

8 Lively Havens With Clean Air and Green Space

WHERE *to* RETIRE

JULY/AUGUST 2007
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AMERICA'S 100 BEST

MASTER-PLANNED
COMMUNITIES

Getting a Home
That Suits You

The New Scene
In Communities

Steps to Making
A Stress-Free Move

Field of Dreams:
Great Towns
In the Heartland

US \$4.95/CAN \$5.95

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Do you want to retire to a quiet haven in the woods, or a walkable neighborhood within a city? Do you prefer a small community or a large one with a collection of neighborhoods, clubhouses and amenity centers? Do you have a tight housing budget or is the sky the limit?

Within our 2007 selection of America's 100 Best Master-Planned Communities, you will find a great diversity, in places from Florida to Washington, Massachusetts to California and Wisconsin to Texas.

For all their variety, though, these communities share a commonality: a neighborly ambience that many residents say they had found lacking where they lived and worked many years previously. Residents say they feel a "true sense of community" in their new homes.

At Shorewood Glen by Del Webb in Shorewood, IL, Cathy and Dennis Schley, both 61, feel revitalized by all their new friendships and activities in the community, Cathy says. "I've never been so happy," she says, adding that her husband feels the same.

Tom and Pat Griffin, both 64, relocated from Troy, NY, to Coquina Crossing in Elkton, FL. "It's a real neighborhood. You know the people who live on your street and there's a lot of interaction," Tom says.

Besides a *joie de vivre* throughout, there are some other common threads among the selection, some trends that are new and others that have grown stronger since we saw them beginning in 2005, when we last published our 100 Best selections.

■ Even pooches get recognition now.

The latest amenity: dog parks. A number of communities now cater to owners of pooches, with enclosed parks where residents can take their dogs and let them run free. While the dogs play, the residents socialize.

■ Spas are enhancing fitness facilities.

With working baby boomers fueling a tremendous growth in day spas, communities are looking to keep those people happy as they become buyers. Though the number is small, more communities have added full spa facilities and this trend is likely to grow bigger as empty nesters relocate. Instead of a full spa, some communities

have a massage room in fitness facilities so that a therapist can be scheduled as desired.

■ Communities are getting greener.

Communities are more dedicated to preserving the natural beauty and habitat of the land, with green spaces going far beyond golf courses. Many neighborhoods are nature-oriented, setting aside preserves and wetlands and creating parks and trails to enjoy the habitat. Some developments are reserving half or more of their land as open space. And there are green homes. Leading the way, Florida has several certified green communities that are ecofriendly and have homes that meet or surpass green-building standards.

■ These places are made for walking.

Nearly every community has walking and biking trails, some with more than 20 miles to explore. Sidewalks are common, particularly in the growing number of new urbanism neighborhoods with homes that have front porches and small yards. "You sit on the porch and chat with people as they walk by," says Dianne Schirtzinger, 59, who relocated with her husband, Jim, 61, to Baldwin Park, a city neighborhood in Orlando.

Additionally, more communities have town centers, reminiscent of yesteryear's small towns, where people can walk from their neighborhoods to a theater, bistro, coffee bar, post office and the clubhouse and amenity facilities. Amphitheaters and plazas are the settings for outdoor entertainment.

In our 2007 selection, 31 states are represented, going far beyond the Sun Belt to include places in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Montana and Wyoming. While our list has many places that have repeatedly been in the 100, this time we have about 30 newcomers. We have communities built by major names in the homebuilding industry and ones developed by families who have been stewards of the land for several generations, slowly creating their dream place to live.

We do have a few caveats: Home prices are subject to constant change. We give the range of base housing prices, but these likely will rise. Also, some lots command premiums, thus increasing the base prices noted.

**WHERE TO RETIRE
PRESENTS**

**AMERICA'S
100
BEST**

**MASTER-PLANNED
COMMUNITIES**

*Diverse places coast to coast share
a neighborly ambience*

By Mary Lu Abbott

Fawn Lake Spotsylvania, Virginia



FAWN LAKE

The lure: Amid a dense forest with 7.4 miles of shoreline on Fawn Lake, this community is a serene retreat of intimate neighborhoods linked by nature trails. Located near historic Fredericksburg, it's a certified wildlife sanctuary, preserving natural woodlands and wetlands. Boating, fishing and other water sports are popular pursuits. Golfers tee off on an Arnold Palmer course, which offers a country club with dining and other amenities. At the community's lakeside club complex, residents enjoy swimming, tennis and a variety of activities, clubs, events and classes.

What residents say: The community's namesake lake caught the attention of retired Col. Tony Wilbur, 69, and his wife, Judy, 66, who have a sailboat. "It looked like the lake was great for boating and kayaking," Tony says. They had retired in Annapolis, MD, but wanted a newer house with less maintenance and a place to enjoy their boat. "We had a great builder," he says of their new home at Fawn Lake, adding that it's an active community and a kayak club is among the interest groups.

Prices: \$500,000-\$3 million for single-family homes.

Status: 625 homes built of 1,398 planned on 2,300 acres.

Age-restricted: No.

Information: Fawn Lake, 12201 Longstreet Drive, Spotsylvania, VA 22553, (800) 435-8020 or www.fawnlakevirginia.com.

WHERE *to* RETIRE

July 1, 2007

Mr. Justin Kirkland, Marketing Director
Fawn Lake
12201 Longstreet Drive
Spotsylvania, VA 22553

Dear Mr. Kirkland:

Congratulations! I am pleased to inform you that *Where to Retire* magazine has designated Fawn Lake as one of America's 100 Best Master-Planned Communities.

During an eight-month selection process, our editors reviewed several hundred candidates across the country. Your community is among an elite group of developments that offer today's retirees a well-rounded, active lifestyle.

Where to Retire applauds the positive impact that each of our 100 Best has made on the economic health of the towns and cities in which they are located. All of the communities are leaders in providing a high quality of life to those who are embarking on new adventures in retirement.

We extend our heartiest congratulations to you, your employees and your residents, and we wish you continued success.

Sincerely,



Karen Northridge
Publisher, *Where to Retire*