

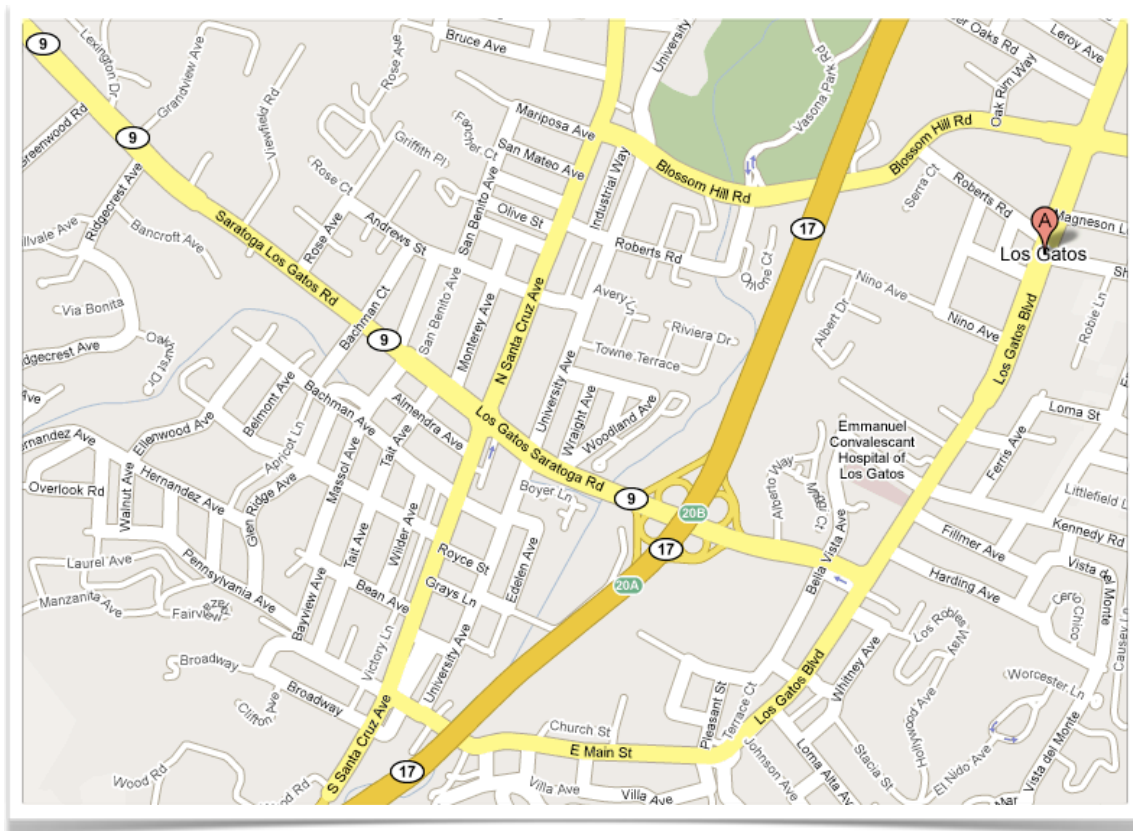


# Understanding Los Gatos Real Estate

By Connie Miller

Unlike more homogenous communities, Los Gatos has many different neighborhoods, each with their own distinct characteristics. Reading this will help you understand many of the most popular components of what makes up this vibrant community.

When most people think of Los Gatos homes, they tend to think of the many Victorian-style homes. The two neighborhoods that best exemplify this are Glenridge and the Almond Grove. Almond Grove is the area between Glenridge and Santa Cruz Avenues.





This neighborhood is the epicenter of the Historical Society's concern. Any exterior building modifications in this historic zone are carefully scrutinized by the planning department and require a special hearing with the Historical Society. Largely occupied by classic Victorian styles this neighborhood is quaint and loved by many. My former neighbor, who spent over forty years in Los Gatos, told me that aside from San Francisco, Los Gatos has the best collection of Victorians in Northern California. His explanation was that in the late 1800s, early 1900s Los Gatos was the community where noteworthy San Francisco residents had second homes. To quote him, "Many a San Francisco executive would come to Los Gatos for the weekend to get away from the fog and work over the weekend with their secretaries." Well, I am not sure about that, but I can tell you people love the Almond Grove neighborhood, especially around Halloween. On Halloween, Tait Avenue turns into a spectacle of special effects and becomes a trick-or-treaters heaven. Mounted police will roam the street and literally hundreds of people flock from around the Valley to partake in the celebration. If the lots in Almond Grove are too small for you, then you will need to travel up the hill to Glenridge and pay a bit more to get the elbow room you desire.

Arguably the prime area in which to live in Los Gatos is the Glenridge neighborhood. Glenridge sits up the hill just past the Almond Grove and north of the main drag of Santa Cruz Avenue. It starts at its namesake, Glenridge Avenue and continues until you hit the winding roads that take you into the back country areas. It features larger lots, wonderful Bachman Park, and some of the best Victorian architecture examples around. Perhaps the best example of Queen Anne architecture south of San Francisco is Villa Tusculum on Chestnut. The founder of Cisco Systems lives in Glenridge as do many other corporate executives. Glenridge is appreciated for its walk-to-town proximity which means no parking hassles when you want to shop or dine downtown. Although, from personal experience, it is way easier to stroll the few blocks down to



town rather than to lumber back up the hill several blocks to the neighborhood after having consumed a large dinner and a glass of wine.

While the entire town is great for raising a family, there are two neighborhoods that stand out as particularly focusing on children. The first sits in the neighborhood behind Whole Foods off Los Gatos Boulevard and is affectionately called, the Manor. They say that you can't live in the Manor without owning a mini-van. Sometimes, driving around there, I think it is true. Most of the streets are named after flowers, like Lavender, Orange Blossom, Oleander and such. The terrain in this community is flat and the architecture is uniform with traditional ranch-style homes, for the most part with a sprinkling of newer two-story homes. Most of the kids in the Manor go to Blossom Hill Elementary. The school shares a spacious park with baseball diamonds, play areas, tennis courts and more. Weekends, Blossom Hill Park is teeming with activity. Typically, there will be at least one birthday party going on, a soccer game and a little league game all simultaneously.

The other family-oriented community worth noting is Belgatos. Situated down Blossom Hill Road and bordering San Jose, Belgatos is also predominately full of ranch style homes. There is a community pool and open space area that brings its neighbors together. If you live there and have children who swim, expect to spend countless summer weekends volunteering for the local swim team and watch your child thrive with friends from all over the neighborhood. The wife of a friend of mine who lives in this neighborhood passed away from cancer. She left her husband with two grade school kids to raise. Almost daily, the neighbors would bring a meal over for my friend or come over early so he could get a jog in before work. This was an amazing support structure that took place for almost a couple of years. You have to love a community that rallies around someone in need like that. (I hope my friend is ok with me sharing



this story.) It just speaks to how wonderful this place is. One other thing to note about Belgatos is that it is not in the Los Gatos School district. Even though the schools this community feeds to are excellent, that matters to some people.

The other community of note that resides within the Los Gatos town limits, but feeds to yet a different school district is La Rinconada. Feeding to Campbell schools and congregated around the La Rinconada Country Club and golf course, this area is home to many people for whom the Country Club holds significance. There are children in this neighborhood for certain, but I sort of think of it as more a place for retirees. Residents, please forgive me if I offend you with this comment. There are many beautiful homes in the La Rinconada plus townhouses that afford views of nature and the country club. You save on average about \$100,000 per million on a house here as opposed to one that might be elsewhere in the Los Gatos school district.

There are even more neighborhoods within Los Gatos, Civic Center, Surrey Farms and probably a dozen others. But by having read the above prose, you can get a feel for the largest ones. If you want more information about pricing variability, school boundaries, or other parts, feel free to contact me.

Connie

Connie Miller

Alain Pinel Realtors

(650) 279-7074

[cmiller@apr.com](mailto:cmiller@apr.com)

[www.bestsiliconvalleyrealestate.com](http://www.bestsiliconvalleyrealestate.com)