

Ranch-living prices got you spooked? Check out these rental flats and ranch-style patio homes beside Shalom Park



Clockwise from far left: V-Esprit's gardens; a home interior; residents Jack and Liz Rackl, left, join former Cherry Creek High School assistant principal Debbie Taylor for a happy hour.

If you're one of thousands of age-55-plus buyers who feel they're stuck between a rock and a hard place now — that is, able to sell your older home at top dollar but not liking what you'll have to pay today for a low-maintenance patio ranch — veteran senior living executive Cindy Wagner has a rental concept to show you, east across Parker Road from Cherry Creek State Park.



Wagner spent recent years as executive director of Shalom Park, the Jewish-affiliated, non-profit assisted living community. Now she's vice president of operations at V-Esprit, a locally owned and managed entity that's bought out Shalom Park's independent-living apartment units and 44 low-maintenance, paired-patio homes, putting them together with some packaged services to create a novel rental concept for low-maintenance living.

That packaged approach includes educational, cultural and fitness classes at Shalom Park's new J. Leonard Levy Wellness Center; and à la carte dining

in its bistro — a bright café where I met Jack and Liz Rackl, who had lived in one of those roomy patio homes for two years before V-Esprit's move. "When someone new takes over, you're concerned it's not going to be as good as it was," said Jack Rackl, career U.S. Air Force veteran. But the pair has been nothing but pleased with V-Esprit and its new services.

Those include full maintenance on the well-landscaped, ranch-style patio homes, access to the 20,000-square-foot Wellness Center and pool, and light housekeeping twice-a-month. V-Esprit contracts with Synergy Home Care to arrange some optional assisted-living services; and can provide more if you need them. Just as with the dining at the bistro, it's à la carte.

Like the old ad campaign, "You don't have to be Jewish to love Levy's real Jewish Rye," you don't have to be Jewish to love Shalom Park, says Peter Torrens, vice president of communications at V-Esprit. The apartments and patio homes on the 26-acre campus were already attracting a majority non-Jewish crowd before the takeover by V-Esprit, he says.

Meanwhile, this lease, age-55-plus con-

IF YOU GO...

WHERE: V-Esprit, Active Adult Community beside Shalom Park; apartments and 2-bedroom ranch patio homes, all maintenance and host of services included, award-winning wellness center, dining at bistro available à la carte; 5240 S. Shalom Park Cir., Aurora; from I-225 head southeast on Parker Road 3 mi. to E. Bellevue Ave., turn east 1 block to Bellevue Dr., and follow signs; or from Arapahoe Rd., turn north on Parker Rd. 2 miles to Bellevue and go right
PRICE: \$1,000 lifetime fee, from \$1,950/mo; patio home from \$3,100/mo.
WHEN: Today 9 a.m. until 6 p.m.
PHONE: 303-400-2300
MORE INFO: v-esprit.com

cept generates the same sense of community among that crowd as those very expensive for-purchase communities do — fostered by activities included with the package. When I visited, most residents were up in Black Hawk on a coach daytrip. "Watching the aspens turn?" I asked Wagner. No, she replied, that's set for next week.

"You write one check a month to cover everything," says Torrens. That starts with a single "Community Lifetime

Fee" of \$1,000 for any home, which carries over if you leave for some reason and then return. A 725-square-foot, one-bedroom apartment starts at \$1,950/month; from \$2,375 for a two-bedroom unit; with prices climbing for views across the state park to the mountains and for an updated package of finishes, mirroring what V-Esprit has done to the communal areas of both the apartment and patio-home neighborhoods.

A 1,375-square-foot patio home — nice looking indoors and out — rents from \$3,100/month. Who would rather rent than buy? Numbers of profiles, says Torrens, starting with those who need to get out of their older homes but don't feel confidence in the high purchase prices they're seeing, and want to buy time. V-Esprit also sees some renters who have spouses in Shalom Park's long-term care facility, wanting to stay close and share meals at the bistro.

V-Esprit is just east of Parker Road at Bellevue; from I-225, head southeast on Parker Road three miles, turn east on Bellevue a block to Bellevue Drive and follow the signs.

— Mark Samuelson writes on real estate and business; you can email him at mark@samuelsonassoc.com. See all of Samuelson's columns online at DenverPost.com/realestate