



Up in the Air

Why is Highlands, North Carolina, so popular? It's like Buckhead in the woods.

Well-to-do Atlantans have been using Highlands as a summer retreat since the early twentieth century, when Coke execs such as the Woodruffs started the trend. A primary draw is the temperature: When it's 89 degrees here, it's ten degrees cooler there. But it took time for the masses to catch on to the rustic town of 1,100—which swells to 18,000 in the summer—two and a half hours to the northeast. “When they four-laned the first part of [Highway] 441 about fifteen years ago, I saw the demographics here change dramatically,” says Mark Meadows of Highlands Properties. Meadows has handled almost a quarter of the high-end Highlands market (homes from \$750,000) for the last twenty years. “We went from about 15 percent Atlanta-based visitors or buyers to 63 percent that first year.” Well into the 1980s, Main Street windows were covered in paper by fall, but Highlands is now a year-round destination with enough Christmas-ornament sellers and fudge shops to keep the city folk satisfied.

I heard we had the country's best Ultimate Frisbee team. Is that true?

Last October, Atlanta's Chain Lightning won the Ultimate circuit's national championship. Composed of students, engineers, and tech consultants, Chain also boasts a winner and two finalists for the Callahan Award, Ultimate's Heisman. The winner, Josh “Zip” Ziperstein, is a medical student at Emory. “Josh is the best player in the game today,” says A.J. Tiar-smith, on Chain since 2002. “His coming to Emory was incredibly important for us.” Indeed, Chain's recent success—the team was created in 1981—is largely due to recruitment from talented “feeder” schools such as UGA and Georgia Tech, a strong local Frisbee community that boasts a 1,000-strong summer league, and a reputation as one of the most successful club teams in the South. “We draw from a much larger area than, say, Boston or New York,” says Ziperstein. “One guy commutes from Philadelphia to play with us.”

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SENIOR MOMENTS

OLD RIVALS

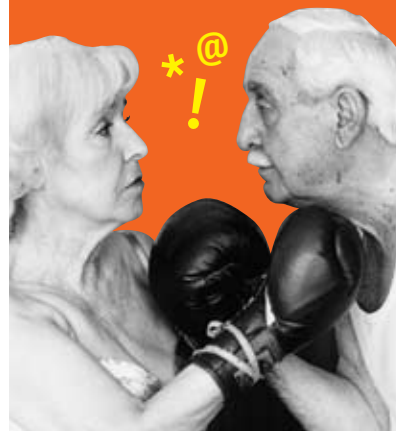
Two of the ritziest retirement communities in Atlanta sit across the street from each other: Canterbury Court at 3750 Peachtree Road, and Lenbrook at 3747. Canterbury, established in 1965, is the homey old standard for Buckhead's aging affluent; Lenbrook, opened in 1983, is considered the relatively young, slick neighbor. But there have been years of one-upmanship between the two.

On the surface, there's little that distinguishes the two age-sixty-two-and-over bubbles from one another. (Disclosure: I have grandparents on each side of the divide.) Both are rather expensive places to spend one's twilight years: Canterbury's entry fees are as high as \$908,440, while Lenbrook's go up to \$1.2 million. They both offer Wii bowling, dance nights, nursing facilities, and sprawling “campuses” on which to ambulate and recreate. Their residents eat meals prepared by chefs of some repute. And in a perceived arms race of sorts, they've both added buildings in the last five years.

But there are differences: Lenbrook features valet service; Canterbury has an eleven-acre garden. Lenbrook offers billiards; Canterbury counters with shuffleboard. Lenbrook has a lounge with a bar; Canterbury, popcorn machines. And rumors run rampant on both sides of the street about the eccentricities and excesses of the other place: *A Lenbrook resident once had two apartments: one for him and one for his duck-hunting equipment! A Canterbury man allegedly runs down his hall each morning nude!*

Lately, Canterbury has been abuzz about the marble floors at Lenbrook; they represent the perceived hubris of the place. All I know is that my grandmother who lives at Lenbrook recently slipped and fell on the polished stone. She broke a bone. And, touchingly, a few Canterbury friends looked after her.

—CHARLES BETHEA



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