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Golf Real Estate's New Golden Age: Surging Demand, Changing Lifestyles

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Like golf itself, the landscape of golf real estate is experiencing a renaissance, driven by a perfect storm of factors that extend well beyond the traditional appeal of a links lifestyle. While the sight of homes along fairways probably won't excite most golfers mid-round, the dream of owning property alongside a course or in a residential golf community is in exceedingly high demand.

This resurgence is evident in golf communities across the country, from the coastal shores of South Carolina to the Hill Country of Texas and the Hawaiian Islands.

Take Kiawah Island, where 2024 marked the most successful year in the resort island's history, with over \$1 billion in sales volume across 447 transactions, according to Kiawah Island Real Estate – surpassing even the COVID-era peak of 2021. The average sale price reached \$3.8 million, with 20 home sales exceeding \$5 million on Kiawah Island, which has five resort courses and two private layouts, with a third on the way. "The continuing strength of the real estate market on Kiawah Island further solidifies our belief that the desire to be a part of this exceptional community is much more enduring than a cyclical trend," says Chris Randolph, Managing Partner at South Street Partners.



Fundamental Shift

A key element in play is a fundamental shift in how people view these communities. Rob Duckett, President of Operations at [South Street](#), has observed a significant transformation in residential patterns. "There's been this migration to these safe-haven communities, and COVID heightened the demand," Duckett said, pointing to Palmetto Bluff in South Carolina as an example. The Lowcountry community has seen full-time residency climb past 50% – up from 30% to 40% just five years ago and from 20% when the property first opened.

Palmetto Bluff opened a reversible short course called [Crossroads](#) at the start of 2024 and more recently [unveiled plans](#) for a new 18-hole course designed by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw that will anchor the community's third village. The new offerings could help Palmetto Bluff surpass what was a near record-breaking year in 2024, with over \$384 million in sales, just \$7 million shy of the community's 2021 historic total.



And the trend extends well beyond the Southeast U.S.

While the prestigious South Carolina enclave of [Timbers Kiawah](#) has been sold out since 2021 due to increased demand – with buyers from the Northeast in particular seeking year-round golf and other outdoor activities – [Timbers Kauai](#) in Hawaii is experiencing record sales because of new offerings. This ranges from shared ownership interests in Hokuala's private residence club to full ownership residences in Timbers Kauai and vacant lots in a new subdivision for families to build a dream home on the Garden Isle. The newest [Laola Nani](#) luxury townhomes along the signature 15th hole of the Jack Nicklaus-designed Ocean Course, which traces the shoreline of Ninini Point Bay, range from \$6.1 million to \$7.5 million.



Prices have been “steadily increasing across the board in all offerings,” said Debbie Edgerton, Senior Sales Executive at Hokuala Real Estate, who attributes this success to more than just the golf amenities. “Buyers really love the community and 'ohana' feel of Timbers Kauai. The owners and Timbers Kauai Ohana are a tight-knit community. (But) the golf course definitely plays into the sales presentation as the Ocean Course is our most significant amenity here at the property.”

Evolution of Golf Communities

The evolution of these communities is exemplified at [Reynolds Lake Oconee](#) in Georgia, a 12,000-acre lakefront resort real estate property halfway between Atlanta and Augusta.

Reynolds has seven courses, four of which are open to public play as well as for guests of the on-property Ritz-Carlton. The other three, including the [newly opened Richland](#) course, are private options for some of the community’s 4,000 member families.

"We have seen almost a complete inversion of our membership demographically and psychographically over the last 10 years," explains Dave Short, Senior VP of Sales, Marketing, and Strategic Planning. "It's not the 65-year-old guy pensioning off from GM after 30 years who wants to play six days a week. When I put up a billboard, it's a much broader group of people who are attracted and are figuring out how to make this their permanent place."



In Texas Hill Country, the similarly established golf and lakeside real estate development at [Horseshoe Bay](#) continues to grow and expand, with \$350 million in new and recently updated amenities.

Real estate sale prices in Horseshoe Bay increased 12% in 2024, with the offerings spanning a wide range, from the Waters Unit Condos that have been sold out for over two years to a new luxury development called Atten Hill that's in a founders campaign. There are 92 homesites in the 24-hour guard-gated community, with each including a membership at the Horseshoe Bay Club's private Summit Rock course that's valued at over \$200,000. The Jack Nicklaus design is the members-only course within the community that also boasts three resort courses designed by Robert Trent Jones, Sr.

Stacey Persinger, the general manager of membership at The Club at Horseshoe Bay, said the surge in interest is predominantly driven by urban professionals and families seeking reprieve from the congestion of city life. They're instead pursuing a full-amenity lifestyle that blends luxury with recreation and natural beauty.



A Reprieve From City Life

“But it’s more than just amenities – it’s a lifestyle shift,” said Persinger. “More people are trading city stress for the tranquility of the Hill Country, seeking not just a getaway but a community. [The Club at Horseshoe Bay](#) is meeting that demand with a robust social scene, exclusive dining, and a vibrant, active membership.”

About a half hour east, Loraloma Private Club and Estates outside Austin recently unveiled 29 homesites along its new David McLay Kidd-designed course, his first in the southern U.S. These fairway-front sites, priced between \$1.13 million and \$1.83 million, reflect the more measured approach to current golf-related real estate development than the boom years of the 1990s and early 2000s.

According to the [National Golf Foundation](#), while U.S. golf development remains limited compared to previous decades, new course construction is at its highest levels in more than a decade. Among course projects under construction or in planning, 42% have a housing component – notably higher than the 25% of overall U.S. golf supply tied to real estate.

The impact on property values is significant, with NGF's research showing homes on golf courses experience an average 15% bump in property value.

Florida leads the nation in golf communities, with more than 500 residential golf developments, followed by California, Texas, Arizona, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Among the newest golf real estate offerings in the Sunshine State is [Cabot Citrus Farms](#), a [four-course destination](#) that has a limited number of two- and four-bedroom golf cottages along with a forthcoming selection of two-story Fairway Homes. Prices start at \$1.8 million for the cottages, which are grouped in a small neighborhood between the courses near the main clubhouse that's under construction, and \$3.7 million for fairway homes that are situated near the 10th hole of the Roost course.

This new era in residential golf interest and new development reflects broader societal shifts: increased workplace flexibility, a renewed appreciation for outdoor recreation, and a desire for community connection in the post-pandemic world.

While these communities span seasonal retreats to year-round havens, they continue to attract older golfers with more time, money and inclination to engage with the game as well as a more diverse and younger demographic. The commonality is that all are seeking not just a place to play golf, but a comprehensive lifestyle that balances recreation, social engagement, and the freedom to work from anywhere.