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‘Try Before You Buy’ Sparking Luxury Home Sales

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Loraloma, a luxury new home community in the Texas Hill Country, encourages prospects to try before ... [\[+\]](#) ARETE COLLECTIVE

No one would consider buying a car without first kicking the tires and taking it out for a test drive. Yet when folks ponder an even larger purchase – that of a luxury home – they sometimes have to base their decision on little more than a walk-through. Or do they?

A number of luxury second home communities are permitting would-be buyers to take the home out for a test drive of sorts, by letting them stay a while in the residence.

That’s the experience that awaits buyers at Loraloma, a private community in the Texas Hill Country southwest of Austin. The three- to five-bedroom turnkey cottages, villas and estates are being marketed through a novel “try before you buy,” sales approach.

“At Loraloma, we feel it’s paramount to create a sales experience that showcases the lifestyle of what’s to come for residents at Loraloma,” says Ryan Butters, COO for developer Arete Collective, a partner of Compass Development Marketing Group.

“Since we’re opening up a new destination, we’re charged with not only showcasing Loraloma, but the appeal of the Hill Country as a whole. We’ve created an experience that truly celebrates the natural beauty of the land, and gives prospects a glimpse into what makes Texas so special. From a sales tour on horseback to a curated overnight stay in our guest cottages, we want that traditional Texas hospitality to shine.”

Envisioned lifestyle

The try-before-buying strategy is part of the sales approach as well at Suncadia, a luxury home community and resort in Cle Elum, Wash., 90 miles east of Seattle on “the sunny side of the Cascades.” Ready-to-go floor plans and curated finish choices are complemented by the chance to try out the Suncadia lifestyle, with activities from golf to mountain biking, kayaking and swimming, before signing on the dotted line.

“With many of our clients coming from outside Washington, our ‘Experience Suncadia’ program is a great vehicle to ensure we are getting that one-on-one time with prospects while offering a completely personalized itinerary,” says Corey Atherton, Suncadia managing broker. “Whether they are avid mountain bikers or looking for kid-friendly amenities, we make sure each visit shows off the community and region as a whole.”

More than a few prospects have come away from the experience more intrigued by the community than they might have been had the sales team not gone the extra mile to make that would-be buyer feel at home, Atherton remarked. “It’s a great way to help buyers envision a lifestyle here that suites their needs,” he added.

Four seasons

Tributary is another community letting prospects take a test run before buying. Located just over the hill from Jackson Hole, Tributary is set in the rolling foothills of the Grand Teton range in Driggs, Idaho.

It’s a four-season private club community where residents can spend their days fly fishing, biking or hiking the prized trail system or skiing at the Grand Targhee ski resort a short distance from the community.

“Many communities, like Tributary, must be experienced to be fully appreciated,” says Jeff Heibrun, director of real estate for the club community. “When prospects get a chance to discover the destination and amenities for themselves, they can easily envision their next home.”

There’s no doubt the try-before-you-buy sales approach has disadvantages, including limiting the number of days the property is available to be toured by other prospects. The offsetting reality is that, according to at least one sales director at a new home community, a third of prospects who take advantage of sleepover showings ultimately purchase. That’s a rate three times higher than that of those who don’t sleep over.

One might say the power of the overnighter is not overhyped.