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## Agrihoods

The Rise of Farm-to-Table Living



Virginia's Willowsford



# Agrihoods

An increased focus on farm-to-table living has spurred a rise in the development of agricultural neighborhoods.

By Kristen Ordonez

As healthier lifestyle trends continue to gain ground, homebuilders are trying to cash in on consumer sentiment through the creation of “agrihoods.” From the beautiful shores of Ecuador and open pastures of Wyoming to the rolling hills of upstate New Jersey, agrihoods are allowing homeowners to enjoy greater connections to the earth and an enhanced sense of wellbeing.

For active agrihood communities like Oceanside Farms, wellness is a major inspiration behind its development. A luxury agrihood community in Puerto Cayo, Ecuador, Oceanside Farms provides an optimal mix of pristine beachfront environment with convenient access and amenity value. The development, according

to co-founder Sean Kelly, was designed to offer a lifestyle that was unique on the levels of health and wellness. “By targeting this farm-to-table, dock-to-dish, wellness-driven lifestyle, we encompass the physical, mental and social value of our community and residents within it,” Kelly says.

Though the concept of an “agrihood” was not fully realized at that point, Kelly and co-founder Wendy Chan were able to realize their goals for Oceanside by designing the farm to remain accessible, and almost customizable, to residents through a variety of harvest privileges. Residents can fully customize their lifestyle, from having seasonal selections brought to their door to reserving ergonomically designed growing beds where they can “place their hands in the



Ecuador's Oceanside Farms

soil and grow-their-own with pride,” says Kelly.

A refocus on food origin and quality is a large part of the expansion and appeal of agrihoods. To understand where food comes from and be involved in the process of growing it as part of the living experience sounds simple enough, but nowadays seems almost revolutionary. Agrihoods go further by linking the home to the farm or garden, and even moreso to amenities. For an agrihood like Willowsford in Loudoun County, Virginia, this reconnection to an all-encompassing community that offers both luxury amenities and farming reverts to an almost transitional lifestyle, modern, but with traditional roots.

This transitional lifestyle is apparent as



Sycamore House Courtyard & Gardens at Willowsford

soon as you enter Willowsford. Though the community spans four distinctive “villages” on over 4,000 acres, it is defined by the recreational spaces and strong food and farm connection that encourage an appreciation for the environment and a commitment to land stewardship. Everything about Willowsford feels close-knit, from the Farm Garden and Market Stand, open seasonally to residents and the local community with seasonal vegetables, local meat, farm fresh eggs and more, to the Willowsford Conservancy that connects and maintains the community’s forests, trails, streams, fields and farmland.

Willowsford extensively offers residents the chance to not only connect with each other as neighbors, but to connect to their food and drink. When in season, food is sourced mainly from the farm or from farms in the surrounding area. No matter the time of year, residents can attend events like cooking classes, demonstrations, “Date Nights” or dinners that deepen that feeling of a close-knit family, with modern touches such as live instruction and on-site wine experts that tell the origins of your wine selections. Through the landscape’s rich agricultural heritage, Willowsford stands out as an agrihood offering a transitional lifestyle, a community with modern home designs and traditional ideals of what it means to be neighbors.

The benefits of agrihoods extend further than just the plate, especially for developments that offer restaurants on site. Within the kitchen of Ninety Acres, a restaurant located on the grounds of Natirar, chefs have the chance to curate a farm-to-table dining experience for residents. Natirar in Somerset County, New Jersey, is redesigning its country estate to become Pendry Natirar, bringing a bespoke collection of private, whole-ownership Estate and Farm Villa residences to the property with the Natirar Farm as their backdrop. “The Natirar Farm allows people to reconnect with their



New Jersey’s Pendry Natirar

passion for natural, healthy eating and a way of life authentic to the 100-plus-year history of Natirar,” says founder Bob Wojtowicz.

While residents will have direct access to Natirar’s 12-acre farm to create a true “dining table at the farm,” having a farm right outside the kitchen is even more favorable for chefs, according to Wojtowicz. “The farmers at Natirar work in tandem with the Natirar chefs to produce fresh ingredients,” he says, noting that chefs can request when the ingredients are harvested to allow them to reach peak perfection.

This sense of perfection in the dining services at Ninety Acres is prevalent, making meals feel more like an experience than just dinner. From almost anywhere in the dining area of the restaurant you get a glimpse of the chefs working to prepare your food; you see the high-rising flames and get a sensation of what’s to come just from the smells surrounding you. And though Ninety Acres’ dedication to locally sourced ingredients is well known, its appreciation of these ingredients is fully realized in the dishes they create, from a creamy, savory egg dish that feels like a fluffy, buttery cloud to thin slices of cheese and crispy pork that taste utterly sinful.

Through agrihoods, culinary experiences



New Jersey’s Pendry Natirar



Ecuador’s Oceanside Farms

EQUADOR PHOTO BY SEAN KELLY; PHOTO AT RIGHT © BUSHNELL PHOTOGRAPHY; ABOVE RIGHT PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN HORAN; ABOVE LEFT PHOTO BY MAXINE SCHNITZER



PHOTO BY DAN HAM

Wyoming's Brush Creek Ranch



Virginia's Willowsford

developed for residents offer a unique opportunity to revel in the process of cultivating, harvesting, preparing and savoring food in the beautiful landscape where it is grown. For example, Wyoming's Brush Creek Ranch intends to deliver the new Farm at Brush Creek Ranch to create an immersive epicurean adventure of the highest quality that captures the flavors of the West, according to Michael Williams, executive vice president and COO of Brush Creek Ranch.

"Each of the individual components of The Farm are destinations within themselves.... Each feature maximizes views of the landscape and uses color palettes and design elements from the respective processes (brewing, distilling, cheesemaking, et cetera) and treats both as art for the interiors," Williams says.

So much of the purpose behind agrihoods relies on education and granting residents accessibility to sustainable farming and resources, ideals that are becoming more appealing to luxury developers, says Wojtowicz. The concept offers a "new way to deliver a deeper connection to the location, wellbeing offerings and, better yet, a sense of community." **U+I**

**Editor's Note:** Kristen Ordenez visited Willowsford and Ninety Acres as part of this special report.