

**LM**

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REAL ESTATE

## Sports Hubs

There's a real buy-in for resort communities offering amusement and amenities.

BY IRENE RAWLINGS

**R**eal estate agents are calling this a rural renaissance as buyers seek out second homes to enjoy for more than just weekends away. In highest demand are properties with access to outdoor activities—from kayaking to golfing, surfing to diving. After a year of pandemic fatigue, an escape to the country with the comforts of home *and* the services completely taken care of—as if staying in a five-star hotel—sounds just about right.

### PALMETTO BLUFF

#### Bluffton, South Carolina

The 20,000-acre riverfront development in the heart of Lowcountry saw its strongest year-to-date sales with more than \$257 million in closed transactions in 2020. Sporting life pursuits include equestrian experiences and salt- and freshwater fishing excursions. Palmetto Bluff Shooting Club has a professionally designed sporting clays course (down here, they call this “golf with a gun”). Homesites from \$225,000 to \$2.5 million; homes from \$837,000 to \$5.75 million; [palmettobluff.com](http://palmettobluff.com)



**SILO RIDGE FIELD CLUB  
Amenia, New York**

Once a dairy farm (hence the name) in New York's historic Hudson Valley, the 850-acre community is all about playing sports and enjoying the great outdoors. It's all right there: lakes, woods, wildlife, an old-fashioned swimming hole, and a Tom Fazio-designed golf course. Golf courses are often the focal point of Discovery Land Company residential resort communities. Mike Meldman, founder, chairman, and CEO, noticed early on that if he wanted to interest his young kids in golf, he should take a casual approach with the option to golf barefoot and raid the snack stations set up at select tees. Discovery's signature recreation-concierge program, Outdoor Pursuits, is a highlight at all 25 locations, providing knowledgeable guides, expert instruction, and the latest equipment. Homeowners can be outfitted for adventure camping expeditions in local wildernesses, fly-fishing excursions in private and public streams, sporting clay and skeet shoots on Discovery courses, and upland hunting outings. At Silo Ridge, 245 houses and condos are being built by regional craftspeople, using local, repurposed materials whenever possible. Estate homesites and condos from \$2.7 million; [discoverylandco.com](http://discoverylandco.com), [siloridge.com](http://siloridge.com)



**THE CLIFFS  
North and South Carolina**

Find this collection of seven residential mountain and lakefront communities in the Carolina Blue Ridge Mountains (between Greenville, South Carolina, and Asheville, North Carolina). Members who own a home in one of the communities have access to the amenities of all seven—wellness centers, golf courses, tennis clubs, restaurants, an equestrian center, and a marina complex on the 18,500-acre

lake that facilitates fishing, boating, wakeboarding, and other water sports. "Residents can live in the mountains and still enjoy the lake," says Lauren Buckland, director of sales for Cliffs Realty, who has seen an 85-percent increase in first-quarter sales from 2020. "The climate here allows us to be outdoors year-round," she adds. Homesites from \$125,000; homes from \$500,000 to more than \$6 million; [cliffsliving.com](http://cliffsliving.com)



**BALSAM MOUNTAIN  
PRESERVE  
North Carolina**

This low-density, conservation-orientated private residential community on 4,400 acres is surrounded by national forest land and Smoky Mountain National Park. With fewer than 100 homes, it will remain forever wild; 75 percent of Balsam's land has been placed under permanent conservation easement. Another selling point: an Arnold Palmer-designed golf course (one of his favorites—he was smitten by the watercolor mountain vistas). Parallel to 30 miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, and riding horses are freshwater streams and creeks, ideal for fly-fishing for southern brook trout. Ride horses up to the top-of-the-mountain Dark Ridge Camp for an overnight under the stars. Homesites from \$199,000; homes from \$646,000 to \$2.6 million; [balsammountainpreserve.com](http://balsammountainpreserve.com) →



**SUSURROS DEL CORAZÓN**  
**Punta de Mita, Mexico**

On 33 lush acres overlooking the Bay of Banderas, Auberge Resorts Collection's Susurros del Corazón ("whispers of the heart") is surrounded by tropical jungle and pearlescent beaches and offers a rare opportunity to own a beachfront home. The destination has 30 residences (from three-bedroom beach casitas to a six-bedroom presidential suite) alongside four distinct culinary concepts, a 3,000-square-foot fitness center and yoga studio, kids' club, and Auberge Spa, all in a jungle-meets-the-sea location. In 2020, the neighboring Punta Mita resort and real estate development reported an 84-percent increase in home sales over the same period in 2019. "Buyers continue to be interested in Riviera Nayarit, Auberge-branded resorts, and the hassle-free nature of turnkey residences. The pandemic has highlighted the benefit of having a second home to escape to," says Mark Cooley, partner, SV Capital (developer of Susurros del Corazón.). "Ninety percent of our buyers put their homes into Auberge's rental program ... creating income from a second-home asset that would otherwise be sitting empty." From \$1.9 million to \$10.9 million; [susurrosresidences.com](http://susurrosresidences.com)





**THE PRESERVE SPORTING CLUB & RESIDENCES**

**Richmond, Rhode Island**

A 3,500-acre private estate in Rhode Island (an hour's drive from Boston and 2.5 hours from NYC) offers a wide range of homes—one- to three-bedroom penthouses in the newly opened Hilltop Lodge, single-family homes, and small-and-cozy cabins—across a variety of natural settings, like uplands, woodlands, pondside, or in neighborhoods. Ownership includes access to members-only activities from fly-fishing to rock-climbing, world-class sporting clays and upland hunting, and horseback riding. Owners have access to the private white-sand beach at five-star sister property, Ocean House, less than 30 minutes away in Watch Hill, Rhode Island. From \$549,000 (cabins); from \$749,000 (one- to three-bedroom penthouses); from \$5 million (family homes); [preservesportingclub.com](http://preservesportingclub.com)

**COACH HOUSE**

**Wellington, Florida**

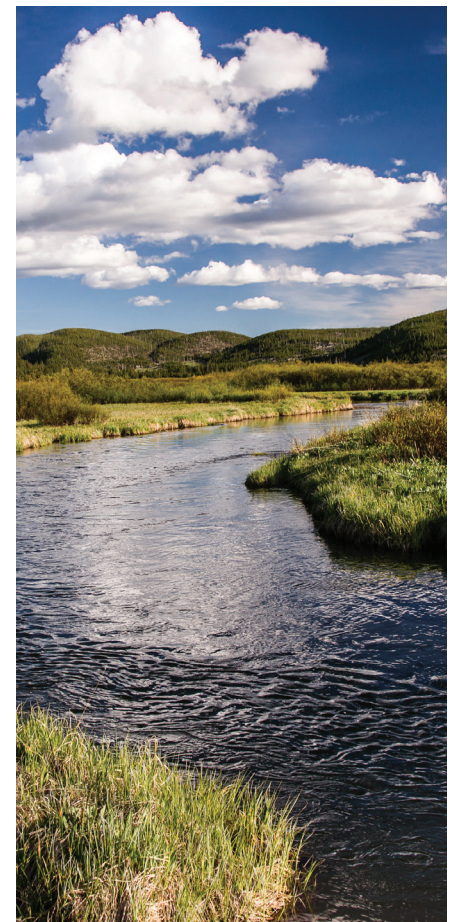
Just south of Palm Beach, Wellington is one of the most affluent enclaves in South Florida and the US epicenter for world-class polo and dressage. Developed by Neil Hirsch, owner of the BlackWatch Polo Team, the smartly scaled Coach House has 34 two- to four-bedroom condos—each with direct elevator access and a large terrace. Other amenities include a showstopping, palm-lined rooftop pool with private cabanas, a spa for humans and

one for their pets, and climate-controlled garages with electric-charging stations. The building overlooks Wellington's Equestrian Preserve Area and is close to an impressive 100 miles of groomed bridle trails. High-profile polo players Nacho Figueras and Grant Ganzi have already reserved. Hirsch calls the residences convenient and secure, "lock-and-leave homes for high-net-worth individuals." From \$2.5 million to \$8.75 million; [coachhousewellington.com](http://coachhousewellington.com)



**SNAKE RIVER SPORTING CLUB  
Jackson Hole, Wyoming**

This exclusive sporting club on nearly 1,000 acres offers almost anything you can think of doing outdoors—tennis, golf, whitewater rafting, fly-fishing on the legendary Snake River, riding a horse for miles on trails in the Bridger-Teton National Forest, or going on an overnight pack trip. The Lodges (from \$3.2 million furnished), The Residences (1–2-acre homesites from \$2 million), The Ranch Estates (35-acre homesites from \$4.4 million); [snakeriversportingclub.com](http://snakeriversportingclub.com) →



From Top: Courtesy The Preserve Sporting Club; Courtesy Snake River Sporting Club; Adobe Stock. Opposite: Courtesy Auberge Resorts