

Things to know before buying a vacation home

By Daniel Goldstein, MarketWatch

If home ownership is the first cornerstone of the American Dream, then a quiet cabin by the lake (if not a beach house with a view of a breathtaking sunset) in the mountains as far away from a Wi-Fi hot spot as possible probably runs a close second.

When people think of a cabin, they usually want a certain rustic look and that look is often heavy timber. Heavy-timber construction with exposed beams and columns as big as 6 to 8 inches wide often are a feature in cabin design, but are also more expensive than ordinary construction.

Sue Lowe, a senior vice president and broker with Chase International in Zephyr Cove, – where the median home value is \$392,700, up 9.2 percent in the past year and forecast to rise another 5.6 percent in the year ahead – says prices for winter vacation homes in her market range from \$100,000 to \$10 million , and it's typically because of strong demand and tight supply.

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