

VACATION HOME SPOTLIGHT



Anderson Creek has plenty of space for Audrey to ride Blaze. The community's environmental commitment was a huge selling point for Catherine and Elton Ashford.

CHRISTOPHER QUENDO / Special

ANDERSON CREEK RETREAT

"Natural beauty and pioneer history are the touchstones of Anderson Creek Retreat," says Doug David, general partner of the family partnership responsible for the community. "We have over 1,000 acres of mountaintops, ridges and creek valleys with preserved pioneer homesteads, creek corridors and botanically sensitive areas. These permanently protected places are connected by a network of trails so they can be enjoyed by families and friends. Our covenants ensure that the land will be managed for the long-term benefit of both the environment and the property owners." For more information, log onto www.andersoncreekretreat.com.

RECENT SALES:

3.01 acres, \$155,000, wooded site next to Spring Preserve

3.13 acres, \$160,000, wooded site, meadow, views to Rich Mountain Wilderness

8.86 acres, \$350,000, pasture, hardwoods, sunset views

THINGS TO DO:

"There's Amicalola Falls, the Cohutta Wilderness, Rich Mountain Wilderness ..." Elton Ashford lists quickly, "along with the arts and crafts in Ellijay and Blue Ridge, vineyards and apple festivals and terrific trout fishing, hunting on Forest Service land ... it's just a great launching point for the outdoors."

Within Anderson Creek Retreat there's an easily accessed 17-acre mountain lake and stream. "We've made so many memories around the lake, including watching our daughter catch her first fish," says Catherine. Elton adds, "Our daughter said it best — 'I think of it as family time' — and so it is. I believe we just get closer here, and you can't have anything better than that."

GETTING THERE

From downtown Atlanta: Take I-75 north to I-575, which becomes Ga. 515. In Ellijay, turn right at Ga. 52 east. At Roy Road, turn left. Follow to three-way stop and turn right onto Bucktown Road. Go 1.3 miles to Spring Camp Road, and turn right into Anderson Creek Retreat.

Do you have a vacation home? We'd like to learn about it and see some photos. Send us an email at vacation@ajchomefinder.com with the details of your home and include some family snapshots that really show it off.

"I can stay on Anderson Creek property and ride my horse Blaze for two hours without retracing my tracks."

Catherine Ashford, Anderson Creek homeowner

Wooded family retreat a perfect fit

By C.W. CAMERON / For the Journal-Constitution

Who: Audrey, Catherine and Elton Ashford

What: A southern vernacular farmhouse cottage on just under five acres in Ellijay with three bedrooms and two baths. Outdoor living space includes a front porch, open deck and 20-foot-by-20-foot covered porch with stone fireplace.

When they moved in: Working with architect Bill Tucker and builder Tim Hall, it took about two years to build the custom-designed home. The Ashfords moved in August 2006.

How long does it take to get there? It's 50 minutes from their home in north Alpharetta.

How often do they get there? Just about every weekend.

How they selected the community: Elton says, "We had the idea we wanted a mountain place and looked for about two years. One day I found a postcard from Anderson Creek in the mailbox. When I read the card, I felt I

could have written it myself, it was that close to what we were looking for. I stopped in the driveway and called the number, introduced myself and was invited to lunch that weekend with the developer and his wife. Everything they said was truly right on the money. We knew this was the right place."

What was the message? "It's about having minimal impact on the environment. It's amazing how fast landscapes can change. We see that all the time in Alpharetta," says Elton. "We really got into the Anderson Creek concept of preserving the land, having lots of hiking and walking trails and building homes that are thoughtfully placed so they fit into this wild area," adds Catherine.

And there's a place for their horse: "I can stay on Anderson Creek property and ride my horse Blaze for two hours without retracing my tracks, or I can go beyond that onto USDA Forest Service land. Through the Anderson Creek Saddle Club, property owners can

purchase an interest in the 20 acres of fenced pasture and barn. Now I don't have to put my horse into a trailer, and that is real appealing to me," says Catherine.

Getting to know the neighbors: "Our neighbors are the most interesting people. We're all very different, but there's such a fascinating dynamic here. We hosted a wild game supper last spring and it was a terrific way to get to know the neighbors. The conversation was fascinating. We all have the same common interest, a love for the land and nature," says Elton.

Will they retire there? "We didn't go into it thinking we would retire here, but once we bought the property, we knew this was where we'd want to be," says Elton. Catherine adds, "That was a large part of our decision about the type and size of house we built. We have an unfinished basement, for example, that was designed for expansion and could add 1,200 to 1,500 square feet."

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