

Sunday Mercury-News

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Century Ranch Development Founded on Forgotten Land

Land for recreation, retirement, investment? Nothing new these days. Anyone who drives any distance on a weekend can hardly help but be aware of the new developments springing up. The newest of these, however, is far from typical, located in an area that few people know, called Indian Valley. The development is Century Ranch, so named because of the area's century-old history and once-famous vacation resorts and health spas that boomed a century ago.

Since the era of the spas, the valley has been virtually forgotten by settlers, railroads and highways for over 100 years. It's almost ironic that this rolling, relaxing, oak tree country could have been overlooked or forgotten, considering it's closer to the Bay Area than most of the popular vacation spots and so richly endowed by nature.

Century Ranch is 180 miles northeast of San Jose, about 3½ hours by car. The entire valley, because of its elevation, is free of smog and haze. The "ranch" resembles an immense foothill meadow and frames one of California's

largest man-made lakes. The atmosphere is quiet, the lake is uncluttered, so deer still come to drink along 43 miles of shoreline.

On the west, Century Ranch is bounded by some five million acres of national forest. Snow Mountain (capped with snow

most of the year) and Mt. St. John, both on the west of the valley, provided an Alpine vista. In the spring, the hillsides burst with wildflowers.

Indian Valley may have been overlooked in the past century, but this is forgotten now. In 1965, the valley was rediscovered by a new settler and visionary, Dr. Rolf W. Peter of Palo Alto, founder of Century Ranch. And now, a new chapter in the valley's history is about to be written.

The Ranch was first opened in May of this year and, in September, the eve of the Indian Summer season, followed the groundbreaking for the International Century Clubhouse complex. Visitors discovered that they could drive a paved road all the way to the Ranch, and that Century Ranch offered a great deal of country right in the bay's backyard.

The drive to Century Ranch is pleasant, roads are good and the motorist will see a great deal of beautiful country he'd otherwise miss. From Santa Clara County or the East Bay, take the Nimitz Freeway up through Oakland and head for Vacaville on Interstate 80. At the Nut Tree, take the Winters-Redding cut-off (Interstate 5) north to Williams and then Maxwell. Turn west at Maxwell and follow the signs to Century Ranch.

A unique network of "green belts," permanently set aside by Dr. Peter, connects Century Ranch homesites with the park land around the lake. The green belt, for walking or horseback riding, winds

throughout the development and connects with trails, roads and jeep trails that take you further into the wilderness. Those with horses are able to stable them at the Century Ranch Saddle Club, whose headquarters is a century-old barn.

The International Century Clubhouse now under construction is 5,000 square feet of restaurant, cocktail lounge and game room with a 360-degree view of the surrounding countryside. The clubhouse complex,

which will overlook the golf course and pro shop, will include an arcade and covered walkways connecting with the swimming pool and future buildings. All facilities, golf course, tennis courts, condominium apartments, etc., are a definite part of the program and are already bonded to assure property owners of their completion.

Towns such as Williams, Colusa and Maxwell are 10 to 15 miles from the ranch and provide the normal shopping, service and medical facilities.



CENTURY RANCH—A portion of East Park Lake, part of the permanent vast outdoor recreational area at Century Ranch. To the west lies the Mendocino National Forest and Snow Mountain rising over 7,000 feet.