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Where to Retire

The Authority on Retirement Relocation

July/August 2019

50 THE SHORT LIST

50 Best Master-Planned Communities in the U.S.

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Arizona

DOLCE VITA

APACHE JUNCTION, ARIZONA

THE LURE Dolce Vita, translating to “sweet life” in Italian, delivers on its name by offering an array of amenities and activities in a welcoming environment. The development, 35 miles east of Phoenix, boasts a 33,000-square-foot clubhouse complete with a billiards area, library, ballroom, movie theater and arts space with a kiln. Residents escape with a good book by the zero-entry pool, relax in two hot tubs and compete in games of pickleball, tennis and shuffleboard. A lifestyle director helps coordinate more than 40 social events per month.

WHAT RESIDENTS SAY “Dolce Vita has everything you’re looking for,” says Frank Sperna, who relocated from Tempe, AZ, with wife Kristine in 2017. “They’ve got all the amenities. The grounds are clean and there’s a lot of stuff to do. You can’t go wrong.” Frank initially had hesitations about manufactured housing until he visited here. “I looked at the homes and said, ‘These are absolutely beautiful,’” he recalls. “I was convinced right then and there.” Kristine, 63, loves the security of a gated development, while Frank, 72, enjoys the fitness center and pool as well as the stained-glass projects in his garage studio. “I have the door open a lot, and people come by and say, ‘Hey, what are you doing there?’” he says. “They’ll introduce themselves, and we start talking.”

DEVELOPER Murex Properties

PRICES \$120,000s to \$170,000s for single-family manufactured homes; lots are leased

MONTHLY HOMEOWNER FEE \$648 (lot rent)

STATUS 382 homes built of 720 planned on 137 acres



AGE-RESTRICTED Yes

INFORMATION Dolce Vita at Superstition Mountain, 3301 S. Goldfield Road, Apache Junction, AZ 85119, Dolce-Vita-AZ.com

EASTMARK

MESA, ARIZONA

THE LURE Residents are out and about, bicycling on pedestrian-friendly streets, swimming at the resort-style pool and enjoying picnics in more than 40 parks. In The Eastmark Great Park, folks indulge in burgers and shakes at a refurbished 1940s diner while little tykes explore a massive climbing playground. The age-restricted Encore neighborhood features its own clubhouse with a pool and fitness center as well as programming organized by an activities director. The development’s focus on volunteerism allows neighbors to unite behind common causes.

WHAT RESIDENTS SAY “I look around and see kids playing in the park, or people rollerblading or bicycling, and it just feels like such a wholesome environment,” says Kathleen Otjens, 60. “It reminds me of when I was a kid.” She is part of a community improvement committee, and hopes to get involved with a gardening club and women’s Bible study. On Friday nights, she and husband John, 61, join friends around a neighborhood fire pit. “You bring whatever you want to drink and snacks, and sit around together and visit,” she says. The couple relocated in 2017 from Corvallis, OR, to

be closer to their son and his family, but before choosing a development, they consulted local law enforcement. “We asked, ‘For community safety, where would you choose?’” Kathleen recalls. “Without hesitation, every single one of them said, ‘Eastmark.’”

DEVELOPER DMB Associates Inc. and Brookfield Residential

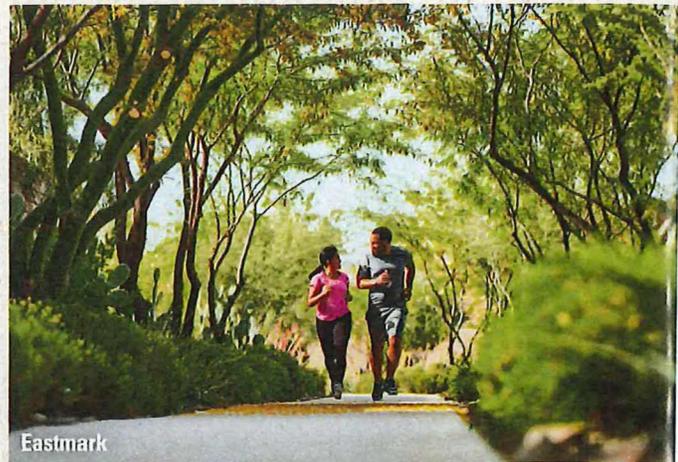
PRICES Mid-\$200,000s to \$650,000 and higher for single-family and multifamily homes

MONTHLY HOMEOWNER FEE \$98 to \$125

STATUS 2,500 homes built of 15,000 planned on 3,200 acres

AGE-RESTRICTED No, but the Encore neighborhood is age-restricted

INFORMATION Eastmark, 10100 E. Ray Road, Mesa, AZ 85212, Eastmark.com



Eastmark

ROBSON RANCH ARIZONA

ELOY, ARIZONA

THE LURE This 55-plus neighborhood allows retirees to enhance nearly every facet of their lives. Health and wellness get a boost in the fitness complex, indoor lap pool and aerobics studio. Social circles expand around the billiards tables, at the on-site restaurant and bar and in more than 100 clubs. Artistic talents are nurtured in the Creative Arts Center, where residents can quilt, paint and form pottery. Lighted tennis courts, an 18-hole golf course and 16 pickleball courts inspire spirited competitions, while the resort-style pool presents a cool respite from the Arizona sunshine.

WHAT RESIDENTS SAY “I feel like a kid again,” says Daryl Ness, 59. “I wish I could stay awake longer than I do, because there’s so much to do.” After researching active-adult communities for many years, he and wife Vicki, 62, chose this gated development in 2018 for its quality home construction, safe environment and convenient ▶