

fitting into the forest

by Indiana Reed

Smith

The adage “exposed to the elements” takes on a whole new meaning at Elements at Edgemont Highlands, new multi-unit townhomes currently under construction five miles northeast of town. These are elements to which you want to be exposed.

Earth, air, sky and water — Elements is designed as a neighborhood rich with texture, embracing the beauty of the natural environment without sacrificing amenities.

“It’s about harmony and being able to fit within the forest amid the trees,” says Luis Marquez who, with his wife Jaime, is developing the complex.

The homes have four efficient floor plans and range in size from 1,365 to 2,200 square feet. They are staggered horizontally as well as vertically down the natural grade of the hill so that driveways, entrances and decks remain private. Striving for sustainable design, each unit has storage spaces tucked into nooks and crannies as well as an abundance of built-in cabinetry.

Exterior and interior finishes are available in a variety of color schemes inspired by the surrounding elements. “We started with a big bowl of rocks, pinecones, leaves and branches,” says Jaime Marquez, and incorporated those hues into the homes. The

interiors also have hand-scraped, engineered wood floors and slab-granite countertops.

Indeed, all of the details have been addressed: entryways are covered; the two-car garages are big enough to provide storage; the covered back decks are generous and double as outdoor dining rooms; energy-efficient windows bring additional light without losing heat; and master suites are on the main level.

When designing the buildings, existing Ponderosa pines were measured, and those 10 inches in diameter or greater were saved and incorporated into the community.

Rocks excavated during construction were repurposed into drainage beds or featured in the common-area landscaping, which was designed for xeriscape planting.

Simplicity and minimal maintenance are two of the lock-and-leave features that allow homeowners the convenience to come and go, “even if it’s your primary home,” says Jaime, noting that Durangoans seem to always be off to the next adventure.

The overall Edgemont Highlands development incorporates sustainability, and Elements neighborhood falls right in harmony. Residents enjoy the communal herb and vegetable gardens, efficient natural-gas heating, miles of trails and access to the Florida River for fishing.

Phase one, called Mountain Streams Court, has been in planning for two years, with the first six homes completed by the end of 2013. At full build-out, 32 townhomes are planned, with starting prices under \$400,000. www.elementsdurango.com ■



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