



WRITING SAMPLE

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Cat Mountain Neighborhood: A Naturalist's Paradise

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Cat Mountain was developed as a retirement community, but has left that legacy in the past as the neighborhood has become home to a delightful and diverse mix of neighbors of all ages. Conveniently located, Cat Mountain is 15 minutes northwest of downtown Austin, and residents can drive to Austin-Bergstrom International Airport in 25-30 minutes.

Development of Cat Mountain began in 1971 and continued through 2008. Many of the older homes in the community have been remodeled to update their appearance and add modern features. Though styles of homes in this neighborhood vary greatly, many have terraces, patios and decks to take advantage of the stunning views of the city and Lake Austin. Ranging from smaller 1,200-square-foot homes priced in the low \$300,000s to larger 6,000 square foot luxury homes priced at \$1.5 million, the average sales price in Cat Mountain is in the high \$500,000s.

Children in Cat Mountain attend schools in Austin Independent School District, including Highland Park and Doss elementary schools, Lamar and Murchison middle schools, and Anderson and McCallum high schools. Both elementary schools were rated "exemplary" by the Texas Education Agency, while the secondary schools are all rated "academically acceptable."

Outdoors enthusiasts appreciate living less than 10 minutes from Bull Creek Greenbelt, a 48-acre park featuring numerous hike and bike trails. Locals especially enjoy bringing the family dog to this beautiful natural area.

Austin Country Club is also nearby. The private, historic club offers its members golf, tennis and a boat dock. Tennis is also available at Cat Mountain's own amenities center, which also features a clubhouse, swimming pool basketball courts, picnic area and a playground.

"We have a great sense of community here," says Bryan Harter, president of the neighborhood association. "We host a number of social events and activities throughout the year including

barbecues as well as Christmas parties and Easter Egg hunts. It's really fun to get together and meet people from other cul-de-sacs. We've got each others' backs."

Friends, Views and Dreams of Lifetime

Two empty-nester couples are enjoying a fun evening at one of the couples' Cat Mountain home. On this chilly night, they're enjoying the warmth radiating from the wood-fired pizza oven. One of the men pours everyone another glass of the 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon the group is drinking, and then heads down to the wine cellar to bring up another bottle. The host couple is celebrating the last of their children going off to college — she'll be in California, at Stanford, and while they'll miss her, they're excited to start this new chapter in their lives.

It's sunset, and the four friends gaze contentedly out of the giant picture window in the dining room; views of the surrounding hills and canyons are spectacular. They snack on caviar-topped bruschetta and talk about weekend plans. The men wander down the hall to the stunning home office to set up a tee time set for Saturday morning at Austin Country Club. The women agree to meet for an early morning hike at the greenbelt before heading over to the Arboretum to check out the sales.

"The community has really nice, quiet wooded areas and lots of trails," says Harter. "Lots of our neighbors love to hike and go out walking around the neighborhood and through the woods. It's something we make plans for and look forward to doing."

Country Club Luxuries and Elegant Shopping

The Arboretum, an upscale shopping destination in a park-like setting, is about 15 minutes from Cat Mountain. The outdoor mall is home to more than 40 restaurants and shops, including Restoration Hardware, Saks Fifth Avenue, custom jeweler Kirk Root Designs and Jos. A. Banks menswear. Among the restaurants options at the Arboretum are Drunk Fish, where neighbors enjoy a fusion of Japanese and Korean cuisine, and Zoe's Kitchen, a family-friendly eatery offering Greek soups and salads.

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.

Date night might include a visit to Brio Tuscan Grille, where sliced steak bruschetta and lobster fettuccine delight the palate of local couples celebrating something special. Another special-occasion option is Siena, where the upscale Italian fare is enjoyed by area residents looking for romantic atmosphere.

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

Another Day Of Beauty, Convenience and Community

Reveling in the breathtaking, panoramic vistas that characterize their hilly neighborhood, Cat Mountain residents are grateful for another day in their attractive, upscale community.

Neighbors revel in the mix of ages that call Cat Mountain home. Families with children of all ages, couples with no children or children off to college, and retirees all enjoy the beauty and convenience this northwest Austin neighborhood offers.

They love being close to Austin Country Club and to a spectacular greenbelt. Lake Austin is nearby, and neighbors spend many weekends enjoying the water's recreational offerings.

Neighbors also appreciate the community's convenience to shopping and dining. "We're close to everything. The commute to downtown isn't bad, and everything we need in terms of shopping is nearby," says Harter. "I've lived here since 1994 and have no plans to leave."