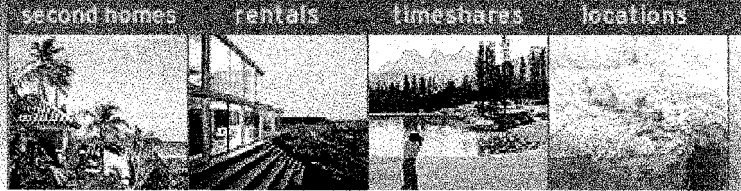


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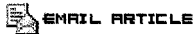
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Retire To Sacramento Golf Heaven

2/10/2005 10:18:29 AM

by Bob Souza



Affordable, interesting courses – so abundant you can stay busy and never get bored.

The Sacramento area has become an exciting port for the golf enthusiast, appealing not only to current long-time residents, but also to the vast amount of migrating retirees. The considerable number of courses has guaranteed that the competition will keep fees low, and produce a constant flow of advertising specials.

With mortgage rates still attractive and housing prices appealing (compared to other California spots), many are pulling up stakes, particularly from the Bay Area, and finding their way to this desirable haven. And what a delightful change it is.

Del Webb's Sun City Lincoln Hills living community was created especially for the active senior lifestyle. It is located near the city of Lincoln, and currently boasts of 5,000 (zoned for 6,800) new homes in the range of 1,195 to 3,068 square feet, priced from \$315,000 to \$560,000. Residents are automatically members of the Lincoln Hills Golf Club. The proximity to metropolitan Sacramento and the Sierra foothills allows for an endless array of entertainment, recreation and cultural activities.

A predictably mild all-season climate makes it possible for continuous golf play throughout the year – a definite advantage. Your game will never get too stale. The real challenge will be in deciding which lucky course will have the pleasure of your company. Ah, so many to pick from,

The gamut runs from the flat, easy-to-walk valley style, to the rolling-hills type

found at a slightly higher elevation. There are even a few reminiscent of those European models, without the cavernous bunkers. Somewhere over fifty courses (within a 45-mile radius) at last count, with new ones popping up seemingly every couple of months.

One of the prettiest has to be the Apple Mountain Golf Resort, just a short drive into the Sierra foothills. It comes complete with some of the most breath-taking golf scenery anywhere. Carts recommended.

Empire Ranch Golf Club in Folsom is a relatively new links style course that features great views of the Sacramento Valley from the back nine. The finishing hole is a rare par 3, and it requires a 211-yard shot over water – quite a challenge when the wind blows. They also have a terrific practice facility, where you can spend even more hours.

Winding through natural terrain and rolling hills, and amongst the oak trees and granite rocks, you will enjoy a decidedly different sensation at Twelve Bridges Golf Club. There is much to like about this site of the annual Longs Drugs Challenge, an LPGA tour event.

DarkHorse Golf Club in Auburn was chosen by Golf Magazine as one of the top 100 you can play in America. Newly opened in 2002, it was also picked by Golf Digest as one of the best new affordable courses. This stunning jewel features 150 feet of elevation change from high point to low.

The Johnny Miller designed Whitney Oaks Golf Club should be on anyone's "must-play" list. The marvelously conditioned course, in a spectacular setting of wetlands and oaks, creates an absolutely special experience. There is a wonderful mix of housing types and styles available here as well, should you desire to hang around awhile.

You can also find the customary assortment of city and county managed courses, most quite pleasurable, and usually less expensive. Put those on your list as well.

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