

real estate

SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES FROM \$314,900:

Contemporary or more traditional? Wonderland gives you a choice in Stapleton's newest neighborhood, opening today



On the Home Front

Mark Samuelson

Exactly at a moment when Denver is seeing the highest rents and lowest vacancy rates in memory, Stapleton has unwrapped its creative Conservatory Green neighborhood – single-family homes that are walkable to stores and restaurants, but have prices so low that they're reaching buyers who are spending this kind of money to live in older areas with nowhere near Stapleton's attractions. The newest Stapleton builder-model opening happens this

weekend, as Wonderland Homes unveils two new series; one with models totally ready and a second far enough along to preview.

Both are priced from the low \$300s. The difference is not the price, but the styling: Heritage at Conservatory Green, opening today, features traditional architecture in familiar farmhouse and Craftsman styles; while a block away you can peek inside Expressions, almost ready for their own opening, with a sleek look that reaches for the edgy loft look.

"When we started, we had the idea of mixing the styles together, but we found people

have clear preferences on which they like," said Wonderland Vice President Michael R. Hart, who was doing a final check on the Heritage models before this weekend's opening.

As proof, Wonderland already sold 18 homes even before today's formal opening of the Heritage traditionals. Those buyers are almost evenly split between the two collections, half taking the ones that hark to history, the others going for the edgy contemporaries.

Commercial real estate broker Terrance Pace, who works downtown with Cushman & Wakefield, was one of many buyers sneaking a look inside – and was leaning toward the contemporary ones: "Rents are at an all-time high, and you can get a mortgage at par or less than a rental," Pace said, eyeing an Expressions model.

"It's a no-brainer," he added.

Whichever way your own preferences run, modern or established, Wonderland's team had seen enough sales leading into this weekend that if you like the look of these, they recommend not lingering too long. "People would do well to get out here now and get on a contract, or get your name on a waiting list, get your name on something," Hart said.

Apart from its walk-to proximity to dining, taverns and stores at The Shops at Northfield Stapleton (directly across Northfield Boulevard from the Conservatory Green neighborhood), you'll also see a new-urban community plan that puts the garages on the alley in the rear, keeping the people-side of each home away from the cars, clustered around grassy courtyards. "Neighborhoods form at the fronts of homes rather than in the backs," noted Hart. "The whole idea is to attract people to the front."

"We're pretty good at this," Hart added, pointing to Wonderland's experience as a pioneer with new-urban styled developments around the metro area.

There's something else you can see in both of these new collections in which Wonderland excels: finished basement space. "Eight years



Wonderland Vice President Michael Hart and Amy Irvin show one of the traditionally styled Heritage models opening this weekend at Stapleton's Conservatory Green neighborhood.

ago we never finished a basement, but now it's becoming more and more popular," Hart noted. "You're starting with some of the lowest prices in the Conservatory Green neighborhood, and for another \$22,000 to \$29,000 you can pick up another 900 or a thousand feet of finished space."

"This is not your father's basement," Hart added. Wonderland starts with high basement ceilings, adding a brighter, airier quality. Currently, around half of Wonderland's current buyers are opting to add a finished lower level as part of their options.

Of course, they're also getting Stapleton's parks, trails, pools and summer events; including the farmer's market and venerable dining attractions at Stapleton's E. 29th Avenue Town

Center. In addition to Wonderland's opening, you can visit Stapleton's new visitor center at 49th and Uinta. From Quebec at Martin Luther King, head east on MLK a half mile to Central Park Boulevard, then head north a mile-and-a-half on Central Park to Northfield, then left a half mile to Uinta.

Mark Samuelson writes on real estate and business; you can email him at mark@samuelsonassoc.com. You can see all of Mark Samuelson's columns at DenverPost.com/RealEstate.

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if you go ...

WHERE: Grand opening, Wonderland Homes at Conservatory Green, Stapleton's newest neighborhood walking distance to The Shops at Northfield Stapleton; model premiere Heritage Series; preview Expressions Series; other builders opening soon. 8144 E. 49th Dr., Denver; from Quebec in Stapleton take MLK east 0.7 mi. to Central Park Blvd., north 1½ mi. to Northfield Blvd., left ½ mi. to Uinta
PRICE: From \$314,900
WHEN: Today, Sat, 10 a.m. until 6 p.m., Sun. noon-5 pm.
PHONE: 303-393-9099
WEB: StapletonDenver.com