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In the South, horses roam within gated equestrian communities and on private horse farms with acres of rolling land.



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Home Is Where The Horses Roam

By Lauren Varga

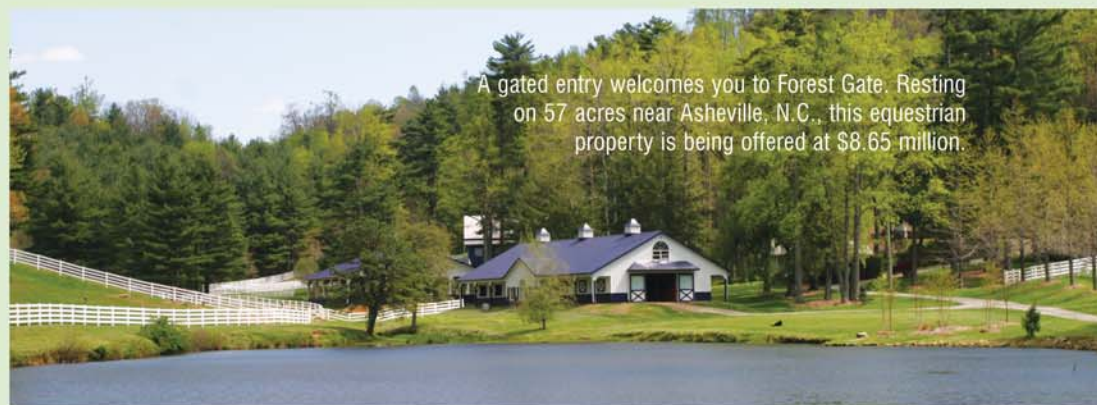
Ocala, Fla., and Alpharetta (Milton), Ga.

Equestrians looking for relatively small parcels in communities with shared facilities and amenities should consider Ocala, Fla., and Alpharetta (Milton), Ga.

Known as the horse capital of the world, Ocala, Fla., originally focused on thoroughbred operations, which called for more acreage. Today, Ocala is a well-rounded horse community with every kind of riding discipline.

For those who spend winters showing in Ocala—especially the Hunter-Jumper crowd—“smaller properties appeal more than the big ones,” explains George De Benedicty, Pegasus Realty & Associates.

Wellington—an equestrian community in Ocala—offers riders lots ranging from 10 to 15 acres and bridal paths. “Whether bridal paths lead to an amenity or a convenience, they’re a big asset to equestrian communities,” says De Benedicty.



A gated entry welcomes you to Forest Gate. Resting on 57 acres near Asheville, N.C., this equestrian property is being offered at \$8.65 million.

Ocala is not typical Florida, explains Realtor Joan Pletcher. Here, Palm trees and flat lands are substituted with rolling hills and live oak. Buyers will find prime equestrian property with “a Southern feel, rolling grounds and warm and friendly people.”

A great place to raise a family, Ocala offers properties convenient to town but in close prox-

imity to horse venues. Pletcher adds that buyers have “the best of both worlds.”

In Alpharetta, buyers will find a variety of property, both in and out of equine communities. “Every house you go to is so different,” explains Carolyn Hassel of Jenny Pruitt & Associates. “Each home is a unique piece of art.”

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Surrounded by a horse trail, Tullamore is an equestrian neighborhood in Milton with large lots, “a sense of security and a common bond,” says Hassel. Prices in this neighborhood range from \$1.2 million to \$3 million.

Separate from equine communities in Alpharetta, are country estates that may not currently board horses but have the potential to do so. When a subdivision “doesn’t cut it,” says Hassel, buyers find a home with a countryside feeling close-in to the cultural atmosphere of Atlanta.

In Alpharetta, Realtor Nancy Murphy and co-lister Susan Meakin, both of Jenny Pruitt & Associates, are listing a custom home for \$1.199.5 million. The lakefront showplace is

In the Tryon, N.C., market, however, Lillie Brown of RE/MAX Advantage notes that buyers will find larger lots because of zoning regulations. “Very little, if any, is being developed into subdivisions.”

In fact, larger horse properties hold preservation easements. This regulation will limit whether a property can or cannot be subdivided, how it can be subdivided, and will provide privacy from future development.

According to Brown, in this market buyers are looking for perpetual trails—maintained by a subdivision or homeowner—because “these trails are under easement and can never be taken away.” Golden Hills at Fairview Farms is an example of property with a perpetual trail sys-

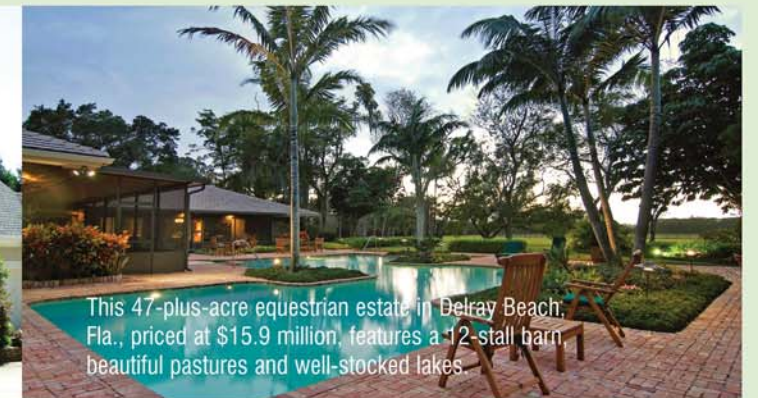
and standardbred devotees is attracting other disciplines and breeds. Equestrians are drawn by the area’s “excellent land and facilities, some of the world’s foremost experts in horse care, and some of the nation’s most knowledgeable agents in the purchase and sale of equine real estate,” says Kirkpatrick.

In Lexington, Ky., buyers will find some of the best grazing soils, a temperate climate and specialized veterinary clinics. According to Hill Parker of Turf Town Properties, horse farms in this area range from 5 to 500 acres in size and \$300,000 to \$20 million in price.

“It’s a good equestrian market because of the improvements of the Kentucky Horse Park for the World Equestrian Games,” says Parker.



This 7-acre \$1.2 million lakefront estate is tucked into the center of Alpharetta, Ga., horse country.



This 47-plus-acre equestrian estate in Delray Beach, Fla., priced at \$15.9 million, features a 12-stall barn, beautiful pastures and well-stocked lakes.

graced by elegant living spaces, including a banquet-sized dining room, gourmet kitchen and hardwood floors. Outdoors, a horse lover will find more than 7 acres and formal gardens.

North Carolina

Horse lovers in The Tar Heel State have a choice between small in-town parcels or larger, protected tracts.

Sheelah Clarkson of the Sheelah Clarkson Agency in Asheville, N.C., offers equestrian properties coupled with a culturally enriching lifestyle. “The Asheville market is the fastest-growing area in North Carolina,” says Clarkson. “There are people who love to ride but love culture. You get both in Asheville.”

Because the price of land has increased, those looking to buy in Asheville will find private farms starting at 5 acres, rather than 50-100 acres. Buyers should expect to pay at least \$1 million for a property with land, a barn, or a covered ring and arena.

In Asheville, equestrians get lost on miles of national forest trails. Equestrians also rely on verbal agreements as a way to use trails that span across private properties.

tem. Here, riders will enjoy 12 miles of trails.

Tennessee

Riders will find similar trail arrangements in Tennessee. Since most trails in this area are deeded, neighbors agree amongst themselves to let one another ride across property lines. “For the most part, people are willing to share,” explains Lawrence Lipman of Lipman Sotheby’s International Realty.

Near Nashville and Franklin, Tenn., Leipers Fork is a 4,000-year-old village with general stores and a country lifestyle. According to Lipman, properties in this area range from 20 to 400 acres.

Kentucky

In Central Kentucky, like Tyron, equestrians will find very few subdivisions. “Because most of the farms have traditionally been thoroughbred breeding farms, there are very few equestrian communities,” explains Arnold Kirkpatrick of Kirkpatrick & Company.

The coming of the 2010 World Equestrian Games in the Bluegrass (Fayette County) is bringing more horse disciplines to the area. Kirkpatrick is finding that what originally drew thoroughbred

Equestrians in Lexington don’t take their horse endeavors lightly, after all, “horses in Lexington are more important than Microsoft to Seattle,” explains Parker. “The horses become a part of your life.”

Delray Beach, Fla.

Not your typical horse country, equestrians buying property in Delray Beach, Fla., are buying for size and “a sizeable property is extremely rare and hard to find,” says Wendy Casey of Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate. That is why her 47-plus-acre listing in Delray Beach is so remarkable.

“This property is truly unique,” says Casey. “The beauty of this property is the total seclusion and the preserve, where it won’t be developed.”

Casey, who grew up riding in England, was immediately drawn to the landscaping of this property. “It didn’t feel like I was in South Florida; it almost felt as if I was in England,” she says.

According to Casey, there are approximately 200 listings on the market in Palm Beach County that span 3 to 10 acres. But, there are less than 10 properties that reach 40-plus acres in size. **UFI**

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