

Living a dream

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Phillips Farm offers custom homes, carefree living for people 55 and older

East Hartford – George and Veronica Steiner fell in love at Phillips Farm.

The couple was already in love with each other, but at Phillips Farm, an age-restricted housing complex off Silver Lane, they fell in love with their new dream home.

The couple – he's 61 and she's 59 – lives in a yellow Cape Cod-style home with green shutters on Phillips Farm Road, a private road in Phillips Farm. The development, which caters to those 55 and over, was created to resemble a New England-style village, complete with old-fashioned lampposts, white picket fences, and sidewalks.

The Steiners' three-bedroom home with attached garage is typical of the single-family homes built at Phillips Farm in the past year in that it has a lot of customization, something the builder, William Ferrigno, welcomes from his homebuyers.

Ferrigno is a third-generation homebuilder and owner of the Avon-based Sunlight Construction, which specializes in the building of custom luxury homes. Phillips Farm, an age 55 and over housing development on 17.5 acres, is a project being undertaken by Ferrigno and his firm.

Phillips Farm is something Ferrigno is extremely proud of, and he has a right to be. Last year the Cornwall model home at Phillips Farm won the prestigious state Home Building Industry Award for the best 55 and over detached home with more than 2,000 square feet of living space.

The Cornwall, which is 2,100 square feet, is among six different styles of homes available at Phillips Farm. The judges noted the Cornwall's exceptional features that fit the lifestyle of today's active adults: its two-story great room that opens to a breakfast room, its first-floor master bedroom suite, and its two-car garage.

So far the Steiners are among 30 families who've already bought into Phillips Farm, and with 36 home sites left, there's still time for others to become part of this special community billed as "the best value in Hartford County."

The homes range from about \$259,900 to \$329,900, and those prices can vary depending on the amount of customization the homebuyer opts for. Depending on the model of home chosen, the floor plans can range from 1,500 to 2,100 square feet and have three or four bedrooms, 2 ½ or three bathrooms, and a one or two-car garage.

For the Steiners, who left an age restricted complex in East Windsor to move to Phillips Farm, what they liked was the fact that their new home would be a detached single-family residence that they could customize to their own liking, Veronica Steiner says.

They also had a balcony created at the top of the stairs overlooking the living and dining rooms, and it's in this new space – space that's sort of like a loft – that they put their computer.

The Steiners also decided to customize their second-floor master bedroom, making it larger and having it include an attached bathroom rather than a bathroom off the hallway.

“He really worked with me, letting me do anything I wanted with this house,” Veronica says of the builder, Ferrigno. “He was really great. He never said ‘no, we can’t do this.’”

Besides the ability to customize their home, what the Steiner's also liked is the location of Phillips Farm – it's close to everything. It's across the street from a major supermarket, bank, and pharmacy, and a short distance from the highway, which they appreciate since both of them still work, she at ING in Hartford and he at Community Health Resources in Windsor.

And their new home is more centrally located in relation to the homes of four of their five children who live in Connecticut. And when it comes to their fifth child, who lives in California, Veronica notes that she and her husband are still relatively close to Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks.

In catering to the age 55 and over community Phillips Farm offers maintenance-free living. For a monthly fee of \$175 you can live worry free, with all the outdoor maintenance such as snowplowing, the cleaning of gutters, landscaping, and making repairs to the exterior of the home, taken care of by the management.

And no matter which style of home a homebuyer chooses at Phillips Farm, some of the standard features are: a master bedroom and laundry on the first floor and two extra bedrooms on the second floor, a full basement, Thermopane vinyl windows with tilt-in sashes, a brick paver patio or wood deck, a choice of wood cabinetry for the kitchen and baths, Moen brand single lever plumbing faucets, a choice of stain resistant carpeting and laminate counters, central air-conditioning, and cathedral or 11-foot ceilings in the interior.

Customizations that some clients have opted for have included installing an automatic stair climber to the second floor, having the whole house wired for audio, adding a Jacuzzi, screened-in porch, or four-season room, and pushing out a dormer to make a bedroom bigger and adding a walk-in closet.

If you have a dream feature in mind when it comes to your new home at Phillips Farm, just ask. “We haven’t said no to anything yet,” Ferrigno says.

Ferrigno makes it a point to meet with all the homebuyers at Phillips Farm whether they're customizing or not. He even held a cocktail party at the model home at Phillips Farm last fall for all the new residents, an event the Steiners attended.

“We all pride ourselves on the quality of our overall product, not just from the sticks or the two-by-fours but from our quality of customer care, which goes to how we do customization for our buyers and how we care for them after the sale,” Ferrigno says.

For anyone who buys a new home at Phillips Farm by March 31, Ferrigno is offering an added incentive in the form of free upgrades. If you purchase your new home by that date, you'll get from \$5,000 to \$10,000 toward upgrades.

Phillips Farm will be represented at the 60th Original Connecticut Home Show, which runs through Sunday at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. Just look for Booth No. 267.

For more information, you can also visit the Phillips Farm website at:
www.phillips-farm.com