

Upscale condos entice Tiger fans

November 19, 2006

By Mike Hasten

mhasten@gannett.com

BATON ROUGE — Tanya Dillon is looking forward to next year's LSU football season and not having to fight the pre- and post-game traffic because she will be tailgating and spending the night within sight of LSU's Tiger Stadium.

Dr. Russell Saloom is eagerly awaiting next year's completion of his accommodations and tailgating spot a mile or so down Nicholson Drive from Dillon's location so he can walk across the street to watch LSU baseball. Being a few blocks from Tiger Stadium is a plus, too.

Dillon and Saloom are among a growing number of sports fans nationwide who are shirking hotel rooms and motorhomes on crowded parking lots for luxury condominiums being built with walking distance of stadiums. The price being paid for such convenience here: from \$180,000 up to a cool \$1 million, which is the cost of a penthouse overlooking Tiger Stadium's "Death Valley."

Opening in April will be the Fieldhouse, a New Orleans French Quarter-style development just outside the pylon that marks the Nicholson Drive gates of LSU. The condo complex advertises that it is "600 yards from Tiger Stadium," provided that you take an angle and cut across parking lots.

"We're marketing more to out-of-town clients, true LSU fans what want to come in for a game and have a nice place to stay, not a hotel room," said Ginger Maulden, one of two Stirling Properties ERA agents handling sales of Fieldhouse units. "Some Baton Rouge people are buying them rather than fight the game day traffic."

A native of Delhi who also lived in Tallulah before moving to Baton Rouge, Dillon said she will use her condo as a party spot. After her father Tom's death, she is now running the family catering service, Dillon's Catering, and "this is something that Daddy would have jumped right on."

Dillon said she expects her condo to be a popular spot for friends and relatives.

"Tallulah is a big football town and a lot of friends come down for the games," she said. "We'll be so close to the stadium, it will be just like walking to class. In fact, I'll be closer than a lot of dorm rooms."

Fieldhouse, built by Capstone Development Corp. of Birmingham, will have commercial developments on the ground floor facing Nicholson Drive and 98 one- and two-bedroom residences on the upper floors and in other buildings. Eighteen different floor plans are offered.

Condos on the four-story south side with balconies that face Tiger Stadium will be more expensive than those facing the inside of the complex.

Another project, Southgate Towers, is in the rapidly developing section along Nicholson Drive, just off campus. Robert W. Day of Baton Rouge, the developer, already has leased units, and the seven-acre compound has restaurants, a bookstore and various shops already operating and a health club under construction. A luxury suites hotel and additional shops are in the plans.

Eric Etchison, director of sales at Southgate, said the three-bedroom penthouse overlooking the stadium a quarter mile away will sell for \$999,900. The other units, depending on the number of bedrooms, start at around \$200,000.

Southgate has several different floor plans starting with two bedroom units with 853, 1,047, 1,244 and 1,383 square feet. Three bedroom units have 1,654 square feet.

Saloom, a 50-year-old Lafayette native who has an ophthalmology practice in Baton Rouge, signed a purchase agreement more than two years ago on his \$210,000 Southgate condo. One of the first to sign up, he is excited because it is now showing signs of construction beginning.



Work is under way on Fieldhouse, a New Orleans French Quarter-style condominium development just outside the pylon that marks the Nicholson Drive gates of LSU in Baton Rouge. The complex advertises that it is "600 yards from Tiger Stadium," provided that you take an angle and cut across parking lots. (Mike Hasten/The Times)

RELATED LINKS

Southgate Towers: www.southgatetowers.com

Fieldhouse: www.fieldhousebr.com



Artist's concept of Fieldhouse. (Special to The Times)

Related news from the Web

Latest headlines by topic:

- [Theater](#)
- [Medicine](#)
- [Arts](#)
- [Ophthalmology](#)

Powered by Topix.net

"I'll tailgate in my apartment instead of under a tent" before and after LSU football and baseball games, he said. And as a season ticket holder in both sports and an occasional basketball game fan, he will have a really nice place to spend the night.

Saloom said that considering the location and the price of real estate in Baton Rouge, "it's really not bad," at \$175 a square foot for his 1,200-square foot condo, compared to the \$600,000 motor coaches that park on campus.

In the future, though, "hopefully, my two children, age 5 and 7, will go to school at LSU and have a place close to campus," Saloom said. "Also, if I retire and move out of state, I'll have a place to stay when I come back for LSU games."

Another plus, he said, is being able to rent it out as a hotel room or lease it for weeks or months at a time when he is not using it.

"Everything you need is in walking distance," Etchison said. "It's a lock-and-leave lifestyle. Lock your door and everything is taken care of for you. If you need something, just call the concierge."

Sandy Avery of R.W. Day and Associates, said, "People in Baton Rouge are sick and tired of driving."

Saloom said it will take him less time to walk back from Tiger Stadium to Southgate than it would take to get out of the parking lot.

About one-third of the buyers are strictly looking for a game day location but Maulden, Etchison and Avery said some buyers are purchasing units to be used by their children to attend college. Many are attracted by the excitement of permanently living on or near a college campus.

"There's a large body of research that indicates that the aging population "" baby boomers "" is looking to return to campus," Avery said. "These folks want to be near the excitement," not just athletics but cultural events, theater productions, recreational activities and leisure classes.

Universities welcome the developments, she said, because if older people become involved in university events, they're more likely to contribute financially to the campuses.

Southgate and Fieldhouse are not designed as student housing but some students will live there because their parents own them. Representatives of the developments said they will not make them available to students to rent by the semester.

Avery said a few buyers from New Orleans said that besides game days, they will use their condos for hurricane evacuation destinations. Southgate is being built with six-inch poured concrete walls for strength and soundproofing.

Fieldhouse is a more conventional wood-frame structure with ironwork balconies.

The two developments appear expensive but they're not the only \$200,000 condos in Baton Rouge. Two developments in downtown are in that range: R.W. Day has one going up on Burbank Drive and another is being built on Jefferson Highway at Bluebonnet Road.

Article Comments

This article does not have any comments associated with it

[Add Comment](#)

©The Times
November 19, 2006

Partners: Jobs: [CareerBuilder.com](#) • Cars: [Cars.com](#) • Apartments: [Apartments.com](#) • Shopping: [ShopLocal.com](#)
[The Daily Advertiser](#) | [The Town Talk](#) | [The News Star](#) | [The Daily World](#)

Copyright 2005© The Times. [Principles of Ethical Conduct for The Times](#)

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy \(Updated 2005\)](#).

[Send us your questions and comments.](#)

