



Where nature is not a place to visit, it is home



by Debbie Rauen

IN THE PAST DECADE, Spokane has experienced a surge in downtown lofts and condos, as well as housing construction along the Spokane River. Now, a new concept in urban homes is being introduced on Spokane's South Hill by former accounting-firm-owner-turned-developer Roger Fruci.

Bella Terra Garden Homes is centered around a garden that would put most parks to shame. In fact, the concept for Bella

Terra was born when Fruci was sitting in Manito Park's Tsutakawa Japanese Garden and thought "Why can't we live in beautiful settings like this?"

Many years later, and after acquiring the land needed to assemble a 15-acre parcel near the Lincoln Heights area, this vision is becoming a reality. Bella Terra will provide a feeling of being far away from town, yet it is located only 12 blocks from shopping and

entertainment, close to medical care and hospitals, and less than 15 minutes from downtown and I-90.

“The central organizing concept has been to provide a setting where there will be a deep connection to nature, and to provide that in a maintenance-free setting that frees up time for an active lifestyle, whether that means spending time reading instead of doing yard work, weekends filled with hiking and skiing or extended time away for travel,” says Fruci. “At the same time, for those who like to garden, the townhomes have been designed to provide personal garden space as well as an extensive area for private container gardening, with built-in drip irrigation.”

The central garden will be unlike anything currently available in a Spokane-area housing community. It measures approximately 500' x 120' – about the size of two football fields laid end-to-end – containing ponds, waterfalls and a wide variety of trees and plants. Fruits, vegetables and herbs will be woven throughout the ornamental plants in the garden, creating a space that looks like an ornamental garden, but produces an abundance of food.

Not only will food be grown in the central garden, but the entire top of the 380-foot wall along Bella Terra on Havana Street between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> avenues will be a planter with drip irrigation, filled with hanging food plants, greenery and flowering plants.

“Taking the opposite approach of most developments, our garden and water features were laid out first, then the townhomes were designed specifically with the garden views and connection as the primary criteria,” says Fruci. Once the basic layout was completed, every aspect of the plan was evaluated and dozens of adjustments were made to the garden and townhome designs to maximize the residents' connection to the garden and to maintain their privacy.

The first phase of Bella Terra's master planned, gated community will consist of 36 townhomes encircling the central garden. There will be more than a mile of pathways and private roads for walking or


jogging around the 15-acre site.

The exquisitely designed townhomes, each with a garden view and private outdoor spaces, offer a wide variety of options, with one, two or three-story models. The townhomes have a contemporary feel, while embodying traditional values of craftsmanship, design and finish that are typically found only in custom homes.

“While two of our three main models offer full ground-floor living, the Emerson townhome is our most flexible and dynamic model,” says Fruci. “It can be either two or three stories, features a spectacular terrace overlooking the central garden, and even offers options for an elevator or a three-car garage. The ground floor of the Emerson can be configured in one of four ways, including a fully self contained living suite where an elderly parent, an adult child, one of the owners or a guest could live long term in what is essentially a separate, one level home within a home.”

Other key design features include no common walls, ensuring sound separation from neighbors, and expansive walls of glass facing the garden that flood the homes with natural light and provide spectacular views. Despite all the glass, year-round energy costs, including heating, cooling, hot water and all other uses, have been independently computed to range from \$85 per month for the smallest model, to \$154 for the largest, with the average sized model at about \$110.

Bella Terra will appeal to anyone who wants a spectacular garden setting without the responsibility of yard maintenance. It is an excellent option for empty nesters wanting to downsize and simplify without giving up the beauty of their current outdoor living spaces.

“In a world that can be noisy, hectic, filled with multiple distractions, and lacking any sense of natural order,” says Fruci, “Bella Terra will provide a home base that will enable people to relax, re-focus, and re-energize.” 

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More information on Bella Terra can be found at [www.bellaterragardenhomes.com](http://www.bellaterragardenhomes.com).