

HOMES Friday

Fall Home Show
Map your way to a
new home — Page 2

Builders target a market

*Niche products
fit different
buyers' lifestyles*

By **SHERRY GIEWALD**
Daily Herald Correspondent

Today, many homebuilders create smaller niche markets for bigger sales.

When homebuilders narrow their focus to a specific product, they reduce their competition to those marketing the same type of home or lifestyle. With niche homebuilding, it's all about the customer.

Builders often target a product to a certain segment of the population — such as active-adult communities designed to meet the needs and wants of seniors. But the concept has been expanded

Fall Home Show

Each Friday during the five-week show, the Daily Herald will cover a different design topic. They are:

Sept. 11: Splashes of color: Hues for the home

Sept. 18: Infill trends: Return of the teardown

Sept. 25: Niche homes: Targeting priorities

Oct. 2: Open spacer: Neighborhood amenities

Oct. 9: Quick moves: Building on spec

to meet whatever lifestyle or home you want — waterfront, resort, sustainable living, maintenance free, stair-free or upscale luxury. There's a builder that has you in mind.

Here's a look at niche markets in the area and products homebuilders offer.

Waterfront

At Red Seal Homes' Willow Lake community in Lake Forest, residents enjoy more than



COURTESY OF KZF DEVELOPMENT
At Meadow Ridge in Northbrook, Red Seal Homes offers maintenance-free living where the landscaping, snow plowing and exterior maintenance are provided for homeowners.



COURTESY OF HERITAGE HARBOR OTTAWA RESORT
Near Starved Rock State Park, Heritage Harbor Ottawa Resort is building waterfront homes and cottages around a 32-acre marina.

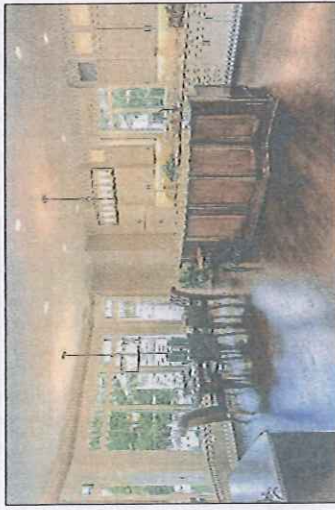
beautiful views of the community's two lakes. They also have access to fishing, canoeing and kayaking. The property, which was originally part of Marshall Field's private estate, features a preserved wooded shoreline surrounding portions of the lakes.

"Homes with water views are always at a premium, but being able to access the water takes the amenity to an even higher level," said Brian Hoffman, vice chairman of Red Seal Homes. "It's definitely rare for residents of a newly built community to have access rights to a lake, and our residents take full advantage."

Resort

Heritage Harbor Ottawa Resort offers a unique location in the Starved Rock area and waterfront amenities that target a very specific lifestyle, said Tammy Barry, director of sales and marketing for the marina resort community.

"People love Ottawa



COURTESY OF EMERALD HOMES
Emerald Homes, the premier division of D.R. Horton, builds houses in areas such as the North Shore, Arlington Heights and Libertyville.

because of its small-town charm and simpler way of life, and some even relate it to Mayberry," she said.

People who live in the suburbs who want a vacation home like that Heritage Harbor is within 90 minutes of Chicago because they won't have to drive far to enjoy resort-style living in their second home.

And those who live in the

32-acre marina surrounded by pocket neighborhoods of waterfront custom homes, condominiums, cottages, townhouses, coach homes and lofts.

Sustainable living

Amid suburban sprawl, Serusun Farms in Hampshire offers a sustainable community like no other that blends peaceful pastoral living with today's conveniences.

Centered around a 16-acre working farm, Serusun Farms is a progressive rural oasis where residents will enjoy hundreds of acres of open space with restored prairie and woodlands.

"This is an unusual opportunity for families to live, and for children to grow up, on a farm," said John DeWald, president of John DeWald & Associates, developer of the community. "Most professional people don't have the time or money to run a farm; here we do it for you."

Residences from smaller

See **NICHE** on **PAGE 9**

Niche: Luxury buyers targeted

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lots. Community amenities include world-class equestrian center facility, community center with swimming pool and fitness center, jogging, hiking and biking trails, tennis and basketball courts, stocked fishing pond, bar and grill and meeting event facilities.

Maintenance-free

Red Seal Homes sees a demand for maintenance-free living from all walks of life with much of it driven from people coming out of condos and townhouses where they're accustomed to a more maintenance-free environment, Hoffman said. "With today's lifestyles, people don't want to spend time tending to their lawn or removing snow as they did 20 years ago."

The builder's Provenance of Northbrook community offers three home styles, two of which are maintenance-free. The Villas offer single-family living and The Terraces feature two-story townhouses with a first-floor master option.

During the past year, KZF Development has also seen a much broader range of homebuyers — from young professionals to empty nesters — drawn to the maintenance-free lifestyle, said Partner Steve Friedman.

At Meadow Ridge in Northbrook, the builder offers what its customers are looking for — the convenience of maintenance-free living where the landscaping, snow plowing and exterior maintenance are provided for homeowners.

"A lot of our buyers are snow birds or travel a lot, and they value having someone else responsible for the upkeep of their property. We also see a lot of young professionals who appreciate the maintenance-free and gated aspects of the community," Friedman said.

Meadow Ridge offers two-story homes with main-floor master suite and traditional two-stories with all the



COURTESY OF HERITAGE HARBOR OTTAWA RESORT
Heritage Harbor Ottawa Resort offers a unique location in the Starved Rock area.

bedrooms upstairs, which appeal to all types of buyers.

Timber's Edge, the builder's newest development, also in Northbrook, features 21 single-family homes with landscaping and snow removal included, but the homes themselves are the responsibility of homeowners. Designs include single-level ranches, Cape-style homes with a first-floor master suite and traditional two-stories with bedrooms on the second level.

Ranch homes

For KLM Builders, single-story, ranch homes is the core of its new construction. "We see a lot of baby boomers aging in their existing two-story homes who want or need a single-story ranch home for ease in daily living," said Kim Meier, president of the company. "Also, some people have hip or knee problems or walking and other disabilities where they need ramps for wheelchair accessibility."

KLM offers three new communities with 10 ranch model homes. At Running Brook Farm in Johnsburg, the company, bought the remaining 37 home sites and will complete the subdivision with all ranch plans. The homes feature open floor plans with the popular split bedroom layout with the master suite and guest bedroom on opposite sides of the home.

The builder has a similar

situation in Woodstock. Both communities have city sewer, sidewalks and all the amenities today's buyer wants including a location near shopping, restaurants and banks.

Luxury homes

Emerald Homes, the premier division of D.R. Horton, serves the new luxury home market with floor plans that feature the latest in building technology and design.

"There are many discerning buyers that want a luxury home in an established area where new construction is limited," said Chris Naatz, vice president of sales and marketing. "These buyers are looking in areas that are close to major employment centers and conveniences, but want a community with tree-lined streets and even some nostalgia."

These luxury homes offer a quicker delivery, or move-in time frame. In today's busy world, customers enjoy seeing a finely appointed home with exceptional interior colors in an established area that is available in a much shorter time frame than it would take them to find a lot and a builder on their own.

Emerald Homes builds homes in areas such as Hinsdale, Western Springs, the North Shore, Arlington Heights, Libertyville, Northbrook and many more.

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