

RESERVE ONE HOMES

Running Brook Farm a gateway to winter wonderland

The Chain O' Lakes area has some of the best downhill and cross-country skiing around. While it's only a 90-minute drive from Chicago, for people who live in the burgeoning communities along the Chain O'Lakes, a skiing excursion is often an unplanned afterthought.

Although winter started mildly this year, locals know how fast and dramatically that can change.

Reserve One Homes has three communities nestled in the Chain O'Lakes countryside — Running Brook Farm, Duck Lake Crossing and Vern's Landing — and another in the works, Glacial Trails.

The single-family homes at Running Brook Farm offer all the amenities (and more) of suburban Chicago new homes, but in tranquil settings and for considerably less money.

A good example is the Laurelwood ranch. With a base price of \$354,900 and with almost 2,900 square feet, this home is exceptional inside and out.

It includes three bedrooms, 2½ baths, a basement, and a two-car garage. The colonnades and variegated gables add to the curb appeal — a trademark of Reserve One Homes.

Inside, the rambling floor plan with open access, generously-sized bedrooms, and high ceilings, contributes to a spacious, airy feel, rarely found in a ranch home. Living areas include a family room, living room, breakfast room, and dining room. There is also a convenient laundry room.

The 13-by-15-foot dining room, which features a vaulted ceiling, is a perfect spot for a home office since it is right off the foyer and across the hall from a powder room. The master bedroom with optional skylights and fireplace includes a master bath with dual vanities and two walk-in closets.

Clever architectural features, such as a 12-inch-deep plant shelf near the entry, dot the entire home. And many windows allow buyers to gaze out onto the natural landscape and wildlife that distinguish the Chain O'Lakes area.

Reserve One Homes has one completed Laurelwood model for sale. There are many other single-family plans and also townhomes available at Running Brook Farm.

For cross-country skiers, there are many opportunities in the area. For starters, there's Chain O'Lakes State Park in the heart of a winter wonderland.

The park has four trail systems available for cross-country skiing. They range from 2¼ miles to eight miles. The park office even doubles as a warming house on winter weekends.

Ice skating and ice fishing are also popular activities at the park when the temperature drops and the ice is thick enough. Sledding is also prevalent winter activity. Snowmobiling is not permitted in the park, but access to the frozen lake is provided for snowmobile enthusiasts.

Glacial Park, in nearby Ringwood, has some of the most

pristine cross-country trails around — extending out to what seems to be the middle of nowhere — which is just where many skiers want to be on a sunny winter afternoon.

For downhill skiers, there's Wilmot Mountain on the east side of the Fox River.

It has eight chairlifts, three rope tows, and 25 wide-open runs for beginners and experts alike. They offer night skiing, snowboarding, and ski and snowboard rentals in addition to a full-service cafeteria, Pizza Barn, and bars. For advanced skiers and snowboarders, there's a terrain park with rails and lofty jumps.

For those who are a little rusty, they also have a world famous ski school and for those who are a little anxious, they have an award-winning National Ski Patrol.

Starting out at the Running Brook Farm sales office has advantages. Visitors can ask the salespeople for directions to Wilmot Mountain or the cross-country parks.

To get to the Running Brook Farm sales office, take Illinois 31 north to Illinois 120. Go east on Illinois 120, a half mile to Riverside Drive. Turn north on Riverside and go two miles to Running Brook Farm Boulevard, then follow the signs.

The sales office is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays through Fridays and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, or by appointment. Call (815) 759-0808. Visit Reserve One's Web site at www.ReserveOneHomes.com.