



WRITING SAMPLE

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The Courtyard: A Community Where Tennis and Water Are the Stars

A compact waterfront community with an award-winning tennis club, the Courtyard features homes on half-acre lots and boat docks on Bull Creek. Residents also enjoy a private park, trails that wind through green spaces and a neighborhood marina that allows easy access to recreation and fishing on Bull Creek and Lake Austin.

“We have a beautiful park on the creek that is private to our community. It’s one of those jewels that people don’t know about,” says Cathleen Barrett, a four-year resident of the neighborhood. “Some neighbors launch kayaks from the park.”

Construction in The Courtyard began in 1979 and continued through 2005. Older homes have been updated or remodeled to include modern amenities. Courtyard homes range in size from 1,000 square feet priced at \$220,000 up to larger, 6,425-square-foot homes priced at \$1.25 million. Many of the higher-priced homes feature direct access to Bull Creek, which feeds into Lake Austin.

The Courtyard Tennis Club, a private club located within The Courtyard neighborhood, provides a tennis complex with 14 outdoor hard courts and two indoor hard courts. Tennis professionals offer lessons to Courtyard residents who are members of the club. The Courtyard Club also offers three pools.

The neighborhood is 15 minutes northwest of downtown Austin and 25 minutes northwest of Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

“It’s an established neighborhood. Because of its geographical location — bordered by the creek and by two major roads — there are no surprises about how things will develop over time. Courtyard is a destination, not a ‘pass through’ neighborhood. This helps keep our streets quiet with fairly low traffic volume,” says Leslie Craven, president of the board of directors of The Courtyard Homeowners’ Association, which organizes social events and celebrations throughout the year.

Students living in The Courtyard attend schools in the Austin Independent School District, including Highland Park Elementary, Lamar Middle School and McCallum High School. In

2011, Highland Park was rated “exemplary” by the Texas Education Agency. McCallum High is home to one of Austin’s fine arts academies.

A Friendly Family Rivalry, A Friendly Neighborhood Lifestyle

A man patiently watches his teenage son practice serve after serve at the Courtyard Tennis Club. Thanks to natural talent and in-neighborhood championship tennis facility, the youngster is a tennis prodigy possibly heading for a professional career in the sport, and dad is happy to give him all the warm-up time he needs.

Practice done, the pair takes to the courts for their weekly Saturday match. At one time, Dad usually came out on top in these matches, but as the teen has grown stronger and more skilled, he is now more often the victor.

After the game, the two jump in the club’s pool to cool off and tease each other about missed shots. As they splash around, they discuss tomorrow’s plans. They’ve been invited out on the lake by their retired neighbors, who have just purchased a new ski boat they’ve been wanting to try out. Another family from the neighborhood will be joining the group, too.

That’s one of the aspects of The Courtyard the man and his son like the most. Everyone’s friendly and everyone likes to socialize.

“You run into your neighbors a lot. We go out to dinner and get together at each others’ houses,” says Barrett. “We see each other at the park all the time.”

Sparkling Custom Jewelry and Scrumptious Seafood

Neighbors looking for outdoor exercise or a place to walk to the dog head to Bull Creek District Park, a 48-acre green space minutes from The Courtyard, or their own neighborhood park.

“We have a beautiful private wooded community park along Bull Creek – walking paths, a pier that people fish and swim from, benches to just sit and enjoy the quiet and beauty,” says Craven.

Courtyard residents enjoy the 40-plus upscale shops and restaurants they find at The Arboretum, an outdoor shopping destination located in a park-like setting about 15 minutes away from the neighborhood. Special occasion jewelry is available at custom jeweler Kirk Root Designs, while neighbors find special decorating touches for their upscale homes at Pottery Barn.

Restaurants in and around the Arboretum include Austin favorite Z’Tejas, famous for its herb-chile-glazed mahi mahi, and date night seafood option Eddie V’s, where pretty much everything is fantastic, but neighbors are partial to the North Atlantic Lemon sole.

Ten minutes from the neighborhood is Austin favorite Waterloo Ice House, a popular choice for post-game festivities; kids of all ages love their burgers and tacos.

When it's time to do the weekly grocery shopping trip, neighbors head to Randalls or H.E.B., less than 10 minutes away.

Privacy with an Overwhelming Sense of Community

Neighbors enjoy the compact, quiet character of their tight-knit neighborhood.

The tennis players in the neighborhood are proud of the top-rated tennis facilities and glad they are close to the sport they love so much.

Other neighbors love the easy access they have to Bull Creek and Lake Austin —kayaking is a favorite activity of many neighbors, who store their boats in creek-side lockers in the neighborhood park. The park, beloved by Courtyard residents and private only to them, is a community gathering spot for year-round celebrations and events. They like its convenience and beauty.

Most of all, the neighbors like each other. “I’m not exaggerating. I’ve not met anyone in here who isn’t friendly and welcoming,” says Barrett. “It’s a great, great neighborhood.”