

NOT RETIREMENT BUT SENIOR LIVING

We caught up with Barry Kaganson, founder and chief executive officer of Auria Senior Living at the group's flagship Bryanston community, San Sereno. He outlines for us the thinking behind the five communities located in Johannesburg, Cape Town and KwaZulu-Natal.

By Mark Pettipher



BARRY KAGANSON

Founder and CEO of Auria Senior Living

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Many of our readers may remember Barry Kaganson as the co-founder of Republica, South Africa’s largest off-campus student housing provider, which was established in 2009. Seven years later, in 2016, after seeing a need for senior-living communities that would cater to the more discerning and sophisticated 70+ generation, he bought San Sereno from Sanlam as the first of Auria Senior Living communities.

Now there are four in the portfolio – three in Johannesburg (in Bryanston, Melrose and Sandringham), and one in Rondebosch in Cape Town, with another being developed within the Zululami Luxury Coastal Estate on KwaZulu-Natal’s North Coast.

“We don’t talk about retirement villages,” says Kaganson, “because living in a senior living community is not a function of being retired or not.

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“We refer to senior living and not retirement living because we understand that this stage of life is not about retiring; it’s about a different set of needs and lifestyle choices defined by happiness, security, peace of mind and health. Our aim is to develop senior living communities that are destinations of choice – places where anyone over the age of 70 would want to live for their high-quality lifestyle and amenities, whether they need assistance with any aspect of their life or not.

“Auria communities are what is internationally termed ‘continuing care retirement communities’, or CCRCs. Based on the idea that most people would prefer to ‘age in place’, a CCRC is designed to operate as a single environment, with a continuum of living options available, ranging from completely independent living to varying degrees of assisted living, as well as nursing and dementia care. Even more important is the emphasis on providing an environment that supports quality of life for older adults, covering everything from physical wellness to social engagement and even lifelong learning.”



In most regions of the world, including South Africa, populations above 65 are growing. By 2020, the number of people aged 60 and older outnumbered the population of children under 5 around the world. Auria's communities represent the latest thinking in creating attractive environments that support wellbeing and engagement in a person's later years, without ever having to move when it is least convenient.

Auria's philosophy of care is driven by the aim of helping people enjoy their best quality of life. The group is setting a new benchmark in continuing-care community living for the over-70s, providing for the intellectual, emotional, social and physical needs of its residents, in attractive and well-located environments.

Kaganson elaborates on the thinking behind Auria: "Senior living communities are attractive living options for older people for many reasons. Some of the main reasons include the availability of care and support, the 'hassle-free' living that arises from being part of a managed community, and being able to live at a more manageable scale. However, being part of a sociable and active community is just as important.

"We run and manage every aspect of each of our communities. We staff our facilities with experienced people from the hospitality industry, the healthcare profession and the property industry.

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70 Senior living

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“Core to our success is making sure that we provide the very best service and experience possible. This drives demand and keeps us at our best.

“A well-managed senior living community actually enhances people’s independence by removing burdensome tasks and worries, and giving people the freedom to enjoy life on their terms.

“Economies of scale help us keep living costs at reasonable levels, and our residents benefit from this in a number of ways. Auria Senior Living communities offer a range of independent residential, assisted living and care options that provide a total continuum of care, and ensure that residents and their families have the comfort of knowing their unique requirements can be adapted should their needs change.

“Keeping our objectives in mind, and with this approach – which is informed by international best practice – our CCRC residents can live completely independently, knowing that assistance and care are available if and when needed. This might mean occasional assistance with certain activities, a regular level of help with the activities of daily living, or comprehensive support from the dedicated staff in the care centre.”



San Sereno

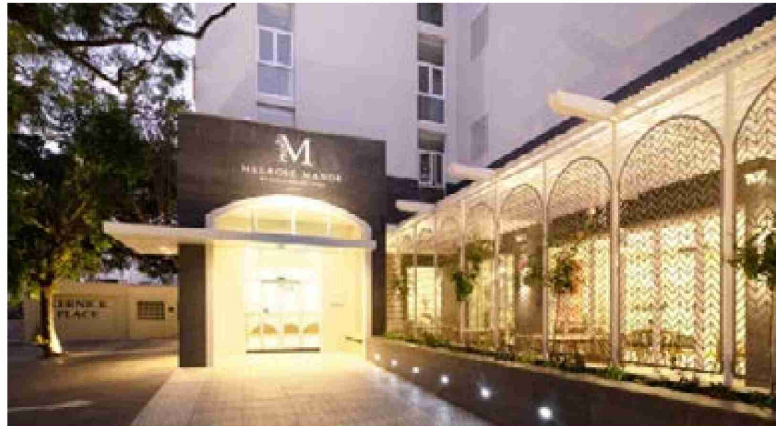
San Sereno, Auria's flagship community, was acquired in 2017 and extensively renovated to create a beautiful residence for more than 350 residents. Set on a 33-acre site in the suburb of Bryanston, it comprises 214 independent living units (houses and apartments), as well as 50 assisted living units and a dementia care facility.

Communal areas were extensive, yet dated. "The facility we acquired was completed in the early 1990s, and was in dire need of an upgrade," says Kaganson. "We wanted to transform the existing aged building into a world-class, contemporary community that provides a luxurious and enticing living environment for residents, accommodates impaired movement and mobility, and provides all the necessary amenities within the rapidly changing senior living environment."

Melrose Manor

Melrose Manor is a beautifully designed, centrally located senior living community in Melrose North, Johannesburg. The transformation of a grand old building in a quiet cul-de-sac has recently been completed, transforming it into an elegant, desirable, purpose-built senior living community.

The revamp saw the creation of a new, state-of-the-art Wellness Centre that offers doctors' consultations, physiotherapists and biokineticists. There is also a hair salon and the popular Café Auria, and a bistro serving light meals, coffees and treats to residents that spills out onto a deck, with a pergola connecting the interior and exterior spaces.



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Royal View

Pegged to open toward the end of 2022, Royal View is a beautifully designed, purpose-built senior living community on the magnificent Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club in Sandringham.

It is located on a two-hectare section of the Royal Johannesburg Golf Course, which was acquired specifically for this purpose. The 122 apartments currently under construction will range from one-bedroom serviced apartments to three-bedroom units, with entry prices starting at R1.5-million. All units will have convenient access to a well-equipped care centre and communal spaces. The communal areas include an extensive range of hospitality services such as a concierge, a cinema, a hair salon, a heated indoor pool, a state-of-



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the-art wellness centre, a restaurant with fine dining, and a café/bistro with an outdoor deck with beautiful views over the golf course. The entire development will have a solar water-heating system as well as a full back-up generator and back-up borehole water supplies.

Royal View broke ground earlier this year, and construction is progressing at speed. Three out of the five residential blocks, and the communal building, have already reached second-floor level. Construction is running on schedule, and interest and sales have “surpassed expectations”.

Woodside Village

Situated on nine hectares in the sought-after Cape Town suburb of Rondebosch, Woodside Village has earned the reputation as a successful and well-run CCRC. Auria Senior Living acquired a majority interest in Woodside Village in February 2021, and are currently renovating, refurbishing and redeveloping this well located community to match the design and hospitality standards of the other Auria Senior Living communities.

Coral Cove

Situated within the Zululami Luxury Coastal Estate on the shores of Sheffield Beach, Coral Cove will offer residents the best in hospitality, wellness and care. And the sweeping sea views and private beach access are not the only reasons it appeals to former Miss South Africa Penny Rey Coelen.

“I always wanted to retire somewhere with a sea view,” says Coelen. Since her husband passed away, she has stayed focused on living an active life and making new memories. She still loves to socialise, travel, exercise and take on creative projects.

“Living at Coral Cove will enable me to continue living that life, but with an added layer of support and care, should I ever need it,” she says. “I love the fact that the day-to-day things are taken care of, and that I’ll be able to spend my time doing things I enjoy, like having coffee or drinks with friends and taking art lessons. I even plan to take up dance classes!”

“We are delighted to be creating a CCRC of this calibre on the North Coast,” says Kaganson. “With the exceptional lifestyle that it offers, we expect Coral Cove to appeal not only to South Africans but to foreigners looking to retire in South Africa. We believe that Coral Cove may be the first CCRC in the world to have access to a private beach club, and because of its location within Zululami, it is part of a greater environment that supports multi-generational living.”

Auria’s reputation as an award-winning operator with a hospitality and care model that implements global best practice strengthens the overall offering.