

Like to look at homes? Look to south county

*There are many
to choose from
along 101 corridor*

By **DAWN WITHERS**
South County Life

When it comes to shopping for a new home, south Monterey County offers plenty of opportunities to browse and buy.

Each of the four cities along the Highway 101 corridor south of Salinas has models to tour — and plenty of homes available.

“We always welcome people to come through whether they are on the market or not, because everyone knows someone who is looking for a home,” said Louise Oates, a vice president of marketing and sales for Salinas-based Creekbridge Homes. Creekbridge built the Arboleda and St. Charles Place developments in King City and Greenfield, respectively.

Many prospective homebuyers look to south county because of developer promotions, such as discounted home prices and free upgrades, Oates said, adding that Creekbridge this year offered two promotions at Arboleda and St. Charles Place.

Two of the most popular packages, Oates said, are a kitchen upgrade with granite countertops and stainless steel appliances, and backyard landscaping.

When those promotions were offered, Creekbridge doubled the number of daily walk-throughs at its Arboleda and St. Charles models from 30 to 60, she said.

Arboleda offers 11 models, Oates said, with various floor plans and dozens of amenities, such as recessed oak cabinets, French doors and whirlpool bathtubs.

St. Charles Place homes range in price from about \$350,000 to more than



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Robert Reyes of Salinas tours a model home at Creekbridge's Arboleda development in King City.

\$500,000, and Arboleda homes range from about \$330,000 to more than \$500,000.

New homes in the cities south of Salinas are some of the most affordable in the county. According to the Monterey County Association of Realtors, homes in south county cities had a median price of

\$465,000 in January, compared with a median price of \$536,000 for a home in south Salinas.

From 1994 to 2004, growth in the cities of Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield and King City ranged from 45 percent to 69 percent, compared with 13 percent for the county as a whole,

DETAILS

A sampling of model homes and subdivisions to visit throughout south Monterey County:

■ **KING CITY:** Mills Ranch, 385-0200; Arboleda, (800) 595-6896.

■ **GREENFIELD:** Walnut Place, 757-6251; Seville, 674-1021; Terra Verde, 674-2208; Mariposa, 674-0411, St. Charles Place, 674-2572.

■ **SOLEDAD:** Diamond Ridge and Orchard Lane, 678-4748.

■ **GONZALES:** Canyon Creek Town Homes, 675-2815.

according to Applied Development Economics, a consulting firm specializing in economic planning and development services.

In the next 20 years, growth in the region could range from 1.9 percent to 4.7 percent — or another 55,700 to 80,500 people.

Greenfield ranked as the fourth-fastest-growing city in California last year, with a population increase of 15.6 percent.

Kimberly Langon, a sales associate with Nino Homes' Terra Verde subdivision in Greenfield, said many people who come to see the models are looking to move up into larger homes.

“Our homes are unique,” Langon said.

Terra Verde has four models and floor plans to choose from, and, she said, some of the homes offer special features, such as a second-floor laundry room, and upgrades including granite countertops, extended master suites and surround-sound stereo.

Nino Homes' other Greenfield development, Mariposa, offers smaller lot sizes and less expensive houses than Terra Verde, Langon said. It's selling much faster, she said, though Terra Verde has only 11 out of 96 homes still available for sale.

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