



The ribbon of water looks more like a stock pond than a tropical resort.

But come back in a year, and the project now under construction in Prosper will be a little slice of the Caribbean in Denton County, with three sandy beaches, boat docks and a boardwalk along the almost 2,000-foot-long water park at the Windsong Ranch community near U.S. Highway 380.

While other developers have talked about building one, Windsong Ranch has the only Crystal Lagoon under construction in North Texas. Plans for an even larger lagoon in Rowlett are up in the air.

That's just fine with developer Terra Verde Group, which is building the \$1.2 billion, 2,000-acre Windsong Ranch community.

"We are having terrific success marketing that this is coming," said Terra Verde's Craig Martin. "We have people buying houses here because of the lagoon."

The almost 10 million-gallon pool at Windsong Ranch will offer residents of the community a one-of-a-kind location for swimming, boating and lolling around on the beach.

"It will be complete by Memorial Day of next year," said Martin, giving a tour of the construction site.

With plans for more than 3,000 homes, Windsong Ranch is one of North Texas' most successful residential communities. More than 700 homes have sold in the project, which broke ground five years ago.

The Prosper development has been a big hit with residents who work in nearby Plano and Frisco employment centers. To woo buyers, Terra Verde has crammed Windsong Ranch with goodies that appeal to today's new homebuyers.

Windsong ranch has more amenities than any other master-planned lifestyle community in North Texas, Martin said. "We already have two pools, a café, mountain biking trails, tennis courts, basketball courts, a community garden, 600 acres of open space and 30 miles of trails.

"No one will be able to compare to us with this Crystal Lagoon."

Florida-based firm Crystal Lagoons is building and franchising the projects all over the world.

The company just opened its first U.S. location in Florida using patented technologies that filter and maintain the huge water features.



Developer Craig Martin poses for a photograph at a construction site of the new 5-acre crystal clear lagoon by Crystal Lagoons in the Windsong Ranch community in Prosper. (Jae S. Lee/Staff Photographer)



The Crystal Lagoon under construction in Prosper's Windsong Ranch will open next spring.
(Jae S. Lee/Staff Photographer)

"The first time I saw one of these was in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico," Martin said. "It was so unbelievably cool. When I saw it I said, 'We have to do that.' "

Between the construction and licensing fees, Martin said the Windsong Ranch Crystal Lagoon will cost twice what the usual residential development community center runs. He won't say exactly how much Terra Verde is spending on the project.

Twenty-five years ago, most of the new residential communities around the U.S. were centered on golf courses. But with changing consumer tastes and rising land prices, residential developers are looking at new options to anchor their home projects.

"There will be a lot of interest in seeing how this lagoon does for Windsong Ranch," said Ted Wilson, a principal with Dallas-based residential consulting firm Residential Strategies Inc.

"Windsong Ranch is one of the highest-quality new neighborhoods, and they have performed very well," Wilson said. "Adding the lagoon is just another feature that will continue to draw buyers."

Unlike other Crystal Lagoon water parks that accompany hotels and resorts, the Windsong Ranch pool won't be open to the public. You'll have to buy a home to use the lagoon when it opens next spring.

Homes in Windsong Ranch start in the high \$200,000s.

"The response from our residents has been off the hook," Martin said. "I wish it was open today."

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