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LOCATION AND LIFESTYLE DRAW BUYERS TO THE THOMS ESTATE.

Asheville, NC -- All it takes is one look at The Thoms Estate to see that it stands apart from the myriad developments and communities that promise inspired estate living.

This eighty-three acre sanctuary of pastoral, rolling landscape and Blue Ridge mountain views is located within the city limits of Asheville, North Carolina, and is no more than a breezy bicycle ride from its dynamic downtown.

“You can literally go from fly casting to fine dining in less than fifteen minutes,” said Kent Smith, CEO of Global Development Resources (www.gdrinc.net) which was selected by the trustees and family of The Thoms Estate to revive, preserve and enhance the legacy created by Harold Thoms, who founded the private estate in 1941.

European estate living. Now conveniently located in America.

The estate’s unique combination of natural splendor and urban amenities is only part of the story. Smith’s theme for the community is reminiscent of the European countryside, with uniquely designed cluster homes in hamlets. In all, there will be 131 full-ownership estate homes, artist cottages, and village homes. Their design reflects old world style with distinctive architectural details, from whimsical turrets and exposed timber framing to impressive stone work.

But the similarities to European estate-living are more than just skin deep. “We set out to create a community that reflects a more European approach to living,” continued Smith, “more in harmony with the natural world.”

Nearly half of the property, 38 acres, will be enhanced to create a true “estate living” experience, incorporating an array of thoughtfully selected amenities, including: numerous water features, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, fields of lavender and wildflowers, a labyrinth, a secret garden, cobble stone accents, gas lanterns, and various sculptures. The estate will be a true strolling paradise with scenic walkways meandering around cascading waterfalls in a botanical park-like setting.

An artist village will allow residents the opportunity for creative expression with periodic seminars offered by talented artisans and craftsmen from the Asheville area. The concept is to tie together an estate feel with an appreciation for the arts, gourmet food and fine wine. All this, plus residents will enjoy a care-free maintenance program and full concierge service.

Patience pays dividends.

This unique approach to estate living has struck a chord with buyers. The developers are phasing the release of a small number of exclusive properties at a time. And already, a majority of the Phase One properties have been sold, paving the way for the launch of Phase Two in June 2008, consisting of the estate's village homes.

"We are taking a very patient approach to the development of The Thoms Estate," explained Smith. "I showed our plans to a builder who is interested in working with us. After studying the blueprints, he looked at me and said, 'You don't see work like this anymore. Because no one wants to take the time and expense to do it right.' I thought that was a tremendous compliment."

That attention to detail and commitment to quality has not been lost on buyers.

"Our success has taken place even as the national and regional housing market experienced a downturn," said Smith, "To generate this level of excitement in this kind of market speaks to the exceptional nature of this property and the hunger there is for estate living where the emphasis really is on 'living.'"

A different kind of estate. A different kind of resident.

"The individuals who are drawn to The Thoms Estate don't want to just retire to the nineteenth hole," continued Smith. "They may enjoy golf, but don't want to make it the focal point of their life. They also want to fly fish, to hike and bike, to explore the over one million acres of national forests that surround Asheville."

"These are people who are more in tune with both nature and with their own creative instincts," added Smith. They want to take on new challenges. Like learning a new language. Taking up painting. Or trying their hand at woodworking. And we're providing an environment that helps fire those passions."

One need only contemplate an arched wooden bridge over one of the ponds at the estate, inspired by Monet's retreat at Giverny, to realize that there's a refreshing sensibility at work here.

"The French have an expression for it," said Smith. "They call it *joire de vivre*. Joy of living. And I think it sums up very nicely what we're trying to achieve at The Thoms Estate."

"We are so impressed with Kent's (Smith) vision for the future of The Thoms Estate," said Ryan Blau, landscape architect from Design Workshop, a renowned and international company respected for sound urban and community planning with offices in Asheville. "We plan to submit the design (for The Thoms Estate) to the Urban Land Institute as a model for the rest of the country when it comes to responsible development in the United States."

To honor the Thoms legacy, Smith plans to preserve several unique features on the property. The manor house, which served as Thoms' "dream home," will be completely restored and used as a social gathering area as it did for so many years for his family. New features will include a wine tavern with private owner's lockers, library, and state-of-the-art fitness center.

In keeping with the culturally oriented nature of the estate, residents will receive memberships to the Asheville Art Museum and the Asheville Symphony Orchestra.

But golf and tennis enthusiasts will also be well cared for. Residents will receive an Associate Membership at the adjacent Country Club of Asheville, where they can enjoy tennis, swimming and the sublime challenges of a gem-like Donald Ross par-72 golf course.

Weekend events inspire buyers.

Throughout the year, The Thoms Estate is giving prospective residents an opportunity to see and experience the property first-hand by offering special themed weekends. Twenty fortunate couples spend a weekend exploring the estate and participating in myriad special events and activities.

“The idea behind the themed weekends is to allow our clients to take in both The Thoms Estate and the larger community to which it is connected, said Smith. “Asheville is one of the most vibrant small cities in America. The natural beauty, the history, the cultural richness – you can’t really understand that from a brochure or a website. And it’s the same way with The Thoms Estate. You have to get your feet on the ground, walk the estate and experience this special place with all of your senses.”

The first event of 2008 is “*An Appalachian Spring*,” scheduled from April 11th to the 13th. Upon arrival, guests will enjoy cocktails overlooking the Biltmore Estate winery. Saturday morning will be spent touring The Thoms Estate and exploring the gardens and grounds. Later in the day, guests face a difficult choice. Will it be afternoon watercolor classes? Flower arranging accompanied by live music? A wine tasting at the Vanderbilt guesthouse? Or a private Biltmore Estate conservatory and garden tour?

Capping the weekend will be an evening of musical magic featuring Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony performed by the Asheville Symphony, led by the dynamic young conductor, Daniel Meyer.

For more information about “*An Appalachian Spring*” and other themed weekends to be held in 2008, contact The Thoms Estate at 877-550-1211.

“We enjoy sponsoring these events,” said Smith. “They’re a great way to introduce The Thoms Estate and Asheville to our prospective residents.”

From dream to reality.

Often, the process of building a dream home can turn into a nightmare. Mindful of this, Smith and his designers have put together a team of experienced builders who meet the highest building and ethical standards.

Thoughtful planning and design have yielded a portfolio of estate homes and artist cottages in a variety of styles and sizes. These can be customized to the personal preferences of their owners while also fitting with the unifying architectural vernacular.

A design center located in downtown Asheville provides buyers with one central location where they can meet with their builder of choice and make all of their color, hardware, fixtures, trim and customization decisions.

“We want the homebuilding process to be what it should be: exciting, stimulating and trouble-free,” said Smith. “Our goal is to inspire our owners, not frustrate them.”

Phase Two – and beyond.

The stewards of The Thoms Estate have every reason to believe that Phase Two will be every bit as successful as Phase One. “The village homes represent another great option for prospective owners,” explained Smith. “Some people just don’t need an estate home. Our townhomes allow residents to enjoy every amenity The Thoms Estate has to offer with a living space that’s just right for their lifestyle.”

Phases Three and Four will round out the offerings from The Thoms Estate and Kent Smith is hopeful these stages will be complete sometime in 2009. “We’re humbled by the reception we’ve received from the community,” said Smith. “I think The Thoms Estate has really struck a chord with people. When they see our plans, they see that you can create a community that’s both elegant and completely in harmony with the natural world. We’re striking a fine balance, and it’s obvious that buyers appreciate that.”