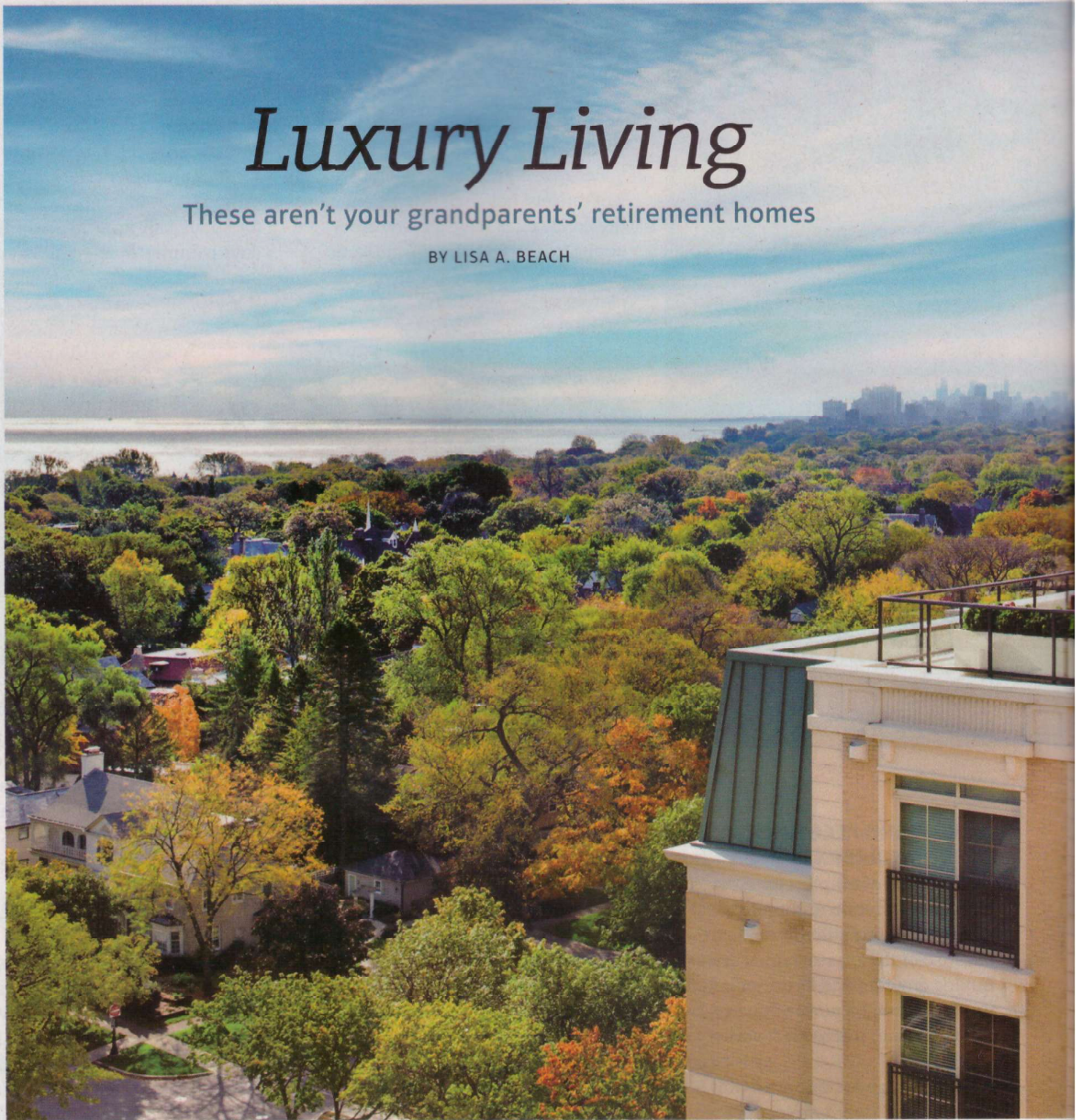




Luxury Living

These aren't your grandparents' retirement homes

BY LISA A. BEACH



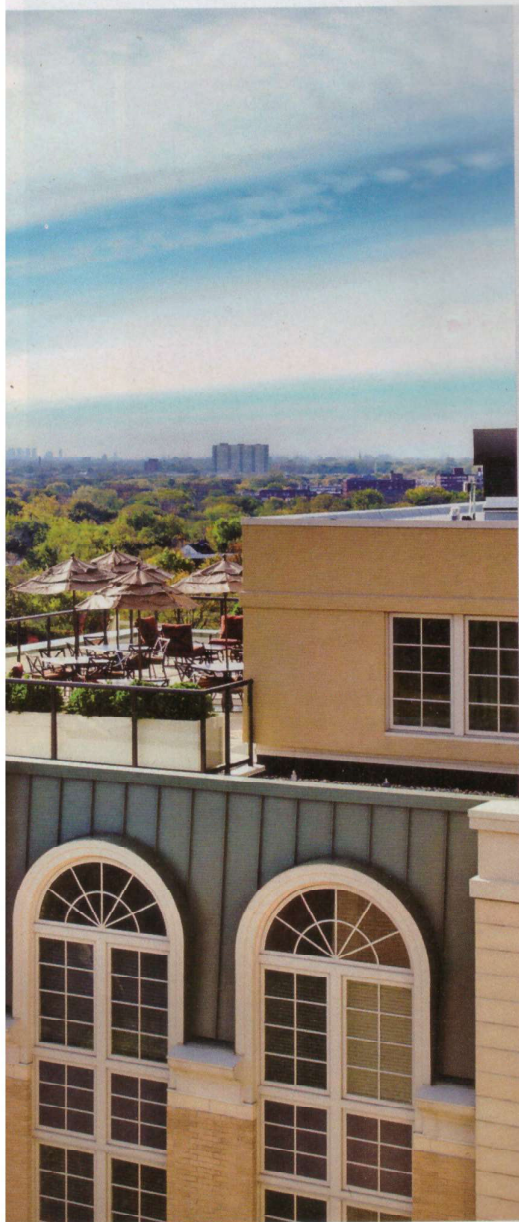
After swimming laps in the saltwater pool, you head to the spa for a Swedish massage. Later, you're meeting friends for dinner at the on-site gourmet restaurant. The next day, you're booked solid: an early tee time followed by an afternoon ceramics workshop. You might even take in an evening concert.

It might sound like an activity-packed vacation at a luxe resort, but it's actually a typical day at a new breed of senior-living communities. If the phrase "retirement home" conjures up images of bingo games and oatmeal, think again. The latest trend in senior living focuses on luxury, resort-style leisure with top-notch amenities and a full slate of

activities such as horseback riding, gardening, travel and golfing.

What's the appeal of these high-end retirement communities?

"They offer older adults an incredibly convenient and flexible lifestyle, all in a high-quality, maintenance-free environment," says Ron Jennette, president and CEO of Texas-based Methodist Retirement Communities. "I think



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THE MATHER

Evanston, Ill.

Situated just a few blocks from the scenic shores of Lake Michigan, The Mather is a pedestrian's paradise. Residents can meander through walking paths and beautiful gardens in this lushly landscaped community or stroll to shopping, dining and cultural activities nearby. The Mather offers one- to two-bedroom apartments, and entrance fees range from \$400,000 to more than \$2 million.

Amenities: 10,000-square-foot spa and fitness center with a nearly Olympic-size heated pool and 24-hour fitness classes; movie theater; library; restaurants; live concert performances; and cultural excursions to the theater

there's a misperception that when older adults move into a community, they must compromise autonomy and freedom for services, care and security. In reality, residents have greater flexibility to pursue their interests because they don't have to worry about the day-to-day maintenance that comes with homeownership."

Luxury retirement communi-

ties offer a spectrum of housing choices, ranging from independent living to skilled nursing. While some active seniors opt for independent-living apartments, townhomes, condos and single-family houses, others want the reassurance of a Continuing Care Retirement Community — an option that allows residents to "age in place." Residents move in

while they're still able to function independently, and then tap into on-site assisted living accommodations and skilled nursing as needed. The common thread? These upscale communities can make you feel like you're on a permanent vacation.

Take a look at just a few of the fabulous luxury senior-living communities around the country:



RETIREMENT

IS IT RIGHT FOR YOU?

Before making the financial commitment that luxury senior living requires, do your research and ask yourself these questions:

Can you afford it? You need to look at the long-term costs before signing on the dotted line.

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Do you like the people in the community? Take a tour. Talk to residents. Can you see yourself interacting with these people on a daily basis?

...

Is the staff qualified? If you are thinking about an assisted living or retirement home, be sure the staff is qualified to handle your medical needs.

...

Ask about violations. Be sure housing is up to code and look into any past health citations.

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What is the overall financial strength of the senior living organization?

...

What is the occupancy level? Are there a lot of empty apartments or is the complex somewhat full?

...

How long has the staff been working at the community?

SOURCES: SENIORLIVING.COM, COVENANT SHORES (MERCER ISLAND, WASH.)



2 RIO VERDE COMMUNITY AND GOLF CLUB *Rio Verde, Ariz.*

This 760-acre community borders the Tonto National Forest, Four Peaks mountain range and McDowell Mountain Regional Park, giving residents beautiful vistas and ample reason to get outside and play. Rio Verde offers 980 custom-built homes, townhomes and villas ranging from less than \$200,000 to more than \$1 million.

Amenities: Two 18-hole golf courses; tennis; pickleball; bocce ball; art and dance classes; pool and water aerobics; fitness center and classes; massage services; library; book clubs; charity groups; events and activities such as comedy shows, cooking classes, wine dinners, cycling and horseback riding



3 COVENANT SHORES

Mercer Island, Wash.

Minutes from the Space Needle, Pike Place Market and downtown Seattle sits the waterfront property of Covenant Shores. This 12-acre community offers 208 apartment homes for residential living, 32 assisted living, 15 memory-support assisted living, and 43 skilled nursing beds ranging from \$91,000 for a studio to \$654,000 for a custom two-bedroom.

Amenities: Private marina on Lake Washington; scenic walking paths; putting green; restaurants; fitness center; Jacuzzi; card and game room; creative arts center; 60+ clubs; wood shop; gardening; watercolor painting; lakefront barbecues; bridge; line dancing; kayaking and photography

GEORGE GRUEL: COVENANT SHORES



4 **ATRIA WEST 86**
New York City

Set on Manhattan's Upper West Side just a few steps from Riverside Park, Atria West 86 offers the ultimate metropolitan lifestyle for older adults who crave all that "the city that never sleeps" has to offer. This pet-friendly community offers studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments ranging from \$7,730 (studio) to \$18,000 (premium two-bedroom) per month, and appeals to seniors looking for sophisticated city living.

Amenities: Penthouse salon and spa; rooftop terrace with a fitness center and exercise classes; gourmet restaurants; library; more than 200 monthly events including live performances from the Julliard School and the Jazz Foundation; renown speakers; art classes; writing workshops; trips to Broadway shows and museums



5 **THE LANGFORD AT COLLEGE STATION**

College Station, Texas

Open this year, the newly built 12-acre, pet-friendly community is nestled near the Texas A&M campus. It offers large (starting at 1,000 square feet), independent living condo-style flats, assisted living apartment homes, and suites ranging from \$350,000 to \$500,000. Each building includes a porch and spacious common area ideal for those who want to entertain and socialize.

Amenities: Pebble Creek Country Club social membership; wellness classes; state-of-the-art fitness studio; educational events; parties; Bible studies; gardening; multipurpose room; beauty salon; barber shop; game/computer lounge; walking paths; restaurant-style dining; clubhouse