

# Layout, roominess, fountain make ranch plan interesting

Angles everywhere provide unique accents for the Kokeita (405-41), a ranch with 2,535 square feet of living space.

The facade has a colonial style porch with many windows and high roof lines. The main part of the home is V-shaped, with a two-car garage configured in a dog leg to the right.

A vaulted entry features a fountain surrounded by the flooring. This catches the eye and makes a guest's visit start with a special feeling.

Beyond are the vaulted living and dining rooms surrounded by large

windows. Patio doors off the dining room open onto a vaulted covered deck with skylights.

An optional waterfall garden is further back.

The vaulted master suite and office are left of the entry.

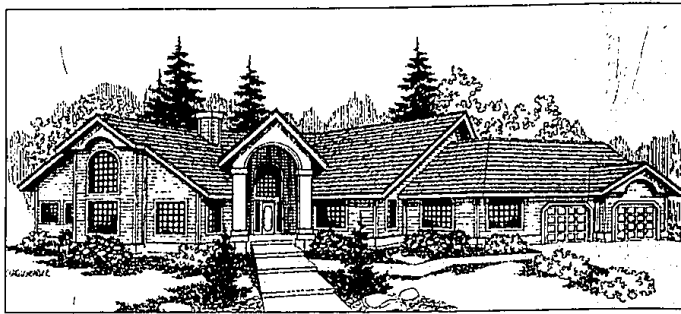
The office, ideally situated if one works at home, also could be used as a sitting room or den.

The master contains a TV shelf, walk-in closet, raised tub, separate shower, his-and-her sinks and a pocket door separating the toilet.

Two secondary bedrooms, one

vaulted, are to the right of the entry with a full bath between.

The kitchen/nook is separated from the rest of the house as a totally individual room. It has long counters containing an appliance center, a raised dishwasher and a center island



with cooktop. Patio doors lead to the back yard.

A vaulted family/den is adjacent to the kitchen. It contains a gas fireplace and entertainment center.

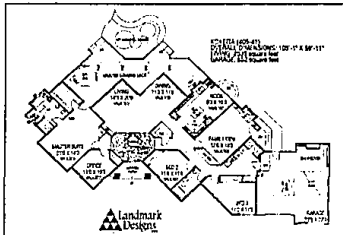
Between the garage and family room is a large utility room with a half bath in the rear.

The garage has an attic overhead with pull-down stairs. The rear is set up with a shop workbench and storage area.

For a study plan, including scaled floor plans, elevations, sections and an artist rendering, send \$19.95 to Landmark Designs, 33127

Saginaw Road E, Cottage Grove, OR 97424. Please specify plan name (Kokeita) and number (405-41).

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## Part-time snowbirds drive some warm-weather housing markets

(AP) — Do you, like some Michiganders, own a second home in the Phoenix area?

A sizable number of buyers propelling that area's housing market to record levels call Arizona home only part of the year.

Metro Phoenix has become a mecca for second-home buyers, who spend the winter months at their golf retreats in north Scottsdale, mansions in Paradise Valley or multi-unit communities in the western and eastern parts of the city, and then head to cooler climes during the summer.

And a recession, terrorism and tanking stock market haven't been enough to drive down demand for vacation homes, particularly among baby boomers, housing ana-

lysts say.

They estimate that as many as one-fourth of the more than 110,000 new and used home sales metro-wide in 2001 were not primary residences.

Across the country, sales of second homes, overall, slipped about 4 percent to 359,000 in 2001 after setting a record in 1999, according to the National Association of Realtors biennial survey.

But the Valley's still an affordable place for second homes, real estate analyst R.L. Brown said. "A million-dollar house here would be at least twice that much in California."

Arizona ranks sixth nationally for the percentage of its houses used for vacation retreats, according to the 2000 census. And Scottsdale

is one of the 10 most popular areas among second-home buyers, according to the national real estate firm Escapetohomes.com.

"Second-home buyers are in the market," said Greg Hague of Hague Realty, who recently sold a \$3.2 million Paradise Valley house to a couple who will spend a few months a year there.

Million-dollar home sales in metro Phoenix climbed 2 percent to 380 in 2001, while nationally, seven-digit sales dropped 11 percent. But at the same time, there was some pressure on high-end home prices as new developments came on line and the number of used homes in the market jumped.

Competition for buyers has

developers increasing amenities. Besides golf, most gated communities in north Scottsdale have concierges, spas and services that shop for residents.

Mirabel, a Scottsdale development, takes care of residents' plants and pets and has a community boat at nearby Bartlett Lake.

Whisper Rock, one the last remaining residential parcels in affluent north Scottsdale, has a "mayor" who plans community events such as wine tastings.

Scottsdale multiple listing service numbers show homes sales of \$500,000 and up to almost where they were early last year, with more than 100 closing each month.

Since no one really needs a

second place to live, the vacation home market can be volatile. So price plays a big role.

Even though the price tags on some lots in exclusive north Scottsdale communities like Whisper Rock, Mirabel, DC Ranch and Desert Mountain climb above \$600,000, the homes are considered a bargain compared with such places as Santa Barbara, Calif., San Diego, Palm Beach, Fla. and even Las Vegas.

Almost 90 percent of the 350 lots sold in Mirabel have gone to second-home buyers, said Steve Adelson, president of the development, which has land for custom homes and golf villas starting at \$175,000 and going up to \$750,000.

Retirement developments

like Sun City Grand in Surprise and Sun Lakes and Springfield in Chandler also have many residents who keep other houses in other parts of the country.

These second homes are much less expensive — \$100,000 to \$300,000 — but also often come with guarded gates and golf courses.

The Realtors Association survey said second-home buyers polled in 2001 prefer new houses. It also found the typical second home buyer is years ahead of retirement at 46 but is likely purchasing a pre-retirement house.

That group and the 76 million aging baby boomers will continue to drive Phoenix's second-home market for the next decade, Brown said.

## Soundproofing multifamily units is all in construction

BY JAMES AND MORRIS CARY  
FOR AP WEEKLY FEATURES

When we were younger, we took it for granted that if one lived in an apartment, condo, townhouse or duplex — any multi-family dwelling, for that matter — sharing secrets with your neighbor was the norm.

We later discovered that sound can be substantially deadened between homes without spending a fortune.

We once built an apartment on the top floor of a seven-story mini-skyscraper in San Francisco. We built it inside an existing metal-walled structure. The air-conditioning system for the entire building was enormous. When it ran it was incredibly noisy. We couldn't figure out how a home could be built within 40 feet of such a large and noisy machine without it having major noise problems.

We met with an acoustical engineer who suggested that we cover the interior surface of the

party wall with three layers of 5/8-inch wallboard. He told us to use R-30 fiberglass batt insulation in the stud cavities.

We couldn't believe that three layers of wallboard and a layer of R-30 insulation would effectively quiet the rear of the building. It took about nine months to complete the construction.

Much to our surprise, the noise outside stayed there once the sound wall was complete.

Granted, there were no windows or doors in the sound wall; there were only the studs, R-30 fiberglass insulation and the three layers of wallboard on the inside surface and the texture and paint. One could go outside and hear the roar of the equipment, and then go inside and hear no trace of it. We couldn't believe our ears. We then were convinced that multiple layers of wallboard and a layer of R-30 insulation could do the job.

And, we discovered that killing noise doesn't have to be costly. Wallboard is rather inexpensive, as is fiberglass insulation.

In homes where families live on opposite sides of a common wall, it's best for the studs on one side

to be separate from the studs on the other side. We think that two separate walls work best.

One wall for one side; one wall for the other. This way when someone pounds on his wall, the vibration isn't transferred to the other side. Also, wallboard shouldn't be applied between the common walls. The layer of wallboard can defeat the sound-deadening properties of the insulation layers in each of the walls.

Remember the configuration: three layers of 5/8-inch wallboard, a stud wall filled with fiberglass insulation, a space between, another stud wall filled with fiberglass insulation and three more layers of 5/8-inch wallboard.

We think that the building code ought to be updated to include a full separation between multiple dwellings and that the party walls should each have several layers of wallboard within each dwelling.

Wall cavities should be filled with as much fiberglass batt insulation as will fit without compressing to add more sound-deadening quality.

No portion of the wall cavities should be without insulation.

You can't do all of these fancy framing things

unless you're building from scratch.

But if you have room, you can build a wall inside your place holding it a few inches away from the existing one and adding as many layers of wallboard and/or soundboard as you can afford. Also, you can simply add wallboard to an existing wall. If the studs in the wall travel all the way to the other side, some sound might come through even with several layers of wallboard.

There are some types of soundboard that come with fabric or wallpaper applied to one surface. Screwing soundboard to a wall is easy, but be sure to properly extend the electrical boxes.

If you live in a rental with noisy neighbors and the landlord doesn't care, consider moving. Your landlord might not want to spend the money it takes to silence the noisemakers, but you might have grounds to cancel your lease if his inaction is causing you to lose sleep. We recently returned from a visit to the research and development labs of Johns Manville in Denver.

Their acoustic testing facility is one of the best in the country. If you want more information on sound control, check out their Web site at [www.jm.com/sound](http://www.jm.com/sound).

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### WELLS

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finishing work dependent on the wishes of individual buyers.

"All plans are a little different," MacLeish said. "Two or three are somewhat similar. We will customize to their tastes, put anything in they want to. We can deliver within 30-45 days."

The model at Indian Wells includes

many upgrades such as marble flooring, fancier cabinets and skylights. It's priced at \$363,900.

The model features a kitchen/dining area; great room with volume ceiling; and master with shower walk-in closet and two-sink vanity on the main living area. Two bedrooms, a bath with combination tub/shower and a small sitting area are upstairs.

Other floor plans offer buyers a pass through-wall between the kitchen and formal dining room, a large upstairs loft and living spaces arranged more symmetrically on the main floor.

"The big draw, I would say, is garages with entry at the main level and first-floor luxury bedroom suites," said Melody Griffin, sales manager and MacLeish's daughter.

"Landscaping is top-notch," she added. "Another plus is full basements, as well as luxury appointments we're doing granite, marble in the model, beautiful moldings."

Indian Wells is serviced by city water and sewers and is within the Royal Oak school boundaries. Pets are allowed.

The property tax rate is \$27 per \$1,000 of state taxable value, half of sales price for new construction. That means the owners of a \$300,000 condo there would pay about \$8,550 the first year.

The monthly association fee is \$125. All utilities are individually metered.

The sales model at Indian Wells, (248) 524-3244, is open 1-6 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays and by appointment.

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