

Fort Worth, Texas

The City's Magazine

Southlake Splendor 2008 Dream Home

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE: **30+** IDEAS

NASHVILLE STAR:
Melissa Lawson

THE STAYTON:
Resort-Style Retirement

BOBBY BRAGAN:
60 Years as Mr. Baseball

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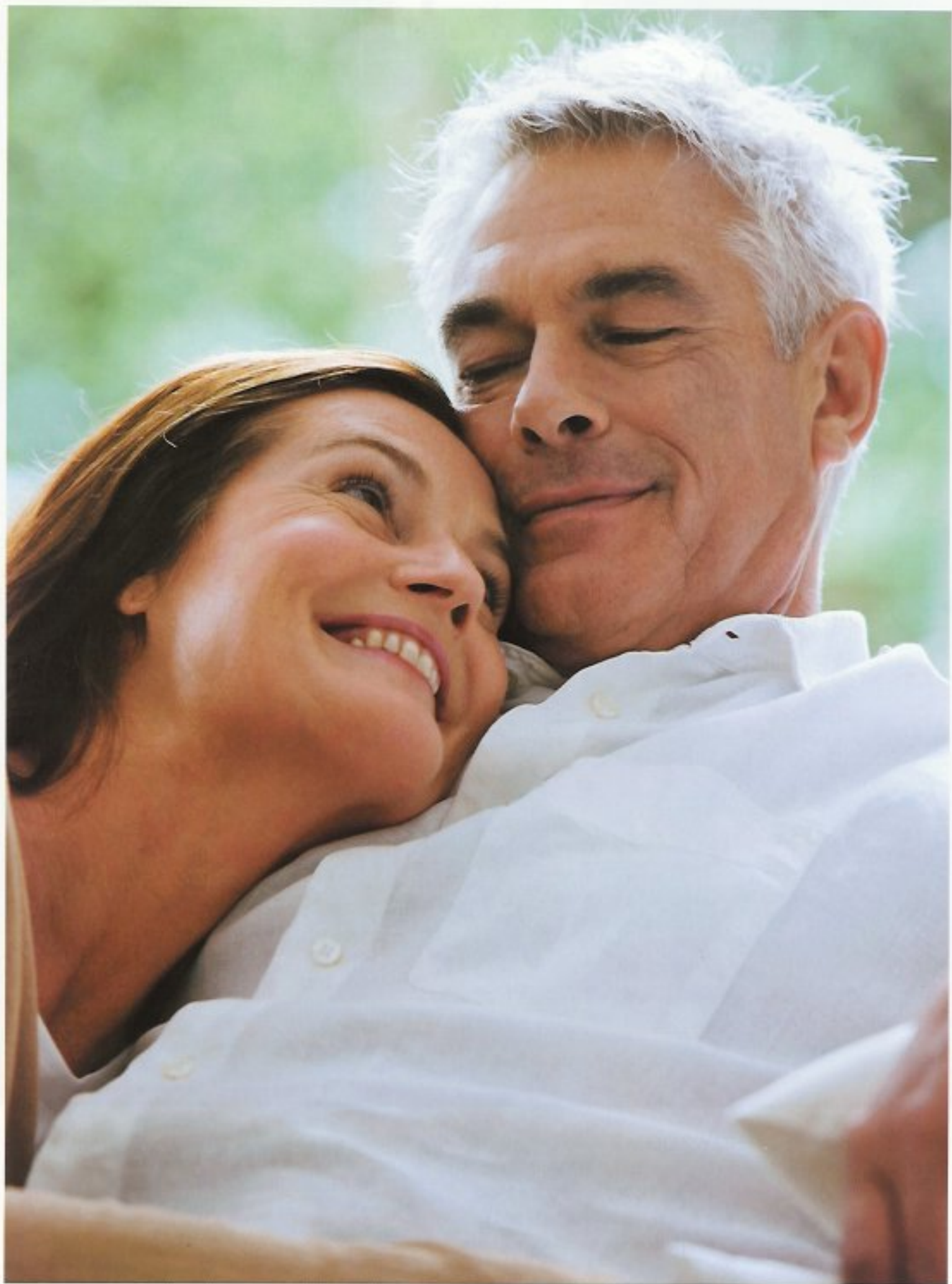
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The Way to Stay

The soon-to-rise Stayton at Museum Way will be a wellness-focused, luxe-living retirement community touting a sought-after Seventh Street address and an enviable array of pamper-yourself amenities—all ingeniously designed to help its residents dwell well. *by Alison Rich*

Although it served them well for many years, Fred and Carole Kelly are ready to relinquish their four-bedroom abode on the city's west side. "We needed to find someplace [without] the yard, the taxes and the house, and spend the better part of retirement," Fred explained. "That's what started us on the journey of looking for a retirement community."

That journey took the couple—he's a former exec and she's a retired educator—far and wide in Fort Worth. But when they spotted the Stayton, their search came to a grinding halt.

"This isn't your assigned-seating, got-to-wear-your-badge, everybody-eats-at-a-certain-time place," said Fred, who worked for 40 years at Lockheed Martin in engineering and management positions. "This is life as you live it. There's flexibility of style and care, and it's the best we found in the area."

The Kellys wanted an upscale yet close-knit enclave that also offered life-care options—assisted living and total healthcare, if necessary—and a near-the-action location, including

downtown cultural venues and their church. They will have all that—and more—when they relocate to the Stayton when it opens in 2010.

"We were looking for a place where we could have community and health benefits and live the lifestyle we live now," Fred said. "We looked at everything in Fort Worth, and we liked the Stayton's style. The location is great because it will be [near] plenty of shops and grocery stores—within easy walking distance or a short drive ... It appealed to us from every aspect." The superior sustainability quotient was an added bonus. "It's great," Fred said. "We all owe it to ourselves to do the best we can as stewards of the earth."

Another perk: "The Stayton will let us bring our two cairn terriers," said Fred of the couple's beloved canines, who no doubt will frolic to their hearts' content in the planned dog yard. "And that was important."

Also, as mom and dad to six children, grandparents to 12 and great-grandparents to one, the fact that there will be plenty of room for visitors was a definite draw. "The kids can come. The grandkids can come. It's going to be good," Fred said.

The Stayton will be an insta-community of sorts for the Kellys, who are looking forward to rekindling old friendships and nurturing current ones. "We've got lots of friends who are going to live there," he said.

But what the Kellys are most looking forward to is simplicity at its most authentic, truly encapsulating the heart of the place.

"Just being able," Fred said, "to focus on living."

A Very Worthy Fit

Cowtown was the logical locale for an upmarket life-care community, said Charles B. Brewer, president/CEO of Senior Quality Lifestyle Corp., the Dallas-based company that owns the nonprofit Stayton. "The area has blossomed," he said of the bustling-with-new-business Seventh Street corridor and nearby developments like the mixed-use Montgomery Plaza across the street. "It's a forward-looking city, and we think we'll fit in very well here." Also a fitting counterpoint to the Stayton's community focus: the city's never-met-a-stranger nature, which Brewer praises.



HIGH AND MIGHTY / David Dillard, president of Baltimore-based CSD Architects, said he referenced the Museum District when designing the 11-story structure slated to open in 2010, particularly pointing out the building's three slender towers standing side by side.

"We felt very welcome to Fort Worth," he said of Mayor Moncrief and other city leaders' warm reception to the project from the get-go. "They've done everything possible to make us feel welcome. I couldn't have felt any better."

Brewer's ultimate objective, he said, is to cultivate a community where its residents—and the city at large—can be proud. "The city of Fort Worth—and particularly downtown and that area—is the kind of place we want to be and the kind of residents we want to have," he said. "Our goal is set a new standard and be the very best."

Building More Stories

If great architecture is mindful of its surrounding environs—incorporating those elements into its milieu so that it mirrors the surrounding composition instead of colliding with it—then the Stayton is a true archetype of that approach. "The language is driven by the voices around it," said David Dillard, president of Baltimore-based CSD Architects, which has an office in

Dallas, "and is extremely respectful of its region."

He referenced the Museum District heavily when designing the 11-story, three-towered, neutral-toned structure, on which construction is slated to commence in late '08. "You've got a lot of variety in the façade," Dillard said. "It moves in and out in a rhythmic way in all four directions." One of the most deliberate ways the Stayton reflects its setting is via the "three striking geometric figures—the three slender towers—standing side by side," he said. "The Kimbell is made of the exact three components. And the Modern also has three geometric shapes side by side."

The mid-rise Stayton is the client's first foray into vertical CCRC (continuing care retirement communities), Dillard noted, which makes its high-and-mighty listing of luxuriant extras all the more apropos.

"It's hospitality-driven architecture," Dillard said, noting the destination spa and bistros as places that most surely will be hopping with activity. "When you walk in

the lobby, you'll see a fabulous assortment of sitting spaces, lounge spaces, a concierge desk, a couple of really cool booths with curtains that draw across for privacy—it's an elegant five-star-hotel-like space for amenities."

Although it might seem paradoxical, the site's petite profile was a huge design motivation. "The fact that it's so tight—it's only a 3-acre site—made us work even harder than usual to make the most of every square inch," Dillard said, noting the use of numerous fountains and courtyards outside to produce the illusion of copious space. "We're letting the eye wander far beyond the limits of the floor plan itself."

Not to mention the fact that the sky-reaching configuration also ups the earth-aware ante.

"The idea of going vertical in my lexicon is becoming one of the most important ways to be green," Dillard said. "Essentially, it's the economics of using less of Mother Earth. It's the idea of taking a 3-acre site and doing the same thing as a 30-acre site. You leave more green space and more

PLUSH RETIREMENT / Interior designer Lea von Kaenel said the Stayton is an urban high-rise that will feel comfortable and 'Fort Worth lifestyle' oriented. The lobby furnishings, for instance, will be soft traditional.

greenery—literally—on the ground when you go up. A skyscraper is more friendly than a ground scraper.”

Not only did Dillard fashion the Stayton to be fetching to occupants (the average age of residents is 78, he noted), but he also had to appeal to their mid-50s adult children—commonly the people who make the ultimate decision about their parents’ retirement residence. Beyond that, he also ensured he made it very “Fort Worth.”

“There are things I did differently here and not in the ‘D-word,’” he said, lightheartedly referencing the company’s sister property in Dallas. “Its architecture is rooted about a mile west in the Museum District. And that goes not only for the building materials but for the characteristics of the architecture that recognize the local climate. This building is laced with shading devices—on the ground and on terraces. Balconies on different levels are filled with regional grassland plant materials that are low maintenance and native.”

As for the style, he deliberately blended the “refined, traditional taste” of Fort Worthians on the inside with a more transitional look on the exterior. “The outside is connected to the architecture of the museums, the inside is connected to the residents’ styles and the houses they’re coming from,” he explained. “There’s a deliberate juxtaposition of the museum architecture on the exterior and a very warm residential

GREEN AT A GLANCE

- Because it’s sited on a 3-acre parcel site that previously was a contaminated manufacturing site (it’s all cleaned up now!), the earth-easy Stayton at Museum Way will quite literally add green to Fort Worth by adding usable land.
- The structure itself will be oriented to optimize the availability of natural sunlight, with window design and shading to maximize passive solar illumination.
- Resource-sipping setups will abound vis-à-vis such innovative systems as a high-efficiency heating and air-conditioning system, low-flow water fixtures and toilets, Energy Star appliances, compact fluorescent bulbs, motion sensors to control lighting and automatically adjusting window shades.
- Floors will be made from bamboo (a rapidly renewable resource that doesn’t contribute to deforestation), and carpets will be composed of wool (a chemical-free material).
- Fewer toxins will be released into the air, thanks to the low-VOC paints used throughout the structure.
- Furnishings, artwork, etc., will be bought locally to nix the need for shipping (and thus, toxins emitted from vehicles) from far-off locales.
- The landscape will feature drought-resistant plants and native grass to minimize watering.
- The clean indoor air will benefit residents who have asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema.
- The copious exposure to daylight—a natural mood elevator—could even help those residents who deal with depression.

flavor on the interior.”

And that juxtaposition is what truly elevates the Stayton to the apex of the senior-living arena, he said. “It’s the top-of-the-line way to live as a senior in Fort Worth, Texas, in a perfect location, close to everything, with views and comfortable living, services, variety, flexibility. It’s a



multifaceted set of experiences inside and out, where every floor and every part of each floor feels like an experience in and of itself.”

Designing a Destination

Creating a lifestyle that empowers clients to make choices is the crux of the Stayton’s design premise, said interior design consultant Lea von Kaenel of Austin-based StudioSLX5.

“Although there is an overarching concept, all the areas have their own personality,” she explained, citing the layers of differently functioning spaces in this large continuing-care community. “There is a seamless aesthetic across all levels of care.” Von Kaenel will delineate zones, for instance, by employing different paint colors and finishes, furnishings and artwork.

Because the Stayton is an urban high-rise, it will have a different feel than, say, a community located in a suburban setting. “The building is not entirely traditional—it feels comfortable and ‘Fort Worth lifestyle’ oriented,” von Kaenel said. Lobby furnishings, for instance, will be comfy in a “soft traditional” way, with global influences evident, as well. “It might not be your ‘grandmother’s wingchair,’” she noted, “but it definitely sits like a wingchair.”

In short, the Stayton will be a blend of traditional and soft mod-





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ern. "Our job is to walk that line and balance them," von Kaenel explained. "It has to appeal to the residents now and look good 10 years from now." It also has to catch the eye of their adult children, she noted.

The main challenge is providing a hospitality-based environment with the "science supporting that environment," said von Kaenel of the intricacies involved in designing for the senior market. For instance, furniture has to be ergonomic, with arms that are easy to use and firm cushions that are snug but also easy to move out of. Plus, there has to be plenty of crisp lighting and a marked contrast between walls and floors.

The schema also includes elements that aren't just easy on the eyes—they're easy on the earth, to boot. "Anything that we can do that's a sustainable material, we have," she said, noting that the spa is 100 percent green.

"It's on their radar screen," she said of residents' desire to live eco-consciously. "They want healthier living environments and are also very concerned about the planet, so there's a

strong commitment to making it as sustainable an environment as we can." The building also blurs the distinction between the indoors and out, with expansive exterior views.

It's also a new model for retirement, von Kaenel said. "It's going to be one of the best in the country of its kind," she said. "These residents are very involved—active politically, active culturally—and they want to continue that. The Stayton will allow them to take advantage of all the cultural opportunities downtown. And that's the kind of lifestyle we want to provide." ■

BY THE NUMBERS:

The Stayton's Life-Care Continuum

- 188 independent living units
- 48 skilled nursing
- 42 assisted living
- 18 memory support

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