

South Florida custom builder and broker team up for trio of estate communities



Hollywood-based RCR Homes built this 5,800-square-foot model home at Saddle Ridge, one of three luxury communities it's developing just outside of The Villages. (Robert S Brown via Howard Chase Real Estate)

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A developer and a broker with deep roots in South Florida are making a move into Central Florida. **RCR Homes** and **Howard Chase Real Estate** are teaming up to build and sell up to 34 ultra-luxury homes about an hour northwest of Orlando.

“These are like big monster mansions,” said Howard Chase, broker and owner of Howard Chase Real Estate, with 63 brokers based in Miami Beach. The homes will sell for just under \$1 million to \$7 million and will range from about 4,000 to more than 10,000 square feet. “It’s for the upper echelon of buyers.”

RCR Homes owns land in three areas near Ocala and Leesburg. Windsor Green, located east of U.S. 441 in Lady Lake, is the largest with 21 lots. The others having six and seven lots. Buyers can combine lots if they choose.

Legendary Trails, just off S. 80th Street in Ocala, will have access to [Cross Florida Greenway](#) biking and equestrian trail. Saddle Ridge is located on Saddle Ridge Lane in Weirsdale, north of Harbor Hills Country Club.

“The draw to this area is space,” Chase said, adding privacy is a key selling point because the homes will not be close together. “The lot sizes are between one acre and just under five acres. The homes on these lots are enormous.”

Three homes are already built, two in Windsor Green and one in Saddle Ridge, with an offer on the table for one of them. For the others, buyers will have several floorplans to choose from, with an option to customize.

“The build-to-suit option is just a bit more special to what other developers offer. It will be a blank slate. [Buyers] can use our templates and then modify as they see fit or if they want to design their own home, we will work with them,” Chase said.

No matter the design, all will have one thing in common. “We try to use higher quality materials. These homes are quality homes, high end,” said Richie Burns, owner of Hollywood-based RCR Homes. In his more than 700 custom homes to date, Burns said he only uses level five drywall, custom American-made wood cabinets, and materials other developers do not regularly use.

These neighborhoods will be RCR’s first in the Central Florida area and will target wealthy retirees, celebrities, doctors, lawyers, and business people who want an equestrian type of lifestyle with lots of space and land. There is no age or child restriction.

Burns has family living in the areas near the future neighborhoods and has been buying nearby land for about five years. “I just love the area. I love the people, the trees, the way of life. It’s more relaxed,” he said.

Each neighborhood will have a guard gate and each home will have a pool. Some will have tennis courts or places for horses. There will be no community pool or other common space. “This style of community is a bit different than a typical retirement community,” Chase explained. “The amenities are the houses. You don’t have to leave your house to go to the amenities because you will have them all.”

Intensive marketing will begin in December and a sales center will open in Saddle Ridge. Realtors from Howard Chase’s Miami Beach office will be making the move to the area. “We’re going to be bringing our team up there. I was comfortable enough with the project to the point I fell in love with it,” Chase said, adding it’s a big deal for a South Florida company to expand to Central Florida since it is often the other way around. “Our team is ready and equipped. We’re accustomed to selling expensive properties.”

Chase says he and his team are in it for the long haul since it will take a couple of years to build up the areas and sell out, hopefully creating a permanent presence for his company in Central Florida. “It’s really ripe for this kind of development. This type of product that we’re building, we’re shifting the market. We’re offering something that doesn’t exist yet.”

“I think it’s a bit of a risk because it’s pretty high end,” Burns said. “[These neighborhoods are] high-end living, luxury estate type of gated community and are quality built,” he said adding there is a limited number of people who will buy this type of home, but it’s a risk he is willing to take. “Building is my passion.”

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