

# TOSCANA

## *Country Club*

*By June Allan Corrigan*

**M**eander down a trellis-lined path to a magical place. A place where mountains soar and lush greenery surrounds. A place where stunning, clear lakes sweep up to meet handsome stone buildings accentuated by towers. A land visited by breezes redolent with the scent of roses and just a hint of rosemary. Where the babbling sound of water fills the air and perfect weather reigns. What enchanting setting have you happened upon, so reminiscent of a choice locale in the Italian countryside? Breathe deep and relax, as is the intention, for you have discovered the Tuscan-inspired world of Toscana Country Club. A secret garden within a garden proffering a lifestyle unto itself.





Inhabiting almost a square mile, this picturesque luxury residential community and private equity club is developed by the renowned Sunrise Company. Its location in upscale Indian Wells means ready access to area airports as well as cultural and sporting attractions throughout Southern California. A bounty of dining and shopping opportunities exist nearby, not to mention excellent medical facilities. But Toscana casts a potent spell and it might be that you choose to never leave its

environs at all. One could easily while away a desert sojourn within the confines of this idyllic setting. The only pressing tasks each new day would be to mull over the myriad activities that Toscana offers and make a decision where to turn attentions first.

A delightful village feeling pervades Toscana. The community feeling is

evident as neighbors cheerily hail neighbors en route to Il Forno, or Spa Bella Vita and the Sports Club, or perhaps to play golf on either of two championship 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Courses. Reminiscent of a grand Tuscan estate, Toscana's various amenities occupy separate buildings in the Club Villa. Residents meander down open-air, old-world passageways or maneuver about in golf carts, meeting and greeting one another along the way, often stopping to chat at the community's own private post office.





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“What makes Toscana special is the connections that people forge here and the activities that abound,” says Jennifer Di Francesco, director of Spa Bella Vita and the Sports Club. Indeed, the printed calendar is chock-full of tournaments and sports clinics, kids and family events, theme parties, wellness seminars, and countless other events. The schedule is always evolving as Toscana’s ever-resourceful staff continuously listens to the Members and devises elements that will satisfy their many diverse passions. The months of November through April witness a predictable flurry of activity, but a true sign of the strength of relationships formed here are the summer excursions where Members eagerly convene once more.

Golf enthusiasts happily sign up for couples trips to resorts like Bandon Dunes in Oregon or Kiawah Island in South Carolina during the summer months. Last year, a group went to Scotland to play and while there attended the Ryder Cup. Meanwhile, Toscana’s hiking club has sought adventure beyond Coachella Valley trails and has so far tackled Havasupai and the West Rim of the Grand Canyon as well as Zion, with a trip to Yosemite coming up in May. Not to be outdone, Toscana’s cycling club met up to pedal their way through the Burgundy region of France last year and has plans to do the same this summer in Croatia.

“The beauty of Toscana, aside from the obvious, is the fact there is something for everybody ... and we build on that every year,” says David Craig, Director of Golf. Sheer range of activities aside, he’s also referring to the completion of Toscana’s North Course, the final eight holes of desert-themed play currently under construction and slated to open in November 2015. This exciting development has opened up a host of new home sites and home building opportunities. Once finished, the North Course will complement Toscana’s lushly traditional South Course, enhancing the Club’s golfing experience and providing new challenges to all Members. As always, world-class teaching professional and Director of Instruction Bill Harmon will oversee a top-notch program at Toscana that includes individual sessions, clinics, and the annual Harmon Brothers Golf School.





Tennis aficionados will appreciate the Charlie Pasarell Tennis Center that graces the community. It features a professional stadium court and three additional lighted courts, including one clay court. The Club's enthusiastic new Tennis Director, Nigel O'Rourke, who is both USPTA and USPTR certified, heads up a full roster of clinics, league play, fun mixers, and private instruction.

The Toscana Sports Club both gives and gets a thorough workout every day of the week. Club Members have access to the latest in cardiovascular, TRX suspension, and strength training equipment. Private and group Pilates instruction is offered, as are a wide range of classes that include spinning, yoga, and dance. Stretching sessions are also popular. Many Members start their day with an invigorating indoor workout and then segue into whatever outdoor activity suits their fancy, whether it's golf, tennis, hiking, biking, volleyball, or birding. Toscana indeed has something for everyone.

All that activity deserves a respite from time to time and it's little surprise that Toscana's five-star Spa Bella Vita figures prominently during those quiet moments. "The whole design of our spa is unsurpassed related to the way in which the treatment rooms have been laid out," says Jennifer Di Francesco. An open-air courtyard water garden leads to seven lavishly appointed suites — including two Grand Suites that are particularly suited for couples and groups such as wedding parties. Each offers spacious treatment

areas, indoor/outdoor shower experiences, and private garden terraces. A spa boutique, full-service salon, steam, sauna, and whirlpool round out this sumptuous facility designed to provide a complete holistic wellness experience.

Of course, Members' palates cry out for their just due, and Toscana delivers in resplendent fashion. From quick snacks in the Sports Club and the golf course Den to exquisite lunches

and dinners served graciously in Il Forno, only fresh and locally sourced ingredients will do. Executive Chef Eric Wadlund, formerly of Spencer's Restaurant in Palm Springs, brings his much-lauded skills to the table. The Old World sense so prevalent at Toscana infuses the Club's eclectic indoor and outdoor dining spaces as well. Il Forno Trattoria offers a striking peninsula location and enchanting views from multiple indoor and outdoor vantage points. And if you're seeking a truly unique culinary experience, an exclusive wine cellar room can be booked for intimate family celebrations and social gatherings. It features seating for up to 20 guests at a lengthy dining table under the cellar's barrel-vaulted ceiling.



While golf remains a centerpiece of the Toscana lifestyle, an overriding emphasis on health and wellness continues to take the Club in new directions. A post-holiday wellness challenge offered in January is a perfect example. It captures the attention of Toscana residents Marlie and Steve Burt each year. Everybody who signs up makes a commitment to keep track of their physical activities and food consumption for six





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weeks. Participants are assigned a book to read on health and wellness and then they get together to discuss it. Last year’s topic was happiness and on a daily basis participants were asked to submit three positive things they noticed as they went about their activities. “It was surprising how easy it became to do and then you *are* happier because you notice those things,” says Marlie. She went on to win the challenge and was awarded a spa treatment.

The Burttts, who call Calgary, Canada, home, have been coming to the desert for well over 20 years. They bought their Toscana home in late 2012. “In my experience, this is by far the most active club in the desert and boasts an average age that is somewhat younger than most,” says Marlie. “Both these factors held a big appeal for us.”

Prospective homeowners can choose from 18 distinctive floor plans with residences ranging in size from 2,400 to 5,400 square feet. Thoughtfully created spaces engage and foster the connections so many Toscana residents seek.

Homes — all located on the golf courses — are offered from \$995,000 to more than \$3 million. Estate home sites are available for a limited number of custom homes and they start at \$695,000.

Ten show homes are open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The extensive home design center provides the added convenience of one-stop shopping along with two on-site professional interior designers to help homeowners create their desired look and style. ✨

