

The Robb Report COLLECTION™

REAL ESTATE AND HOME DESIGN



Kitchens & Baths

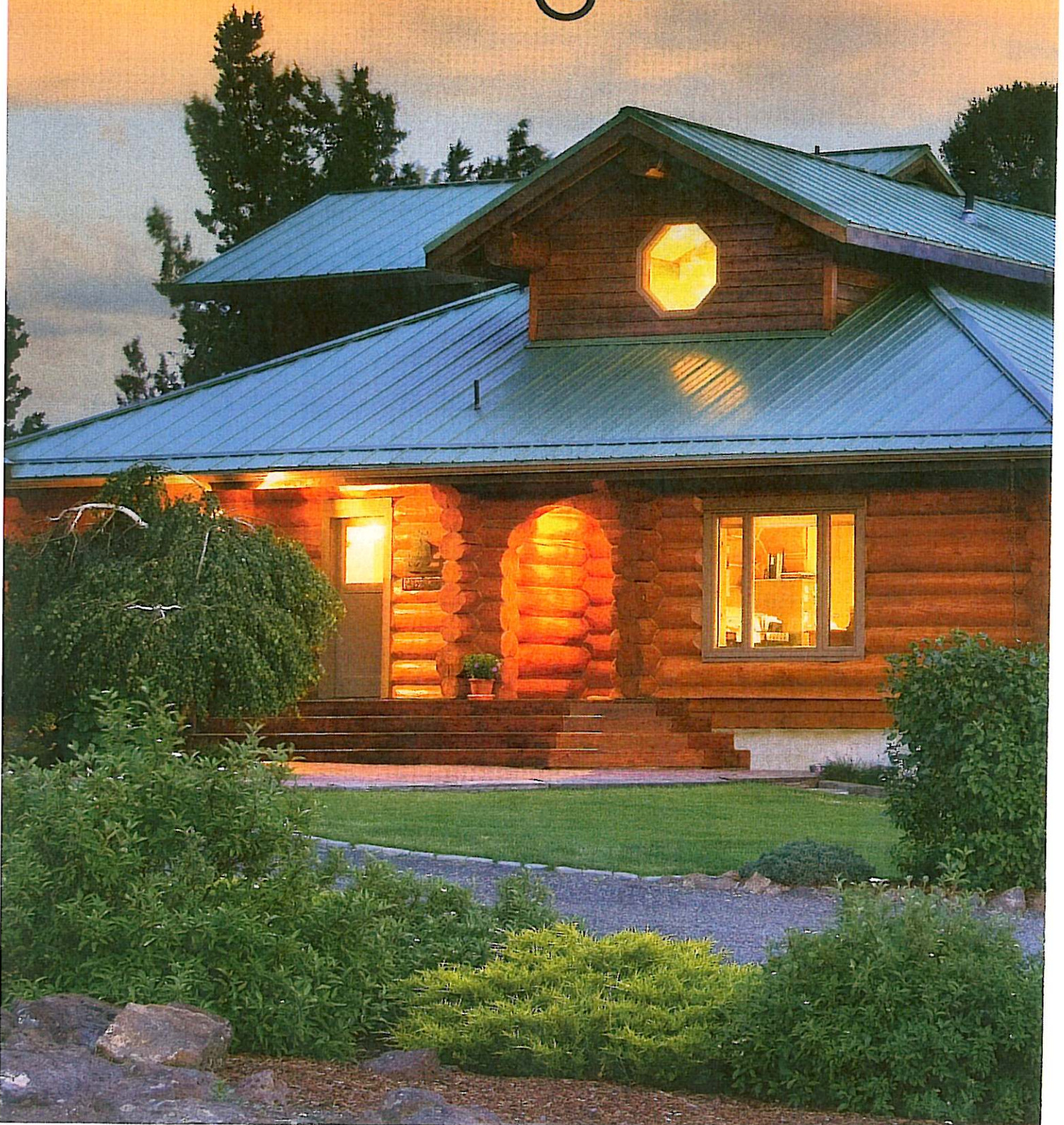
Brilliant bathrooms, new accessories and design trends

SEPTEMBER 2006

robbreport.com
A CURTCO MEDIA PUBLICATION

SUPPLEMENT TO ROBB REPORT
NOT INTENDED FOR INDIVIDUAL SALE

Bend, Oregon



ADMIT IT. WE ALL ENVY THOSE EARLY adopters, folks who either had the grade-A brains or dumb luck to stumble onto a slice of heaven, whether signing on at a wacky new company called Google or buying a cabin in a run-down mining town called Aspen.

But no need to despair. As crowded and connected as the world has become, there still are opportunities to get ahead of the curve if you know where to look. So here is a tip. Bend, Oregon.

This city of 70,000 in under-the-radar central Oregon is quickly becoming a magnet for both retirees and telecommuters, who, in the past 18 months, have helped local real estate values increase by 40 percent. Developers have begun pouring into the area, offering new homes on large lots for seven-figure prices that might even make a cashed-out Californian wince.

Why the gold rush mentality? While Bend does not have precious metal in its hills, it does have hills, even soaring mountains (like the Cascade Range, whose star is the U.S. Ski Team training site, Mt. Bachelor) that provide a postcard-worthy backdrop. And the Deschutes River, a proud tributary of the mighty Columbia River, roars through downtown Bend with rafters in tow. Toss in a high-desert climate—Bend sits at 3,625 feet, which means dry heat during the day and crisp climes at night—and you have a certain kind of paradise.

When New Yorker Bill Rosen moved to Bend a decade ago, he was immediately seduced by the town's laid-back atmosphere and its staggering natural surroundings.

"In the past, most people you'd meet were either waiting tables or working in the mills," says Rosen, who is kept busy these days as a provider of office supplies to the town's



FACTS & STATS

THE OTHER OREGON: Bend is the hub of central Oregon, a lesser-known inland empire that does not trip off the tongue as easily as cosmopolitan Portland, Shakespearean Ashland or coastal Cannon Beach. But the rains that routinely visit those destinations leave Bend largely unscathed; thanks to a handy mountain range holding back those clouds, the city enjoys more than 300 days of high-desert sunshine a year. And getting there is becoming less of a chore. Where long road trips from points north, west and south used to be the order of the day, now the area's Redmond Municipal Airport—just 16 miles north of Bend—hosts direct flights from major Western hubs such as Denver and San Francisco. For more details, contact Bend's Visitor & Convention

Bureau, 800.949.6086, www.visitbend.com, or try www.ci.bend.or.us for information on everything from city planning to neighborhood characteristics.

NATURE RULES: For residents and visitors alike, Bend's natural beauty is a constant source of entertainment. Golfers can sample the 27 courses laid out across the central valley, which is exemplified by Pronghorn, a private residential community that boasts Jack Nicklaus and Tom Fazio courses side by side. The same bounty awaits hikers, anglers and river rafters, all of whom have outlets for their passions in the surrounding Cascade Range and meandering Deschutes River. Consider a trek up Mt. Bachelor (800.829.2442, www.mtbachelor.com), which often has good

skiing well into summer, or perhaps a river raft with Ouzel Outfitters (800.788.7238, www.oregonrafting.com).

RAPID RISE: The only thing hotter than a high-noon summer sun is the real estate market in Bend. For the past five years, demand has increased for everything from vintage homes on the city's historic west side to new construction on ranch land just out of town. While the median home price hovers around \$300,000, most single-family homes actually start at around half a million. Among those offering insights are Brooks Resources Realty (541.318.8002, www.brooksresources-realty.com), Coldwell Banker Morris Real Estate (541.382.4123, www.bendproperty.com) and Melrose Realty (541.318.5171, www.melrose-realty.com). —M.D.

growing business community. "About five years ago, we got discovered—mostly by Californians, but now you'll see people from all over. It's still a very cool place, though when you head up to the mountain lakes, it's tougher to find camping spots these days."

But everything is relative. "I'd say Bend is a bit like Boulder was 15 years ago," says Scott Knox of the city's Visitor & Convention Bureau, noting that Bend's median home price is \$320,000, pricey for some major U.S. cities, but still a bargain in the eyes of many. "Right now we're just dealing with those usual issues that pop up when you're discovered, everything from transportation to housing for a growing service industry."

There is no doubt the pace of the former mill town is



Previous pages: A home on 40 acres in Bend, Ore., on the market for \$2 million. Above: A Vandeventer Ranch house, \$3.3 million. Both offered by Coldwell Banker.

picking up. Some 27 golf courses in and around the city are luring the leisure set, while a revitalized downtown area is drawing chic retailers and branches of nationally known brokerage houses. The regional airport has added direct flights to San Francisco, with Denver and Los Angeles on the way.

City officials have created a task force, dubbed Bend 2030, to help ensure that the nation's newfound fascination with the area leads to a place that down the road is "proud of (its) clean and efficient public transportation, appropriate mixed-use development and fully connected citywide trail system."

That vision certainly appeals to those shopping for first or second homes in the area, says Stan Duczeminsky of Coldwell Banker Morris Real Estate. "People are coming here to hike, fish, hunt and generally take advantage of a beautiful place, and they certainly don't want to see that ruined anymore than folks who have lived here forever," he says.

For those who truly want to buy a piece of old Bend, the city's mountainous and historic west side is the place to be—at a cost. A typical millworker's home from a bygone era

occupies 900 square feet on a 7,000-square-foot lot. "Unrestored, something like that will go for \$400,000 now, and much more if it's been renovated," says Romy Mortensen, vice president of sales and marketing at Brooks Resources Realty, whose new development, a 486-acre mixed-use project called NorthWest Crossing on the west side of Bend, features homes ranging from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

NorthWest Crossing broker David Quiros remembers moving to Bend 23 years ago. "I was told this place would become the Palm Springs of the Northwest," he says with a laugh. "Well, that just may wind up being true."

Well, maybe not. For all its desert beauty, Palm Springs remains largely a retirement community whose climate ranges from hot to oven temperature. Comparatively, Bend's mild climate, its change of seasons and, perhaps most important, its history as a multigenerational community make it a somewhat rare—and still affordable—gem. —MARCO R. DELLA CAVA