

Sunday Times



22 AUGUST 2021

Neighbourhood

PROPERTY & LIFESTYLE

Stately family living



This Saxonworld home with its double-volume spaces and generous open-plan living rooms, is perfect for a relaxed family lifestyle, page 15


PAM GOLDING
PROPERTIES



Rabie's Clara Anna Fontein lifestyle estate outside Durbanville

Retiring? Consider this...

As we age, change becomes more and more difficult, but if you're planning to downsize your life while upsizing your security and circle of friends, there's no need to wait

WORDS: EDITORIAL TEAM • IMAGES: SUPPLIED

Advances in medicine and technology are extending our lifespan and the average person can now expect to prepare for at least two

decades of retirement after the age of 60. Properly planning for retirement is therefore imperative. "No one enjoys having to move house, nor

the expense involved, but this is about taking a long-term view of your future," says Garry Reed, managing director, Evergreen Lifestyle Villages.

Notions around ageing and what it means to live a fulfilling life in one's senior years have been changing, says Barry Kaganson, CEO, Auria Senior Living. "Gone are the days when a 'nursing home' or 'old age home' was the proverbial end of the line. Why should people wait until a home becomes unmanageable or a spouse can no longer cope before they move to a place where they can live an enjoyable life, hassle free and with the care they need?"

Loneliness, boredom and social isolation become a reality as you age, particularly if you're stuck behind high walls in the suburbs, nursing a spouse, or no longer able to drive. "However, retirement villages are home to vibrant communities of elderly people who are keen to make new friendships, to stay active and even to learn new skills," says Reed.

Deciding your next steps should include considering a few important points.

Developing a financial strategy

"What many people do not know is that you don't have to wait until you're 60 to plan for or move into a retirement lifestyle village. In fact, the earlier you do it, the more chances you have to release assets, reduce expenses and have a better lifestyle for longer," says Phil Wilson, sales director for Evergreen Lifestyle, a provider of retirement accommodation.

It's essential to have a good grip on your financial situation to strategise for the future. First ascertain the following, he says. "What do you owe, monthly expenses, additional income from retirement annuities, pension funds, investments and dividends, the market value of any property you currently own, and expenses like insurance and medical aid. Now you can move on to where you plan to live post-retirement."

Where would you like to live?

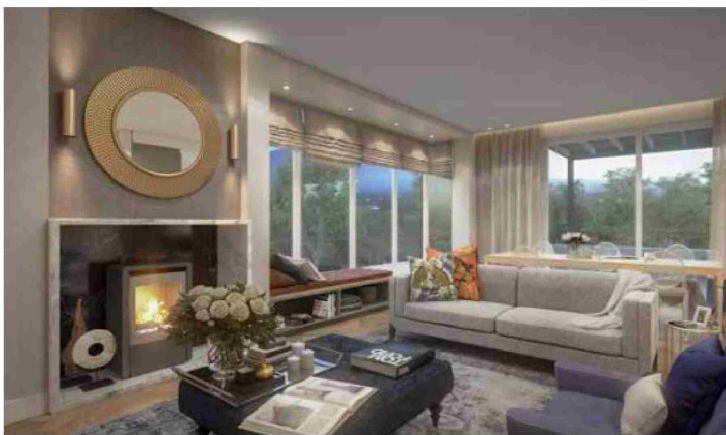
Many retirees opt to retain their family home, but this means they'll need to budget for ongoing property expenses linked to insurance, rates and taxes, security, garden services, cleaning, repairs and maintenance which could prove to be costly and impractical. Unfortunately, you can also expect your home to need more attention, not less, and those big bills will be a reality for many years to come.

Alternatively, one could opt to liquidate one's property and purchase a smaller home, possibly within a retirement village, with the profits from the sale reinvested to boost one's retirement savings.

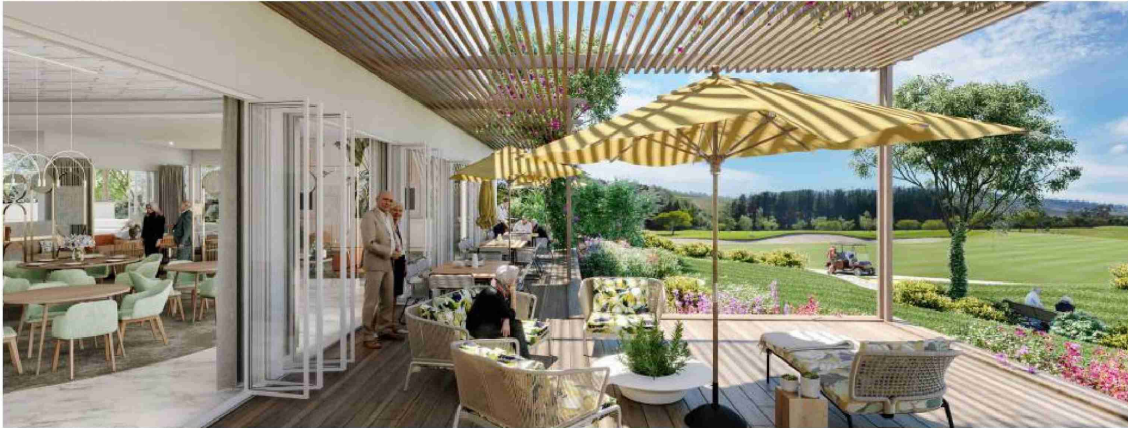
"If you hail from the baby boomer generation, chances are you either want to sell up and travel the world or stay put in the family home and live independently for as long as possible. You might be opposed to the idea of moving to a retirement village based on preconceived notions of what that might look like, but today's retirement villages are a far cry from the old-age homes of the past," says Wilson.

"Many senior living communities are aware that retired people don't want to give up their independence, they simply want a structure that is beneficial to their needs and preferred lifestyles," says Gus van der Spek, founder and owner, Manor Life, and developer of Wytham Estate in Cape Town. Retirement lifestyle villages provide security, lock-up-and-go living and a host of facilities. Residents also have access to a community of like-minded individuals with whom to socialise and form close relationships with.

"A professional onsite team also takes care of all aspects of daily life - like cleaning, painting and repairs, gardening and landscaping, healthcare,



A living unit in Wytham Estate in Cape Town



Aurora Senior Living's Royal View in Sandringham

housekeeping, laundry, catering, and more – so that residents can relax and focus on what really matters, to live life to the fullest,” Reed says.

Physical health

Retirees need to take a long-term view and ensure that their home will accommodate their changing needs over time. “Staying put in the family home may be fine while they’re fit and healthy, but what happens if they suddenly become ill, impaired or incapacitated,” says Wilson.

“Our bodies naturally require more care as we age, and no matter how fit we are, we’re all susceptible to accidents, sudden falls and broken bones. And as debilitating as this can be physically, the financial implications are often more dire,” says Reed.

According to a 2018 report by Just Retirement, pensioners who require 24-hour care can expect to pay almost twice as much in

their own home versus living in a retirement village that offers both primary and personalised home-based healthcare services, on-site emergency facilities and 24-hour nursing, as well as frail and dementia care for those who need it.

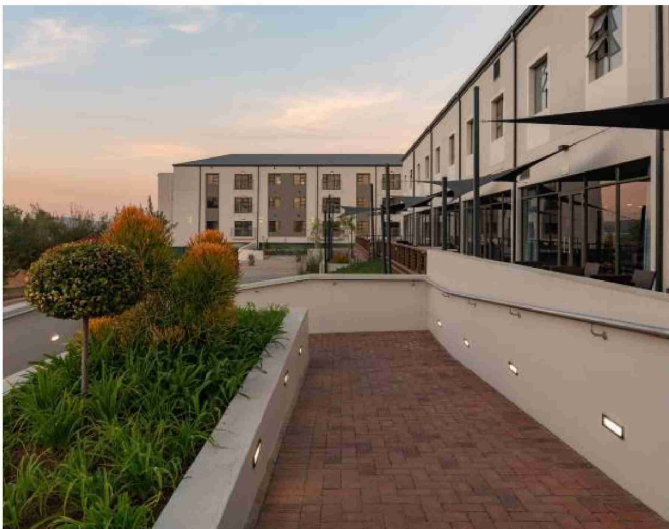
This “ageing in place” concept or home-based care means that there is no stage at which the level of assistance needed is not on offer, says Kaganson. If you’re living in a retirement village or estate with these facilities, they will bring care services like nursing to you instead of you going to a frail care facility. “One can go from living independently to needing help with most of one’s daily activities, all in the same living environment,” he says.

Safety and security

“We all become much more physically vulnerable as we age, and with home invasions an unfortunate reality in South Africa, security is a burning issue for



Evergreen Broadacres lifestyle village in Johannesburg



Evergreen Broadacres lifestyle village in Johannesburg



Wytham Lifestyle Estate in Cape Town

young and old alike. Staying safe isn’t cheap either. Consider the costs of insurance, security systems, alarms, and armed response services,” says Reed. At most professionally run retirement villages, 24-hour security, access control, electric fencing and security cameras are part of the package. And if you do go away on holiday, you can simply lock up and go, knowing your home is safe and secure.

Disaster protection

“In areas like Cape Town, protection from disasters such as the Table Mountain fire are vitally

important. People should make sure to choose a living option that has taken measures to prevent these threats and protect their residents,” says Van der Spek.

Customisable experience

Many of today’s senior living communities don’t only offer a one-size-fits-all experience. Residents can often choose the type of home and the exact level of service and care they need. Even whether or not a person can bring their pet along can be a deciding factor for some and this option is now included in many estates’ offerings, says Van der Spek.