



Welcome to  
ARVERNE by the SEA

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## New Development Revitalizes Rockaways Community February 14, 2005

### Shazia Khan

One seaside community in Queens is undergoing a long-awaited renaissance.

"When they picked our name out of the lottery, it's like a true lottery, you won the lotto," said Angel Guivas.

Angel and his wife Marisol may not have won a million dollars but they sure got a million dollar view. The couple recently moved into a new home in the up-and-coming community Arverne-by-the-Sea, right next to Rockaway Beach.

"It's like having the excitement of New York City with the serenity of the beach," Marisol said. "I mean it's perfect."

Dozens of homes have already popped by on the 100-plus acres slated for the \$800 million development. Many more two-family homes and condos are expected to be built in the next five years, and there is already a waiting list.

"Arverne-by-the-Sea will be 2,300 homes when its finished," said developer Les Lerner.

The land was once home to a popular resort, but a fire in 1922 left it in ruins. The community bounced back a few decades later only to suffer a great decline and be designated an urban renewal area by the city.

Many years and several proposals later, the city and community-backed developers, the Beechwood Organization and the Benjamin Companies, broke ground in 2003 for Arverne-by-the-Sea.

This long-awaited project has been met with enthusiasm from home buyers. A two-family house is selling in the mid \$500,000 range.

"To be a pioneer, to be in on something at the ground level will automatically yield a benefit," said Wanda Jones Robinosn, one of the new home buyers.

There are plans for a supermarket and a marina. And since it is a growing community, there are growing needs, such as better transportation and more retail shops and schools.

But residents are confident more amenities will come in time.

"Some people just say there is nothing there, there's just a house, and is it safe," Marisol said. "We say just go in. It's going to be really nice. You don't want to miss out."

Waterfront property is often a great long-term investment, but some of the new homeowners have more immediate plans.

"My friends are saying, 'Let me know when I can come out, and I'll bring a bathing suit, and I'll bring my surf board,'" said Lenny Rosenblatt, another new Arverne resident. "And I say, 'Hey, that's why I'm here.'"

