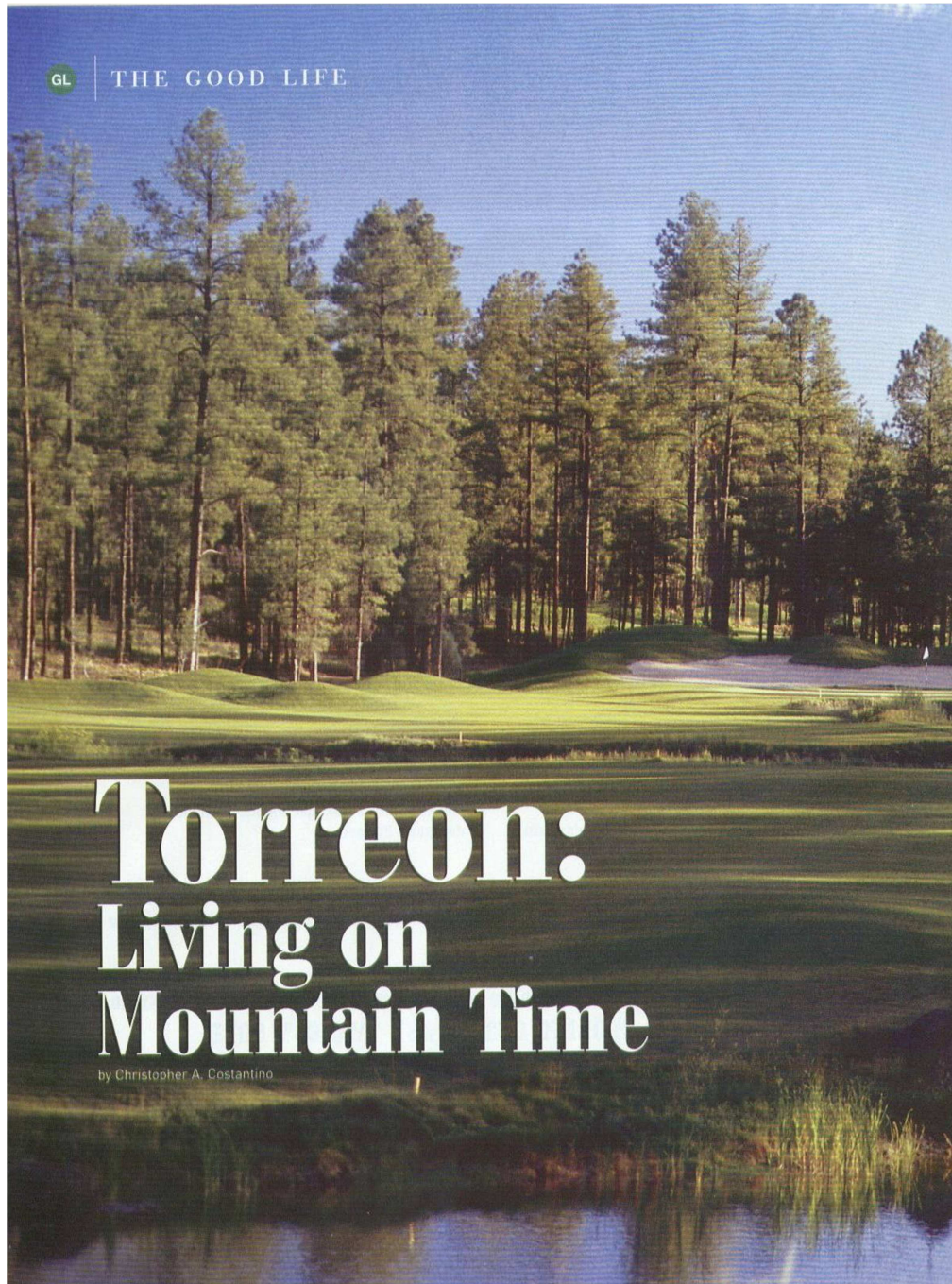


TORREON:

Living on Mountain Time

By Christopher A. Costantino

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Living in The Phoenix area has many advantages – four major league sports teams, symphonies, theatre and world class restaurants, to name a few. The weather is also beautiful... nine months of the year. During the other three months, however, the Valley of the sun leaves few to dispute the reason for the moniker.

More and more residents are escaping the summer swelter for refuge in the majestic White Mountains, listed by MSN Money as one of the top ten emerging second-home markets in the nation. With 600 miles of streams, 40 lakes and a 180-mile trail system, there is always plenty for the outdoor lover to enjoy. In addition, the Sunrise Ski Resort offers downhill and cross-country skiing, snowboarding and snowmobiling, making this a perfect year-round residence.

Located in the heart of the White Mountains at the crossroads of US 60 and 260 (175 miles northeast of Phoenix), the city of Show Low is the area's commercial and tourism hub. An elevation of 6,350 feet provides for winter temperatures (25 – 55 degrees), mild summer temperatures (45 – 85 degrees), and an annual snowfall of just 38 inches. Against a backdrop of one of the largest stands of Ponderosa pine forests in the world – Apache Sitgreaves National Forest – lies Torreon... a 1,387-acre master-planned gated community. Opened in the summer of 1998, the area was developed by Scottsdale's Desert Troon Companies, which has properties all over the world, and is ideal for both second home buyers and permanent residents. According to Sheridan Atkinson, Vice President of Land Operations for Desert Troon Companies and Corporate General Manager for Torreon, "Thirty to 40 percent of our buyers will be primary residents and the rest will purchase property here for a second home, retreat or vacation getaway."

In the area of family recreation, Torreon is hard to beat. At the core of a 12-acre Family Center Complex is a 2,400-square-foot clubhouse, which houses a playroom for video games, ping pong, air hockey and board games, along with a media room which sports a big screen television. Outdoors, the complex offers tennis, volleyball and sports courts; a children's play area; walking paths; an equestrian center; a catch-and-release fishing pond; and fitness center with a 3,675-square-foot heated pool, a weight room and a spa. Additionally, an outdoor amphitheatre is available for small concerts and other activities.

At the center of their 27-hole golf course rests the 13,000-square-foot clubhouse, which features a 30-foot stone tower (the community's namesake – *Torreon* – is Spanish for tower), men's and women's locker rooms and a pro shop. Designed by internationally acclaimed architects von Hagge, Smelek and Baril (who are known worldwide for the creation of more than 250 courses in the United States, Europe and Asia), this course preserves the aesthetics of the land, including the natural washes and wildlife.

If a beautiful piece of land on which to build a house is what you want, home sites range from a third of an acre, to just over an acre. Many boast golf course or mountain views, with prices from the 40's to the high 100's. More than half of the lots, in fact, are located on the golf course. A reasonable association fee (\$108 per month) covers the costs of all the common areas, roads and security. By the end of the 2004 season, approximately 300 homes will be completed, leaving 850 lots available for purchase.

If pre-built is more what you are looking for, the “Lodges at Torreon” offer vacation living in single-family twin homes, all of which are within walking distance of the first tee and the family center complex. According to Sales manager Pete Powel, “A home at The Lodges is for people who love being right in the middle of all the action.”

Built by Mirage Homes of Fountain Hills, there are 38 units, each of which features three bedrooms and three baths. Every unit has a spacious, private deck and a centralized great room that includes a kitchen, dining area and living room which serves as a common gathering in the center of the home. The most unique feature is a special “lock-off” on one of the suites – an ideal amenity for multiple families or business arrangements. With its own temperature control, private entrance, wet bar, sitting area and fireplace, the room becomes completely self sufficient. Prices start at \$389,900 – a great deal, considering golf membership is included, which allows use of the course for anyone in residence. There is currently one model open for viewing.

Residents are privy to the dining options at Torreon, where the Grille and Patio provide casual lunch service, and the Formal Dining Room features fusion cuisine with a Southwestern flair. Executive Chef Matt Simon offers dishes, such as SHRIMP PUERTO PENASCO, shrimp scampi with chipotle and haba ero peppers; SWEET ASIAN CHILI MARINATED VENISON, a six-ounce portion of venison New York strip served with chili butter; and their signature dish, BBQ BABY BACK RIBS. Of the latter, Chef Simon claims, “They always keep coming back for those.”

Healthy eating is a priority though, with an added benefit of appealing to the ever-growing group of people that are watching their carbohydrate intake. For example, mashed cauliflower is offered as an alternative to potatoes, and sauces are based more on stocks and vegetables, and less on cream and butter. Good food at a good price is their goal: “Nothing on our menu is more than twenty dollars,” states Simon. With fine fare accompanied by panoramic views of the golf course, trees and mountains, “It all adds up to a wonderful dining experience - we've got such a great atmosphere here.”

Melissa L'Heureux, a former Chandler resident who has made Torreon her permanent home, praises the community. “We just love everything Torreon has to offer in terms of outdoor activities. It's perfect.” Good weather, scenic views and friendly people... Torreon is perfect for people that want to escape the stressful lifestyle of the big city (temporarily or permanently) and provide a safer environment for young families with children. With Torreon, you can *Escape the Bonds of Everyday*.

Pursing your escape?

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