

Centex touts Chaparral's Modesto setting, amenities

By **CLAUDIA D. NEWCORN**
SPECIAL TO VALLEY HOMES

Finding a location that creates a sense of place and community was integral to Centex Homes' choice of location for the Chaparral subdivision in Modesto's Village I.

"We chose Modesto because it is a great place to live," explains Nathan Tuttle, vice president of operations for the builder. "Modesto is a growing city with a hometown feel that offers amenities that will continue to attract homebuyers. The Village I area in particular has a great family environment, with excellent schools and nearby shopping - which we believe our Chaparral customers will enjoy," he says.

Centex has built homes for 50 years. In 1998 Professional Builder magazine named the company its Builder of the Year. A Fortune 250 company, Centex has received high ratings from J.D. Power and Associates - a marketing-information firm that conducts research and surveys - for customer satisfaction and product quality, Tuttle says.

"From the time we buy a piece of land until well after a homeowner closes on their home, we focus on customer needs," Tuttle says. "Couple that with the quality we build into our homes, and it's a winning combination," he says, and adds that the materials and workmanship that go into each home receive as much emphasis as the variety of amenities, inside and out.

"We include many higher quality features that may not be found in other new homes, and which are not always obvious to our customers," Tuttle explains. "At Chaparral, we created a special display called 'What We're Made Of' dedicated to educating prospective homebuyers about our unique construction techniques."

Additional services - like a 5,000-square-foot design center where buyers can select everything from flooring to countertops and plumbing fixtures - help ensure a buying experience that is both educational and rewarding.

"We have on-site designers who are assigned to work with every buyer," Tuttle adds. "They are a very helpful and well-trained staff, and they guide the buyer throughout the process."

A Homeowner Maintenance Education (H.O.M.E.) program brings together customers and builder representatives for an in-depth discussion of the construction process, the performance expectations of new homes, maintenance items of which new homeowners should be aware,

etc. Centex also uses this time to highlight the strength of its two-year "fit and finish" warranty.

"We look at the homebuilding process as a collaborative effort with our customers," Tuttle says. "From the time we sell a home, we are in constant communication with the customer. Whether they are meeting on site with one of our team members or checking the status of their home via our customer-specific 'My New Home' Web site, we like to make sure that our customers understand where we are in the process and what steps are to follow."

With five single- and two-story floorplans, three elevations per plan and several color palettes, the planned 171-home neighborhood is designed for visual variety. Home sizes range from 2,470 to 3,620 square feet, with base prices from the high \$400,000s to mid \$500,000s.

All plans offer flexible space that can be converted from lofts to bedrooms or bedrooms to offices, for instance.

"The great rooms are a very popular feature," Tuttle notes. "A few of the plans have downstairs bedrooms, with options to convert to dens or offices." Large second bedrooms are also well-received.

Master bathrooms include double sinks and separate tubs and showers. Fireplaces are found in the spacious family rooms and every plan has ample closet space. Dual-pane windows add beauty while conserving energy.

Of 20 homes released since Chaparral opened in November 2004, all have sold.

"Because of the demand for our homes, we currently work off a priority list," Tuttle says. "Unlike the lottery systems used by some builders, our priority registration system rewards prospective buyers who get involved early in the process."

The floorplans

Residence 1 is a 2,470-square-foot, single-story home with three bedrooms, two and a half baths, living and dining rooms and a three-car garage. The open kitchen, breakfast nook and family room create a pleasant and sizable area for casual gatherings.

Two-story Residence 2 has 2,964 square feet, four bedrooms, three baths and a loft in addition to living and dining rooms and a three-car garage. A large family room and breakfast nook cozy up to the kitchen.

Residence 3 is a spacious, 3,291-square-foot plan with four bedrooms, two and a half baths and a loft that overlooks the family room. Three bedrooms and two baths are located upstairs, while the master bedroom is tucked into the rear of the downstairs. A formal dining room abuts a study conveniently located next to the entry, making it an ideal office space.

Residence 4 offers four bedrooms, three and a half baths and an extra-large garage with space for a workbench. The two-story home has 3,359 square feet of living space with formal living and dining rooms, a large family room, breakfast nook and kitchen, all on the first floor. A staircase ascends to the loft that overlooks the dining room. Double doors enter the master suite, which includes a retreat, deep walk-in closets and generously appointed bath.

Residence 5 - the largest of the plans, at 3,620 square feet - has five bedrooms, three and a half baths, formal living and dining rooms and a three-car garage. The gourmet kitchen is situated between a family room and breakfast nook, with convenient access to the dining room. Upstairs, the master bedroom is set well away from the other four bedrooms and offers a view of the back yard.

"Buying a new home can be one of the happiest times of a person's life, but also a stressful one because it's one of the largest purchases many of us will ever make," Tuttle says. "We understand that, so our goal is to make it as easy and enjoyable as possible."

To visit Chaparral from McHenry Avenue in Modesto, go east on Floyd Avenue and turn left onto Orchard Parkway. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily (2 to 6 p.m. Wednesday). For more information, phone (209) 552-0371 or visit the Web site www.centexhomes.com and select "San Francisco/Northern California."

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