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40 - PRIME, JULY 24, 2009 - USA TODAY

**Life on Vacation**

A weekly look at the second-home market

Pinehurst, N.C.

**Come for the golf, stay for the lifestyle**



By Larry Olivetti  
Special for USA TODAY

Imagine Scotland's St. Andrews, the birthplace of golf, with much better weather and Southern hospitality, and you have Pinehurst, the nation's oldest golf vacation destination. The area's nickname, the "Home of American Golf," is no hyperbole. When Massachusetts visionary James Walker Tufts developed Pinehurst in 1895 as a health retreat full of outdoor activities, it became quite literally the nation's first golf resort.

Today there are eight golf courses at the resort, plus dozens more in the area, including the adjacent villages of Southern Pines and Aberdeen. Tufts' active lifestyle vision, Pinehurst also boasts a championship tennis center, tournament croquet facilities, and a 200-acre lake complete with marina and beach club.

"Initially it is the golf that draws them, but we also get a lot of tennis players," says Joanne Padgett, broker in charge of Pinehurst Resort Realty, adding that the town is popular with buyers from the Northeast, California and Florida. "Once they get here, they get interested in croquet, lawn bowling and boating."

Pinehurst has been ranked the world's top golf resort by Travel + Leisure Co. and the No. 2 U.S. golf town by Golf Digest. Another attraction is value: Prices are reasonable compared with other top second-home golf regions. "You can buy a one-bedroom condo for under \$100,000, and homes over \$2 million are very rare," Padgett says.

The resort is such an integral part of town that second-home ownership here is an unusual hybrid between a private golf club and vacation retreat, as owners share the courses, spa, restaurants and resort facilities with visiting guests. "There is a separate private clubhouse for members, and they have activities all the time," Padgett says.

Most village homeowners also get an annual unlimited membership package to seven of the resort's courses, including Number Two, where both the Men's and Women's U.S. Open will be played in 2014, for as little as \$300 monthly — less than the dues at many single-course country clubs.



By Andrew Scheraga

**Buckets of fun:** Pinehurst boasts eight golf courses, along with tennis, croquet, boating — and homes that are reasonably priced compared with other golf regions.

**A look at three Pinehurst neighborhoods**

- **Old Town:** The heart of Pinehurst is the grand Carolina Hotel and the main golf clubhouse for the resort's oldest five courses. Residences in this area are within walking distance of shops, restaurants, hotels and spas, with the most desirable along the fairways of the Number Two course. Most are single-family homes costing from \$300,000 to more than \$1 million.
- **Pinehurst Village:** The rest of Pinehurst surrounding Old Town includes a variety of options. The resort's sixth and seventh courses are in separate gated golf communities with larger modern houses and condos, and there are also lakefront houses and non-golf residences. While condos start under \$100,000, those that qualify for the resort's rental pool begin at about \$250,000. Broker Joanne Padgett says larger luxury homes can be had for \$500,000 to 700,000.
- **Surrounding towns:** Real estate within village limits commands a premium, as only Pinehurst residents can buy the local golf membership. Nearby Southern Pines has several top golf communities, including Pine Needles and Mid-Pines. (pine-needles-mlpines.com) and the exclusive Country Club of North Carolina (ccnc.com). More than 1,000 condos are being developed at the less-expensive Little River Golf Resort in Carthage, just a few miles away (littlelv.com).



Photo by Christopher Thomas/Black

**On the market:** The Maple Tree Cottage in Pinehurst's Old Town center was extensively remodeled in 2002.

**Midrange price \$708,000**

- Bedrooms: 3
- Bathrooms: 7½
- Size: 2,500 square feet
- Features: Open kitchen, living room with fireplace, guest suite with separate entrance and kitchenette, heated in-ground pool, two-car garage.



**On the market:** This residence in the Pinehurst Trace adult community is within the village and qualifies for the local golf membership.

**Low price \$215,000**

- Bedrooms: 2
- Bathrooms: 2
- Size: 2,100 square feet
- Features: Large kitchen with granite counters, study great room with fireplace, skylight throughout, master bedroom with whirlpool tub, and one-car garage. Community includes clubhouse, fitness center and pool.