

## A little bit of heaven

### In Ojai, this senior community thrives in its eco-friendly and tranquil environment

By Margaret Aldrich

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Oak Haven is a 22-unit, gated senior community at 1885 Maricopa Highway in the beautiful Ojai Valley. Any preconceived notions one might have about a senior community are quickly dispelled as one views the variety of units, each with its own unique architectural style — from Southwestern to Craftsman to Mediterranean.

And as described by congenial Oak Haven Manager, Jill Saldana, the occupants of these units are equally diverse: a man who shapes surfboards for a living, one who has just published a novel, two nurses, a movie set designer, a woman whose hobby is boogie boarding and another who is an avid golfer — not what one would expect from the residents of a senior community.

Although there is a minimum age requirement at Oak Haven (one person per residence must be at least 62 years of age and the second person must be at least 50), the atmosphere definitely is not that of a stereotypical senior citizen's development.

With very reasonable monthly space rent of \$595 per month, plus utilities, buildable lots at Oak Haven, of which only five currently remain available, can be developed to suit the buyer's wants and needs: perhaps a larger home with a smaller, more manageable yard, or, for the dedicated gardener, a smaller home allowing more room for landscaping.

Each home, regardless of style or size, includes an attached "garagette," a three-sided hybrid of garage and carport, which offers ample space for one or two car parking as well as storage. The backside of the garagette is open and leads to a private patio area, providing privacy and space for outdoor living.

There's a strong sense of community at Oak Haven, one example of which is the communal green house.

This pleasant, airy structure features cleverly constructed wooden planter boxes set in repurposed milk crates and mounted on the green house walls at heights that make gardening a comfortable enterprise with no need for bending or kneeling. Already the planter boxes are filled with an array of thriving vegetables — tomatoes, peppers,

squash and beans among them — all planted and tended by individual residents. In the spirit of community, these vegetables are gladly shared and traded between the residents of Oak Haven. The greenhouse also is wheelchair accessible. Outside a rain barrel stands ready to catch and store rain for use in watering the plants, and inside a lightweight hose and nozzle makes it easy and convenient for gardeners to nurture their plants.

All of the homes in Oak Haven enjoy stunning views of the mountains surrounding the Ojai Valley, as well as the convenience of shopping, restaurants and medical facilities nearby.

A leisurely stroll through the streets of Oak Haven reveals its variety of architectural styles, each with its own stamp of individuality. One Southwestern adobe style unit nestles in the shade of a graceful oak tree and is accented by a bright blue front door. Another's front steps have risers accented with cheerful Mexican ceramic tiles. Many of the homes include such upscale features as skylights, bullnose corners and fireplaces, with Corian or granite countertops adding a touch of luxury to the kitchens and baths. Each home is surrounded by its own lovely and unique landscaping, maintained by each individual owner.

Several of the homes in the development have been featured in the Ojai Valley Green Coalition's Green Home and Building Tour in 2010, 2011 and 2012. One such home, built by Modular Lifestyles, Inc., which is Energy Star Tier I certified, was designed with maximum energy efficiency technology and a minimum 2.0 kWh PV electric system. This system, along with extra insulation in the ceiling, walls and floors has kept the owner's electric and gas bills at or near zero each month. One of the first homes built in the development, modeled after a Craftsmanstyle bungalow, also has enjoyed such energy efficiency due to the use of a solar paneled roof and R-42 cellulose recyclable paper insulation.

Although Oak Haven is not exclusively affiliated with any specific dealer— buyers can choose any dealer as long as the architectural guidelines for the community are met — Modular Lifestyles has constructed 10 of the homes within Oak Haven.

"We are the only California builder that offers award-winning solar-powered manufactured or modular homes in California," said Modular Lifestyles Vice President Steven Lefler. Just one of the options Modular Lifestyles offers is for a low budget entry into solar usage — Solar Ready homes equipped for future installation of solar equipment.

Oak Haven is an affordable, yet upscale senior development committed to providing a tranquil, eco-friendly environment — a "little bit of heaven in Ojai."

For more information, contact Saldana at 646-4441 for more information, or online at [www.oakhavenmanufacturedhomes.com](http://www.oakhavenmanufacturedhomes.com). Lefler can be reached at 888-437-4587 or online at [www.modularlifestyles.com.w](http://www.modularlifestyles.com.w)



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