

The Park Place Story

Story by **Hoyt Johnson** Photos by **Michael Thompson**

I imagine a team composed of veteran developers with exceptional integrity, well-known architects with highly regarded creative skills, a respected decorator who heads an acclaimed design firm, and an experienced builder of various admired properties. Indeed, suppose that this group of experts was selected from among respected principals of this entire area's home-building industry.

Now, imagine an unusually picturesque site — in Sedona, of course — with spectacular views of massive, red-rock monoliths that contrast beautifully with distant mountains just beyond Arizona's vast Mogollon Rim, which separates lush alpine areas from austere deserts. Also, think of this site in a land affectionately known as Red Rock Country, and the quiet peacefulness of the surrounding Coconino National Forest.

But don't just imagine these things — because there is such a team, and there is such a place. Moreover, the select team is creating private residences at this unique site, which is both a practical and beautiful location. Yes, 88 new homes at what appropriately has been named Park Place currently are being marketed to buyers who prize residences marked by exceptional quality and superb design, especially when complemented by spectacular natural beauty.

These discriminating buyers are aware that being surrounded by breathtaking canyons and ancient forests — as at Park Place — is a precious privilege of this area.

“It is the relatedness of all things that creates value . . . invest wisely in beauty; it will serve you all the days of your life.”

— Frank Lloyd Wright



BY DESIGN

Park Place offers three interior models to choose from. Scottsdale-based design firm Studio V then works with buyers to accent their space with their own style and personal touches.

They know that this land of mesmerizing beauty; idyllic, four-seasons climate; myriad cultural opportunities; and most importantly, perhaps, casual living, has been attracting new residents in growing numbers. And these people are aware that barriers imposed by nature seriously limit the opportunity to develop new communities like Park Place.

Thus, they are heedful of advice offered by observers like travel author and editor Hanley Norins, who said: "I think what we're here to do, in the best of times, is to take advantage of all the pleasures and inspirations life can provide, just to enjoy, perhaps."

Park Place is not a Johnny-come-lately venture that quickly burst into the real estate market because a piece of land suddenly became available.

It is both reassuring and interesting to know that the Miller family traded ranch land for Forest Service land in and adjacent to Sedona as early as 1967. And as it happened, additional trades three years later led to the Millers' development of prestigious Foothills South in 1972. Also, these land trades provided a site for what then was "the future development" of Foothills North, as well as the precious land that today is becoming known as Park Place. Now the time is right, but the concept has painstakingly — properly so — evolved over a period of years without haste or waste.

The family behind the development of the handsome private residences definitely is not a Johnny-come-lately entity, either. Historically, local resident Duane Miller and his wife, Beverly Lockett Miller, have played important civic roles for more than a half-century, all the time acquiring and developing various properties in this community and adjacent areas.

In 1948, Duane and his brother, Cecil Jr., formed a partnership, Miller Bros., which operated ranches in northern Arizona, as well as farms and feedlots in the Salt River Valley. Today, the four principals of Miller Bros. Real Estate & Investments Inc. — developer of Park Place — are Duane; Cecil, who resides in Litchfield Park, Ariz.; Duane's son, Ben, who is employed by Miller Bros. LLC and serves on the boards of several community organizations; and Cecil's son, Matt, who lives in Phoenix and has been involved in state banking circles for more than a quarter-century.

In particular, Duane and Cecil's civic involvement constitutes an impressive record of distinguished community service. For example, during the past 50-plus years, Duane has been elected or appointed to a host of important offices, including

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board president of the University of Arizona Alumni Association, which awarded him both the school’s Alumni Achievement Award and Alumni Centennial Award. Most significantly, perhaps, Duane served on the Arizona State Parks Board for 25 years — a stint recognized by the dedication of Miller Visitor Center at Red Rock State Park in 1991.

Among numerous awards bestowed upon Cecil, who also is a graduate of the University of Arizona, are an honorary doctorate of science in 1999 and a Distinguished Citizen Award in 1974. Also, he has served on more than 20 state and national boards.

Architect Don Woods gets excited when he talks about tennis, baseball and Park Place — but not necessarily in that order. These days, he talks faster when he’s discussing Park Place than anything else, and there are good reasons. Not only is Don proud to be associated with this prestigious project, he is excited to be sharing architectural responsibilities with his son, Bob, who has conducted his own practice in Sedona and the Verde Valley area for 20 years.

“This project is big enough for both of us, and we enjoy working together,” said Don. “This is a rare opportunity, a wonderful experience.”

Obviously, Don has had much more time to establish his reputation, and he hasn’t wasted it. Almost 30 years ago, he designed a handsome residence for Duane and Beverly Miller, which opened the door to creating plans for a long list of Sedona homes. And during the ‘80s, Don became involved with commercial projects when he designed Junipine Resort; residential units, tennis courts and pools at Enchantment Resort; and one of Sedona’s finest townhome communities, The Cottages at Coffeepot. More recently, he expanded into a Southwestern style represented by acclaimed new Sedona residences, even traveling to such places

as Dubai, London and Tunisia with clients in order to determine what they desired in their new homes.

Now, Don and Bob have incorporated what Ben Miller calls “Italian influences” into designs for the private residences at Park Place. And in keeping with the romance of these influences, the five different models of residences — 1,718 to 2,275 square feet — have been named Naples, Capri, Verona, Siena and Milano. Fifteen two-story buildings — each with a handsome courtyard and inviting lobby — house these homes, which are located on Positano Place and Portofino Way. Don and Bob appointed the common lobbies with stairways and elevators to service these private residences, as well as underground garages that not only enhance the considerable attractiveness of Park Place, but also reserve space for street parking without the imposition of large lots.

In a unique manner, Don and Bob designed creative, octagonal foyers for all the private residences. “Not only are these foyers entertaining and interesting, they are extremely efficient in the sense of eliminating the need for

hallways because the foyers act as traffic interchanges. Naturally, this made more living space available for other amenities,” Don explained.

A cursory glance at floor plans for the private residences at Park Place reveals that Don and Bob have used a version of Don’s “trademark” great room with sliding glass doors, as well as wooden beams over spacious porches and terraces; effectively separated bedrooms, including the third den/bedroom in the Milano model; utilized either islands or peninsulas in kitchens; provided large, walk-in closets; and designated double sinks in master baths, plus shower stalls in all bathrooms.

Additional features of the Park Place residences include the finest Viking appliances; hardwood kitchen cabinetry; granite countertops; wood, tile or carpet flooring; Kohler plumbing fixtures; gas fireplaces with wood mantels; state-of-the-art security systems; and pre-wiring for surround sound and ceiling fans. Also, in order to create the best architectural design possible, Don and Bob not only employed expert engineering, they utilized consultants to ensure effective soundproofing between upper and lower residences, as well as all party walls.



Additionally, Park Place residents will enjoy a community center with locker rooms, steam rooms and spas for men and women; a completely equipped fitness room; an owner's clubroom with accompanying kitchen; and a covered terrace.

When the Park Place team was being put together, selecting members was not a difficult task. In fact, it was relatively simple because as previously mentioned, many of the creative members that interior design director Katherine Pullen refers to as "the project family" actually are biologically related.

In keeping with this close relationship, it is not just coincidental that Katherine's maiden name was, yes, Miller. She is Duane and Beverly's daughter and she heads Studio V, a highly regarded, exceptional interior design firm headquartered in Scottsdale. Indeed, the V in this firm's name is not just coincidental, either — it is taken from Vernon D. Swaback, generally recognized as the best known, most successful student of famed Frank Lloyd Wright, and also the author of a recently published book, "Designing With Nature."

Katherine, a partner of Swaback at Studio V, directs a staff of 10 designers who have worked on acclaimed projects throughout the United States and in Mexico — and now at Park Place in Sedona, where her staff also has been retained at Hyatt Piñon Pointe.

"Working at home in Sedona, especially with this team, is great fun," said Katherine. "Studio V has not adopted a typical corporate philosophy. From the beginning, all egos went 'out the door.' Though we are not necessarily involved with the same projects, we work together all the time; and we don't want to get too big. Verne and I are professional soul mates, and we constantly confer in order to control these things."

At Park Place, Katherine has created a choice of interior materials and colors designed to provide Park Place buyers with great flexibility — "some Wright-style, some modern, whatever pleases the new owners." These buyers meet with Katherine and/or her staff to personalize the completion of their private residences with standard or upgraded flooring, fixtures, appliances and other related choices. Subsequently, owners can retain their own interior decorators, though in some instances they may choose to use Studio V. And to help expedite this process, Katherine and members of the Studio V staff, who describe Park Place as "kind of a rambling, European village," are decorating three models identified as Modern Rustic Sedona, Spanish Colonial and European Tradition.

"Studio V also will establish the interior décor for the Park Place community center, which pleases me greatly because I love working with my family, as well as with Don and Bob," declared Katherine. "We create fantastic synergism!"

Having garnered Don and Bob Woods to create a plan for Park Place, and Katherine Pullen to visualize and execute design elements, the respected developers — Duane, Cecil, Ben and Matt Miller — proceeded to "draft" a proven builder, Rich Schaller, who heads a well-known Nevada-based firm associated with major projects in Lake Tahoe, Carson City and Reno.

Among the achievements that speak of Schaller Construction Co.'s heralded reputation is its relatively recent selection as the builder of prestigious villas at Seven Canyons Sedona, one of America's most recognized private golfing venues. "Now, I truly am excited about also being part of the Park Place team," declared Schaller.

A rapidly growing list of other people are excited about Park Place, too — among them the Miller, Woods and Pullen principals, of course. But perhaps the dreamers who have imagined having a Park Place address are experiencing the most excitement. And why not? In "Designing With Nature," Vern Swaback quoted George W. Moore, who said, "The dreams which accompany all human actions should be nurtured by the places in which people live."

Welcome to a very special place — Park Place! 🍷



WIDE OPEN SPACES

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