

Builder/Architect

Western North Carolina Edition

*Our
61st
Year*



Trillium Links & Village
Cashiers, N.C.



Great room overlooking Lake Glenville. Photo by VBM Graphics & Photography.

Trillium LINKS & VILLAGE Cashiers, N.C.

By Billie Baker

When four long-time friends decided they wanted to live in an ideal, family-centered community, they did more than pack up their families and move

to another city. They built their dream in the heart of one of the south's most sought-after resort addresses, bringing together high style and family values in one of

the most successful real estate ventures in *Western North Carolina*.

The community is called Trillium Links and Village, and it has

broken all the rules normally associated with exclusive communities. The brain child of four friends—Rusty Culbreth, Morris Hatalsky, Dan Rice and Greg Ward—*Trillium Village* tosses out the notion of *touch-me-not* houses with a *members-only* personality and prohibitive costs in favor of closely knit traditional neighborhoods with sidewalks, grassy parks and plenty of open spaces for enjoying family and the beauty of the surrounding mountains. And it does so while still maintaining all of the perks of living in an exclusive resort.

It's definitely not your rich uncle's country club resort, but one he would likely love to call home.

The dream for *Trillium Links* was born several years ago when the four friends, then residents of Ormond Beach, FL, and the surrounding area, decided they "had reached a comma in their lives," CEO Rusty Culbreth



Outdoor view of Lake Glenville from *The Landings*—a private club for property owners.

explains. The four decided to go into business together. They moved to Cashiers after Rice

visited the area in 1995 and was struck by its beauty and possibilities. After going back to Florida to tell his friends about the perfect spot he'd found for raising families and enjoying life, the group made a trip to the mountains and shortly thereafter purchased the 700-acre tract of land overlooking the Blue Ridge and Lake Glenville.

"Family is very important to Rusty, Greg, Dan and Morris," said Joanne Valent, *Trillium's* director of marketing and sales. The community they created together is more than their business; it is their lifestyle. According to the circle of friends, they wanted to create a lifestyle that focused on families, one that provided families with an opportunity to experience a sense of community and neighborhood. "Their goal is for *Trillium* to be a place where families can enjoy important things, like each other, neighbors and community," she

Dining room overlooking Lake Glenville. Photo by VBM Graphics & Photography.



said.

It's a dream that is not only selling quickly, but drawing young families and retired couples alike. During the grand opening in August 1998, *Trillium* attracted more than 55 property owners, and sales have yet to slow down.

It's no wonder. Not only did the four friends find the perfect place to build their dream community,

they also sought out the perfect planners to bring it to life: the internationally renowned architectural and town-planning firm of *DPZ*. Started by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Syberk in the 1980s, *DPZ* is recognized as the author of the neo-traditional neighborhood movement and has been called upon to design such successful communities as Seaside, FL, which is now a national

model of family-friendly neighborhood design.

"It was just a natural thing for them to seek out *DPZ*," Valent said. "Their philosophy and goals seemed to run exactly parallel."

But what didn't fit was the mountainous terrain. Until now, *DPZ* had designed communities only for areas with a flatter topography. Never before had they tried to map out grid-like street patterns across the face of rolling mountains and valleys. "The elevations were so dramatic and changed so quickly—creating *Trillium* was quite a challenge," Valent said. But it was one the firm was definitely up to.

To further ensure the success of their project, the founding partners turned to one of the country's renowned architectural firms, Stephen Fuller of *Design Traditions* of Atlanta, for their residential designs. "Everything was a perfect fit," Valent said. "The land, the founders' idea, *DPZ* and Stephen Fuller, they all just were a perfect blend." Fuller's homes feature the best of upscale planning with the coziness of smaller footprints. He combines functionality with a smaller square footage and dramatic exteriors to create designs that recapture the essence of years gone by. The inviting front porches are a good example.

To give the community an authentic mountain flair, the project leaders visited Asheville, where they studied the architecture of historic *Biltmore Village* and the *Albemarle Park* neighborhood.

Trillium Village property owners can choose from a complete collection of Fuller homes that range from arts-and-crafts bungalows and European cottages to Adirondack cabins and log homes. *Trillium* employs a full-

Main dining room of *The Landings*. Photo by VBM Graphics & Photography.



time town architect who will assist buyers in modifying the plans to meet their own personal needs. Property owners can also choose to have a custom design, provided it is approved by *Trillium's Architectural Standards Committee*.

Homes in the *Trillium* library range from 1,200 square feet to more than 4,000 square feet.

And while buyers can opt to hire an outside construction firm to build their dream home, none have done that. Of the homes that are currently under construction or are completed at Trillium, all have been built by the community's own construction firm, *Trillium Construction Company*, headed by founder Dan Rice.

In keeping with the *DPZ* concept of traditional neighborhood design, lots in *Trillium Village* range in size from one-quarter acre around the village green, to one-and-a-half acre estate lots overlooking the *Trillium Links*. Land-home packages start at approximately \$250,000 and up.

According to Valent, the average Trillium Village homeowner opts for a smaller residence—around 1,500 square feet of heated living area—with large wrap-around decks. The decks feature both covered and open areas, she said. Such homes are a perfect fit for the environment they grace.

"We've found that our residents put a great deal of emphasis on outdoor living," Valent said. "When people come to the mountains, they go hiking and enjoy other outdoor activities in the cool mountain summers. They spend very little time inside. Therefore, they naturally want to pay more attention to their outside living areas than most homeowners would."



Bradford Adirondack cabin designed by Stephen Fuller, Inc., Atlanta. Photo by VBM Graphics & Photography.

And, true to the resort area's tradition, the majority of homes in *Trillium Village* are second or third homes. "There aren't many people here who don't own a large spacious home somewhere else—like in Atlanta, Alabama or Florida," Valent continued.

"People come here with their families and they don't want to leave," she said. "It's that kind of

place." And it has been for decades. "Families have been coming to Highlands and Cashiers for years to vacation," Valent added.

Though it breaks some of the conventional rules of traditional resort community living, at *Trillium*, they can stay as long as they please. *Trillium* does feature a fabulous golf course. Designed

by Hatalsky, a four-time *PGA Tour* champion and “*Putter of the Decade*” in the 1980s, *Trillium Links* is a classic, traditional, turn-of-the-century style course carved into the intricate topography of the surrounding mountains. Panoramic views, dramatic elevation changes, creeks and valleys make playing the 18-hole course more than a memorable experience.

And while Valent says *Trillium Links* rivals any private course in the Highlands/Cashiers area for play, greens and pure enjoyment, it offers style and excellence with a refreshing twist—one that is in keeping with the spirit in which the community was designed.

“What’s unique about *Trillium Links* is golf at *Trillium* comes with owner privileges instead of membership fees. Our property owners play at preferred rates and have preferred tee times,” Valent says.

Another *Trillium* amenity is *The Landings*, the Village’s private dining club. After all, what up-scale golfing community would be complete without a sumptuous



The scenic 18th hole at Trillium Links. Photo by Scott Sanders, Washington, D.C.

place to dine! Here, on the shores of beautiful Lake Glenville, Master Chef Bruno Martin creates delectable French entrees while sous chef Buddy Dean fashions his delicious desserts. A native of Lyons, France, Martin specializes in French cuisine, but also excels in American and continental fare.

The views, the homes, the

course, dining club and character all combine to create a new type of exclusive community—one that not only breaks the rules of such resorts, but also makes new ones.

Highlands/Cashiers is a very exclusive area. Most communities around here are secured and gated. And most of the clubs have “weighty” initiation fees. “Our founders wanted *Trillium Links and Village* to be *inclusive*, not *exclusive*,” Valent expressed that when you become a member of a private club, each new member that joins takes away from the exclusive nature of the club. But here, we’re different. Every time a new owner or family comes to Trillium, we’re just adding to the family. That’s why we encourage people to come to Trillium Links to play—and stay forever!

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Trillium Links Pro Shop and Cafe. Trillium photo.



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