract.

At the moment, after three years of pioneering, Bel Marin Keys has drawn 231 families—all avowed boating enthusiasts. Most are refugees from the Bay Area's high-and-dry suburbs and compacted urban areas where family boating is of necessity a weekend affair. But here, in a quilt of lagoons and waterways where the family runabout is practically moored to the bedpost, boating is something you come home to after your day at the office. Year-round vacationland California style—this is the call of the Bel Marin Keys.

Says one father of two teenagers: "We came here so the kids would have something to do without having to run in the streets. All of us like boating and swimming, and when I get home from work, the kids and I go for a sail, any day of the week—swim, fish, maybe just horse around on the dock and soak up the sun."

For most Bel Marin residents, setting off on a cruise, whether to the bay or beyond, isn't much different—easier, but not much different—than





the start of most cruises. Planning, packing, getting the kids together—it's much the same as it is anywhere else. But it's returning to home port where the picture changes. Home port is home. It's only steps to the patio, hot showers, warm beds and maybe a quick, hot snack in the all-electric kitchen. It doesn't cost dad a dime in dockage fees (forgetting for the moment the mortgage payment, which averages—taxes and insurance included—\$320 a month) whether he's got a 50-footer or a 15-foot runabout.

Water skiing is big here. The lagoons are marked off with floats a good distance from shore for the protection of swimmers, and the Keys, not surprisingly, have several resident champs who offer the youngsters all the free instruction they can stand up to. The 110 members of the newly formed Bel Marin Yacht Club have sponsored for Keys' youngsters, among other things, a ten-week course in sailing and boat safety. Water safety is understandably a prime community interest, what with every backyard rising out of one of the Keys' two completed lagoons.

The lagoons are man-made and nowhere less than 600 feet across: the neighbor across the way can't see into the family livingroom—at least not without binoculars. But residents here claim it isn't necessary to peek into the neighbor's window to keep up with what the Joneses are doing. The Joneses, the Smiths or whoever they are who live on the other side of the lagoon, are more often than not good friends. Community spirit, the multi-family picnic and Sunday cruise, go over big here; the kids swim, boat and play together—and ride the bridle trails tandem. There are seventeen miles of trails that wind into the Marin hills to link up with over seventy miles of scenic horseways.

A good deal of horse sense has been used to provide the Keys with the best of everything, from boats and yachting to horses and golfing. Yet to come—but much in the plans—is an 18-hole golf course and club, a shopping center accessible by boat and a rod and gun club (the adjoining fields are already well-stocked with quail and pheasant); even now father and son fish off the dock in the

Continued on page 110

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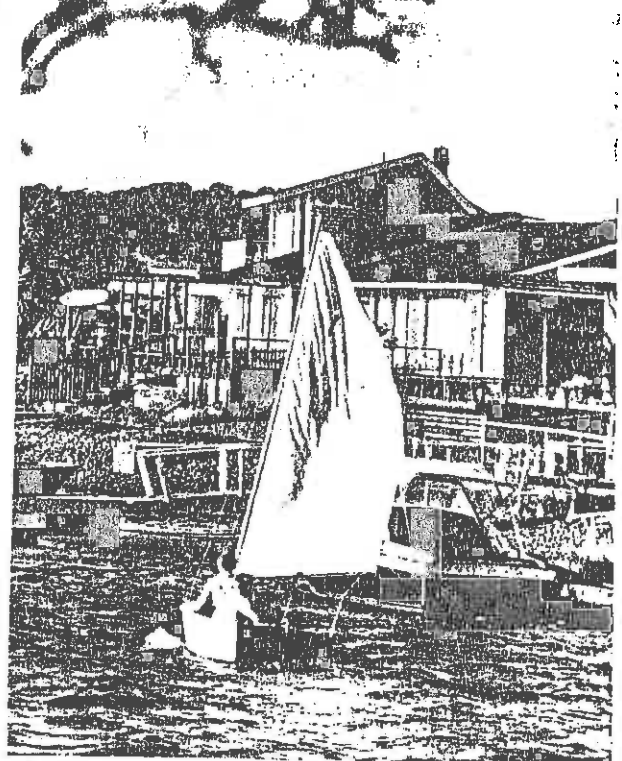
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Bel Marin Keys is located on 2200 acres of farmland near the Petaluma River, little more than half an hour's commute from downtown San Francisco

A COMMUNITY FOR BOATMEN

Continued from page 45

backyard in hopes of catching a striped bass—if not as big as the record 21-pounder, at least as tasty.

No one planned the area's unique air conditioner, but just the same, it works, every day when the westerly pipes up. Despite summer and mid-day temperatures in the 80s and 90s, not one house, it is said, contains an air conditioner. The never-failing afternoon breeze does the job nicely, and the evenings are perennially cool.

Thirty-six inches of rain is the yearly average. The winters are sunny if not balmy, and a swim in January appeals to many a teenager who has watched the over-30 set of the local Polar Swim Club plunge in for the annual once-around-the-lagoon.

The point is, Marin Keys seems to have a lot to offer everyone who likes the water—hot, cold, or with a boat on it.

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