

Life on Vacation

A weekly look at the second-home market

Nashville

Here's music to second-home buyers' ears

By Larry Olmsted
Special for USA TODAY

Nashville, which sports the nickname Music City and is home to the Grand Ole Opry, is where thousands of country music stars, entertainers and musicians call home. It's ideal for music lovers, especially, who are in search of a second home.

Nashville's appeal extends beyond music, though. The city consistently ranks high in friendliness in tourism polls. It's affordable: Its cost of living is about 10% lower than the national average. Its economy — with major health care and technology companies and the headquarters of Nissan North America — has been strong. The downtown presence of prestigious Vanderbilt University adds to its attractiveness.

The city also is big. It sprawls over 526 square miles. Its metro area comprises 10 counties. It's big enough for an NFL football team, the Tennessee Titans, and the Nashville Predators National Hockey League team.

Strong employment this decade and a return-to-downtown trend have led to a number of new luxury downtown high-rises, which have become desirable as second homes.

"You can get a new luxury apartment downtown for \$300,000, and \$1 million gets you a gorgeous penthouse," says broker Marty Calfee of Crye-Leike Realtors. "I showed one last year — a corner unit with floor-to-ceiling windows, great views, right on the riverfront — and it was under a million."

"We're more expensive than the rest of Tennessee, but a great value compared to the rest of the country," Calfee adds. "We also have very low property taxes, and people from elsewhere are always shocked. For a \$400,000 home, you would pay about \$3,500 a year."

As the city has grown, several towns and suburbs, including Franklin and Brentwood, have become second-home options. As a result, the market offers everything from condos, urban lofts and townhouses to gated golf communities and grand Southern mansions.

"No matter which they choose — they can go into town for the symphony, for Titans games or to eat — there is never any real traffic," Calfee says.

Music remains Nashville's charm, however.

"We have live music every single place you go," she says. "Every restaurant, every bar, it's a big draw. In the summer they put a big stage right on the river. Faith Hill, (Kix) Brooks and (Ronnie) Dunn all have homes here."



Source: ESRI USA TODAY

Best for

Music lovers; fans of value-priced, lively urban living.

Claim to fame

Music. Besides numerous live venues, there's the Music Mile, Music City Walk of Fame and Music Row with recording studios. The Grand Ole Opry on WSM is the nation's longest running radio show — since 1925.

Don't miss

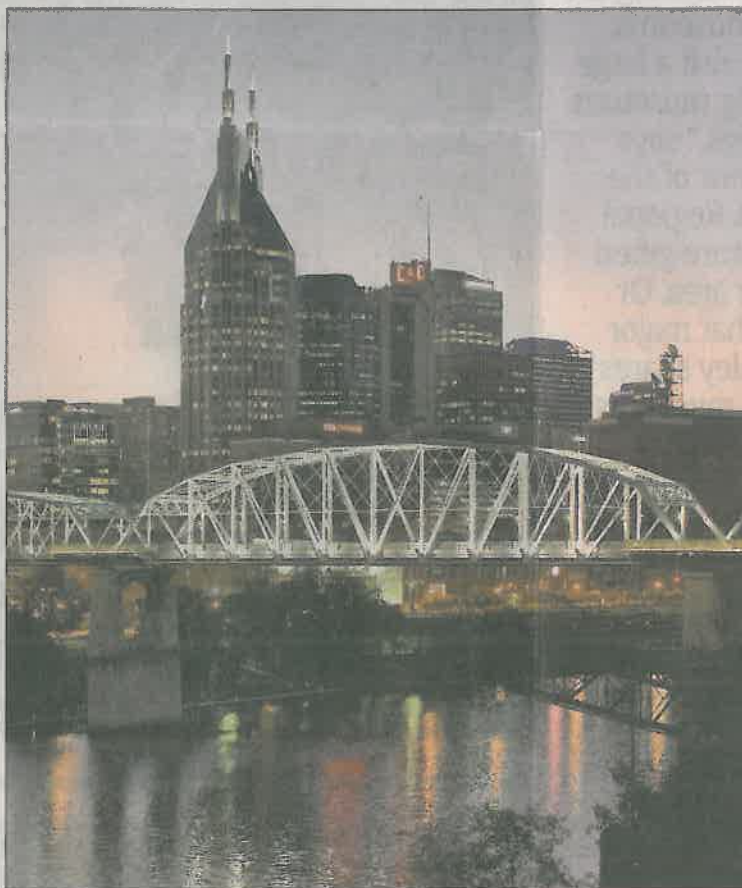
A full-sized replica of the Greek Parthenon and the Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum.

Getting there

Nashville International Airport is served by 14 airlines.

Tourism information

www.visitmusiccity.com



Courtesy of Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau

A high note: The skyline of Nashville overlooks the Cumberland River. Music City's urban core now boasts numerous high-rise buildings.

A look at three Greater Nashville neighborhoods:

- **Downtown.** Nashville's downtown has several neighborhoods with new lofts and condos. The Gulch is a former warehouse district that has some of the city's trendiest bars and restaurants, and new luxury high-rise condos. The District, a revitalized historic area on the river, also has live music clubs and bars. "There are several new condos and urban loft concepts within walking distance of both The District and the football stadium," says local real-estate broker Marty Calfee. New condos start there at about \$300,000.
- **Franklin.** *Southern Living* magazine rated its downtown historic district one of the USA's five best places to live, Calfee says. Luxury houses start at about \$1 million, she says; a two-bedroom condo can be \$250,000. The most popular second-home choice is Westhaven, a planned community, with about 800 residences already. Condos go for \$350,000; houses, more than \$400,000.
- **Brentwood.** A Nashville suburb in the 1960s, it's grown into its own city. "This is where you find the huge McMansions on big lots," Calfee says. "Dolly Parton lives in L.A., but she has a place in Brentwood." There are few condos and less shopping, she says, and Brentwood is less popular for second homes.



Courtesy of Marty Calfee.com

On the market: This 4-year-old brick home is on a corner lot in the exclusive Westhaven development in Franklin.

Midrange price: **\$659,000**

Bedrooms: 4

Bathrooms: 3 plus 2 half-baths

Size: 4,473 square feet

Features: Living room with fireplace, formal dining room, kitchen with pantry, breakfast room and a media room. It has California Closets storage systems throughout. It also has an office, with wet bar and half bath over a three-car garage, and a covered porch and patio.



Courtesy of Tom Gattlin/Michelle Maldonado

On the market: This two-story penthouse apartment is in the Adelia, a new high-rise condo in downtown Nashville.

High price: **\$845,000**

Bedrooms: 3

Bathrooms: 3

Size: 2,389 square feet

Features: Living room with fireplace, dining room and kitchen with pantry. There is bamboo flooring and floor-to-ceiling "window walls." It has gourmet kitchen appliances, two parking spots and storage in the garage. The building has security and a shared pool.