

Resort Living

Vacation properties that let owners relax ||| By Jenny Quill

Real Estate



Danzante Bay owners enjoy a private beach in Loreto, Mexico.

In February, David and Kris, who live in southwestern Washington, had an amazing weeklong vacation at Danzante Bay in Loreto, Mexico.

They fell in love with the quaint Baja town and its stunning environs—the Sea of Cortés to the east and the Sierra de la Giganta range to the west. They went whale-watching, visited a 300-plus-year-old Spanish mission and dined at a secluded beach restaurant.

“We were really impressed with the setting and amenities,” David says. “I like something that’s different from my primary location, a place that you look forward to going to, not just another city.”

David and Kris decided a week in Mexico

wasn’t enough. With siblings, they bought a 2,900-square-foot villa in the 741-acre Danzante Bay development.

“For us, it’s time to enjoy a slower pace in a quieter setting,” David says.

Colorado residents Mike and Sandy also purchased a resort home after being charmed by a destination. For them, Indian Wells, California, checked all the right boxes: great golf courses, a warm climate, top-notch shopping and dining, and proximity to beach towns along the California coast.

“We fell in love with Indian Wells and the Palm Desert area,” says Mike, a real estate investor who purchased a 3,500-square-foot



REUTERS/ISTOCK/3118

house in the upscale Toscana Country Club in 2007. “The other big advantage is that we can be in Newport Beach or any of the beach towns in two hours. We really like the idea that you can go for weekend trips, see the ocean and hang out, and get this nice, warm climate.”



From top: The Beach House brings a tropical feel to the Promontory Club in Utah.

Toscana Country Club in California is home to two Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Courses.

In purchasing second homes, these two couples are part of a significant segment of the home-buying population. Approximately 721,000 vacation-home purchases were made in 2016, accounting for about 12 percent of all existing and new-home transactions, according to the National Association of Realtors 2017 Investment & Vacation Home Buyer’s Survey. About a quarter of those second homes were purchased in resort areas,

which typically offer great amenities and helpful services within developments located in vacation destinations.

Whether you aspire to live the lake life, or you think the road to happiness is a golf-cart path, here are some reasons resort-property owners feel right at home in their second homes.

Amenities Abound at Resort Properties

Toscana Country Club has just about every nicety you could imagine, with two Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Courses, the Bill Harmon Performance Center for golf instruction, a spa, two restaurants, group exercise classes, tennis and pickleball courts, and an outdoor pool on 640 acres.

“I lovingly call it Camp Toscana,” says Mike. “We have one car but two golf carts, because my wife is going to a Pilates or yoga class; I’m going golfing; and we were having more scheduling conflicts with the golf cart than the car.”

At Danzante Bay, the new Rees Jones-designed TPC Danzante Bay golf course, winding through beach, cliff and canyon holes, gets top billing among the development’s impressive list of amenities. The 18-hole course, which was completed in December 2017, is earning rave reviews, especially for its signature 17th hole, which is perched above the Sea of Cortés.

Also chief among Danzante Bay’s features is access to the well-appointed Villa del Palmar Beach



*Scenic bike trails line
The Lookout at Lake Chelan.*

Resort & Spa at the Islands of Loreto. Just a golf cart's drive away from the residences, the resort's six swimming pools, three restaurants and full-service spa await homeowners. There's also a private beach club with a full bar, grills, entertaining space and an event lawn. A private mooring area, recreation center and retail shops are planned for the future.

"I like the resort community because it has recreational facilities; the golf course is exceptional; and there are great restaurants," says David. "Everything you need is right there in front of you."

Facilities at the Promontory Club in Park City, Utah, were designed with the region's four-season lifestyle in mind. In winter, homeowners can take a 15-minute shuttle ride to the club's private ski-in, ski-out Alpine Lodge at Deer Valley, one of the top-rated ski resorts in the country. Here, the club

concierge and ski valet have owners' skis, boots and poles at the ready.

Promontory outfitter Sean Smith, a former Olympian, skis with members and can also be found at the club's Outfitters Cabin, where he organizes tours and helps owners select the right gear for outdoor adventures.

Come summer, the Promontory's Beach House site is the place to be. Part lake, part pool, the facility features a sandy beach, 2.5-acre lake, an infinity-edge pool, cabanas and a beachside cafe.

Homeowners also enjoy Promontory's prestigious golfing. "We have two of the top-rated golf

courses in the state here at Promontory," says Steve, a public affairs consultant who bought a 2,900-square-foot Promontory Club villa with his wife, Terry, in 2016. "The Nicklaus Painted Valley Golf Course, which we live on, is pretty spectacular, as are the clubhouses." The course is renowned for its links-style layout through high-altitude valleys.

At Rancho San Lucas, an 834-acre resort community being developed about 20 miles northwest of downtown Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, homeowners can relax at the beachside pools, bars and breezy cabanas, and savor gourmet cuisine at the luxury hotel Grand Solmar at Rancho San Lucas Resort Golf & Spa.

"We have the ability to take advantage of all of the hotel amenities, but we don't feel like we're smackdab in the middle of it all," says Lisa, who owns a planned 5,500-square-foot Rancho San Lucas estate with her husband, Pat.

On-site offerings including a 15-acre lake and 15

miles of biking are expected to open by the first quarter of 2019, while a Greg Norman-designed golf course is set to be inaugurated in summer/fall 2019.

At The Lookout at Lake Chelan in north-central Washington, it's all about enjoying the picturesque setting. The community has a lakefront cove where residents can dip their toes in the water, sit lakeside or venture out on a kayak. There's also the Lookout Marina, with 70 slips available for use by owners and guests. A community pool, hiking and biking trails, parks, sports courts and access to a neighboring winery are other amenities.



The Rancho San Lucas resort community offers luxury real estate near Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.



Work Less, Live More

Owners say turnkey living is one of the major perks of residing in a resort community. Depending on where you buy, you can have much of your regular upkeep—including landscaping, housekeeping and pool/hottub maintenance—managed by property staff.

At Rancho San Lucas, for example, estate owners have access to a full property-management menu that can be customized to suit their needs—everything from home repair to plant watering.

“They provide landscaping, housekeeping and grocery services. You just call ahead and tell them what you want,” says Lisa. “We own another property, a lake house. If we’re not there, it’s not getting taken care of. When we show up, it doesn’t feel like we’re on vacation. We have to clean it up, get it ready to go, and then we can start having fun. Having turnkey service offers incredible peace of mind and value retention for your property.”

Second Homes That Pay for Themselves

Property-rental programs can make owning a second home more affordable while eliminating the hassle of renting the home yourself.

There are more than 50 homes in The Lookout’s Cottage Rental program, with an on-site hospitality team that for a fee handles bookings, housekeeping and property upkeep when owners aren’t using their homes. For Pete and Janice, who live north of Seattle, the ability to rent their 2,900-square-foot home made buying at The Lookout feasible.

“With the rental program, we could easily afford a house that cost nearly double [our budget] in terms



of build-out cost," says Pete. "It let us afford a house that perfectly aligned with what we wanted."

Bookings of their home have increased over the last three years, with about 50 nights booked the first year and 100 or so nights the second year, Pete says. This summer, the house is completely booked.

"The renters are paying almost all of the house's operational costs."

Shared Ownership

Timeshares can make a vacation getaway more affordable while decreasing the burden of property management and upkeep. With timeshares, you're buying the right to use the property, and owners are allotted a certain amount of time.

Timeshares can also give you a chance to ease into an area. Lisa and her husband, Pat, first visited Cabo San Lucas in 2012, staying with friends at their timeshare at Playa Grande Resort.

Smitten by the experience, Lisa and Pat bought a timeshare, and then they expanded their commitment a year later.

"Every year after that, we expanded our commitment even further," she says. "We ended up with a total of three full weeks there and found ourselves going four or five times a year. So we really started talking about looking at more of a permanent property down there."

Be it beachside, lakeside or slope-side, a vacation home is more than just a getaway; it's a place to recharge and relax, gather with family or enjoy retirement. Ultimately, a second home offers the promise of a life lived on vacation, and what could be better than that? ✎

Jenny Quill writes from Connecticut.