

Western Cape claims title of South Africa's luxury retirement capital

It's official – the Western Cape has beat out Gauteng, home of Sandton and 'the richest square mile in Africa', to claim the title of South Africa's luxury property capital.



Source: Supplied. Gus van der Spek, owner of upmarket retirement lifestyle estate Wytham Estate in Cape Town's Southern Suburbs.

While Johannesburg might still boast the highest number of dollar millionaires on the continent, the rise of semigration and an influx of wealthy foreign buyers has led to a surge in Western Cape home prices, and the retirement property market is no exception.

"Census data shows that an estimated 150,000 people are moving to the Western Cape each year, many of them high net worth retirees attracted by the province's temperate climate and higher levels of service delivery," shares Gus van der Spek, owner of upmarket retirement lifestyle estate Wytham Estate in Cape Town's Southern Suburbs.

"Luxury retirement property developers in the province are struggling to keep up with the increased demand from semigrants and, more recently, a rising number of older foreign nationals," he adds.

Van der Spek's perspective is substantiated by findings from the *2023 Africa Wealth Report* which revealed that Cape Town has become an increasingly popular retirement destination for migrating high net worth individuals from other parts of Africa, Europe, Russia and the UK. The report further states that Cape Town is projected to reach over 13,500 (dollar) millionaire residents by 2033.

"Although it may sound peculiar, given that affordability is less of an issue for wealthy foreign retirees, one of the primary reasons they're choosing the Western Cape as their retirement destination is how far their foreign currency can go here," van der Spek says.

"Cape Town's multi-million-rand homes may be out of reach for the vast majority of locals, but our luxury property market is considered one of the most affordable in the world – allowing someone who may be considered upper middle class in their home country to retire in the style of the 0.1% here," he adds.

Western Cape luxury retirement property hubs

Cape Town itself is the most popular retirement destination in the Western Cape, offering the greatest number of retirement developments as well as proximity to world-class hospitals, shopping centres, parks and for many retirees, their families.

"The most desirable areas of Cape Town, particularly the Atlantic Seaboard and the Southern Suburbs, which contain Bishopscourt, Upper Kenilworth and Constantia, have very little stock available to accommodate newly moved retirees," explains van der Spek. "As a result, area-conscious buyers are opting for units in existing retirement developments, but these too often have a long waiting list."



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Van der Spek acknowledges that, as the owner of Wytham Estate, where available one-bedroom units start at R3.75m, his perspective may not be representative of South Africa's general retirement population. However, experience has taught him that for many retirees, lifestyle considerations play a more important role than price when deciding where to live.

"Wealthy retirees who enjoy fine wine and golfing are increasingly opting for luxury retirement lifestyle estates in the Cape Winelands, such as Val de Vie Evergreen in Paarl or Zevenwacht Lifestyle Estate in Stellenbosch. Others who want coastal living with a small-town feel are flocking to Hermanus, which is fast becoming a retirement mecca."

What classifies a luxury retirement development?

"Unsurprisingly, high net worth retirees are incredibly discerning when choosing the home that will define their Golden Years," says van der Spek. "What sets a luxury retirement development apart from simply being a 'retirement development' is the level of service and amenities offered."

are the on-site amenities offered, as well as the design of its units.”

He shares that the top features that define a luxury retirement development are as follows:

- **High-end finishes:** More than just a bed and a bathroom, these developments offer luxuries like underfloor heating, fully equipped designer kitchens and bathrooms and modern appliances.
- **Resort-like amenities:** This may include a gym, yoga studio, spa, tennis and croquet court, swimming pool, physiotherapy and massage room, clubhouse, walking trail and lush gardens.
- **Fine-dining options:** While standard retirement homes may offer one dining room with a set menu or a tray brought up to a room, luxury communities offer multiple dining options, prepared by professional chefs and catering to individual residence preferences.
- **Concierge services:** These services go beyond basic health and hygiene care, resembling what may be seen in a five-star hotel, such as daily linen changes and cleaning and assistance with making reservations and appointments.
- **Scenic location:** The site of the development will have been carefully chosen to maximise natural beauty and stunning views, further enhancing its overall appeal.
- **Exceptional customer service:** The staff will have been hand-selected for their skills and manner, trained to deliver attentive and personalised care while anticipating a resident’s needs.

“Ultimately, what defines a luxurious retirement experience is freedom and customisation – freedom to choose what level of care and services you require, freedom of what to eat and when, and the ability to customise your lifestyle to your exact preferences – all in a luxurious setting,” van der Spek concludes.

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