

ALTERNATIVE RETIREMENT HOME

Whilst driving down Route 66 some years ago and listening to the car radio, there was a lady talking about the situation she found herself in after her husband had died.

The family home was too large for her and her adult children had married and moved away. I think the state she lived in was Oklahoma.

Her plan was to sell the home and move into a retirement village whereby she felt she would be safe and have easy access to medical care if needed. However she soon realised that the bulk of the capital from the sale of the house would be needed to buy into the retirement village and it turned out in this area, that it wasn't guaranteed that the local doctor could turn up immediately. Often you just had to take yourself off to the hospital in town and wait.

She did her sums and invested her money from the sale of the house. She then had a chat to the local Best Western Motel manager and they agreed on a reduced rate of about \$60 per day for a long term stay (compared with about \$200 per day in the retirement village). The motel room was also somewhat larger than the retirement home.

She was pretty hale and hearty at this time but the benefits were that Best Western guaranteed a doctor attending to their customers within an hour. Breakfast was included in the day rate and she had access to the motel restaurant (or room service) for other meals. For a few dollars extra all her personal laundry was done -- sheets, towels etc and cleaning being part of the motel stay.

As a permanent resident, the manager agreed that she could bring a few items of small furniture - bookshelves etc.

She had access to the swimming pool and there was 24-hour security around the motel. When her family came to visit her, she booked extra rooms for them and they could enjoy a BBQ and a few drinks around the pool.

During the day the free shuttle bus from the local airport called at the motel and she had a free ride to the airport for a meal and to browse the shops. This same shuttle bus took her into town for shopping, movies and catching up with friends.

While the financial benefits were obvious, she was not socially isolated, had access to quick medical attention, there was good security and she could get out and around without much cost as well.

I don't know if you could swing such a deal in Australia, but it certainly sounded attractive.

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