

Handicapping Bush's Cabinet + Creating a Beautiful Bathroom
Why Chinatown Is Still Special + The Joe Allbritton I Know

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Great Places to Live

20 Top Neighborhoods for Families, 12 Hot Scenes for Singles, 50 Golden Zip Codes, 8 Areas to Watch—Plus Where to Find the Best Colonials, Victorians & More

Weather forecaster Sue Palka lives in Kentlands, one of the area's most livable new communities



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GOING TO THE DOGS

Neighborhoods that appreciate man's best friend

If your dog's happiness drives your search for where to live, consider these canine-friendly neighborhoods. You'll find doggy happy hours, puppy birthday parties, and parks where Rover can run off-leash.

Old Town Alexandria offers perhaps the best city life for dogs. Its streets are a walker's paradise, and several small parks and businesses cater to man's best friend. From April through October, Holiday Inn Select (480 King St.; 703-549-6080) hosts Doggie Happy Hour Tuesdays and Thursdays in its courtyard. Dogs eat free—there's a wagon full of food and bones.

Pat Troy's Ireland's Own (111 N. Pitt St.; 703-549-4535; www.patroysirishpub.com) offers a Doggy Menu on the patio, including chopped chicken and beef stew. Olde Towne School for Dogs (529 Oronoco St.; 703-836-7693; oldtowndogs.com) will train, groom, or accessorize your pup. Fetch Dog & Cat Bakery (101-A S. St. Asaph St.; 703-518-5188) offers baked dog goods, including Parmesan-flavored bones and dog-friendly chocolate.

DC's **Eastern Market** and **Capitol Hill** neighborhoods are close to Congressional Cemetery (1801 E St., SE; 202-543-0539; congressionalcemetery.org), which runs an off-leash dog area. For an annual \$125 donation, plus \$40 registration, owners can let dogs roam the large fenced-in cemetery and its hills and trees.

In the suburbs, residents of **north Germantown** are close to Black Hill Regional Park (20930 Lake Ridge Dr., Boyds; 301-972-3476), arguably the best of Montgomery County's four public dog-exercise parks. Black Hill has more than ten miles of trails and is home to the 505-acre Little Seneca Lake. The nearby Ridge Road Regional Park (21155 Frederick Rd., Germantown) also has a county-run dog area.

Dog lovers in **North Springfield** and **Ravenworth** swear by the Bark in the Park program at Lake Accotink Park (7500 Accotink Park Rd.; 703-569-3464). The park hosts dog parades, pontoon-boat cruises for dogs, dog photos with Santa, dog-and-owner fitness classes, and classes in pet first aid and CPR. You can throw a birthday party for your pup—the birthday dog gets a gift basket, and guests get goody bags.

For a list of official and unofficial dog parks in the area, visit metropets.org and click on Yellow Pages.

—LYNNE SHALLCROSS

MORE FUN, LESS WORK

Where empty-nesters kick up their heels

With his \$28-million contract, Joe Gibbs could live in a mansion. Yet last year, when he came back to Washington as Redskins coach, he bought a \$720,000 condo in Stratford House, a Reston high-rise.

Gibbs, like a lot of his neighbors, is an empty-nester—a breed of homebuyer that developers are eager to please as baby boomers edge toward retirement. Rattling around big Colonials void of children, empty-nesters want to downsize and lead a life with more fun and less yard work.

Many empty-nesters are abandoning the suburbs for DC. A few years ago, developers began putting up high-rise condos in **Penn Quarter**, the downtown DC neighborhood around the MCI Center and the Shakespeare Theatre. They thought young professionals would fill those buildings, but older couples also lined up to buy.

They were drawn to the neighborhood's theaters, restaurants, and art galleries—attractions that initially brought tourists to the area. Among Penn Quarter's attractions are the Shakespeare and Warner theaters; museums on the Mall and in the neighborhood (including the National Museum of Women in the Arts); the art films of the E Street Cinema; and high-end restaurants such as 701, Zaytinya, Café Atlántico, and TenPenh.

Oliver Devine and his Penn Quarter sales team at the Mayhood Company sold more than 350 condos in the past year. His client list includes couples relocating from the suburbs, a Bethesda congressman who wanted a pied-à-terre, and parents putting their grad-school-age children in condos bought as an investment.

Chinatown restaurateur Tony Cheng bought a top-floor two-bedroom condo in the Gallery Place next to the MCI Center for his 23-year-old daughter. "You've got everything down here now—you've got restaurants and movies, the MCI Center," Cheng says. "Everything's so beautiful—not like it was ten years ago."

The Ventana (202-481-1281; ventanacondos.com), a contemporary 12-story building being converted from old storefronts on F Street, is selling mostly two-level units, including duplexes with 18-foot windows fronting two-story living spaces. One-bedroom units start in the \$400,000s; three-bedrooms are going for

as much as \$1.3 million.

New condo buildings sold out by developers but now seeing resales include the Mather Studios in the 900 block of G Street. It won awards for its conversion of a century-old neo-Gothic building into lofts, which are selling for between \$450,000 and \$650,000. Units in Terrell Place in the 600 block of E Street are going for roughly \$500,000 to \$1.2 million.

Older buildings with condos coming up for resale include Market Square, one of the first Penn Quarter condominiums and home to several members of Congress. Among the most luxurious in the neighborhood, it saw recent sales between \$30,000 and \$1.8 million.

Upper Northwest DC condominiums are attracting those who want city life but don't like downtown's traffic and hustle. Woodley Park's Metro stop and collection of restaurants make it a popular destination for empty-nesters. Developers Julio Murillo and Dan Malnati are turning a collection of rowhouses near the Metro into the Woodley Court (202-319-9666; mmgdevelopment.com), a small condominium with between 20 and 30 units. Sales are expected to run between \$750,000 and \$1.5 million for the units, which are two- and three-bedrooms with two parking spaces—almost a required perk for empty-nesters.

Two-bedrooms at the Connecticut (202-243-3883; monumentrealty.com/the-connecticut) near the Cleveland Park Metro start in the \$500,000s.

Near the Cathedral, the 44-unit Georgetown Heights (georgetownheights.com) opens at the end of the year. Early buyers have included doctors, diplomats, lawyers, and VIPs. Units come with two underground parking spaces and two or three bedrooms. They range in size up to 3,100 square feet—bigger than the average American home. The largest have a living room, dining room, and two-story family room. Units are selling for between \$800,000 and \$2 million.

Suburban centers are remaking themselves to attract couples who like an urban lifestyle but don't want to move to the city. **Reston Town Center**, once a retail and office hub, is becoming a playland for empty-nesters.