



WRITING SAMPLE

Publication: MaxAvenue.com

Publish date: September 2013

Westlake Hills: Opulence In A Timbered Paradise

Brimming with acres of leafy green trees and bordered by meandering Lake Austin, the charms of Westlake Hills are legendary and greatly appreciated by the many residents who enjoy the lavish lifestyle the area offers.

Just 10 minutes west of downtown Austin, Westlake Hills is convenient for anyone planning to commute, though many big employers are right in the area, too. The area is about 17 miles from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport.

Construction of homes in Westlake Hills began in 1936 and continued through 2011, though most were built from 1980 through 2010. Just as home styles are hugely varied, so are the prices and sizes of the houses. Compact cottages of close to 1,000 square feet sell for about \$272,500, while estate-type, luxury homes of 8,500 square feet in gated sections of the area sell for around \$5.6 million.

Westlake Hills is home to one of the oldest private country clubs in Texas, Austin Country Club. This well-loved club offers members the use of a golf course, 10 lighted tennis courts, heated swimming pool, fitness facility, boat slips and a large clubhouse.

An urban oasis just minutes from Westlake Hills, the Barton Creek Greenbelt features more than seven miles of wooded greenbelt trails along the creek, numerous waterfalls, swimming holes, caves and rock climb walls for adventure-loving locals.

Also nearby is the Wild Basin Wilderness Area, a nature preserve on 277 acres of pristine land. Home to eight endangered species, the preserve serves as a living laboratory for the School of Natural Sciences at St. Edward's University. The area offers neighbors miles of hiking trails.

Children in Westlake Hills attend the schools in the highly rated Eanes Independent School District. Neighborhood kids attend one of six elementary schools and two middle schools.

Westlake High School has been consistently rated as one of the top 100 high schools in the country.

“Most definitely, we decided to move to Westlake because of the schools,” says 31-year resident Joan Grable, whose two children are now grown but retain deep friendships with people they met at Eanes schools. “The schools are really the center of the community in Westlake. Football games are like a huge family gathering. And it’s not just the people who still have kids there. The sense of community doesn’t go away just because the kids graduate,” she added.

Westlake Hills is a community made up of several small neighborhoods, many with their own homeowners’ associations.

A Neighborhood Built for Tradition

Out for a leisurely cruise around Lake Austin on their pontoon boat, a retired husband and wife take turns lobbying their daughter and her husband to move to Westlake Hills. The younger pair has lived out of state for several years, but is relocating back to Austin for work.

The older couple has called the leafy, hilly neighborhood west of downtown Austin home for many years and would just love to have their teenage grandchildren and their parents nearby. Grandma imagines happy family dinners out at any of the fabulous nearby restaurants, while Grandpa dreams of taking his grandson golfing at Austin Country Club.

As the family members wave at a passing speedboat towing a skier, the teenagers join their grandparents in the lobbying effort. They envision many more Saturday afternoons enjoying the lake and the other amenities Westlake Hills has to offer.

“My son is still is friends with kids he knew in kindergarten. I think it’s a pretty unique thing that kids stay in touch after they go off in different directions,” says Grable. “It’s part of what’s special about Westlake Hills.”

Extravagant Shopping, Sumptuous Dining and Friday Night Football

Barton Creek Square, which houses more than 170 shops, is located in Westlake Hills. Here residents shop at JCPenney, Macy’s, Old Navy and many other options. Eateries available at this large, regional mall are plentiful, and include Ruby Thai Kitchen, Sarku Japan and Steak N Shake.

Also in Westlake Hills is the Village of Westlake Shopping Center, where neighbors shop at Office Depot, Twin Liquors, GNC and other retailers. Numerous shopping and dining

opportunities are along Bee Cave Road, also, including Stein Mart, Radio Shack and Thai Kitchen.

Westlake Hills locals wanting to eat out have dozens of options. Las Palomas, where the molé is to die for, is a local favorite for interior Mexican cuisine. Bombay Grill offers spicy Indian specialties, while County Line serves up its legendary barbecue in a historic building that once housed a speakeasy. Families enjoy delicious pizza and subs at locally owned Maryes. Neighbors wanting to enjoy a night out without the kids head to The Grove, where the Seared Miso Glazed Sea Bass delights with a tamari-sherry broth.

Major grocery stores within Westlake Hills include Randalls and H.E.B.

Entertainment options are plentiful, too. On any Friday night in autumn, you'll find most Westlake Hills residents at an area football stadium watching their beloved Westlake Chaparrals playing the national sport of Texas.

On non-football nights, neighbors wanting to catch a movie are close to the theaters at Barton Creek Square mall, where all the new releases play. Other entertainment options include a myriad selection of arts events, clubs and more in the city center, just 10 minutes away.

Education that Excels in a Neighborhood that Enchants

The close-knit community that centers around the highly ranked schools in Westlake Hills is a major draw for many of the area's locals, many of whom you'll find every fall Friday night in a football stadium, proudly wearing the blue, red and white school colors that identify their beloved Chaps.

Westlake Hills neighbors know that after the game, they'll gather for a late-night snack and recount the exciting highlights of the game. They appreciate the plentiful and diverse restaurant choices in the area.

Shopping, too, is a cinch in Westlake Hills, with numerous options throughout the area making it easy to get everything from furniture to clothing to groceries.

The luxury homes that attract

“You don't have to go out of the area to do the basics. And in some areas of Westlake Hills, we can even walk to a number of places,” says Grable.

Having Austin Country Club and Lake Austin within its confines enhances the appeal of this storied neighborhood nestled in the irresistible rolling green hills of west Austin.