

LOCALS ONLY · REGION NO. 04

Asheville

A mountain city rebuilding from Helene, with three luxury addresses that the storm largely spared and a PGA Tour event arriving in September.

A field guide to 3 communities, each scored out of 100.
Reported by Damian Hall · Current to June 2026

THE BRIEF

Asheville, at a glance.

Honesty first. Hurricane Helene hit Western North Carolina hard in September 2024, and Asheville is recovering, not recovered. The county market has cooled to a buyer's footing, with longer days on market through 2026. The luxury addresses below sit at elevation and were largely spared the worst flooding, but anyone moving here should understand the city is still rebuilding parts of its infrastructure and dining scene.

What has not changed is why people want Asheville: the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Biltmore Estate, and one of the best small-city food cultures in the country. In September 2026 the PGA Tour returns to the region for the first time in decades, at The Cliffs at Walnut Cove, which puts a national spotlight back on the market.

THE SCORECARD

Biltmore Forest OLMSTED TOWN · COUNTRY CLUB	87 / ₁₀₀
The Cliffs at Walnut Cove NICKLAUS GOLF · PGA TOUR HOST	86 / ₁₀₀
Champion Hills FAZIO GOLF · HENDERSONVILLE	81 / ₁₀₀

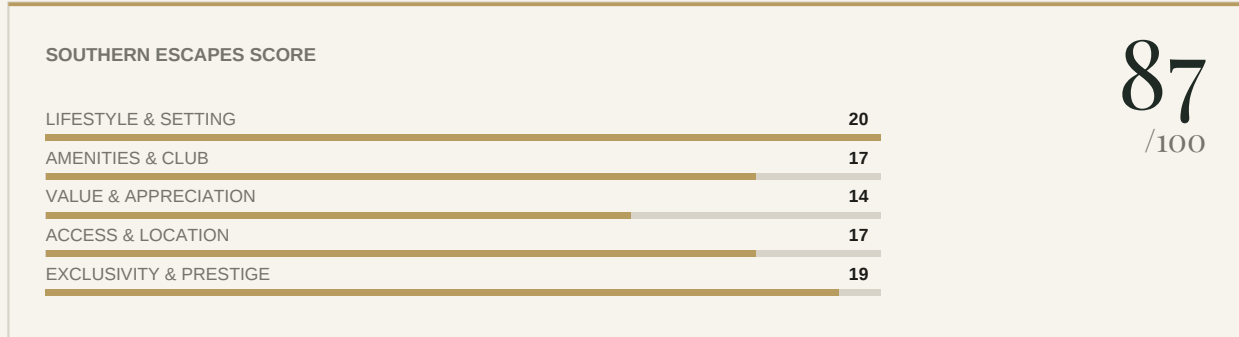
HOW THE SOUTHERN ESCAPES SCORE WORKS

Every community is rated out of 100 from five pillars worth twenty points each: Lifestyle & Setting, Amenities & Club, Value & Appreciation, Access & Location, and Exclusivity & Prestige. It is one editor's working opinion, not an appraisal. On this plateau of addresses, a 79 is not a failing grade.

No. 01

Biltmore Forest

Asheville's most consequential address, a sovereign town carved from Vanderbilt land and planned by the hand behind Central Park.



Biltmore Forest is not a neighborhood; it is its own incorporated town, laid out in 1923 on sixteen hundred acres sold from the Biltmore Estate, with Frederick Law Olmsted's design philosophy visible in every curving street. Estate-sized wooded lots sit between the Estate boundary, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the city, five minutes from downtown. The private Biltmore Forest Country Club, a platinum-rated old-guard club, anchors the social life, though membership is sponsored and selective.

The luxury tier runs from roughly \$1M for smaller homes to \$6M-plus for estate properties, with a current median around \$2.5M, and it has held value better than the county median thanks to scarcity and elevation. The trades are real: inventory is thin, you wait for the right house, and the club is not plug-and-play for newcomers. For legacy buyers who want Asheville's core without living in it, nothing in the region is more prestigious.

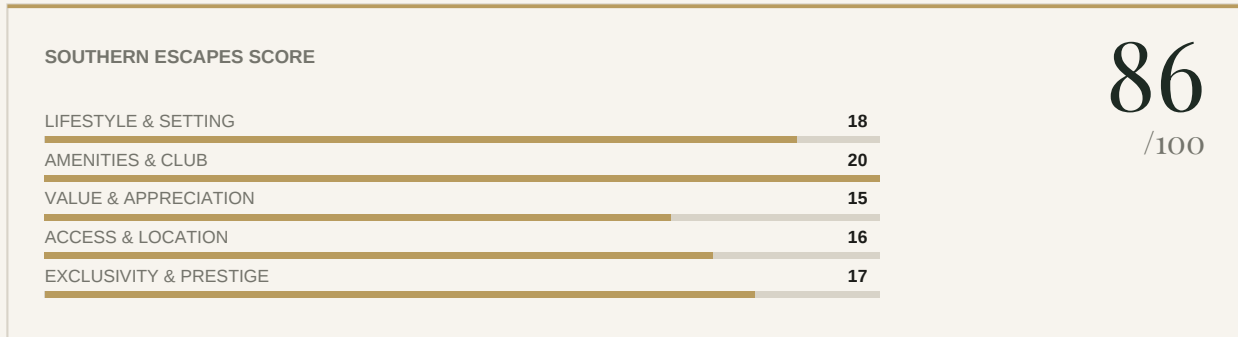
<p>HOMES</p> <p>~\$1M to \$6M+</p>	<p>THE DRAW</p> <p>Olmsted-planned town, Biltmore Estate next door</p>	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>BFCC sponsored; figures not public</p>
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<p>WHY LOCALS RATE IT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scarcest, most storied address in the mountains • Elevation spared it the worst of Helene • Five minutes to downtown and the Biltmore Estate 	<p>WHAT TO WEIGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very low inventory; you wait for the right home • Country club membership is selective, not automatic • Broader Asheville sentiment still recovering
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No. 02

The Cliffs at Walnut Cove

Metro Asheville's only gated mountain golf community, and this September the host of the PGA Tour's return to the region.



Walnut Cove, in Arden about fifteen minutes south of downtown, wraps a Jack Nicklaus Signature course in Blue Ridge views, bordered by Pisgah National Forest and three miles from the Parkway. As one of the seven Cliffs communities, a single membership reaches the lake marinas, the equestrian center, and the other courses across the Carolinas, and a large wellness center and club village give it a self-contained resort quality. In September 2026 it hosts the Tour's Biltmore Championship, the first such event in the region in decades.

Listings run from lots near \$200K to estates approaching \$9M, with homes generally starting around \$800K to \$1.2M. The Cliffs fee schedule is not current online; confirm it before relying on a number. The PGA Tour spotlight is a near-term tailwind, balanced against the Helene overhang that still makes some buyers cautious on the Asheville area. For a golfer who wants the full Cliffs network with a mountain-city backdrop, this is the address.

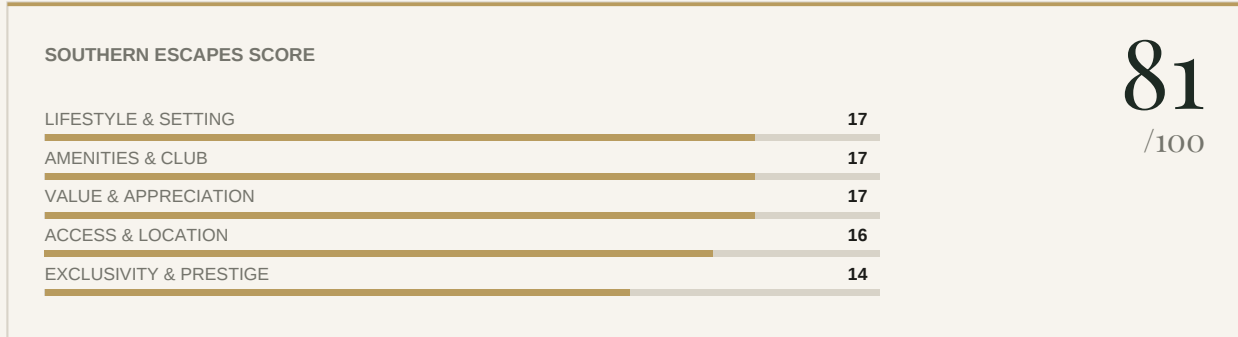
<p>HOMES</p> <p>Lots to ~\$9M</p>	<p>THE DRAW</p> <p>Nicklaus course, PGA Tour host, Cliffs network</p>	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>Cliffs: one card, seven clubs</p>
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<p>WHY LOCALS RATE IT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting the PGA Tour puts it on a national stage • Full seven-club Cliffs network on one membership • Pisgah Forest and the Parkway at the doorstep 	<p>WHAT TO WEIGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership fees are real and need confirming • Helene caution still slows some luxury buyers • Fifteen minutes out; intentionally self-contained
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No. 03

Champion Hills

A member-owned Tom Fazio favorite eight minutes from Hendersonville, debt-free and consistently the top year-round golf community in Western NC.



Champion Hills, near Hendersonville, is built around a Tom Fazio course that Fazio himself has called a personal favorite, ranked among the best year-round layouts in Western North Carolina. It is entirely member-owned with no outside developer, which creates an engaged, active culture, and the community runs from established neighborhoods to new custom sections with seventeen miles of marked trails. Hendersonville fared better than Asheville in Helene recovery, a real consideration right now.

Median listings sit near \$979K, with custom homes roughly \$600K to \$2.5M-plus and townhome entry lower. Membership is optional rather than required to buy, and golf dues are modest relative to the destination clubs. It carries less national name recognition than Biltmore Forest or the Cliffs, which is precisely why it is the best value-for-dollar luxury address in this cluster.

<p>HOMES</p> <p>~\$600K to \$2.5M+</p>	<p>THE DRAW</p> <p>Member-owned Fazio course, Hendersonville access</p>	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>Optional; golf dues modest</p>
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<p>WHY LOCALS RATE IT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A genuinely elite Fazio course, member-owned • Best value-for-dollar in the Asheville cluster • Hendersonville recovered faster from Helene 	<p>WHAT TO WEIGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less national prestige than the nameplate addresses • HOA and club figures vary by source; confirm them • More suburban-feeling than pure wilderness
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Considering one of these addresses?

Before you tour a single home, an Advisory Conversation tells you which community actually fits the life you are building, and what the move is worth under the new Carolina tax math. Schedule one at calendly.com/damianhallgroup, or run the numbers yourself with the Tax Alpha Calculator at southernescapes.com.

The Southern Escapes Score is an editorial opinion, not an appraisal or investment rating. Price ranges, club fees, and market figures are estimates current to June 2026, drawn from sources believed reliable but not guaranteed, and they change. Confirm any figure with the community and your own advisors before acting on anything you read here.