By Tonic Auer

Luxury homebuyers looking for a vacation home or a place to retire aren’t looking for a scripted adventure or a cookie-cutter product. They’re looking for authenticity and getting off the beaten path.

“Affluent buyers want to spend quality time with their families in a place that is more experiential,” says C. Taylor, president of The Catalyst Group in Charlotte, South Carolina. The firm manages real estate sales and marketing for Namakujig, a development along the coast of Fiji’s main island, Viti Levu.

Part of the appeal of this resort residential development is its combination of an exotic destination with the ease of getting there, via direct flights from the West Coast.

“It’s an unspoiled natural environment along 3 miles of beach,” Taylor explains. “Families can swim, surf, and fish, but Namakujig also delivers experiences like private island overnights, hidden waterfalls, fire-side feasts, wild boar hunts and shark dives. The resort includes lock-and-leave villas from $500,000 and larger single-family homes for $2 million.”

RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO

Located on Riviera Nayarit, north of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, Mandarina developer K11 Properties launched sales this year on the 600-acre residential resort, which is currently under construction.

With a targeted opening of the entire development by first quarter 2019, the project has already sold eight of its 55 luxury homes, says Ricardo Santa Cruz, partner in Mandarina.

With an average price of $6 million, the density of homes averages one every 2.5 acres. “The villas are nestled along the southern peak to capture the ocean views and range from four-, five-, and eight-bedroom floor plans with interior sizes from about 5,000 to 11,000 square feet with indoor/outdoor living spaces. The potential buyers we are seeing include both families and retirees, with a lot of interest coming from Mexican nationals and Americans along the West Coast to Colorado,” he adds.

“They want something for everyone, so we’ve curated a number of experiences with pools and entertainment fiefs, a farm-to-table restaurant, educational programs for children to interact with the animals on property, a real-estate office, an on-site gym, a kids club — complete with treehouses and hanging bridges — and many other amenities in conjunction with a Rosewood resort,” Santa Cruz says.

The property has various ecosystems from mountain ranges and cliffs to extreme elevation changes of flatlands with an eucalyptus and lagoon.

The CASCADE MOUNTAINS

Back in the states, most residences in Sunwara — 4,400 acres located 80 miles east of Seattle on the eastern side of the Cascade Mountains — are second homes where owners can experience sunshine and four distinctive seasons, says Sunwara Real Estate vice president Richard Sury.

Originally designed as a resort lodge, most buyers return after visiting as a conduit in the guest season, he says. Sunwara offers prospective buyers the chance to participate in the Experience Sunwara Program (ESPN) in which they can stay at the lodge for two nights at a reduced rate while getting to experience what they’ve most interested in, whether it be a float down the river, cycling the trails or hitting the links.

While most people use their vacation homes about three times a year, the owners at Sunwara are often there twice a month because of its proximity to Seattle. “We appeal to five miles of river, 40 miles of hike and bike trails and the social aspect of the community,” Sury says.

The average age of the Sunwara homeowners ranges from 45 to 71, depending upon the home product. Studio condominiums start at around $280,000 to about $750,000. Homes range from $175,000 to $600,000, and at Sunwara Real Estate can cost from $900,000 to $3.5 million.

JACKSON, WYOMING

Many of the buyers in Jackson Hole — a state that has no income tax — are coming from high-taxation locales like Manhattan and San Francisco, where the tax savings offset much of the cost of moving. And most are looking for the experiential living opportunities of liv- ing among the wildlife, skiing powder before the 11 a.m. conference call or hitting the 65 miles of paved pathways in the region,” says Lisa Smith Jackson Hole realtor Latham Jenkins.

For investors, there is a finite amount of real estate available in Jackson Hole — about 7,000 acres with only about 27,000 acres unsold. Of that available land, hundreds is highly constrained because of the environmental, scenic and water rights issues within it, he adds.

“One of the most valued parts of living here is the wildlife,” Jenkins says. “We are experiencing a movement of people buying in advance of retire- ments,” he says. “We’re seeing many buyers seeking a vacation home, which will ultimately become their retirement home.”

For those seeking a townhouse at the base of the mountains, they can expect a $1.5 million starting budget. The simple homes on a few acres further out average around $50,000, he says.

WE AVOID POST-PRODUCTION ERRORS OR OMISSIONS AT THE INK FORCE OF THIS CONTENT.