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As you wish

By Story By Jane Mahoney
For the Journal

Three model homes recently have opened in a new community on Albuquerque's West Side.

Twilight Custom Homes' new Vista de La Luz development is banking that its broad variety of home designs and prices will make the difference for buyers in these tough economic times. The community, eventually to hold 137 homes, offers both town homes and single-family, detached homes, as well as close proximity to one of the city's express bus routes.

Vista de La Luz, positioned immediately west of Coors and Sevilla, about midway between Montañño and Interstate 40, is a mixed-use community that encompasses both residential and commercial construction. The home lots, climbing stair-step up a ridge, provide sweeping views of the Rio Grande Bosque, the city lights and the mountains. Within easy walking distance along Coors NW is the commercial part of the development, including a Jinja Bar & Bistro now under construction, as well as a bank, bagel shop and salon.

The new homes are directly across Coors from the 1969 award-winning La Luz development designed by architect Antoine Predock, thus the "Vista de La Luz" salute in the name.

The trio of models, all town homes, reflects just a few of the 16 floor plans to be available on the 30-acre property, said Tim McNaney, a partner in Twilight Homes. The homes, both one-story and two-story, range in price from about \$208,000 to \$350,000. Home sizes range from 1,400 to 2,800 square feet.

"We have homes for a broad spectrum of buyers," says McNaney, who is undertaking the company's first Albuquerque project.

Twilight Homes will also continue to build homes in Las Cruces, where the company got its start. At Vista de La Luz, early lookers and the first few buyers have run the gamut from families to empty nesters to single professionals. Nestled between two river bridges connecting east and west Albuquerque, the development provides reasonably quick access to Old Town, Downtown, the Northeast Heights, the West Side, and points beyond, McNaney says.

Twilight Homes bills itself as a custom builder, and as such, offers buyers plenty of choices when it comes to selection of interior materials (countertops, flooring and hardware), as well as some leeway in the home design itself. For example, any of the town home designs can also be constructed as a single-family home on its own lot.

"Some people just don't like the idea of town homes," said sales associate Renee Kirkland, "but empty nesters, in particular, may like the town home floor plan."

The town home models, all 2x6-inch wall frame construction, have energy-saving features such as a 95 percent efficient gas furnace, Energy Star lighting and appliance packages, and vinyl windows with low-e glass.

Contemporary in interior styling, the homes don't ignore the traditional New Mexican favorites of a kiva-style gas fireplace and built-in nichos. In the three-bedroom Castilla model, the 11-foot ceilings allow for extra large windows (topped with a row of clerestory windows) that look directly to the Bosque and the city lights to the east.

The model homes are open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and noon to 5 p.m. Sundays, except today, when hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Models are open by appointment only on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Turn west onto Sevilla at Coors to enter the development. Twilight Homes is to the south.

As an incentive to buyers during the economic recession, Twilight Homes offers referrals for mortgage assistance and is waiving the premiums originally affixed to the lots with the most desirable views. The company is also expanding into a few other local markets. McNaney says Twilight will have a presence in the Cielo Norte community in Rio Rancho, as well as Ventana de Bosque near Old Town.

ESTIMATED MONTHLY PAYMENTS:

(includes estimated taxes and insurance)

For \$238,900 home (1,614-square-foot Castilla model): \$1,262.88

Assumptions: 20 percent down; 5.0 percent, 30-year conventional mortgage

Source: Mace Kochenderfer, Anchor Mortgage Group

STANDARD FEATURES:

Tile entry, kitchen, baths and utility room

White raised-panel interior doors

Gas fireplace

Rounded bull-nose corners

Laminate or tile countertops

Oak cabinets and pantry

Garden tub and cast marble vanities

High efficiency furnace, low-e windows, and Energy Star lighting and appliances

HEATING/COOLING:

Gas forced heat/Refrigerated cooling

INSULATION VALUES:

R-38 in the ceiling, R-19 in the walls