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• LIFESTYLE •

5 Senior Living Alternatives: Finding a Home that Fits Your Lifestyle

By Molly LeGrand

Whether caravanning across the outback or floating along in a houseboat, Baby Boomers are finding new and innovative ways to live out their better years. When it comes to senior housing options, the current 'one size fits all' model is far from satisfactory for this diverse and active group of Boomers.

But what are the best ways to sort through all of the new trends to find the housing option that best suits your lifestyle? Since we all can't caravan, here are five senior living alternatives to suit any unique style!

For the Bookworm

For those who enjoy curling up with a good book and love the intimacy of small groups, a Greenhouse may be just right. Developed by Dr. Bill Thomas, [the Green House Project](#) was designed to put the home back into senior care and have since redefined the way we think about where we live as we age.

Currently, only based in the United States, the Green House project or the small house model has flipped our understanding of what a nursing home is on its head. Instead of hundreds of residents to a facility, this model maintains homes with no more than ten residents.

With core values of a meaningful life, empowered staff, and a real-home setting and atmosphere, these homes have cultivated a new way to provide care. This time the residents are at the center of their model.

Next Avenue writer Gary Drevitch explains how his understanding of senior living was changed by the Green House Model in his article [Not Your Father's Nursing Home](#).

For the Socialite

For the socialites who enjoy being out and about and meeting new people, a Continuing Care Retirement Communities or CCRCs will be a great fit for you! On each campus, you will find sports and activities, banks, beauty shops, and even organized trips. All at your fingertips.

Sometimes the upkeep of a house can take time away from the other more important things in our lives. The CCRC, as the name suggests, is a continuum of care, which truly delivers the aging in place model, so many of us are talking about nowadays, without the hassle of maintaining a big house.

With apartments in Independent, Assisted, and Skilled Living, this option guarantees that you will have a place to live, no matter how your needs change. The best part is it's all in one place!

For a closer look at what CCRCs, look like and can offer check out [Erickson Living](#) communities.

For the Golden Girls

For the faithful and forever friends, there is nothing more empowering and reaffirming than a group of women bonded together through life and experiences. Do you have a few empty rooms in your home you don't know what to do with?

Then inviting women that you know and trust to move in might be the perfect way to use the space. Not only will you always have a girlfriend to talk to, it will save you some money, too. This can be spent instead on a fun night out on the town!

For more on co-housing check out [Boomer Housemates Have More Fun](#).

For the Hipsters

The tiny house sensation has swept us by storm taking millennial and boomers with them! If you enjoy living on your own but the big house is just too much, a tiny home may be a great fit for you.

Since tiny homes are easy to clean and relatively inexpensive, you will have plenty of time and money to do other things. And let's face it, we probably all need to downsize in some way or another. Moving into a tiny house is the perfect excuse to start getting rid of all that stuff we've accumulated over the years. If for no other reason than it just won't fit!

To learn more, check out [the Tiny House Movement: Why Downsizing Your Home May Be a Great Decision](#).

For the Sentimental Soul

Arguably, we can spend a lifetime in our homes. And often expect to. Our homes provide solitude, security, and comfort. They are spaces that hold memories and sentiment and provide us with a sense of self. For the sentimental souls who couldn't bear to leave all of those memories behind, [staying in your own home](#) may be the best choice for you!

In order to make this a sustainable option, consider a few remodeling projects. Most homes are not designed for the changing body, so even the most luxurious tub won't be worth it if we can't get in or out of it!

In fact, re-modeling homes into more age-friendly environments has become a booming business in recent years. Many businesses have begun incorporating universal designs in almost all of their projects.

A few quick tips to make your home age-friendly:

- Moving your bedroom to the first floor
- A no-step in shower with a sturdy stool and railing
- Lowering kitchen cabinets or moving pantry items onto lower shelves
- Switching out all round door knobs for lever-type hardware
- Improve and add lighting to all areas of the home
- Incorporating more seating areas around the home

For years we have been told exactly where and how we should spend our later years. Well, times have changed. No matter your style, you can bet there is a home out there that's destined to suit you!

Where did you start the search for your forever home? Have you found the right place for you? Please join in on the conversation!



Molly LeGrand has cared for older adults living with dementia for over ten years. She is a recent graduate of the Erickson School, UMBC, where she received her M.A. in the Management of Aging Services. Her blog [Upside to Aging](#) is dedicated to sharing an alternative and more positive side to aging.