

Industry **BABY BOOMERS**

The Lifestyle Enthusiast Retooling vs. Retiring

When consulting with builders and developers the most popular question they ask is, “what is the baby boomer going to be interested in next.” I will admit with every passing day the answer to that question gets more difficult.

Past generations were much easier to figure out. Life was spelled out by tradition. You married, raised children, worked for a large company hoping for an adequate pension. You retired and moved to the sunbelt or to the lake. The housing industry supplied them with what they needed and it worked.

Today the baby boomer is aging in a new way. As we approach retirement age we are choosing to “retool” versus “retire.” Finding something new to do that we love and rediscovering long denied gifts and passions is what interests the baby boomer. We are finding a new adventure at a time when previous generations wound down. Because our lifespan is lengthening we have opportunities to contribute to the world for longer than any other generation. We are pioneers on a new frontier of aging with no role models from the past. Our future is created by our attitudes and actions today. If we cling to wanting life to be the way it was in our bodies, minds and activities, we will miss the value in the present and risk becoming the proverbial cranky old person.

This new frontier will include the

opportunity to share the vast amount of wisdom we have gained and continue to gain within a lifestyle that can be intensely active. I call the person who chooses this path a Lifestyle Enthusiast. This person takes a conscious commitment to a vital, life-long learning approach to their second half of life. An e-mail recently circulated went like this, “Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well-preserved body. But rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in hand (and maybe a glass of fine wine), body worn-out and screaming woo-hoo, what a ride!” The lifestyle enthusiast doesn’t hold back and is not fixated on staying young. They are enjoying the whole ride looking forward, letting go, loving life and gaining wisdom on the way. What a fabulous image riding into the gates of heaven filled with an enthusiasm for life!

Where does that leave the Lifestyle Enthusiast and their needs for housing? The key is to remember the intention of the baby boomer is to do things in a new way. They will be trying new foods, taking a class in French, taking

a rock climbing lesson and most of all they will have the desire to share what they have learned with others (especially the younger generation). This is a time of unbelievable opportunity in the housing industry from all areas: land planning, architecture, marketing, sales and of course building. The days of having a piece of land to throw houses on are gone. The future is about building communities that connect us to one another, allow us to contribute and ultimately live agelessly. The market has slowed so take this time to come together with your business associates and plan for the future while enjoying the ride.

BY SUE MARSHALL

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