

When, Where, Why and How:
10 Steps to Your Retirement Eden

8 Northeast Havens:
Colonial Charm Within Big-City Reach

Roads to Retirement:
Georgia's Lakes, Forests

Where to Retire

The Authority on Retirement Relocation

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50 THE SHORT LIST

50 BEST MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S.

The Short List: 50 Best Master-Planned Communities in the United States

BY VAN SHERIDAN

Residents of the master-planned communities on Where to Retire's top 50 list speak of "a sense of belonging" and "a wonderful lifestyle change" when describing what they love about their neighborhoods. One says: "Healthwise and socially, I've never been better." Profiled in the coming pages are developments that daily earn such compliments from their residents. Our eighth biennial edition dedicated to the best-of-the-best in these communities is the result of painstaking work, interviews and research by Where to Retire staffers, who evaluated hundreds of developments to come up with these 50, in 17 states, from coast to coast. Keep reading for short profiles on all 50, complete with interviews from residents, who enjoy touting why there's no place like *their* home.

These active adults utilize the neighborhoods' physical health boosters, from swimming pools and golf courses to walking trails, tennis courts, spas and exercise rooms. But the brain has its own need for nurture, and for that, the residents are joining groups that take art or cooking classes, explore historic sites and enjoy concerts on the community lawn — all fodder for spice-of-life friendships.

More demands for well-rounded, healthy living is a trend, leading these communities to offer more diverse options. Once defined almost solely by golf and clubhouses, developments today provide amenities ranging from energy-saving homes to dog parks to easy access to mass transit. Homebuyers' interests "differ from one person to the next, so one size no longer fits all," says Amber Martin, the active-adult brand director for the Valencia communities in Florida.

Some developments simulate a small-town ambience by adopting the new urbanism philosophy of "live-work-play" — mixing homes, recreation and commercial businesses within their gates, allowing retirees to find part-time employment in their neighborhood. Many who live in Utah's Daybreak, for example, earn extra money at the medical center on the grounds.

Behind all the trends is a renewed optimism about housing and the economy. About 1,000 people attended the recent grand opening of Valencia Cove, an active-adult neighborhood in Boynton Beach, FL. In two hours, developer GL Homes had 72 contracts. To avoid a bidding war, it held a lottery to see who would get first picks.

"There is a pent-up demand, and homes are moving quickly," says Bob Rademacher, vice president of Kolter Homes, which is planning its fourth active-adult community.

Other notes about our 50 Best list: Because you asked for it, this report for the first time includes homeowners association fees. We've given the range of base home prices, but they're subject to change. The handy chart on pages 84 and 85 shows how each stacks up with popular amenities. And on page 86, we showcase five longtime honorees in the Hall of Fame.





FAIRFIELD GLADE

FAIRFIELD GLADE, TENNESSEE



> **THE LURE** Fairfield Glade, between Knoxville and Nashville, enjoys mild summer and winter temperatures, attracting outdoor lovers looking to play year-round. Anglers fish for largemouth bass, catfish and yellow perch at 11 lakes — man-made and spring-fed. Two have full-service marinas with boat rentals and white-sand beaches. There are 90 holes of golf, pickleball courts and 12 tennis courts, including four indoors. Wellness complexes have pools and state-of-the-art exercise machines. A recreation center has a full-length basketball court, crafts workshop and conference hall. Ten miles of trails and paths snake past diverse neighborhoods, forests and rivers. Several dining spots are in the community as well as a shopping area with a grocery.

> **WHAT RESIDENTS SAY** "People here are ready and willing to help," says semiretired real estate broker Ann Cox, 65. "Strangers will stop by to bring you soup if they hear you're not feeling well. Neighbors will form small groups to shop for you or bring you things that you might need if you're elderly." She and husband Charles, 86, moved from the Washington, DC, area in 2007. Visiting family members take advantage of the equestrian facility, where they can rent a horse by the hour. "At Mirror Lake, there is a small amphitheater where residents gather for cookouts and music," Ann says.

> **PRICES** \$190,000s-\$590,000s for attached townhomes and single-family homes.

> **MONTHLY HOMEOWNER FEE** \$47.50.

> **STATUS** About 5,000 homes built of 7,000 planned on 12,000 acres.

> **AGE-RESTRICTED** No.

> **INFORMATION** Fairfield Glade, 7012 Peavine Road, Fairfield Glade, TN 38558, (800) 383-7600 or FairfieldGlade.net.