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# Fontainebleau owner revamps University City senior apartments, pricing

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The Fontainebleau Apts for Seniors in University City are being renovated and aggressively marketed.



The owner of the recently renamed Fontainebleau Apartments for Seniors in University City are trying to take it back to the future. Brentmoor Retirement Communities restored the complex's original name this month, and it is renovating its older apartments and offering residents more economical rental plans.

"You'll pay only for what you want," said Denise Niemann, Fontainebleau's executive director. "We came up with this concept in response to our seniors' financial woes."

Until this year, residents of the apartments at 1001 North Mc-Knight Road, known as Brentmoor Place before the switch, were required to buy a full independent living package that included some meals and activities fees. Monthly rental fees were at least \$2,000.

Options still include transportation, housekeeping and parking, for those residents who drive. But the recession has had several residents worried that they wouldn't be able to make their payments and might have to move, Niemann said.

The new a la carte pricing allows residents to skip the meals and other extras if they desire. Apartments at Fontainebleau now are available for as low as \$1,390 a month.

When the Fontainebleau complex was built nearly 50 years ago, it was marketed as an upscale apartment building for everyone. But by the mid-1990s, nearly 90 percent of its residents were over age 70, and it was being advertised as a senior living complex for independent older people.

The property, acquired in 1996 by Brentmoor Retirement Communities, was renamed Brentmoor Place and converted to a seniors-only, limited-service retirement community.

By 2007, Brentmoor Place had become an all-inclusive, full-service community, providing meals, transportation and housekeeping for its residents.

Now, the a la carte pricing allows options while maintaining a social environment for residents, who are required to be at least 62 years old.

Niemann said Fontainebleau's age gives it one distinctive advantage over many newer buildings. "This is a concrete building, so you hear almost no noise from other apartments," she said. "It's built like Fort Knox."

She said that the apartment complex had been known over the years for its social programs and activities and that those would continue. "It's brain-stimulating; it's computer classes and trivia events, for example," she said.

A group of men who live there organized the MOB group, short for Men of Brentmoor, several years ago. "They get out at least once a month and go to places like Crown Candy Kitchen and other St. Louis landmarks," Niemann said.

A longtime MOB member, Mark Margolies, is a resident coordinator for group activities and helps other residents resolve any concerns. "It gives me something to do," said Margolies, 75.

He said he has enjoyed living there. "I have no complaints," he said. "I like the convenience of the apartments, the location and the staff."

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