

# GOLF

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# GOLD

Where The Game Meets The Good Life



## Go Big & Go Home

Four of America's largest golf communities are also among its absolute finest. Here's why bigger is better when it comes to putting down roots—and your peg. *By Joe Passov*



## DESIGN FOR LIVING

Golf-centric real estate communities of all sizes have faced challenges in the past 10 years. Thankfully, the market has stabilized, and one group that has prospered is communities with 1,500 or more homes. Much of that success has to do with options for residents—not just golf but a rich variety of lifestyle offerings. Pair great golf with great amenities—and enough neighbors to make for a thriving community—and you have a great place to live. Here are four fabulous golf enclaves that embrace the idea of “the more, the merrier.”

### Reynolds Lake Oconee Greensboro, Ga.

» Located halfway between Atlanta and Augusta, Reynolds Lake Oconee is a massive 10,000-acre property with nearly 400 miles of shoreline on Georgia's second-largest lake. A checkered recent past, including a name change (from Reynolds Plantation) has given way to smooth sailing at Reynolds. Residents can sample the best in resort life at the on-site Ritz-Carlton Reynolds, from the award-winning spa to the Linger Longer steakhouse. Four full-service marinas provide superior access to boating, fishing and waterskiing, while the Lake Club functions as the community's social and recreational hub. The 38,000 sq. ft. facility includes indoor and outdoor pools, a fitness center, tennis, and the Rock House, a hunting-lodge replica that is home to lectures and concerts.

**Golf:** Five semi-private courses and the completely private Jim Engh-designed Creek Club make the golf offerings at Reynolds Lake Oconee among the finest in the business. Jack Nicklaus's Great Waters generates the most praise, with its superb lakeside back nine, but Rees Jones's Oconee is nearly its equal.

**Lot prices:** \$40,000–\$1,000,000  
**Home prices:** \$200,000–\$4,000,000  
**Number of residences:** 2,500  
**Contact:** reynoldslakeoconee.com

### The Villages The Villages, Fla.

» No golf community on the planet resembles The Villages. Catering to the active 55-and-up crowd, and best known for its ubiquitous TV spots during PGA

Tour telecasts, The Villages is actually an unincorporated town in central Florida, 50 miles northwest of Orlando, that spills into several counties. The 2016 census shows a population of 157,000 residents, a staggering 1,550 percent increase from the year 2000, making it one of the fastest-growing communities in the United States. The Villages boasts its own hospital, newspaper, and radio and cable TV stations, along with many amenities, from town squares to movie theaters, softball, aerobics and a performing arts center.

**Golf:** Twelve championship courses, including the Arnold Palmer-designed Legends and the Nancy Lopez-designed Legacy, plus 36 executive courses, all of them nine-holers comprised primarily of par-3 holes. When you buy into The Villages, golf at the executive courses is free for life. You'll have to pay to play the championship tracks, but there's no cost for membership.

**Lot prices:** N/A  
**Home/townhome prices:** \$113,000–\$1,250,000  
**Number of residences:** 50,000  
**Contact:** thevillages.com

### Hot Springs Village Hot Springs Village, Ark.

» The largest gated community in the U.S. sits on more than 26,000 heavily wooded acres one hour west of the state capital of Little Rock and 30 minutes from historic Hot Springs. Recreational opportunities abound on the lakes and trails of the Ouachita Mountains and Ouachita National Forest, which surround Hot Springs Village. The community offers more than 200 social clubs and organizations, the Coronado Fitness Center (Zumba, Pilates, spinning, water aerobics),

The sprawling Reynolds Lake Oconee is another gem in golf-rich Georgia.

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