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SPORTING CLUBS TEE OFF

By Scott Kauffman



GOLF COURSES, ESPECIALLY THOSE designed by the industry's leading architects, have long been the main attraction at many private club communities. Increasingly, however, world-class courses are becoming second nature at many high-end golf projects—second nature, that is, to nature.

At least that's the case at a growing number of sporting clubs from West Virginia to Wyoming, where golf is just a fraction of the open-air fun. One prime example is Snake River Sporting Club, a private 554-acre retreat in Jackson, Wyo. To be sure, when Dolan, Pollak & Schram Development set out to develop this low-density enclave of about 130 homesites, it built a first-class, Tom Weiskopf-designed course to wind through the property framed by the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

But golf at Snake River Sporting Club is just part of the entertainment equation—especially when you consider the 6.5 miles of prime Snake River trout fishing, an equestrian center and riding trails, cross-country skiing and miles of hiking and biking opportunities along the river and near the national forest and mountains.

"The way we describe it is 'live the sporting life,'" says Steve Schram, managing director of Dolan, Pollak & Schram, also the developer of the Greenbrier Sporting Club next to the historic Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va. "In England, there's a magazine called *The Sporting Life*. [It is the] concept of being active, interacting with nature, enjoying the land and trying different things."

To own a piece of this lifestyle-driven land, which also offers first-class spa and fitness center facilities and gourmet dining rivaling the Big Apple's best, be prepared to pay a hefty price: Homesites measuring one half-acre to 2.25 acres start at \$1.25 million, and the membership fee is \$150,000 with annual dues of \$8,600.

Additional developers are banking on the sporting club trend as baby boomers (the principle buyers in many of these communities) are looking to spend less time in the office and more time out and about pursuing leisure and hobby.

Another development playing off this theme is the nearby **TETON SPRINGS** in Teton Valley, Idaho. Just a 30-minute drive from

Jackson Hole, the community is launching a member-owned residence club composed of 16 western-styled luxury cabins (one-sixth deeded interests are selling for \$325,000). The homes should be ready by next spring, according to Jeff Heilbrun, vice president of The Residence Club at Teton Springs.

This Idaho club is located within the 780-acre Teton Springs resort community, giving members access to the first-class amenities, privileges and activities that lie just beyond their doors—gold-medal fishing, hiking, mountain biking and legendary skiing in and around the Yellowstone area. Golfers will get preferred access to the Headwaters Club at Teton Springs, designed by golf legend Byron Nelson, PGA Tour player Steve Jones and architect Gary Stephenson. There is also a 9-hole par-3 family course.

“Golf is very important, but it’s no longer the centerpiece,” Heilbrun says. “[People] will golf when they’re here. However, the main attraction

is the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem.”

Similarly, golf at Snake River Sporting Club is an integral part of the plan, but it certainly doesn’t exhibit the prominence it typically does at most private country club communities.

“In the older-style golf developments, you might have had tennis courts and pools, but if you didn’t play golf, you were kind of a second-class citizen,” Schram says. “Because we’re high-end, you have to have a high-end golf course designed by a Fazio, Pete Dye or Weiskopf. But other amenities are just as important, and we put just as much emphasis on our fishing tournaments as we do the golf. For families, it creates a much better environment and opportunities for our members to do a number of different things...” **TETON SPRINGS, 866.445.3328, WWW.TETONSPRINGS.COM; SNAKE RIVER SPORTING CLUB, 888.434.7772, WWW.SNAKERIVERSPORTINGCLUB.COM.**