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Why Are Millionaires From All Over the Country Moving to This Little-Known Arizona Suburb?

In Paradise Valley, home prices are roughly double what they were just three years ago

The suburb has long been little-known outside Arizona, even as it attracted high-profile residents such as Randy Johnson, Mike Tyson, Stevie Nicks and Muhammad Ali. But since Covid, agents said, droves of buyers from New York, California and elsewhere—now able to work remotely—have set their sights on Paradise Valley. They are drawn by Arizona’s warm weather and low taxes, as well as Paradise Valley’s privacy, spacious lots and proximity to city life in Phoenix and Scottsdale.

For many buyers, Paradise Valley is appealing because of its proximity to urban amenities; the town is located about 4 miles from downtown Scottsdale and 15 miles from downtown Phoenix.

On PropertyShark’s 2021 ranking of the most expensive U.S. ZIP Codes, Paradise Valley ranked 50th with a median sales price of \$2.175 million, up 41% from 2020. That is a dramatic change from 2019, when the town made its first appearance on the list at 93rd.

Meanwhile, the town is drawing wealthier people than ever before.

“Our mainstream client probably had a net worth of \$50 million about three years ago,” said Rich Brock, president and founder of Paradise Valley-based home builder [BedBrock Developers](#). “Now, it’s definitely over \$100 million, and a good handful are over half a billion.”

Nestled between Scottsdale and Phoenix, Paradise Valley is surrounded by mountains. The town has multiple golf courses and high-end resorts, including Sanctuary Camelback Mountain, which was recently acquired by New York-based Gurney’s Resorts. Later this year, the Ritz-Carlton Paradise Valley at The Palmeraie will open with villas and a resort.

Other than its resorts, the town is almost exclusively residential, with most single-family lots zoned to span an acre or more, according to Paradise Valley Mayor Jerry Bien-Willner, who said the large lots have been a major draw during the pandemic.



Like a number of other transplants, Ms. De Groot, 58, and Mr. Engel, 76, also said politics played a role in their decision to move their primary residence to Arizona. In California, they feel local policies have led to rising crime, higher taxes, congestion and homelessness. In addition, everything was locked down in California, Ms. De Groot said, but in Arizona they were able to go to restaurants and gyms.

In March 2021, they bought a home in Paradise Valley for about \$3.3 million. A few months later, a newer home in the town with more space became available, so they bought it for \$5.799 million and sold the first house for about \$350,000 more than what they paid. Their new property spans over 2 acres with a pool, two casitas, a pickleball court, a citrus orchard and a koi pond. It is about 2,500 square feet larger than their California home, which sits on less than an acre. Still, their taxes are considerably less, Mr. Engel said.



ILLUSTRATION: SHAW NIELSEN

For David Wurtz, a 37-year-old tech

industry executive, the warm weather is what pushed him to move to Arizona from Boulder, Colo., with his wife and family last year. Mr. Wurtz, who was familiar with Arizona because he visited growing up, said they moved because pandemic-related lockdowns halted many of their children's indoor activities. In Paradise Valley, by contrast, most extracurriculars can be held outdoors.

They sold their Boulder home and bought a roughly 14,000-square-foot Spanish Colonial in Paradise Valley for about \$13.5 million. The approximately 2.5-acre property includes a swimming pool, a basketball court, and an exercise track that wraps around the perimeter.

That was a major plus for Connie De Groot and her fiancé, Richard Engel, a real-estate developer, who moved to Paradise Valley from Santa Monica, Calif., in 2021. Ms. De Groot, a real-estate agent, has family in Phoenix and Mr. Engel has been developing properties in Arizona for about three decades. They were drawn to Paradise Valley, they said, because it has spacious lots, quiet streets, greenery and its own police department, all while being close to the Phoenix and Scottsdale city life. "We wanted to be close to restaurants and things, because that's what we have in Santa Monica," Ms. De Groot said.

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