

Arizona Foothills' Best Places to Live 2014

Written by Melissa Larsen

Thursday, 28 August 2014 18:05 - Last Updated Thursday, 02 October 2014 16:35



When it comes to choosing a home, there is certainly no shortage of luxurious neighborhoods in the Valley to consider, with new ones breaking ground every day. But which to choose? Take a peek at communities—most with a golf focus—that are worthy of calling home.

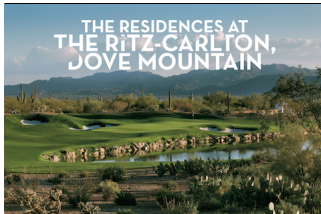


Superstition Mountain Golf & Country Club - A Taste of Europe

In the quiet, tranquil area of Gold Canyon and at the foot of the Superstition Mountains, Superstition Mountain Golf & Country Club features European-style neighborhoods with award-winning homes spanning 930 acres. Residential options range from fully furnished villas to sprawling estates.

Join The Club

The club, the center of activity at Superstition Mountain decked in lovely Old Worldstyle architecture, offers both golf and social memberships. (The club returned to private status just this year.) Prospector and Lost Gold golf courses offer 36 holes of spectacular Nicklaus golf, playable for all level of golfers. Dining, a sports center and a wellness program is also available at the club. superstitionmountain.com.



The Residences at The Ritz-Carlton Dove Mountain - The Suite Life

With four beautiful, distinct neighborhoods, homesites that can span up to seven spacious acres and flexible yet upscale design options, variety is most certainly the spice of life at Marana's The Residences at Ritz-Carlton Dove Mountain. Residents even have access to the plethora of dining options (including room service), the blissful spa, the fitness center, housekeeping and more at the adjacent Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain, making the dream of resort-caliber living a reality. Apart from the world-class golf options, outdoorsmen (and women) can savor 25 miles of hiking and biking trails at the nearly 3,000- acre Tortolita Mountain Park and 2,400-acre Tortolita Preserve.

Join The Club

Within the 45,000-sq.-ft. clubhouse complex of The Golf Club at Dove Mountain, members enjoy indoor and outdoor dining, a fitness center, tennis courts and access to 27 acres of private Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf and a 12-acre practice facility. theresidencesdovemountain.com.

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Desert Highlands - Scottsdale Rock Star

Eight hundred and fifty acres of beautiful Sonoran terrain make up the luxury community of Desert Highlands (and the master plan has strived to preserve the desert vegetation, boulder formations and rock outcroppings). The Scottsdale master plan comprises 560 homesites and offers a fulfilling lifestyle for active families with activities including tennis, golf, a state-of-the-art fitness facility with a full schedule of exercise classes and an 83-degree members-only pool.

Join The Club

The location of the 30,000-sq.-ft. clubhouse at Desert Highlands is just as impressive as its amenities; it is placed at the base of Pinnacle Peak and a towering rock formation known as "Clubhouse Rock." The Jack Nicklaus-designed 18-hole, par 72 golf course is the highlight of the club membership perks. deserthighlandsscottsdale.com.



Encanterra Country Club - The Pampered Life

A 745-acre residential community located in San Tan Valley, Encanterra Country Club offers two distinct residential options: Encanterra is an all-ages community while Shea Homes' Trilogy at Encanterra is a favorite of the 55-plus crowd. Residents savor time on the Tom Lehman-designed signature golf course when not in their Mediterranean-inspired home. (Homeowners have the option of one of 15 floor plans that range from 1,300 to 3,700 square feet.)

Join The Club

La Casa, designed by renowned architect Bing Hu, is the spot to be and be seen at Encanterra. Four distinct restaurants, Mossa Athletic Club, three pools and the full-service Alvea Spa can all be found at La Casa, which is reminiscent of a Mediterranean village. Encanterra Country Club residents hold social memberships to La Casa and have the option to purchase one of the golf memberships. A limited number of memberships are extended to golfers living outside the community. trilogylife.com/communities/arizona/encanterra.



Silverleaf - The Gold Standard

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Silverleaf offers 2,000 acres of luxury in North Scottsdale. Offering one of the most unique golf lifestyles in Arizona is the new Village at Silverleaf. Cullum Homes' The Village at Silverleaf will feature 12 semi-custom villas and seven club cottages that will sit adjacent to the first tee and driving range (contact Silverleaf for pricing). The architectural style of these 10 exclusive abodes reflects the clubhouse and will give residents walking access to the club, the golf course and all of the amenities offered there.

Join The Club

The 50,000-sq.-ft. Silverleaf Clubhouse boasts an eye-catching rural Mediterranean style, as well as A-list spa facilities, resort and lap pools, men's and women's locker rooms and a dining option to fit just about any taste and occasion. The private club features an 18-hole, 7,322- yard championship golf course designed by Tom Weiskopf. silverleaf.com.

Whisper Rock Estates - Desert Dreaming

For those who like to live large, Scottsdale's Whisper Rock Estates features custom homes that range in size from approximately 4,000 square feet to more than 10,000 square feet, with homesites spanning one to four acres. The landscape surrounding Whisper Rock features sandy bottom washes, boulder outcroppings and lush desert vegetation. Residents can enjoy five miles of walking paths; a three-acre private park with a ramada, tennis courts, a basketball court, a large turf area and fitness facility with a fitness pool; and the Caretaker's House, the social hub of the community.

Join The Club

For 13 years, the first course (designed by Phil Michelson and Gary Stephenson) at Whisper Rock has been a favorite of local golfers. (The second course, designed by Tom Fazio, and The Whisper Rock Golf Club itself, opened in early 2005.) The club offers a full caddy program and a "core" design with no housing within its routing. Note that Whisper Rock Golf Club is wholly separate from Whisper Rock Estates, and membership is available on a sponsorship-only basis. whisperrockestates.com



Vistancia - Posh Living in Peoria

Though it is brimming with elegance and a resort-caliber way of life, Blackstone at Vistancia is also a comfortable and relaxed community that has a little something for everyone. Peoria-based Blackstone at Vistancia is a 590-acre community within the 7,100- acre master plan and spotlights world-class dwellings by premier builders as well as custom homesites. For families, the neighborhood park at the guard-gated community is a huge draw, thanks to a half basketball court, a children's play structure, a recreational lawn and shade ramadas. Golfers flock to Blackstone at Vistancia's crown jewel: a private, 18-hole championship golf course designed by Jim Engh.

Trilogy at Vistancia is an active-adult community with three home collections— boasting an impressive 13 different floor plans. The homes fall into four architectural styles, including Tuscan, Spanish, Spanish Colonial and Desert Classic. The social center of the community is the Kiva Club, home to a Center for Higher Learning, artistic studios, an athletic club, a day spa, an aerobics studio, dining and an indoor lap pool and outdoor resort pool. The on-site Alvea Spa and Athletic Club is a prime spot for priming and pampering.

Join The Club

Fine and casual dining and a 24-hour fitness center with high-tech training equipment, a Pilates and yoga movement studio and a massage suite; a resort-style pool with private cabanas; a six-lane lap pool; a children's pool; and four lighted tennis courts attract residents to the 30,000-sq.-ft. Blackstone Country Club. Open to the public, Trilogy at Vistancia Golf Club is a daily fee course that stretches 7,225 glorious yards. vistancia.com.



Whitewing at Germann Estates - Gilbert's Greatest

It is certainly no secret that Gilbert is one of the top spots in the Valley to raise a family— and the town's Whitewing at Germann Estates is a lovely locale to call home. The gated community comprises 120 custom homesites that range in size from approximately one-half to two-thirds acre. Residents are welcome to select one of the Street of Dreams builders (A&E Development, Love Development, Mark of Excellence

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Builders, Rainey Homes and Sharp Western Development) or another builder of their choice. Apart from the majestic homes, the landscaped open spaces, flowering shrubs, pretty Palo Verde trees and the internationally commissioned sculpture, "Passage" by Eric Higgs, provide plenty to please the eyes while driving or walking through Whitewing at Germann Estates. And families will especially enjoy the children's play area complete with a ramada, which has tables, benches and barbecues for hosting friends. whitewingdev.com.



Verrado - All in the Family

Buckeye-based Verrado, one of the Valley's most family-friendly master plans, has launched its newest phase of development. Residents at 8,800-acre Verrado can look forward to 16 new parks, an elementary school, a dog park, the soonto- open Verrado Coffee and a massive new aquatic center that will debut next summer. (Heritage Swim Park will house multiple resort-style pools, a toddler splash pad area and a beach-entry play pool.) The final phase consists of 634 homes constructed by seven builders (some of which are new to Verrado).

Join The Club

The Verrado Golf Club features a championship, daily-fee golf course that winds through the White Tank foothills. The public course appeals to golfers of all levels. verrado.com.



Mirabel - View From the Top

Scottsdale's Mirabel offers some of the Valley's most majestic panoramas, including those of Pinnacle Peak, Lone Mountain, Black Mountain and the McDowell Mountains— not to mention sunset and city-light views. And because Mirabel sits at 3,000 feet in elevation, the summertime temps are a bit more tolerable. Currently, Mirabel has 153 undeveloped custom homesites ranging from two-thirds acres to more than two acres.

Join The Club

The Desert Lodge Clubhouse is teeming with desirable activities and amenities, from a resort-style pool with private cabanas to salon and spa services. Those wanting to work up a sweat can hit the tennis court, the high-tech fitness center or the greens, designed by Tom Fazio and appealing to golfers of all levels of expertise. mirabel.com.



Estrella - Water Wonderland

From parks and trails to the Mountain Ranch Marketplace, with grocery stores, dining options, medical facilities and music and performing arts center and more, Estrella is bursting with reasons to call the Goodyear community home. Water lovers flock to the master plan thanks to two private lakes; The Yacht Club offers residents complimentary use of paddle boats, canoes and sail boats. Estrella has three unique neighborhoods that boast pretty streetscapes and rich architecture: Mountain Ranch, Montecito and CantaMia, which is 55-plus.

Join The Club

Even the littlest residents of Estrella have oodles of amenities to relish at Starpointe Residents Club thanks to the StarSplash WaterPark and the on-site youth club. The grownups have plenty to enjoy, too, like the fitness center, cafe and meeting spaces. The centerpiece of the Golf

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Club of Estrella is a par 72, 18-hole championship golf course by Nicklaus Design. estrella.com.



Rosewood Village at The Foothills - Just Rosy in Ahwatukee Foothills

In the heart of Ahwatukee Foothills—an area that was recently re-zoned after being builtout for more than 15 years—is a new 59-home neighborhood. Rosewood Village at The Foothills is nearing completion of a private recreational amenity with a resort-style swimming pool, covered poolside cabanas, an event lawn, a barbecue, a fire pit and more. There are four types of residential offerings, up to 2,375 square feet, and available in Spanish Colonial, Italian and European Country designs. rosewoodhomes.com.

sneak peek!

In early 2015, Phase I of the development, Trilogy at Wickenburg Ranch, a non-age restricted resort golf course community, is slated to open. The 2,160-acre master plan resort community is currently being developed by Shea Homes and will feature homes by three builders, Shea Trilogy and two additional builders that are still being determined. trilogylife.com.