



How to grow old in style

**New retirement villages
have proven benefits
and much to offer,
says Cheryl Markosky**

MOVING into a retirement home is something most of us would rather not think about. A dreary existence in a poky little room, we may imagine. Hardly surprisingly, we adopt a head-in-the-sand approach.

But you *can* grow old gracefully in retirement villages that offer independence, with your own private accommodation and an improved quality of life.

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, residents of retirement villages enjoy amenities such as cafes, fitness centres and crafts rooms they might not afford if living on their own. Also, the social side of 'solidarity in ageing' means people make friends in these retirement Shangri-las while helping each other with the shopping and cooking.

'Many people choose a community environment where they can have their own front door and plenty of space,' says Andrew Surgenor, director of healthcare at property consultant Savills.

There are fewer than 50,000 retirement units in Britain, but with more in the pipeline and already under construction, that number should double over the next three years.

Our retirement villages are based on the U.S. model — but, inevitably, theirs are on a grander scale.

'The Americans have the advantages of better weather and more land, so they cater for a larger number and have more facilities,' says Mr Surgenor.

'But assisted living in Britain is moving in leaps and bounds. The pros of buying in a retirement village are retaining some independence

and living a lifestyle similar to the one you had before. The downside is you might have to move when you need more care if the development doesn't provide it.'

That added level of care is the main reason retired headmaster Chris Pike and his wife, Inge, a former maths teacher, are selling their £425,000 bungalow.

Media
Daily Mail

Date: 21/04/2006
Type: General Consumer
Frequency: 300/Per year
Circulation: 2397768 (ABC)
MediaDisk Ref: U65A-20
Page: 76

Order
203850001
Swan Hill/27/28

HEL3 30 4012
Page 2(3)
125 29-5

THEY are buying a £330,000 two-bedroom flat at St George's Park outside Haywards Heath, West Sussex. Run by an Augustinian order of nuns, the emphasis is on continuing care.

The £56 million scheme for the over-60s has 225 apartments in 200 acres with a care home, restaurant, bar, shop, hairdresser, library, gym, games and treatment rooms.

Outside there is a bowling green, tennis court and a fishing lake stocked with carp.

'Inge has mild Alzheimer's and we couldn't cope with the garden any longer,' says Chris, 86. 'This sort of facility should be available for everyone, mind you, not just the rich. We can afford it only because our house's value has increased.'

Sister Thomas, head of care at St George's, says they are lucky to be able to build such a viable community — 'we have the advantage of owning grounds'.

By 2020, it is estimated more than 12 million, or 19.3 per cent of the population, will be over 65 — that's a 28.4 per cent increase on the 9.36 million people today.

Jill McLaren, 74, sold her Hertfordshire bungalow for £500,000 to buy a £370,000 two-bedroom ground-floor flat at Hollins Hall, an Audley Court development near Harrogate. 'I use the pool, restaurant and hairdresser regularly,' she says. 'The mini-bus takes us into Harrogate three days a week. I am never bored here.'

Settled: Retired teachers Chris and Inge Pike are buying a flat in a Sussex development.

Right: Hollins Hall, Harrogate

When Jill's husband died just three months after the move, she was grateful she was in a retirement village. 'I was widowed so quickly, but everyone is very friendly. The drawback is a steep monthly service charge of £450, but it does include a lot.'

David Wild of Audley Court says there is a great deal more than just accommodation at their schemes. 'We have moved on from the life depicted in the TV series *Waiting For God* to boost social lives and encourage a sense of community,' he says.

■ *St George's Park: 01444 259732; www.stgeorgespark.co.uk*
Audley Court: 01784 457615; www.audleycourt.co.uk



Ms Barbara Brooks
The Raven Group
Swan Court
Waterman's Business Park
Kingsbury Crescent
Staines, Middlesex
TW18 3BA

Media
Daily Mail

Date: 21/04/2006
Type: General Consumer
Frequency: 300/Per year
Circulation: 2397768 (ABC)
MediaDisk Ref: U65A-20
Page: 76

Order
203850001
Swan Hill/27/28

HEL3 30 4012

Page 3(3)

125 29-5

