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## Business

### Ranch & Retreat: Kerrville is a hunter's paradise

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**Melissa Matthews-Woolard**  
 Special to the Express-News

Kerrville is a hunter's paradise and has been ever since the world-famous Y.O. Ranch opened in 1852.

Besides the whitetail deer and turkeys the region is known for, Kerrville has created a name for itself with its hunting ranches stocked with exotic game. Now hunters pay big bucks to kill big bucks, big ibex, big wildebeests and more.

These excursions draw hunters from all over the country, many of whom end up loving the area and desperate to buy ranchland of their own.

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They won't.

"Hunting is the No. 1 reason people buy in this area. After that, it's recreation — water recreation mostly," said Kyle Kleypas, an agent with Michael Baumann and Co. in Kerrville.

Kleypas has been representing buyers in the area for more than six years. "We only represent buyers because so many out-of-state people have come to buy in this area, and they don't have a lot of time to spend looking."

Kleypas said about half of his buyers are from outside the Kerrville area, and half of those are out-of-state buyers.



(Courtesy of Brian W. Utechl/ Hranicky Farm & Ranch Sales)

The 199-acre Canyon Creek Ranch on Bushwhack Creek is listed for \$2.25 million and includes a 4,200-square-foot main house and a 4,000-square-foot guesthouse. Like the rest the Hill Country, Kerrville, about a 60-minute drive from San Antonio on Interstate 10 West, has enjoyed a healthy land price appreciation. In 2006, land was selling for a median price of \$7,086 an acre, up 247 percent from \$2,043

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an acre in 10 years, according to the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University.



(Courtesy of Brian W. Utecht/ Hranicky Farm & Ranch Sales)

The 199-acre Canyon Creek Ranch is listed for \$2.25 million and includes a 4,200-square-foot main house and a 4,000-square-foot guesthouse.

Despite the appreciation, the area remains attractive to out-of-state buyers because many still consider it a bargain.

"It's high to us, but compared to the North and Northwest (parts of the country), it's still really low," Kleypas said.

Kerr County has several waterfront opportunities, with the Guadalupe River and Second Creek running through it.

Generally, the east side of the county has more springs and creeks, and since it's closer to Interstate 10, the price is usually higher than land on the west side of the county.

"The west side of town until you get to Hunt is more hills, rocks, rougher land. East is more pastures, improved land and provides more access to (Interstate) 10," Kleypas said.

Canyon Creek Ranch is listed for \$2.25 million by Brian W. Utecht with Hranicky Farm and Ranch Sales. That's about \$11,000 an acre for 199 acres, a 4,200-square-foot main house with a wraparound porch, a 4,000-square-foot guesthouse with two fireplaces, a conference room and a 2,000-square-foot barn — plus scenic views of the Bushwhack Creek.

Another property on Second Creek is listed at \$2,807,530 by Jimmy Reno with Hilderbran Reno Realty. That's about \$10,750 an acre for 261 acres that had been used as a horse-training facility rather than a residential ranch. The property has two barns, each with 30 large stalls, a covered arena, a 130-foot round pen, improved pastures in coastal hay production and other pastures for horses or cattle.

Kleypas acknowledged there has been a slowdown in sales during the last two quarters of 2007 and going into 2008.

"I think people are watching what is happening with the mortgage industry situation and waiting a little longer," he said. Since hunting and recreation property is a luxury item and not a necessity, he said he believes buyers can afford to hold off on purchasing until they feel the time is right.

"I guess they are thinking that the prices will go down. But so far, I haven't seen prices dropping around here — other than the properties that

#### KERRVILLE-AREA LISTINGS

##### Second Creek Ranch

- 261 acres on Second Creek
- Amenities: Horse-training facility with 60 stalls. Land features an agricultural exemption with improved pastures in coastal hay production.
- List price: \$2,807,530
- Contact information: Hilderbran Reno Realty, Jimmy Reno, (830) 257-5777

##### Canyon Creek Ranch

- 199 acres on Bushwhack Creek
- Amenities: Two homes, each at least 4,000 square feet, with conference room and 2,000-square-foot barn
- List price: \$2,250,000
- Contact information: Hranicky Farm and Ranch Sales, Brian Utecht, (361) 726-3101

##### 607 Rim Rock

- 3 acres
- Amenities: Views overlooking Kerrville and the Guadalupe River
- List price: \$150,000
- Contact information: ERA Colonial Real Estate, Susan Heffington, (830) 896-5666

##### 2550 Whiskey Canyon Ranch

- 27.18 acres
- Amenities: Plumbed and ready for construction. Has a 2,100-square-foot guesthouse with a gourmet kitchen, slate floors and a patio overlooking a creek.
- List price: \$989,000
- Contact information: ERA Colonial Real Estate, Susan Heffington, (830) 896-5666

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were already too high to begin with

- Axis deer, India
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  - Blackbuck antelope, India and Pakistan
  - Dama gazelle, Africa
  - Common eland and Lord Derby's eland, Africa
  - Gemsbok oryx, South Africa
  - Siberian ibex, Europe and Asia
  - Greater kudu, Africa
  - Llama, South America
  - Nilgai, India
  - Scimitar-horned oryx, Africa
  - Sika, Japan
- Source: Kerrville Convention and Visitors Bureau

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