

2007 ANNUAL GUIDE: 70 TOP-RATED COMMUNITIES

P I N N A C L E L I V I N G

MOUNTAIN HOMES

S O U T H E R N • S T Y L E



AN UNSPOILED GEORGIA MOUNTAIN:

LAST OF THE BIG-TIME BARGAINS?

BEST NEW COMMUNITIES:

GROUND-FLOOR OPPORTUNITIES POSSIBLE

OUR WONDROUS FOUR-SEASON WEATHER:

IT'S THAT COOL MOUNTAIN THING

WIN A SPA GETAWAY TO THE GROVE PARK INN PAGE 131

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COURTESY OF HGTV

Selected as one of the top mountain lakes, Lake Lure was the site for the 2006 HGTV Dream home, located in the Grey Rock community.

2007 BEST OF THE MOUNTAINS AWARDS

BY SANDRA KELLY

Searching for the ideal mountain retreat — be it a second home or a retirement destination — is tough enough because of all the beautiful options available. But what's your lifestyle? Do you want secluded horseback riding trails or a lively nightlife? A community where tennis and golf reign supreme or access to fishing? Or both?



COURTESY OF WALNUT COVE

Fresh as a misty morning, the golf course at Walnut Cove has already earned a host of kudos.

The editors, staff and contributing writers for *Mountain Homes* are as varied in their likes as our readers, so we've drawn on suggestions from all of them to offer this rundown. Here are our choices, backed by solid information as well as experience. Best places for history buffs. Best spots for outdoor activists. Best sites for travel connections to the world. Best spots for city sophisticates or Mayberryites, and more.

FOR WATER LOVERS

(Best Mountain Lakes)

LAKE LURE, N.C.: This petite lake of 720 acres and about 21 miles of shoreline makes up for its size with appeal that includes a seven-acre island at the center of the resort town. *National Geographic* magazine once called this lake one of the most beautiful of the manmade bodies of water. The lake sits in Hickory Nut Gorge.

NORRIS LAKE, TENN.: The shoreline of this lake reaches five counties. Imagine living in a city and having convenient access to a pristine lake. The largest of Tennessee Valley Authority lakes, Norris has more than 800 miles of shoreline and extends 73 miles up the Clinch River and 56 miles up the Powell River. It has three state parks, two game management areas and 59 public access sites.

SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE, VA., can lay claim to more than 500 miles of shoreline and trophy fishing. The lake, 20 minutes from Roanoke, Va., and access to the Blue Ridge Parkway, touches three counties and has grown into an unofficial city with its own movie theater. The lake, developed as a power project by American Electric Power, boasts several fine private and public golf courses.



Golfers at private and public courses in Smith Mountain Lake, Va., enjoy some of the 500 miles of lake shoreline.



A spectacular sunset over the mountains of Red Wolf Run in Asheville, N.C., reminds residents of why environmental preservation is so important.

FOR ENVIRONMENTALISTS

(Communities Committed to Preservation/Conservation)

BALSAM MOUNTAIN PRESERVE, Sylva, N.C. Two-thirds of the Preserve is set aside in a permanent conservation easement. The Balsam Mountain Trust also provides educational outreach to members, guests, educational institutions and the surrounding community, conducting joint projects with regional universities and environmental organizations. The trust works with the developer to implement sound land management plans and landscaping practices, in keeping with the careful building practices and environmental awareness that are at the core of the community's philosophy.

PISGAH PRESERVE on Lake James in Morganton, N.C., is a new 480-acre gated community. Its 140 home sites – ranging from one to five acres – sit amid 115 acres of common/open area planned to protect all streams and waterways. Activities include hiking, biking, boating, swimming, fishing, camping, or just sitting on the porch enjoying views of Shortoff Mountain or Lake James.

RED WOLF RUN in Asheville, N.C., has dedicated time and energy to reestablishing the once-dominant American Chestnut tree. Once the most important hardwood tree in the Eastern U.S., chestnuts averaged five feet in diameter and stood 100 feet tall. Red Wolf Run has planted a test plot of trees descended from The American Chestnut Foundation's "backcross breeding program," designed to introduce the blight resistance of the Chinese chestnut, a low-growing and spreading tree, with the extraordinary growth characteristics of the American chestnut. The Red Wolf Run Foundation receives a portion of proceeds from every home-site sale in Red Wolf Run and has pledged funds to construct a new habitat for the red wolf at the Western North Carolina Nature Center in Asheville.