

NEW HOMES

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Builders share respect for value at Halstead Forest



One good collaboration often leads to another.

Benivenga Building and Italo-American Building, which worked together at Calburn Estates and Calburn Manor in Livonia, are joining forces again to build Halstead Forest, detached site condominiums in Farmington Hills.

The two are building each other's plans on an alternating basis for buyers at a 20-acre site off 13 Mile between Haggerty and Halstead. Forty-six units are planned.

Seven different floor plans are available ranging from \$264,900 for a two story of 2,600 square feet with four bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths to \$335,900 for a two story of 3,400 square feet also with four bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths.

Lot premiums range from \$4,000 to \$25,000.

"We work together," said Ronald P. Benivenga. "We're not competing. Expenses are shared. We're controlling costs better."

"We're both old-time Italians," he said. "Tony DiFederico (Italo-American) and my father go way back together. He likes to build a good house, quality-looking home. Our philosophy is exactly the same."

Several factors will draw prospects, Benivenga said.

"It's pretty private, small and cozy. It's like virgin forest back here in some spots. And one road in and the same road out."

Benivenga also cited value of construction at Halstead Forest.

"A lot of people are looking at square footage in relation to price," he said. "As soon as you cross 14 Mile, you hit another plateau of price ranges."

The Farmington School District, which services the sub, is a big plus, too.

The typical buyer is 35-45 years old, has a child or two, both husband and wife work and they have built previously, Benivenga said.

Standard features in all seven plans include first floor laundry, range and dishwasher, fireplace, air conditioning, two-car garage and basement. Exterior materials include brick and wood siding — no vinyl or aluminum.

Two models have been built. The Hickory, constructed by Italo-American, is a two story of 2,600 square feet.

All four bedrooms upstairs. The walk-up master has a separate tub and shower, cathedral ceiling, walk-in closet and dual sink vanity. One of the other three

bedrooms has a cathedral ceiling.

The main floor is laid out almost as two distinct houses. A library is off one side of an elegant two-story foyer, a more formal living room and dining room flow together off the other side.

A less formal kitchen/eating nook and family room are along the back of the house.

The basic Hickory floor plan built costs \$269,900. The model, with upgrades, is priced at \$294,000.

Benivenga has built the Birch, a more open, contemporary two story of 2,500 square feet with three bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths.

The master suite is on the main floor. It has walk-in, wall and linen closets, built-in dressing table, separate tub and shower, dual sink vanity and cathedral ceiling.

The main living area also has a study with cathedral ceiling, half-bath with sloped ceiling, kitchen/nook with island, built-in desk and cathedral ceiling over the nook, and a combination family room/dining area.

Two bedrooms and a bath with shower are upstairs.

The model, with many upgrades, recently sold for \$316,500. The base price is \$283,100.

The subdivision is serviced by city water and sewers. There are no sidewalks except for around the perimeter of the property.

The property tax rate currently is \$38.76 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation, half of market value. That means the owners of a \$269,900 unit at Halstead Forest would pay about \$5,200 the first year.

The annual association fee is \$120.

Jeffrey Oleinick, sales director, deals with potential buyers.

"They love the location, that it's in Farmington Hills... (and) we've left trees instead of clear-cutting the site," he said.



Birch plan: This model at Halstead Forest situates the master suite on the main floor along with a study, great room/dining room combination and kitchen/eating nook.

"They like the openness of the plans. We also hear people like the fact not all the houses are the same. Ron and Tony will work with each purchaser. We've discouraged people from building the same house next door or across the street," Oleinick said.

Jane and Ken Daus are buying the Laurel, a two story and the

most economically priced plan.

"We currently live in almost the exact same area and didn't want to move too far out," Ken said. "It's real convenient to a lot of different stores, restaurants, malls and freeway access. We also like the Farmington School District."

"It seems I was getting more

house for the money than other homes in the area," he added. "It has a big family room with an open floor plan. It had what we were looking for as well as a nice master suite."

Kathy and Roy Casteel and daughter Nicole will move into a Sycamore, also a two story with four bedrooms and 2 1/2 baths.

"We like Benivenga," Kathy

said. "The quality of his house is very good. He reminds me of a perfectionist. It's taken longer than we anticipated, but he wants it right."

The models at Halstead Forest, (810) 653-4061, are open 1-6 p.m. weekdays, noon to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, closed Thursdays.

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