

The Ridges offers luxury community within Summerlin — PHOTOS

By STAN HANEL REAL ESTATE MILLIONS

May 16, 2015 - 2:22am

The Ridges village in Summerlin was conceived in 2000 as an exclusive, guard-gated luxury community that would include custom and semicustom homes built on 793 acres, and be at the master-planned development's far western boundary. Jack Nicklaus designed the Bear's Best Golf Course as the community's centerpiece, adjoined by Club Ridges, a recreational gathering place for active residents.

When Real Estate Millions arrived at The Ridges sales office for a visit, cyclists from the 2015 Tour de Summerlin bicycle race were swarming and encircling the village. More than 700 participants rode the racecourse and set a new attendance record.

The Ridges is home to seven custom neighborhoods and four high-end production home neighborhoods. Two custom neighborhoods and one high-end production neighborhood are left to develop in the Summerlin luxury community.

Quail, jackrabbits and tortoises make their habitats within The Ridges. And wild burros, bobcats and other animals sometimes wander into the community from the bordering desert.

"A coyote pressed his nose against the window of my office one day," said Elle Gaensslen, sales and marketing manager for custom lots at The Ridges.

The first custom-home community developed was Promontory Ridge, with large lots approaching an acre in size, at the village's highest levels of elevation. Promontory Pointe rises to 3,200 feet above sea level and hosts a panoramic view for community residents, encompassing Red Rock Canyon to the west and the Las Vegas Valley to the east.

The Strip skyline is distinctive from Promontory Pointe, but dwarfed by the vast Mojave Desert encircling it and extending further east for miles.

A design review board from The Howard Hughes Corp. provides guidance to custom homebuilders and architects about the overall theme of each Summerlin village and the parameters defining them. There are height restrictions, suggested color schemes, a recommended selection of desert-friendly plants and a general approach to designing homes that encourages harmony with the surrounding desert flora, terrain and wildlife.

Because of its closeness to the desert's edge, home lighting intensity is also reviewed in each architectural design plan. There are no streetlights in The Ridges, just low-energy path lights that provide enough illumination for pedestrians and bicyclists to follow defined trails and winding streets at night.

The Ridges' common areas are populated with palo verde, red yucca, mesquite, multitrunk African sumac, regal mist ground shrub, lantana and deer grass. The landscaping guidelines for the newest Azure community offer a list of 44 trees, 52 shrubs, 15 ground cover plants, nine accent plants, 11 grasses and seven vines.

Only eight types of plants are prohibited in The Ridges because of their incompatibility with the native desert. These include palm trees, olive trees and common Bermuda grass.

Most mansions at The Ridges feature desert-friendly plants in social areas but minimize plants along the homes' sides and rear. Many owners prefer an infinity-edge pool in the backyard that flows into an open, unobstructed view of the desert.

To blend with the surrounding landscape, the design review board encourages a desert-contemporary architectural approach to creating a custom home. However, there are many design choices within this wide-open style, from the traditional desert home forms of Frank Lloyd Wright to ultramodern architecture that can employ exotic materials and building techniques.

The overall flow of each custom home design should use horizontal, sloped and curved lines that conform each building shape to the local terrain. Colors and construction materials should also be desert-appropriate.

Real Estate Millions challenged Sun West Custom Homes owner Daniel Coletti to provide three different architectural designs that he had built for The Ridges. Together, his three images showcase a wide spectrum of desert-contemporary home designs within the same guidelines outlined by The Ridges design review board.

“Design trends are driven by our customers’ choices. However, to make each design unique, I try to add something new to every custom home I build,” Coletti said. “One idea for my own home at The Ridges was to push out the boundaries between outdoor and indoor living spaces.”

Luxury Homes of Las Vegas owner Kenneth Lowman has brokered real estate transactions within The Ridges since 2004. His company has three active home listings within the village and Lowman himself has purchased a custom lot on which to develop his own luxury home.

“The Ridges have about 450 custom homes, the highest concentration anywhere within the Las Vegas Valley, which makes living here a unique experience,” Lowman said. “Amenities at The Ridges include the proximity to both Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and the Downtown Summerlin shops, the Bear’s Best Golf Course, the security of a guard-gated community and the spectacular views.”

Ivan Sher, co-owner of Shapiro and Sher Group, a luxury real estate sales team, agreed with Lowman.

“The Ridges is the most expensive luxury community on the west side of Las Vegas, with property values as much as 25 percent greater per square foot compared with other custom-home communities.”

Howard Hughes became the rustic desert region’s landowner in 1952. He envisioned the area as a potential development site for Hughes Aircraft Co., but the ground remained untouched until 1988.

The Summa Corp., predecessor to The Howard Hughes Corp., swapped real estate with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to help create and preserve the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

The developers named their new master-planned community Summerlin in honor of Howard Hughes’ paternal grandmother, Jean Amelia Summerlin.

To gain access to this remote property from Las Vegas, construction began on Summerlin Parkway in 1988, aiming to connect the main artery of U.S. Highway 95 from Rainbow Boulevard to Town Center Drive.

The first Hills Village was constructed in 1990 and included a planned park, an elementary school and a

middle school. The Hills village was partitioned into smaller communities for phased development that shared common areas, including a golf course, integrated business park, library and performing arts center.

Over the following decade, as residents moved into their new homes, they created a demand surge that drove the development of new Summerlin villages almost every year — The Pueblo (1992), The Trails (1993), The Crossing (1994), The Canyons (1995), The Arbors (1996), Summerlin Centre (1997), The Willows (1997), and The Gardens (2000). These development projects not only included elementary schools and parks, but also a new high school, medical center, churches, larger retail centers, a country club, a J.W. Marriott Spa Resort and even a ballet company.

For more information about The Ridges village, visit <http://summerlin.com/the-ridges/>

Copyright ©Las Vegas Review-Journal, Inc. 2016. All rights reserved. • [Privacy Policy](#)