

HOUSING RESOURCE: EL PASO, TX

COMPILED BY THE STUDENTS OF PLFSOM

THINGS WE WISH WE HAD KNOWN BEFORE LOOKING FOR HOUSING:

1) There is this thing in El Paso called evaporative cooling: It's an **evaporative cooler** (also **swamp cooler**, **desert cooler**, and **wet air cooler**) is a device that cools air through the simple evaporation of water. For most people "normal" air conditioning is called "**refrigerated**" in El Paso. Evaporative cooling is especially well suited for climates where the air is hot and humidity is low. The advantages of evaporative cooling: it is less expensive to operate. Disadvantages include that it does not work well on days of high humidity (e.g. when it rains) and that the air it pumps in is of higher humidity.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evaporative_cooler

2) Housing in El Paso is not as expensive as in other cities. Coming from a city like Austin where rent for a small apartment can be well over \$1000 to El Paso is an adjustment. In El Paso, renting a two-bedroom house in a nice neighborhood can be done for well under \$1000. I wish I had looked at houses when I first started searching rather than moving in the middle of my first year. It is just good to know that houses *are* an affordable option. Be sure to ask about neighborhood stuff to ensure you end up in the safest area possible.

3) Good resources: www.hotpads.com, www.apartmentratings.com and www.apartmentfinder.com.

4) Statistics for the PLFSOM Class of 2013

68% live in Apartments	77% of students live on the Westside
22% live in Homes (7 rent, 1 owns)	23% of students live on the Eastside
5% live in Townhomes	
5% live with their parents	95% of us do NOT have a roommate

APARTMENTS

THE TUSCANY (WEST)

415 Mesa Hills Dr., El Paso, TX 79912 / Contact: 866-610-5493

REVIEW #1:

PROS: Awesome view, haven't had any problems, quiet neighborhood, 2 pools (which I never used BOO), basketball court, parks, they don't have all of these hidden additional fees (i.e. covered parking, fee for living on the second floor, etc), comes with washer and dryer, nice kitchen, big bathroom, and much more..

CONS: It's pretty expensive for El Paso. The smaller 1b/1b is about 700 the bigger 1b/1b is 890. See if you can find a home it sometimes feels like it's not worth the price. you could probably get a 2 bedroom for just as much as I am paying for my apt.

Overall, I am extremely happy with my apt. However, I feel as though I am paying way too much for my apt. In terms of space and price I could probably get a better deal elsewhere.

Here is my contact information in case you have any questions: Chau Vu, 832.466.4137, chau.vu@ttuhsc.edu

REVIEW#2:

First of all, I ABSOLUTELY LOVE living here! I really think that this is the best apartment complex in the entire city (if not the entire city, it's at least the best complex on the Westside). I've been to a lot of the apartments that other classmates live in since we've started school here, and I still don't think anyone lives in a place better than mine. It's a brand new gated community so it's very safe and beautiful. Many people in the medical community live here (two people in our class, several 3rd and 4th years from Lubbock, current nurses and doctors, and even one of our professors and her family). There are two pools and a really nice fitness center and clubhouse. Also, there is a sand volleyball court, basketball court, and tennis courts on site. Each tenant gets their own assigned covered parking spot. The apartments, themselves, are AWESOME. I live by myself in a 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom apartment and have about 600 square feet. It sounds small but it's really all I need. There is really nice carpeting in the living/dining/bedroom areas, and beautiful lighting and cabinetry in the kitchen. The appliances are all new. Each apartment comes with its own washer and dryer so you don't have to worry about buying or renting your own. The bathrooms are SERIOUSLY HUGE. Each apartment has its own balcony and outdoor storage closet. We have refrigerated air here so you don't have to deal with the whole "swamp cooler" mess. My utilities are minimal, at best. I pay about \$25/month for water, \$20/month for gas, and electricity varies depending on the season. In the summer months I was paying about \$50/month but in the winter months I've been paying less than \$30/month. Internet and tv providers are either AT&T or Verizon, depending on your preference and which apartment you're in. There are people with satellite so if you have DirecTV or Dish Network already set up, you'll probably be able to get it transferred here as long as your apartment faces the right direction. The staff is really friendly here and wonderful about helping all of the tenants. Anytime I've ever needed maintenance work, they've come the same day and fixed the problem. They do allow pets here for a fee. I think it's something like a \$300 pet deposit and then an additional \$10/month on top of your rent. The location is also very good. We're right by I-10, Sunland Park Mall, Target, Best Buy, and Barnes & Noble. Grocery shopping can be done either at Target or Sun Harvest (an organic farmer's market) and there's also an Albertson's about 5 miles up on Mesa.

Now for my criticisms: it's a little pricey to live here. I pay \$685/month and I have the smallest floor plan apartment and that price is only going to go up once I renew my lease. Also, I'm a girl and obviously very interested in closet space for my clothes and shoes, and I wish the closets were just a little bit bigger. It's really not an issue though because there's a bedroom closet, an entryway closet, and a linen closet, so I keep all of my "out of season" clothing in either my linen closet or entry closet to leave space in my bedroom closet for my clothes that are appropriate for the current temperatures. And lastly, the commute to school can be a pain in the mornings. Technically I'm only 1.2 miles from campus, but it can take over 30 minutes to get to school in the mornings because of traffic. Any other time of the day it isn't too bad, but for some reason, I guess I forgot how to drive between the hours of 7am-8am. Gofigure.

Please let me know if you have any questions and you're welcome to come and see my place when you come out here to apartment-hunt! Feel free to contact me, Bailey Wilson, at bailey.wilson@ttuhsc.edu.

THE POINTE (WEST)

5525 N. Stanton St.; El Paso, TX 79912; 915-581-9706

I live at The Pointe Apartments and LOVE them. They are certainly more up-to-date than most apartments on the west side: They have new black appliances, two-inch blinds, and most have new countertops (all put in within the last two years). The apartment is also impeccably maintained with great on-site office / repair staff. In addition to all this, complex features a lot of trees and plants (something uncommon in El Paso). Since I have a dog, the grass was crucial. The complex is very quiet and tends to be home to professionals and little old ladies. I love it! You are allowed to paint walls if you would like, and the management is overall very personable and flexible. I also enjoy that the complex is right up against the mountain, which keeps it a few degrees cooler than the city at all times. When it does get hot, we have *refrigerated* air conditioning. If you have any questions, my name is Travis and you can contact me at tcosban@gmail.com or 713-819-6712.

LAS COLINAS DEL SOL (WEST)

945 South Mesa Hills Drive; El Paso, TX 79912; (915) 833-2040

REVIEW #1:

I will start off with why I chose Colinas Del Sol Apartments. The location is seriously perfect. I-10 and the Border Highway are literally right around the corner however the complex is actually secluded so that you're not affected by the noise of the traffic etc. There are restaurants right outside the complex and Mesa, (a main street with restaurants, shops, grocery stores etc) is only 10 minutes away. The units are larger. Mine is around 900 sqft and I pay 770. We share water, gas, and trash with each building. Cable is included but you have to take care of internet and electricity. The pool / volleyball court area is really nice and the gym has enough in it.

People have had varying experiences here but I think we all agree that management is unresponsive and the workers can be rather rude at times. Personally, I've had a lot of problems during my stay here. Actually, my problems began at my move in when they didn't have my apartment ready even though I had been communicating with them for 3 months. They do nothing about noise complaints. I have a very unruly upstairs neighbor and I've been fighting with the complex about him all year and nothing has been done. If you ever want to speak to the manager you probably won't be able to and if you ever have problems she doesn't respond for another 2-3 weeks. So all in all, if you're not looking to need management much, then this complex will be good for you. If you do like responsive office people, I'd reconsider. Also if you do choose to live here, do NOT get a first floor apartment. There is a leakage problem throughout the ENTIRE COMPLEX! Every time it rains you will probably need to be putting out a bucket and they never fix it right. Please contact me if you have questions. grace.ng@ttuhsc.edu or 915-346-4049

REVIEW #2

I like the openness of my apartment, very quiet, good for someone with pets, located right next to a ramp onto I-10, close to major stores (Target, Albertsons, Sunland Park Mall, various restaurants), within the complex there are 2-3 pools and workout areas. Cons: rent is a little too high (810 a month for a single, not including water and such), management not the best to work with (though personally I have never had any problems).

Overall, I have no issues with Colinas, enjoy my apartment, and would recommend the complex to anyone.

REVIEW#3

The management is terrible. For as heavily advertised as Colinas is you would expect it to be a decent place to live. The facilities are very impressive, but the complex is loud and the management does not care about your needs after you sign the lease. I would not live here if I could go back and pick again. Don't live here for the pool or volleyball court because you can just walk up and use them if you ever want to. The only pros are refrigerated air and easy freeway access.

REVIEW#4

Good things:

- They got new machines in the gym which is nice because the old ones were not very useful, extremely old.
- They are actually not bad on maintenance: They will usually come in within a day or two when you call in. But I have heard that they aren't so good from other people, so this I'm not sure about this.
- It basically looks like a California resort of some kind. This will make you more depressed because you will most likely be indoors studying a whole bunch, but it does look nice.
- It isn't too scary even if you get home late at night.
- If you live in a 2/2 with a roommate rent around \$450 plus utilities - so not ridiculously expensive.
- There are a whole bunch of stores (Target, Ulta, Barnes and Noble, Office supply stores, etc. right next to the complex.) And there is a mall basically like across the street as well.

Bad things:

- Someone backed into my car when it was parked and left a pretty sizeable dent in it.
- It's kind of pricey and you can probably get a place for less in the same area.
- Sometimes the water will get cold when you're taking a shower in the morning.

You can contact me at apatluru@gmail.com if you have any questions!

My name's Aparna. Congrats on med school! Congrats on PLFSOM.

SEVILLE WEST

200 Shadow Mountain Drive; El Paso, TX 79912; (915) 584-7900

I live at Seville West, which is on Shadow Mountain just across Mesa from Sunland Park. Our apartment is a 1200 square foot two bedroom, one and a half bath. The bedrooms and the full bath are upstairs. The half bath, kitchen, and living room are downstairs. There's a tiny patio in the back, but no porch on the front. All of the townhomes have both front and back doors. The rent is \$725 / mo. It comes with one assigned but uncovered parking place that's right by the back door. We pay an extra \$20 / month for a second parking place, which is covered. They will make deals about the deposit and application fees so getting in is pretty cheap. On the downside, the windows are very low-end single pane (wobbly in places) and there's not much visitor parking (almost none).

The managers are hard to get on the phone, but pretty reasonable when you finally get to talk to them. They let us have more pets than are allowed in the official building rules. They are very careful and aware when coming into our apartment so that they don't

let any of the cats out. The complex is mostly quiet. The complex behind Seville West is not at all quiet so where on the property your particular apartment is will make a difference. There are a number of senior citizens living in the complex who have been there for 15+ years. The pool is nice and not crowded. The grounds are well kept. There's almost never a wait in the laundry room. There are half a dozen in the class of 2013 in apartments within half a mile of us.

I would definitely want to be on the west side. It's nice to be tucked up in the edges of the Franklin Mountains. It feels a lot like a small town. From our specific location, there's a Starbucks between the complex and the highway. The grocery store across Mesa sucks, but there's an Albertson's a few miles down the road. There are several dozen restaurants within five miles and even a few within walking distance. There are a couple of Protestant churches, at least two synagogues, and one really big Catholic church in the area. Sunland Park Mall is just a few miles down the hill and the Outlet Mall is about 10 miles down I-10. There's a casino on the New Mexico side of I-10. It's pretty awful but you're not going to have time to go to it anyway.

February '10 update: There is currently one of the three bedroom units available. The tenant moved out 1/31 and it's being worked on. It should be ready for move in 3/1 if not sooner. It's 1340ft² with 3 bedrooms and 1 3/4 baths. The rent is \$815. It's perfect for a family or a group of roommates. There are only four of these units in the complex and they tend to be rented for decades before the people move on.

SHADOW RIDGE (CENTRAL / EAST)

9375 Viscount Boulevard; El Paso, TX 79925; (915) 593-5250

Probably the nicest of the apartments in the area (most are older). It is in a pretty centralized location (technically it is "east" side), and is close to the airport, food, Cielo Vista Mall, and pretty much everything you need is 5 minutes away. It takes about 20 minutes to get to the "west" side (where lots of the 1st years currently live) and 10-15 to downtown bars. Shadow Ridge is pet friendly and they have 1, 2, and 3 bedroom floor plans. I currently pay \$639 for a 646sqft 1 bed / 1 bath apartment. I really like it, but if you're there make sure you get the TOP floor because foot traffic is loud. I'm upgrading to a 958sqft 2 bed / 2 bath for \$785 because I want a separate office (but that's personal preference). Of course, these prices are subject to change! Gas is \$1.5 flat (you just add that to rent), and water added each month according to your building (they take into account number of occupants and square footage). You pay for everything else. My favorites:

- Swimming pool in the summer is NOT busy at all! There are 2, and they are pretty nice. I like to study out there and they have tables and chairs and furniture to lay out on.
- Ceiling fan—you can actually save a lot on AC if you use it!
- Washer/dryer connections—there is a laundry facility, but having a washer/dryer in my place is great and super convenient!
 - Bookshelves—I don't think much about it, but we do have lots of books / study stuff and it's nice that it's already there and it doesn't take up extra space!
 - Prices—they are very reasonable, especially if you plan on having roommates. Even if you're by yourself, comparatively it's pretty good.
 - LOCATION—best part. Nice place CLOSE to school and the hospital!! My one complaint would be that if you really need AT&TU-Verse in your life, then you really have to be patient and persistent. Although the complex is on the map to be eligible for U-Verse, for some reason Shadow Ridge and the complex next to it, Highridge, have lots of problems when the U-verse installer comes. Regardless, it is possible to install U-verse, it just takes many appointments in order for it to finally get installed!

RYAN'S MILL APARTMENT (WEST)

601 South Mesa Hills, El Paso, TX 79912

Contact: Jet Liu (713) 885-1396

Pros

✚ Management

Ryan's Mill has been under a new management for only a couple of years. The new management team is awesome, they are very friendly and helpful if you have any question or needs. Work orders usually get complete on the same day or the day after at the latest. Because Ryan's Mill is one of the older apartment complexes on the west side, the maintenance crew are constantly adding many new features in order to stay competitive (e.g. secure parking gate, tanning chairs around the pool...)

✚ Location

It is located right in the center of the West Side, about 2 minutes away from the Sunland Park Mall, 3 minutes away from I-10 highway, 3 minutes from Planet Fitness Gym, and it is pretty close to all other major apartments on the West Side, so it's easier to visit your classmates on the West Side. Driving to school takes about 15 minutes.

✚ Environment

There are a lot of trees in Ryan's Mill. Out of all the apartments I have visited when I was apartment hunting, its greenery definitely caught my eyes. It is always nice to see green in the middle of the desert. It is very quiet here, even though it is located right next to the street, so great for us!

✚ Price

The apartment is one of the cheaper ones on the West Side. I am paying \$575/mth for 638 sq ft one bedroom apartment with fireplace and patio, which is dirty cheap comparing rents in Dallas or Houston. The rent does not include cable, electricity, or water. Make sure to ask them for medical student discount!

✚ Parking

Ryan's Mills offers free close-gated covered parking.

✚ Roaches or lack of

I have not seen a roach in my apartment since I moved here, definitely a big plus in my book.

Cons

✚ Older Apartments

An older apartment.

✚ Evaporative Cooling

The worst con about this place, see Travis' explanation for details, all I can say is I don't like it. But there is one upside - the electric bill is around \$20 a month.

✚ Gym

There is a gym, with 3 machines in it (lat pulldown, and treadmill, can't remember the last one); they are enough to keep you in shape, but that's about it. I am member of this awesome gym on the West Side called Backstreet Gym, it is about 5 minutes away, contact me if you are interested (www.backstreetgym.com)!

HOUSES

REVIEW#1

I live in a house on the **west** side of El Paso. I found the house after several trips to El Paso--my parents and I came looking in the spring prior to starting school. I had a difficult time finding homes that were in good condition--not sure if my standards were too high or if I just had bad luck! I have the name of my realtor if anyone is interested (I went through 3 of them until I found one that I liked). The drive is not too bad--about 30-40 minutes in morning rush hour to get from Resler (the exit where my house is located off of) to Raynolds (where TTUHSC is). In non-rush hour times, the drive is 15-20 minutes. I like the neighborhood and have good neighbors. Good luck amigos! Call or email me if you have questions or need any advice!
jillian.n.junkes@ttuhsc.edu <<mailto:jillian.n.junkes@ttuhsc.edu>>, 602.705.8628

REVIEW#2

I recently moved into a house on the **west** side from an apartment. I wanted to have a backyard for my dog in preparation for third and fourth year when I will be out of the house for extended periods of time. My rent is \$825 for a two-bedroom, one-bathroom home with a two-car garage. I love it. I live in the Kern area, which is a reclaimed historic district with lots of parks and some really unique homes. I do have evaporative cooling (as do most homes unless recently converted). At this point I haven't had to use it since it is winter and cannot report on its effectiveness. My drive to school is 12 minutes. I live near all my favorite restaurants and bars. The grocery store is 2 blocks away. My neighbors are all families or newly-weds and I feel totally safe at all hours. If you need any advice on searching for a home feel free to contact me! Travis Cosban: tcosban@gmail.com or 713-819-6712.

REALTORS

Sam Trimble: Great for buying or renting. He gets commission from the properties owners so his services are free. I went through two realtors before finding him. He is on time, responsive and very helpful. Sam is in his late twenties and is energetic and understanding of medical student needs. He has a website with his listings but is also able to open rental properties of other agencies. After the agency list in the home I wanted failed to make my appointment, I contacted him and he had me in to see the home that day and then turned in my rental application.

Website: <http://www.samsellse Paso.com/P>

Phone: 915-269-7634

E-mail: samueltrimble@gmail.com

Brenda Rogers: Great for buying a home on the west side. She is very prompt and a good communicator.

Website: http://cardelrealty.com/agent_detail.php?staff_id=17

Phone: 915-494-6004 (cell) or 888-701-0307 ext 227 (office)

E-mail: brendaorogers@gmail.com