

LOCALS ONLY · REGION NO. 01

Lake Keowee

Crystalline water, Blue Ridge framing, and four gated communities that look similar from the highway and live nothing alike. Here is which cove is which.

A field guide to 4 communities, each scored out of 100.
Reported by Damian Hall · Current to June 2026

THE BRIEF

Lake Keowee, at a glance.

Lake Keowee is a Duke Energy reservoir that happens to be one of the clearest large lakes in the Southeast, forty-five minutes from Greenville and twenty from Clemson. The water is the constant. What changes, cove to cove, is the life built around it.

Three of the four communities here fly the Cliffs flag, which means one membership opens all seven Cliffs clubs across the Carolinas. The fourth, The Reserve, is its own world. The right answer depends entirely on whether you came for the golf, the boat, the village, or the quiet.

THE SCORECARD

The Cliffs at Keowee Vineyards	FAZIO GOLF · EQUESTRIAN	84/100
The Cliffs at Keowee Falls	NICKLAUS GOLF · WILDERNESS	82/100
The Reserve at Lake Keowee	NICKLAUS GOLF · VILLAGE	81/100
The Cliffs at Keowee Springs	FAZIO GOLF · BEACH CLUB	80/100

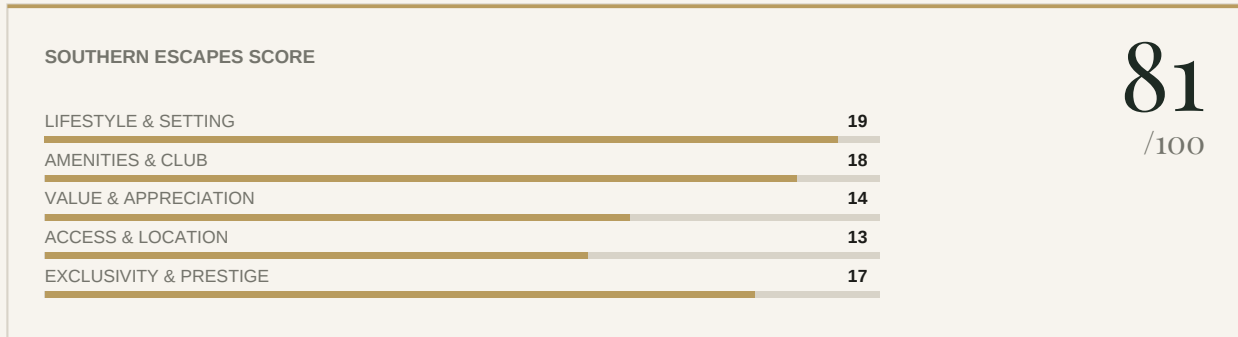
HOW THE SOUTHERN ESCAPES SCORE WORKS

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

The Reserve at Lake Keowee

The only address on the lake with a walkable village at its center, where you stroll from cottage to dock to dinner.



The Reserve is the lake's resort-residential play, roughly 3,900 acres with about thirty miles of shoreline in Sunset, organized around a true pedestrian Village. Residents genuinely walk from a cottage to the Orchard House for dinner or down to a 200-slip marina. A Jack Nicklaus Signature course anchors the golf, and under new ownership tied to the Old Edwards hospitality group, the operation now runs at concierge level. It is not a Cliffs community; its membership and culture stand alone.

The current range runs from roughly \$1.2M into the high seven figures, with a new pocket called Laurel Village adding cottages from the high \$400s, the most accessible entry the lake has seen in years. The trade is location. Pickens County is beautiful and quiet, and forty to sixty minutes from anything urban. Homes here have been sitting longer than the lake's hottest pockets, which is leverage for a buyer and patience for a seller.

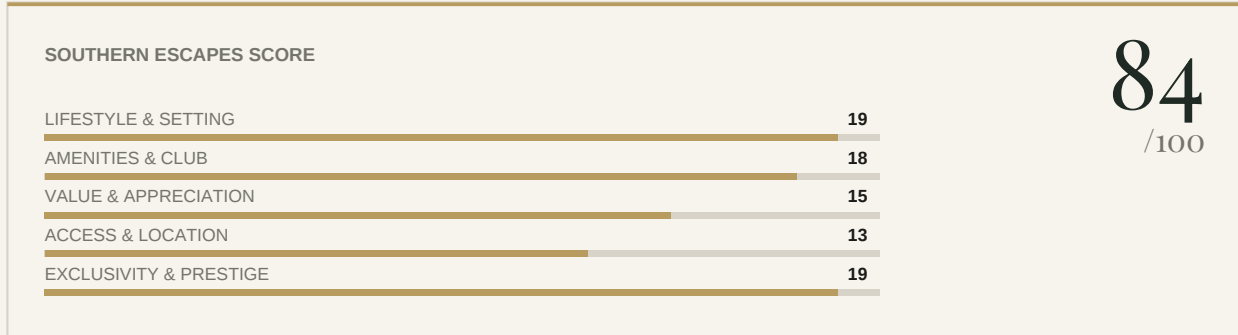
<p>HOMES</p> <p>~\$1.2M to high 7 figures</p>	<p>THE DRAW</p> <p>Walkable Village + Nicklaus golf</p>	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>Tiers not public; ask the club</p>
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<p>WHY LOCALS RATE IT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A real walkable village, which nothing else on the lake offers • Hospitality-grade operations and a deep new ownership bench • Laurel Village cottages open a genuine entry point 	<p>WHAT TO WEIGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty to sixty minutes from Greenville and full services • Fee schedule is not published; you confirm by phone • Slower resale pace than the lake's tightest coves
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No. 02

The Cliffs at Keowee Vineyards

The flagship Cliffs cove, where a Golf Digest top-ten private course plays eight holes along the water and horse trails run for miles.



Vineyards is the established statement of the Cliffs lake region, named for the muscadine vines woven through it. Eight of the eighteen Tom Fazio holes play directly along Lake Keowee, a course routinely ranked among the best private layouts in the country. The Lakehouse, with its wraparound porch and open-air pavilion, is the most photographed dining room on the water, and an on-site equestrian center connects to more than two hundred miles of trails through the Jocassee Gorges. Twenty-five years in, the landscaping is mature and the construction noise is gone.

Homes run from roughly the \$800s into the high seven figures, with homesites from the low six figures. As a Cliffs club, one membership reaches all seven communities. The skew here is golf-serious and horse-friendly rather than family-loud, and time on market tightened sharply through 2026. It is the prestige pick of the three Cliffs coves.

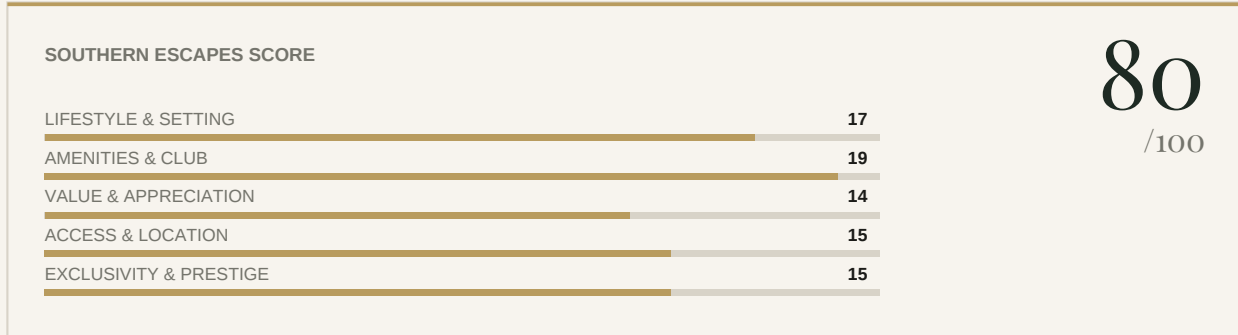
<p>HOMES</p> <p>~\$800K to \$5.9M+</p>	<p>THE DRAW</p> <p>Fazio top-ten course, equestrian center</p>	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>Cliffs: one card, seven clubs</p>
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<p>WHY LOCALS RATE IT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A nationally ranked Fazio course with eight lakefront holes • Equestrian center and trail access are unmatched here • Mature, established, and the most prestigious lake cove 	<p>WHAT TO WEIGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quieter and more golf-centric than family-driven Springs • Cliffs dues sit on top of HOA; model the full carry • Remote from any town for groceries or a hospital
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No. 03

The Cliffs at Keowee Springs

The family cove, closest to Clemson, with a waterslide beach club and the newest clubhouse on the lake.



Springs is the most active and most multigenerational of the Cliffs coves, about twenty minutes from Clemson. The Beach Club, with two pools and a waterslide, is the social engine, and a new hilltop clubhouse from the Hart Howerton firm adds dining, a golf shop, and a wellness center over the eighteenth hole. The Tom Fazio golf here is a flexible three-loop design built for families, and a full watersports program runs kayaks, paddleboards, and wakeboarding off the lake.

Homes start around \$1.3M and climb into the high seven figures, and Springs carries the richest price per foot of the three coves because the product is newest. Several developer release zones are adding inventory, which is friendly to entry buyers and something for an appreciation-focused buyer to weigh. If you have school-age kids or you bleed orange, this is the cove.

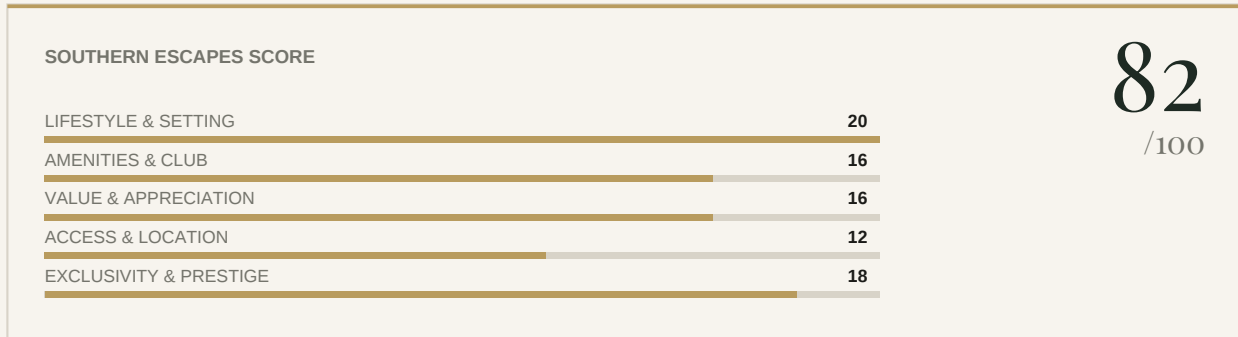
<p>HOMES</p> <p>~\$1.3M to \$5.9M+</p>	<p>THE DRAW</p> <p>Family beach club + new clubhouse</p>	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>Cliffs: one card, seven clubs</p>
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<p>WHY LOCALS RATE IT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best access of the lake coves, twenty minutes to Clemson • Family beach club with waterslide is a genuine differentiator • Newest infrastructure and an architecturally notable clubhouse 	<p>WHAT TO WEIGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busiest and least rarified of the three Cliffs coves • Active developer releases compete with resale pricing • Highest price per foot on the lake right now
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No. 04

The Cliffs at Keowee Falls

The wildest cove on the lake: 2,500 acres, twenty miles of private shoreline, waterfalls, and a Nicklaus course through the trees.



Falls, in Salem, is the most dramatic of the Cliffs coves, twenty-five hundred acres with twenty miles of shoreline entirely private to residents. Falls Creek winds through seven holes of a Jack Nicklaus Signature course named among Golf Magazine's best new private layouts, and rare Oconee Bells wildflowers grow in the fields. The clubhouse is a fireside, rocking-chair affair over the creek, more wilderness lodge than country club. There is no on-site beach club; you take the boat ten minutes to Springs or use the wellness center pool.

Homes run from roughly \$1M into the high seven figures, and the \$6.95M record sale across all Cliffs lake communities in 2025 closed here. Sale-to-list ratios are the strongest of the three coves. This is the pick for a buyer who wants acreage, privacy, and the most compelling natural setting on Keowee, and who does not mind being the furthest from a town.

<p>HOMES</p> <p>~\$1M to high 7 figures</p>	<p>THE DRAW</p> <p>Twenty miles of private shoreline, Nicklaus golf</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"> • The most spectacular natural setting on the lake • Twenty miles of private shoreline and serious acreage • Held the 2025 record lake sale; strong seller conditions 	<p>WHAT TO WEIGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No dedicated beach club; you boat to Springs • The most remote cove, furthest from services • North and South plats can confuse first-time buyers
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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.