

6 Reasons to Live in Black Mountain, North Carolina

Posted on [March 1, 2012](#) by [Mike Czczot](#)



Southern Way of Life asked one of our writers, Mike Czczot why he and his wife chose to move to western North Carolina, and in particular, Black Mountain. We tell our clients who are looking to relocate at retirement, one of the best things they can do when looking at areas and specific communities, is to visit and talk with current residents. So, we wanted to share with our readers what our very own, Mike Czczot feels about living in western North Carolina and Black Mountain in particular...

If you have been thinking of relocating to the mountains...if you have read intriguing articles about Asheville...if you would like to live near a city but not right in the city, perhaps [Black Mountain, North Carolina](#) is calling you to visit.

That's how we ended up here. Two vacations in the [Asheville area](#) convinced us. Asheville's vibrancy, diversity (of people, places and things to do) and compact size (74,000 year-round residents) were the "hooks," and the mountains took it from there. So, my wife and I decided western North Carolina would be home, but exactly where didn't matter, as long as it was near Asheville, but not in Asheville as we'd both had our fill of living in urban areas. We looked at homes to the northwest (Leicester), west (Candler), south (Hendersonville), southeast (Arden, Fairview and Gerton) and, finally, east (Swannanoa, Montreat and Black Mountain). We knew as much (or as little) about Black Mountain as the other communities, but there was [something compelling](#), something we couldn't pinpoint back then.

We can now. It called to us, and sent 6 "invitations"...



I. Accessibility. Or, as business owners have said for eons: Location, location, location. From just south of downtown Black Mountain, you can hop onto I-40 and be anywhere you want or need to be in an hour or less: Enough shopping malls to keep you browsing for a month? Fifteen minutes. Eclectic Asheville? Twenty minutes. The airport? Twenty-five minutes. Picturesque Maggie Valley, [Waynesville and Sylva](#)? An hour, tops. Historic Old Fort, to the east? Twenty minutes – down the mountains (check your brakes) and past postcard-like vistas. Charlotte, the financial and sports heart of North Carolina? You can be there in under two hours. Dislike interstates? The legendary Blue Ridge Parkway is just a 10-minute jaunt. From there, 30

minutes north or south will put you atop or near the mile-plus-high peaks of Mount Mitchell or Mount Pisgah. And state Highway 9 (if you don't mind sharp curves) will take you through what can only be called "God's country" enroute to the frozen-in-time town of [Lake Lure](#) (where you'd almost expect to see men and ladies in "proper" swim attire of the 1930s), or past endless acres of apple orchards near [Hendersonville](#) in less than an hour.

2. Self-sustenance. Like us, you might find that, the longer you live in Black Mountain, the less you might feel like leaving. OK; Black Mountain doesn't have a Walton-esque Supercenter or a 20-screen multiplex movie theater. But it does have more than 40 unique restaurants, a number of one-of-a-kind clothing and furniture stores, two very large competing supermarkets, chain and independent pharmacies (including a compounding pharmacy), a lumber yard, several health and natural food stores, and shops that specialize in everything from outdoor gear and locally made crafts to antiques, appliqués and apples (and other fresh produce). It has a legendary golf course, a lake that's home to ducks and dinghy's, and churches of almost every denomination. To get to the point – Black Mountain's bound to have whatever it is you're needing...or seeking.



3. Class. *Yep; little ol' Black Mountain has class. Buckets of it. You'll find art galleries and studios throughout the town, but you'll also find spirit. The kind of community spirit that, in 2002, quietly, raised \$1.2 million to buy and convert an old town hall into a Center for the Arts that draws residents daily, all year, to its exhibits, classes and occasional theater. It also has a venue (White Horse Black Mountain) that opens its doors to all manner of music – from Big Band sounds and down-home bluegrass to New Orleans and classical jazz – as well as weekly meditations, prominent lecturers and other activities. And little ol'*

Black Mountain even has its own ale-maker, [Pisgah Brewing](#). You'll also experience class as you walk along Cherry or State streets downtown – people say "Hello" and "Good Morning" ... and mean it.

4. Retreats. Let's face it – Everyone needs some down-time now and then. Including you. Black Mountain offers a myriad of ways to get off your beaten path, if just for awhile. Start by taking a less beaten path – one leading to the top of a nearby ridge, such as "High Windy," "Rocky Head," "Lookout Trail" or along the Swannanoa Rim, with other amateur hikers participating in the Swannanoa Valley Museum's monthly outdoor excursions. If looking to rejuvenate your spirituality, Black Mountain is home to the YMCA's sprawling Blue Ridge Assembly and Christmount conference center and residential area for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) – which both have public hiking trails – and the community of Ridgecrest, which includes a 1,300-acre Southern Baptist-affiliated conference center. Just up the road, in the town of Montreat, is the Presbyterian-affiliated Montreat conference center, and in neighboring Swannanoa is The Cove, founded by the Rev. Billy Graham who, by the way, lives in Montreat. In downtown Black Mountain, you can head for The Source to retreat from conventional treatments and indulge in yoga, acupuncture, massage and herbal therapy. A few miles south on Hwy. 9 is The Light Center, a non-denominational retreat that helps "people expand awareness ... and to pray more effectively," or a place to simply walk.

5. History. It wasn't until we'd been living in Black Mountain for several months that we realized its past. Walk along State Street, Cherry Street, Broadway and Sutton Avenue, and you'll see why the National Register of Historic Places listed the entire three-block downtown area as a Historic District. Along Sutton Avenue is the old train depot, still open today – but as a museum. Just north of State Street are residential roads filled with historic homes, some dating back to the mid-1800s (and looking better than some built in the late 20th century). A few blocks west is the Black Mountain College Historic District (now known as Camp Rockmont). The college had a short life – 1933 to 1957 – but was nothing short of radical. Its board members included Albert Einstein and Buckminster Fuller, and its curriculum was so advanced that the global academic community refused to support it. The college, by the way, lives on today, but in Asheville, where its contributions are on exhibit. Less than a mile south of downtown Black Mountain, in the Christmount community, is "Rhododendrun," the retirement home of Rafael Guastavino, built after he'd completed the design and construction in the late 1890s of George Vanderbilt's mansion, Biltmore at Asheville. There are many artifacts still on the property, including the house's kiln and chimney, a wine cellar and old stone walls.

6. Community. *There's almost an "open-door" feel to Black Mountain. People here exude the kind of warmth and hospitality you'd expect to find in tiny hamlets elsewhere in the Southeast. I've even experienced it at three of Black Mountain's newer communities – [The Settings](#), [Cheshire](#) and nearby [Creston](#). From*



almost the moment you enter, you're seen (and treated) as a friend or neighbor. In the established neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area, residents wave as you pass by; in the restaurants, owners ask your name – and remember it. And you feel it at the town's many annual events – the twice-annually LEAF Festival of music and arts, the summer Sourwood Festival, spring's Art in Bloom, and the East of

Asheville Studio Tour; twice yearly, artists open their homes to all residents and guests to watch them create hand blown glass, ceramics, painting, fine woodworking, sculpture and more.

OK, so it may not be paradise. What is paradise? Black Mountain, North Carolina, sure fills a lot of needs for a growing number of residents. Residents like Donna Ross, who wrote on a blog, "There is no town in the U.S. that is more similar to a Thomas Kinkade painting than Black Mountain, NC. You have to experience the magic of the mountains here to believe what a special place it is. The people, the lifestyle, the land...once you've visited...you'll get a sense of what's written in this blog. My grown children and grandchildren feel the same way. Black Mountain enchants you...every single day. 'There's no place like Home' ...it's ours and we love it dearly!!!" ...Couldn't agree more.