

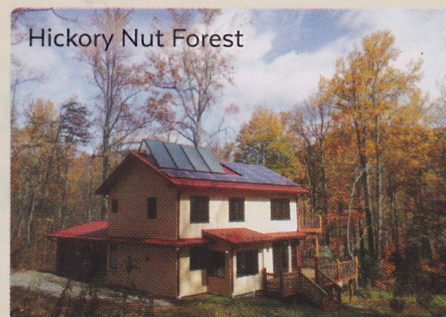
Tres Santos



Serenbe



Hickory Nut Forest



# THE GOOD LIFE

Want to live close to nature, eat good food, and live a healthy life?  
These communities just might be for you.

By Nicole Gregory

**THE WORDS “PLANNED COMMUNITY”** usually conjure up images of gated subdivisions with huge homes, overwatered lawns, and residents who drive everywhere and hardly know each other.

This suburban vision is exactly the opposite of a new crop of innovative communities that are designed to encourage neighborliness, exercise, and healthy living. Here are three examples.

## Tres Santos

Tres Santos, a five-acre area that includes homes, a hotel, and shops, is now underway on the coast of Baja California, Mexico.

The high-end houses—many of which have been wired for solar panels—feature breezeways, courtyards, and verandas for indoor-outdoor living in Baja’s warm climate. Their architecture complements the coastal landscape in color and vibe; a gray-water system is used for irrigation. Walkways and bike paths connect the various areas, making it easy for residents and visitors to get out and exercise—and socialize.

“Research shows that people want to live where they can exercise, enjoy healthy foods, and have frequent social interaction in a beautiful environment,” says Kelsey Meyer, marketing analyst for Tres Santos.

A 1.5-acre organic garden is in the works and will be central to life

here. Run by a local farmer, it will supply food to area residents, as well as to a restaurant and hotel. (Visit [tressantosbaja.com](http://tressantosbaja.com) for more.)

## Serenbe

Serenbe, located 35 miles outside Atlanta in the Georgia countryside, is one of many communities created out of a passion to preserve land—it was planned 10 years ago as a food- and health-oriented town. Serenbe’s current 250 homes are “EarthCraft certified,” meaning they’re energy efficient, water saving, and durable. Founders Marie and Steve Nygren intended Serenbe’s 1,000 acres to be agriculturally focused, with a 25-acre farm on site that supplies restaurants and a farmers’ market; Serenbe also runs a CSA program.

“Access to good food is one of the elements of a community,” says Monica Olsen, a Serenbe spokesperson. (Visit [serenbe.com](http://serenbe.com) for more.)

## Hickory Nut Forest

Located 30 minutes outside Asheville, NC, in the southern Appalachian Mountains, the sustainable community of Hickory Nut Forest consists of homes and lots on 100 acres of protected land purchased by John Myers and partners.

“We have a community garden down in the apple orchard that has 25 raised beds,” says Myers. Hickory Nut Forest is being developed slowly and mindfully, with the intention of preserving and supporting the environment. Trails throughout encourage residents to venture into the surrounding nature. (Visit [hickorynutforest.com](http://hickorynutforest.com) for more.)

What kind of home buyers are attracted to these kinds of communities? “It’s a super-mixed group,” says Olsen of Serenbe’s population.

“Our oldest residents are 65, and the youngest is 3 months,” says Myers. “We like having a diversity of ages, which makes a more interesting community.”