



Noteworthy Neighborhoods

GOING HOME IN THE NEW MOUNTAIN SOUTH

BY NANCY C. WILLIAMS

Not since the pioneer movement of the 1700s has the Mountain South seen such a surge in settlers and the notion of “neighborhood” has returned. Community spirit, environmental consciousness and old-fashioned values are shaping the way we live and the places where we abide.

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN.

Traditional neighborhood development. New urbanism. Downtown revitalization. By building residential living spaces surrounding a town center the new urbanist neighborhoods are created to be walkable. The design begins at the human scale, with buildings closer together, streets constructed for slower speeds and sidewalks throughout. From the town center, residential areas fan out within walking distance.

Breakaway, NC below the Wolf Ridge Ski resort is the vision of Stephen Martin, inspired by Seaside in Florida and I'On near Charleston, SC., but mostly by Martin's childhood memories of family time spent in the mountains. “We're striving to create a place where neighbors can share conversations over a porch railing and families gather for dinner...” Breakaway is a carefully constructed brand-new village with restaurants, a library, chapel, community pool, outdoor market, and post office. Ski-loving residents will have easy access to the slopes via lifts that originate at the village center.

The Village of Cheshire at Black Mountain, NC with its English Tudor style is patterned after the lovely vintage Biltmore Village in Asheville. Cheshire's main street will host a garden center/nursery, movie theater, bank and an ice cream eatery ... yum.

Versant, situated above Asheville, will be a guard-gated community with its own “Old World” mountain village. Estate home

sites as well as luxury town homes and condos will be surrounded by a trail system and natural area that's part of the Audubon International Gold Signature Sanctuary Program.

Bristol, Johnson City and Asheville are seeing an urban renewal where formerly neglected space above the street level is being converted into ritzy loft apartments and condos. In downtown Kingsport, lofts are going in over storefronts and the State Theater is undergoing renovation. The result is a revival of historic districts with a distinctively contemporary flair.

The Village at Cardinal Forest in Johnson City in the Arts and Crafts style features front porches, rear-entry garages and lamp-lit streets that enhance the curb appeal. “We wanted people to have a community relationship in a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere,” says developer Mike Rhodes.

Preston Park in Kingsport is within a short walk of Exchange Place, a living-history farm from the early 1800s. New Halifax offers Charleston-like architecture in a clustered neighborhood only a stone's throw from Jonesborough's early-American town center.

Kingsport Landing on the Holston River will be a multi-year, multi-million-dollar complex with the old Netherland Inn as its centerpiece. “It's a comprehensive riverfront development,” says Jeff Fleming, assistant city manager for development. “King's Port was the original head of navigation for the entire Tennessee River Valley ... we're just being true to our roots.”

MOVE OVER, MOON SHINERS.

Mountain property values are soaring as city slickers purchase getaway homes for the outdoor experience. At **The Settings of Black Mountain**, vice president of acquisitions for the development - Chip Knight says “We're building in preservation and appreciation of the environment, facilitating ways for people to enjoy it.”

Creeks on the property are to be undisturbed and home construction adheres to “green,” healthy guidelines. To minimize light pollution Knight details, “Instead of streetlights, we're doing ‘wash’ lighting at corners and bridges. You can walk

down sidewalks and see stars at night.”

Woody Keen, an internationally prominent and highly sought-after trail builder, is to lay out the development’s trails system with natural park areas. The Settings also caters to outdoor kid fun by having an elaborate rope course that’s a big hit with the boys.

Sunalei Preserve is a mountain community within a preserve straddling the High Country state border between Watauga County, NC and Johnson County, TN. Approximately 132 of its nearly 1,000 acres have already been donated to the High Country Conservancy as part of a permanently managed nature preserve, including the summit at an elevation of over 5,500 feet.

The number of home sites within Sunalei (which is Cherokee for “morning”) will be strictly limited, allowing for large parcels of land. The sites are designed to remain intact, accommodate entire families and be passed down to future generations.

Neighborhoods abound for the sports enthusiast. **Wilderness Trail** at Boone encompasses 1,000 acres of pristine Blue Ridge Mountains real estate for hiking, mountain biking, golf (a challenging Rick Robbins course), swimming, fitness training and tennis.

And if you want to live on the links in North Carolina, the choices are dizzying, including Tiger Woods’ recent announcement that he will develop his first American Course at the **Cliffs at Carolina** just outside of Asheville.

The Cliffs at Walnut Cove at Asheville rests on 1,500 acres of dense forests, rolling meadows and clear streams—sounds like perfect conditions for the Jack Nicklaus signature golf course at its heart, where celebs like Kevin Costner have played.

Around the Tri-Cities in Tennessee, several of the established courses are seeing added residential development. **Old Island** in Kingsport is a planned lifestyle community overlooking Crockett Ridge Golf Course with several distinct neighborhoods, including The Islands to debut in 2008. **Quail Creek at The Ridges**, near Jonesborough, featuring Tuscan-themed homes with a view of the fairways. Golf and tennis lovers who want to be members at The Ridges Golf and Country Club can enjoy this upscale environment in a maintenance-free home.

DON'T JUST DRIVE TO YOUR NEW HOME. FLY IN.

For intrepid pilots and those who don't want to waste a lot of time on the road, the fly-in neighborhood is their destination of choice. Soaring among the mountaintops is **Mountain Air** at Burnsville, NC, which has its own private air strip and will soon feature the

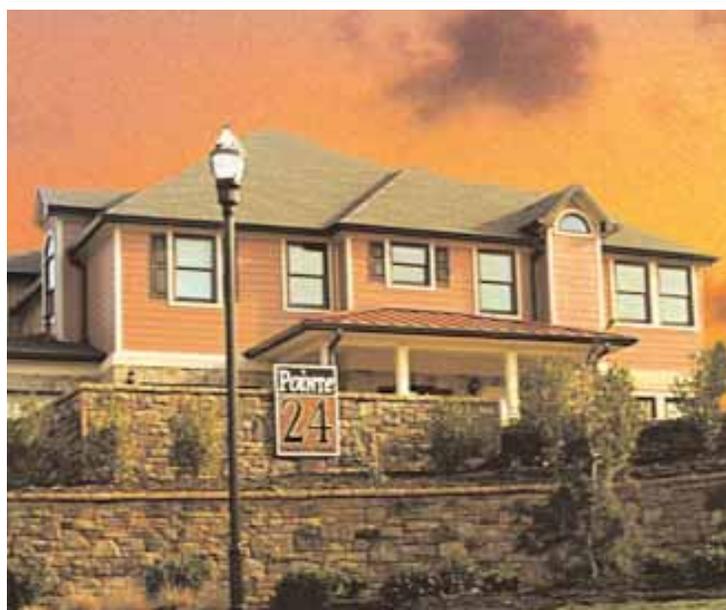


OPPOSITE:
ENTRANCE AT SUNALEI PRESERVE, A THOUSAND-ACRE DEVELOPMENT WITH A PERMANENTLY MANAGED NATURE PRESERVE.

TOP:
THE EAGLES NEST RESORT IS FASHIONED AFTER “CAMP MEMORIES” WITH LOTS OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITY.

MIDDLE:
SUNALEI PRESERVE OFFERS ESTATE-SIZED SITES, DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE ENTIRE FAMILIES AND BE PASSED DOWN TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.

BOTTOM:
POINTE 24 TOWNHOMES HAVE A FRONT-ROW VIEW OF WATER RECREATION ON BOONE LAKE.





adjacent **Settlers Edge**, with spectacular sunrise views of Mount Mitchell. **Elk River's** development has a jetport, where owners can fly in to enjoy a Jack Nicklaus signature golf course that has consistently been ranked among North Carolina's top 10 courses.

Watauga Falls on Watauga Lake at Butler, TN is attracting buyers with its illuminated heli-pad. Developer Jonathan Houser says it's a convenience that appeals to NASCAR industry executives who want to go from Bristol Motor Speedway to stunning lakeside privacy in just a few minutes' helicopter ride.

Houser with co-developer Scott Henley, has designed Watauga Falls with waterfalls, bridges over water and of course, a lake view. "You should be able to see or hear water anywhere on the property," Houser says. His home plans include Appalachian-style log cabins and many of the cabins are to be completely furnished. "When we finish," he says, "you'll only bring your toothbrush."

River Plantation in Greeneville is a private new subdivision with riverfront and river-access properties on the Nolichucky. "It's an estate subdivision with lots no smaller than an acre," says developer Paul Nellesen. "It used to be a huge dairy farm, a unique piece of property with mountain and river views as well as the seclusion of country life." The Nolichucky is not navigable for motor-powered boats, which makes it ideal for lazy rafting, floating, canoeing and fishing.

Where lakes don't already exist, new ones are being made. Three man-made lakes and other water features were created in the meadows at **Highland Ridge**, Johnson City, to accent the upscale neighborhood. "We wanted to make it a lifestyle community, with a friendly feel," says realtor Gail Gouge, who is one of the team of developers along with her husband, Ron. Highland Ridge has walking trails around the lakes, wooden footbridges, a fountain "bell tower" and pavilion area where neighbors can meet. The Gouges go to church with Dan and Tammy Eldridge along with Larry and Janice McClanahan, friends and real estate professionals who joined forces to create Highland Ridge. Seven different neighborhoods are incorporated into the plan, from patio homes to estate-sized dwellings costing over \$1 million.

On Boone Lake, water recreation gets a front-row audience from residents at **Pointe 24**, a close-knit neighborhood of town homes near Winged Deer Park in Johnson City. **The Groves at Boone Lake** offer contemporary condos only a few steps away from boat slips at its private marina. And **River's Edge**, off



TOP:
THE FITZGERALD WILL OFFER A RESORT LIFESTYLE ADJACENT TO THE GROVE PARK INN AT ASHEVILLE.

MIDDLE:
CREEKS AND WATERFALLS ON THE PROPERTY AT THE SETTINGS ARE LEFT UNDISTURBED IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE NATURAL BEAUTY.

BOTTOM:
MOUNTAIN VISTAS ARE MIRRORED ALONG THE NICKLAUS SIGNATURE COURSE AT THE CLIFFS AT WALNUT COVE.

"You can walk down sidewalks and see stars at night."

—CHIP KNIGHT,
THE SETTINGS AT BLACK MOUNTAIN

Willmary Road in Johnson City, will be a new 16-lot waterfront subdivision with community lake access and covered boat slips.

HOME IS WHERE OUR FAMILY IS.

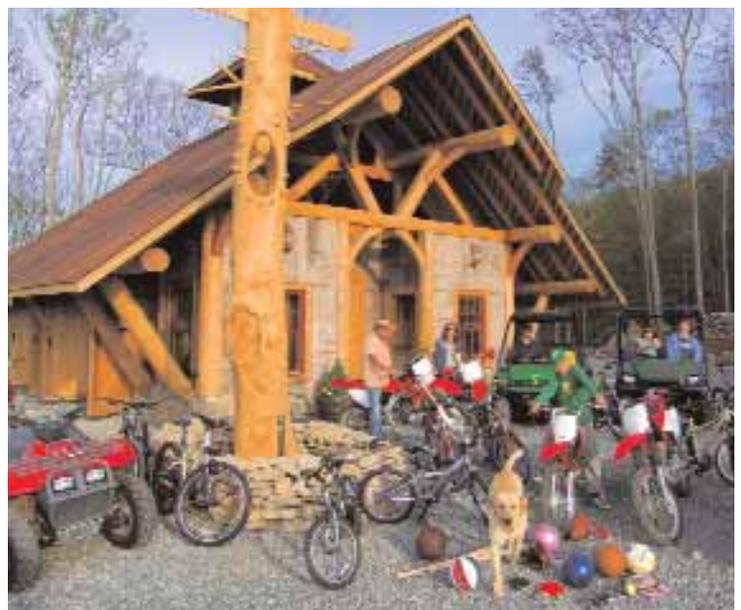
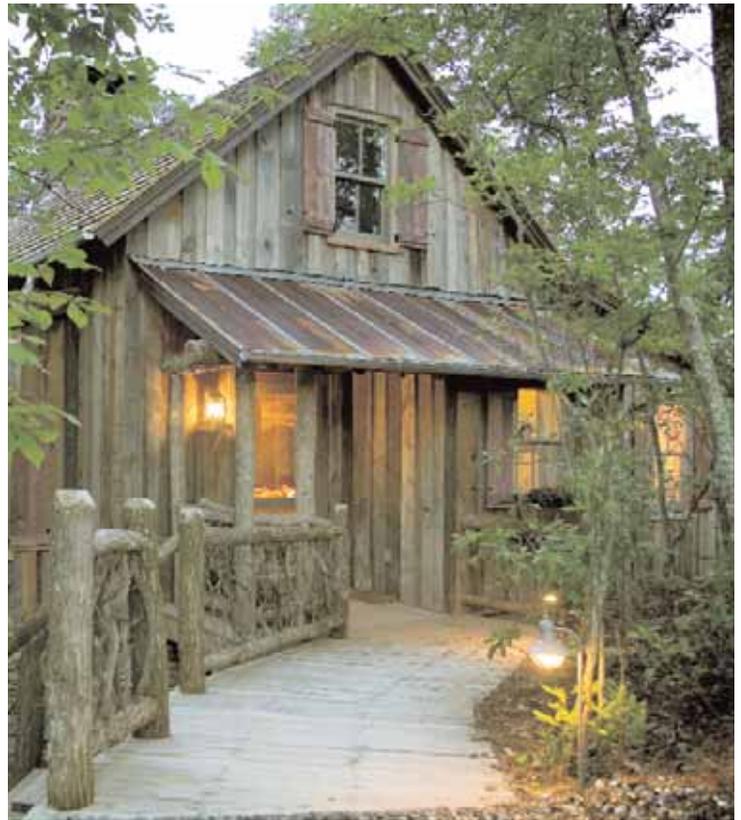
At **The Lodges at Eagles Nest** near Banner Elk, time together becomes an adventure for members of all generations. Built by renowned developer John Turchin, the resort is fashioned after memories of camp life with every recreational opportunity imaginable.

Some of the activities for Eagles Nest residents and guests include an equestrian center, spa, library, ice-skating rink, ropes course, hiking trails, archery and shooting ranges, motor cross track, amphitheatre, bowling alley, tennis courts, winter sports, woodworking, sculpture and painting. Whew. Oh, and there's a library for those who want only to sit quietly with a book. Eagles Nest also has a "toy barn," with grown-up toys like four-wheelers.

Laurelmor is a new private resort community planned for 6,000 acres of mountain splendor near Boone and Blowing Rock. It will offer a Tom Kite Signature golf course, mountain lodge with fine dining, wine cellar and Camp Laurelmor for kids. Four seasons of activities with a dedicated outfitter—including trout fishing, archery, horseback riding and skeet shooting—will help ensure families have a great time.

The Edinburgh is a fit for families with children who want to stay closer to their school. Residents will be able to walk their kids to a new Kingsport city school designed to fit in with the neighborhood look.

Sharing the family farm is the secret behind the pleasant atmosphere at **Garland Farm Estates** north of Johnson City, which has been in the Garland family for more than seven decades. "It's our back yard," Michael Garland says, "which is why we take so much pride in what we're doing. My parents



TOP:
"COOL BEANS" IS PART OF THE CENTERPIECE VILLAGE UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT BREAKAWAY.

MIDDLE:
SOME OF THE BACK TO NATURE LODGING FEATURED AT BALSAM MOUNTAIN.

BOTTOM:
THE "TOY BARN" AT EAGLES NEST OFFERS FUN ON THE RUN FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES.



(David and Jane Garland) are crazy about all the people who live here, and we try to keep in touch with them personally, on a first-name basis.” The development focuses heavily on open, common green spaces, not building neighbors on top of neighbors.

RELAXATION AND RETIREMENT

Realtors talk about the “half-back” phenomenon—where retirees who moved from up North to Florida to escape the cold are now moving “halfway back” to our region to escape the hurricanes. And there are plenty of extraordinary condos and patio homes from which to select.

The Fitzgerald, is a multi-story complex featuring two and three bedroom luxury units going up just yards away from The Grove Park Inn in Asheville with its golf course, spa and sports complex.

The Villas at Netherland Lane in Kingsport and the **Ridges Overlook at The Ridges**, Jonesborough, both developed by Mitch Cox Development Group, are targeting a mix of retirees and professionals through patio homes designed for single-level living.

Among the multitude of retirement options in the Smokies is **Day Springs**, an Aspen-style condominium community in the heart of Pigeon Forge with 80 fully furnished units. In addition to the development’s proximity to outlet shopping, golf and national park vistas, Day Springs has the “aahh” factor of a luxury on-site spa facility for massages, facials and personal care.

Grande Harbor on Boone Lake will offer upscale resort-style living with the convenience of being near transportation via Tri-Cities Airport. More single-level homes are going in near Blountville, TN in **The Cottages at Feathers Chapel**—116 condominium homes designed in a European country style, in a triangular-shaped development surrounding a reflection lake. At Johnson City, **Willow Springs Reserve** is a new clubhouse community with one-level villas and 32 single-family home sites, near East Tennessee State University and just a short stroll from beautiful Willow Springs Park.

Wherever you decide to settle after seeing all these dazzling opportunities, there’s one thing you can be sure of: Once you’ve stayed awhile in the Mountain South, you’ll always call it home. 

{ *Nancy C. Williams lives in Johnson City and is a regular contributor to Marquee.* }



TOP:
THE INTERIOR OF A BALSAM MOUNTAIN PRESERVE CABIN.

MIDDLE:
GARLAND FARM ESTATES FOCUSES HEAVILY UPON GREEN SPACE.

BOTTOM:
THE GATES AT HIGHLAND RIDGE CLUBHOUSE.

