



One of the lounge areas at the Watermark Westwood. JAMES BAIGRIE

MAGAZINE

## 5 Luxury Senior Residences Designed to Stun

Across the nation, 'old-age'-styled living is getting a welcome new spin

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What fusty and depressing nursing homes? Senior living today is going the way of high design and hipness: A new cadre of upscale and stylish communities are more akin to sleek boutique hotels or luxury condominiums than the afterthought environments they were in the past. With all-inclusive monthly rates that start at \$3,000 and soar to well over \$13,000, they have prices to match.

Take the **Elan Collection** by Watermark Retirement Communities, a brand that's breaking all the stereotypes of what it means to move into a home for seniors. Elan has five locations including in Tucson, Napa Valley, and Brooklyn Heights. Its latest, at Westwood Village in Los Angeles, opened last month.

The property is situated in a 14-story U-shaped tower and has a long list of amenities. There are four dining venues serving local and seasonal cuisine, as well as a salon, spa, library, wine bar, and performing arts studio. Residents even have access to personal shoppers.



Inside a private unit at the East 56th Street residences. [visualhouse](#)

Watermark tapped hospitality design firm Hirsch Bedner Associates, behind luxury hotels such as Pebble Beach and Four Seasons Atlanta, on the interiors. They're inspired by midcentury-modern principles and include elements such as sculptural brass, light woods and 1950s artwork. The architect for the project, CallisonRTKL, meanwhile, played up an indoor-outdoor living concept with a bright and open lobby and a large courtyard with comfortable seating and a firepit.

Elan Collection is for the next generation of seniors, according to David Freshwater, the chairman of Watermark Retirement Communities. "This is a group with very different expectations of how they will live their active retirement years," he says. "Our properties aim to deliver resort-style amenities that are uncommon in retirement communities."

**Sunrise at East 56th** in New York City is another name making waves on the senior living scene. The 151-unit development has one- and two-bedroom apartments with views of the city and spacious terraces. Residents here can enjoy a robust lineup of activities like happy hours, Central Park tours, and history lectures.



The lofty dining area at the Inspir Carnegie Hill Evan Joseph Images

Champalimaud Design, attached to prestigious hotel renovations such as Raffles Singapore, was tasked with bringing the spaces to life. In its first senior living project, the firm created a modern aesthetic with millwork, moldings, subtle gold and marble accents, and bespoke furniture pieces with ergonomic details that help residents with balance and going from sitting to standing up.

More than 30 blocks north, **Inspir Carnegie Hill**, in the eponymous Manhattan neighborhood, is a luxury senior living community that opened in March. Situated in a 23-story tower, the property has two fine dining restaurants, a gleaming salon, an open-air park on the 17th floor, a saltwater pool, and a fitness center filled with top-of-the-line equipment. A Mercedes-Maybach house car is on hand to drive residents around.



A room dedicated to memory care at the Varial, set to open next May.

Frank Fusaro, a partner at Handel Architects, led the design. The firm is renowned for its high-end residential and hotel projects such as the Four Seasons hotels in San Francisco and Miami, and Fusaro says that he wanted to bring a similar feel to the first retirement community in its portfolio.

The lobby, for example, has a Roman travertine marble floor, while the bar has an accent wall in yellow onyx and warm terracotta leather stools. Gardens throughout the building are planted with fragrant flowers such as lilac and lavender, and an interior courtyard on the second floor is filled with bamboo.

Two more names are generating buzz in the retirement homes space.

**The Ridge**, with two locations in Utah and one in Denver, features contemporary residences with 14-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows and common spaces with local modern art and soft leather seating.



The fitness center and juice bar at the Variel.

The lifestyle here certainly sounds appealing: Personal trainers are on hand to help residents in the souped-up gym, and happy hours with top-shelf wine and spirits are a mainstay. The restaurant-style dining venues serve dishes ranging from delicious comfort food—think Korean fried chicken—to sophisticated: grilled watermelon with feta cheese and toasted pine nuts, for instance.

Then there's **the Variel**, in Woodland Hills, California, scheduled to debut next May. Patrick McGonigle, president of South Bay Partners, the property's developer, says that the aim is to have a vibrant environment in a state with a dearth of high-quality senior living facilities.

The Variel will feature an indoor swimming pool, a yoga studio, a movie theater with oversized leather chairs, a gym and juice bar with marble floors, a golf simulator, a test kitchen for live cooking demonstrations, and multiple bars.

"We don't want people to move in here and retire," says McGonigle. "We want them to come and live."