

TRENDS DEVELOPMENTS**Home, home on the ranch – in demand**

The demand for ranch homes is exploding for many reasons and given all the benefits that ranches have to offer, it's not that surprising. Ranches are for everyone who likes the warmth, openness, and accessibility of single-story living – and also for people who like big basements.

Reserve One Homes, offers both single-family ranch homes and ranch townhomes. And the townhomes are real ranches – with no one above and a generous basement below.

It used to be that ranch homes were either like sprawling convention centers

or cramped cottages, but no more. Contemporary homes designers have learned how to maximize the living space in a generously sized single floor.

"We spent many hours scrutinizing the floor plans," said Lisa Porter-Loftus, a Reserve One Homes partner. "We went over every square inch to make the layouts as elegant, inviting and livable as possible."

Reserve One Homes' Running Brook Farm in Johnsburg offers the 1,088 square-foot Dartmoor townhome – a ranch base-priced at \$206,990. The two-bedroom, two-bath home features nine-foot ceilings, ceramic tile flooring in both the foyer and bathrooms, Chesapeake

woodgrain interior doors and trim, first-quality wall-to-wall carpeting, designer-line vinyl flooring, walk-in closets, volume master bedroom ceilings, decorator light fixtures, custom-finished hardwood kitchen cabinets, double-bowl stainless steel kitchen sinks, Frigidaire kitchen appliances and wood bathroom vanities with cultured-marbled tops and an attached two-car garage.

Options include a bay window in the dining room, a gas fireplace, a rough-in for a basement bath, upgraded Vienna kitchen cabinets, upgraded kitchen appliances and a washer and dryer.

The single-family Laurelwood ranch is base-priced at \$354,900 and includes almost

2,900 square feet.

It includes three bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, a basement and a two-car garage. The colonnades and variegated gables add to the curb appeal. Inside, the rambling floor plan with open access, generously sized bedrooms and high ceilings contribute 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 large 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.

The 2,223 square-foot Eden single-family ranch is base-priced \$295,990. The foyer opens to the gorgeous great room with its vaulted ceiling and spacious family area. A living room (or home office), and dining room provide additional space for family enjoyment. A large breakfast area off the gourmet kitchen – which also opens

to the great room – is perfect for entertaining.

Banks of windows create a bright, sunny atmosphere and offer views of the large natural areas that adjoin the property. The master suite, set apart for added privacy, features a large walk-in closet and master bath with a separate shower, oversized bathtub and twin vanities. Two additional bedrooms each have their own bath.

Each Eden ranch includes a basement, first floor laundry room and two-car (optional three-car) garage. Another popular option is a sunny morning room.

All Reserve One homes include first-quality wall-to-wall carpeting, ceramic tile

See **TRENDS**, Page 3

TRENDS

From Page 2

and designer-line vinyl flooring, walk-in closets, volume master bedroom ceilings, nine-foot first floor ceilings, decorator light fixtures, custom-finished hardwood kitchen cabinets, double-bowl stainless steel kitchen sinks and wood bathroom vanities with cultured-marbled tops. Single-family homes also include hardwood flooring in the foyer and powder room.

This Eden ranch is offered in three of Reserve One Homes' communities - Running Brook Farm in Johnsburg, and Duck Lake Crossing and Vern's Landing in Fox Lake.

Running Brook Farm is near Route 31 and Route 120. To get there, take Route 31 north to Route 120. Go east on Route 120, one-half mile to Riverside Drive. Turn north on Riverside and go two miles to Running Brook Farm Blvd., then follow the signs.

The sales office is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays through Fridays and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays - or by appointment. For more information on Running Brook Farm townhomes or single-family homes, call 815-759-0808.

To get to Duck Lake Crossing, take Rand Road (Routes 12 and 59) north to Fox Lake. Then take the North Route 59 ramp turnoff and make a quick right onto Frontage Road, turn left at Chris Larkin Road and go one-quarter mile to the model.

The sales center is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays - with additional hours by appointment. In mid-March, hours change to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week. For more information on Duck Lake Crossing, call 847-973-3400.

Vern's Landing is located at Deer Run and State Park Roads in Fox Lake. The sales center is located at Duck Lake Crossing.

For more information on Vern's Landing, call 847-973-3400. For information on all three communities and Reserve One Homes' newest community, Glacial Trails, visit the Reserve One Homes Web site at www.reserveone-homes.com.

Kitchens the heart of Smykal Homes

A great kitchen doesn't have to break the bank.

Just look at the homes at Ravine Woods in Channahon and River's Edge Landing in Minooka, both being developed by Smykal Associates. The kitchens - typically with islands, breakfast bars, pantries and furniture-quality cabinets - offer both flair and function. Moreover, these kitchens are available in homes with affordable price tags.

"We design our kitchens to live and look well," said Peggy Taheri, vice president of sales and marketing for the Wheaton-based builder. "Islands create additional workspace. Pantries provide storage. Breakfast bars turn islands into a gathering spot.

"So many people are eating out more, but when they cook at home, they want to do it right. Our kitchens are set for both living and entertaining."

At River's Edge Landing, Smykal offers eight floor plans ranging from 2,060 to 3,020 square feet, base-priced from \$269,900 to \$319,900. At Ravine Woods, five plans range from 2,800 to 4,010 square feet and are base-priced from \$299,900 to \$399,900.

All eight homes at River's Edge Landing include islands, and seven include wall or walk-in pantries. All five homes at Ravine Woods include islands - four have breakfast bars - and pantries as well.

"The kitchens have all the elements that the modern family really needs, without spending a bundle," Taheri said.

Though the excellent value and styling offered prompts most people to stick to the basics, buyers may add options to customize their kitchens.

"Any money spent on the kitchen is well-spent, because buyers generally get a good return on kitchen upgrades, whether it's remodeling or new construction," Taheri said.

Some homeowners put in taller upper kitchen cabinets. Some may stagger their cabinets for a more interesting look, selecting a tall corner cabinet, and leaving the rest the standard 30 inches high, with crown molding on all of them. "It dresses up the

kitchen," Taheri said.

Owners can add extras to their cabinets, including pullout drawers and shelves, Lazy Susans and spice racks. Some homeowners prefer a cast-iron sink over stainless, and others want to upgrade the dishwasher. Garbage can drawers, dishwasher panels and even high-style faucets are popular additions as well.

Customers can put in granite or synthetic countertops, but many buyers stick with the standard laminate. "Laminates have improved a great deal over the years, with plenty of colors and textures to choose from. Most people have no trouble finding the look they want from what we offer," Taheri said.

One option remains very popular: hardwood flooring. "People really like the look and it makes sense to put in hardwood flooring, throughout much of the first floor, during construction," Taheri said.

River's Edge Landing's homes have three to five bedrooms, 2 1/2 to three baths, full basements and flexible spaces. Ravine Woods homes have four bedrooms, an upstairs bonus room, 2 1/2 baths, a three-car garage, gourmet kitchen, basement and plentiful storage.

Unlike many other new-home communities in the area, neither River's Edge Landing nor Ravine Woods is part of a special service assessment area, with yearly assessments potentially totaling hundreds of dollars a year.

Decorated models at both communities are open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Because the two communities and six model homes are only two miles apart, visiting both is simple and convenient.

To visit River's Edge Landing, take I-55 to Route 6. Drive west 3.5 miles to Bell Road, then drive north two miles to McEvelly Road. Turn east (right) and drive two blocks to the models. The phone number is 815-467-1800.

Information also is available at www.smykalhomes.com.

Compiled from real estate press releases.