



::Fall::

Time To Explore:

Tierra Monte & Evergreen Hills

Two pocket neighborhoods on the edge of the City



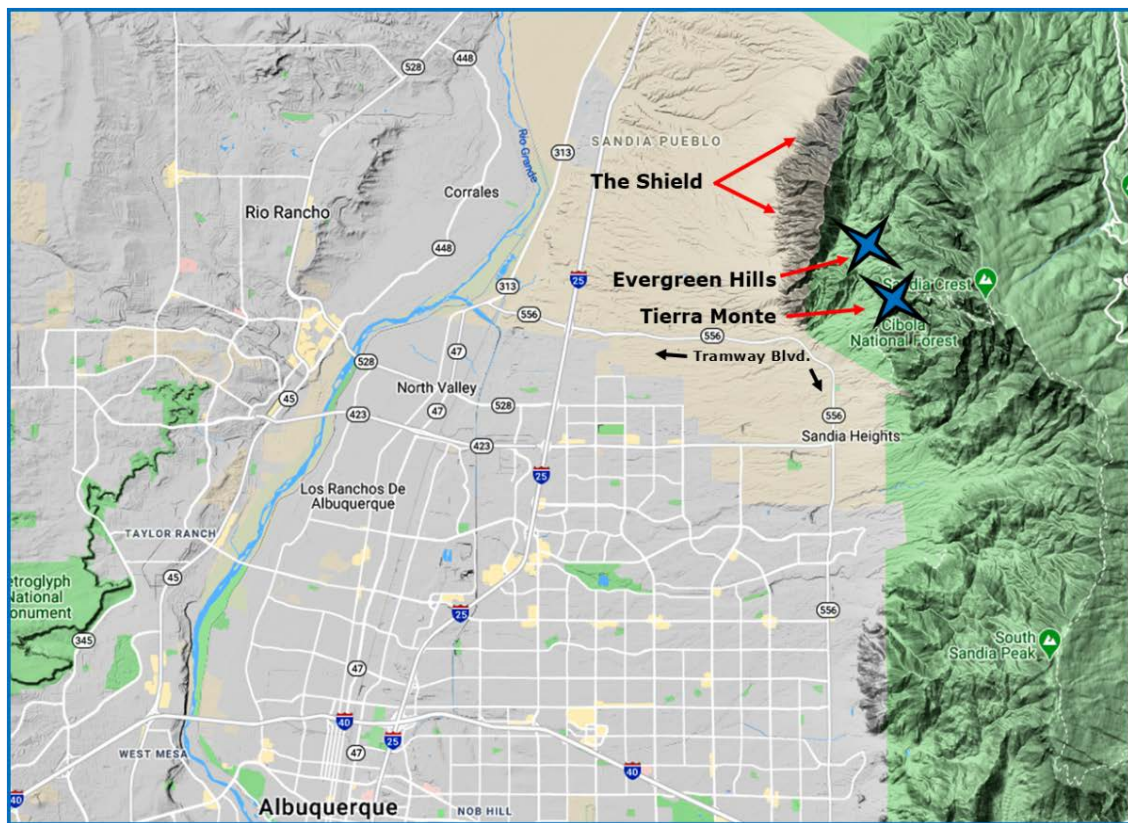
This is a great time of year to explore, especially now, as personal space is so important. And what a great way to get away from it all, by never leaving the MetroABQ...

Unless you are a hiker or mountain biker, you may not have heard of the two small neighborhoods nestled high up in the Foothills of the Sandia Mountains. Tierra Monte & Evergreen Hills are both unique & exclusive: the real estate there can be expensive, the views are extraordinary, & getting there & back can be a lot of fun.



The top image gazes south along the Sandia Foothills, from a residence high up the mountain face in Tierra Monte, a small bedroom community north of Sandia Heights. The property, recently for sale, backs up to the Sandia Mountain Wilderness--huge boulders sit above the home just beyond the property line. The image just above is from the same house but facing due west; the rocks on the right side are the beginnings of the massive Shield rock feature that extends across the Pueblo of Sandia, up to the [Village of Placitas](#). More on The Shield below.





Where are these tiny mountain enclaves? The scenic way to get to Tierra Monte & Evergreen Hills is to start on Tramway Blvd. Tramway is the easternmost (road) arterial in Albuquerque proper, running north & south along the length of the Sandia Mountain Foothills. Numerous neighborhoods dot the hills, starting at the [Four Hills Village](#) in the south. As you head north along Tramway, you pass other prominent Foothills neighborhoods like [Supper Rock](#), [Embudo Canyon](#), [Kachina Hills](#), [Glenwood Hills](#), [High Desert](#) & the neighborhoods that make up [Sandia Heights](#).

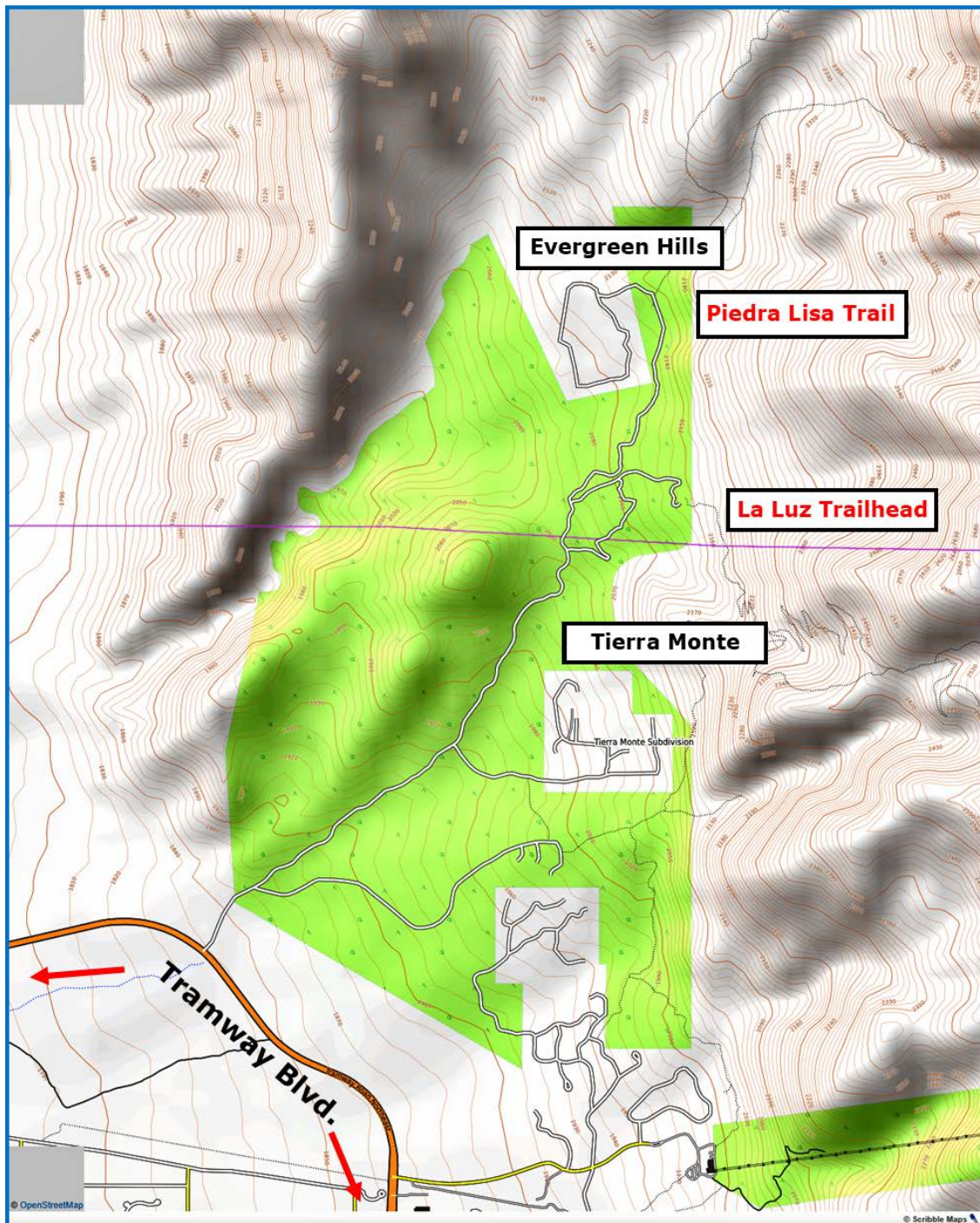
Right around then you'll pass signs for the Sandia Peak Tram. Continuing north the houses seem to recede back toward the mountains & mostly disappear, & you are suddenly surrounded by Open Space; keep going.

Up until then Tramway Blvd had been straight for nine miles, with panoramic across-city views looking west toward the mesa & volcanoes. When the boulevard starts to curve west, it becomes Tramway Road, & heads toward the Pueblo of Sandia. That turn in the road is where you'll see Forest Route 333, which is the only way (by car) into that part of the Sandias.

The most distant destination first: Evergreen Hills sits at the end(-ish) of that forest road, arguably the hilliest & twistiest road in the county.

Once you turn onto the forest road, there are numerous other interesting sights

along the way: the La Cueva Recreation Area, the Tierra Monte neighborhood, Juan Tabo Picnic Area (with CCC-era stone house), the [La Luz Trailhead](#) & the [Piedra Lisa Trail](#); plus, there are dozens of hiking/biking trails that zig & zag up & down the arroyo canyons, crisscrossing behind The Shield. See the map below.







## Evergreen Hills

The drive up to Evergreen Hills is so far north, that you cross into Sandoval County just before you arrive. Starting at the end-ish of the Rt 333, the two dozen plus homes in Evergreen Hills are all fully sustainable & off the electric grid. All have a healthy combination of solar PV arrays, water cisterns & catchments, propane tanks, wind-powered turbines, lithium batteries, generators, passive solar architectural building design, wood stoves, & numerous other green conveniences that ensure the remote homes have power, even when the city below may not.

Notice the large dark gash in the top left section of the map above, which is the western slope of The Shield; Evergreen Hills sits directly behind that huge rock formation, which affects the weather considerably. That's why it's good to be cautious, as the road reaching the small community can be treacherous in the winter months, which are longer & colder in Evergreen Hills than a mile away in Sandia Heights, for example.

The entire community lives on Circle Drive NE, or just off it, on a few small side roads. A driving tour of the neighborhood involves taking Circle Drive around its loop to the beginning, which is a short distance from both the La Luz & [Piedra Lisa](#) Trails. The homes are all custom built--no two are close to the same; & some have been built on the top of a hill, so they tend to stand out in the valley.

There isn't much real estate activity in the neighborhood. In the last five years, only two homes have sold publicly, a home is for sale now & one is under contract about to close. In general, the homes there sell for around a half million dollars, plus or minus a hundred thousand or so...

The above image is Evergreen Hills from the road as you drive in. Notice the windmill in the bottom right-hand corner, & the red drilling derrick in the middle, on the property of an under-construction new home. Below is a prominent home in Evergreen Hills that can be seen from almost everywhere in the small community. To the right, it has the requisite photovoltaic solar panel array for power.



**The Shield** is a huge rock formation on the west side of the Sandia Mountain range that resembles a medieval shield. See the map above. It's a cool jagged rock face & is the largest rock feature on the mountain. With the sheer walls & pinnacles, it draws rock climbers from all over. There are a few mines & a quarry in the area, too. The Pueblo of Sandia, which owns the land around The Shield, reveres it as a sacred protector of their land. It's easy to see how The Shield seems to wrap around the border of the Pueblo, protecting their watershed.

Which brings us to Piedra Lisa. **The Piedra Lisa Trail** is a 5 & 1/2 mile hike starting just before Evergreen Hills, skirting behind The Shield, & finishing up in the Open Space at the [Village of Placitas](#). I hiked the trail & even though it



d it doesn't go up to the top of the Sandia Crest, but instead traverses behind The Shield, it's still a nicely strenuous hike. The view scenes to the west & up the mountain are amazing.



On the way down from Evergreen Hills to Tierra Monte, a great place to stop along the way is the Juan Tabo Picnic Area.

From the [US Forest Service](#): *The Juan Tabo Picnic Area site is full of [Civilian Conservation Corps](#) (CCC) history & is listed in New Mexico's Registry of Historic Places.*

*There are stone picnic tables (seen below) and structures built by master stoneworkers during the 1930's, to blend seamlessly into the existing landscape. You will soon discover a rock pavilion (above) that is hidden by the trees, plus other small structures sprinkled throughout the site. Keep your eyes open for picnic tables, vault toilets and fire places that are tucked away in nooks and crannies, throughout this site.*

*The CCC was an early [New Deal](#) program begun by President Roosevelt in 1933 and continuing through 1942. During the great the Depression, The Civilian Conservation Corps employed local young men, all across the nation, to work on projects that would build up and improve states and national forests and parks.*

*Albuquerque, the Sandia Mountains, and New Mexico gained facilities that are still in use and enjoyed today. The structures you see in the Juan Tabo Picnic Site are almost 90 years old...*

What catches the eye at the Juan Tabo Site is the rounded riverstone house that overlooks the North Sandia Heights neighborhood below. The perhaps 400sqft structure was built sometime in the 1930's, & is complimented by numerous also-as-old stone picnic tables scattered in little flat nooks around the hill. It's a cool area to explore.

[Click to view more images of Juan Tabo structures.](#)





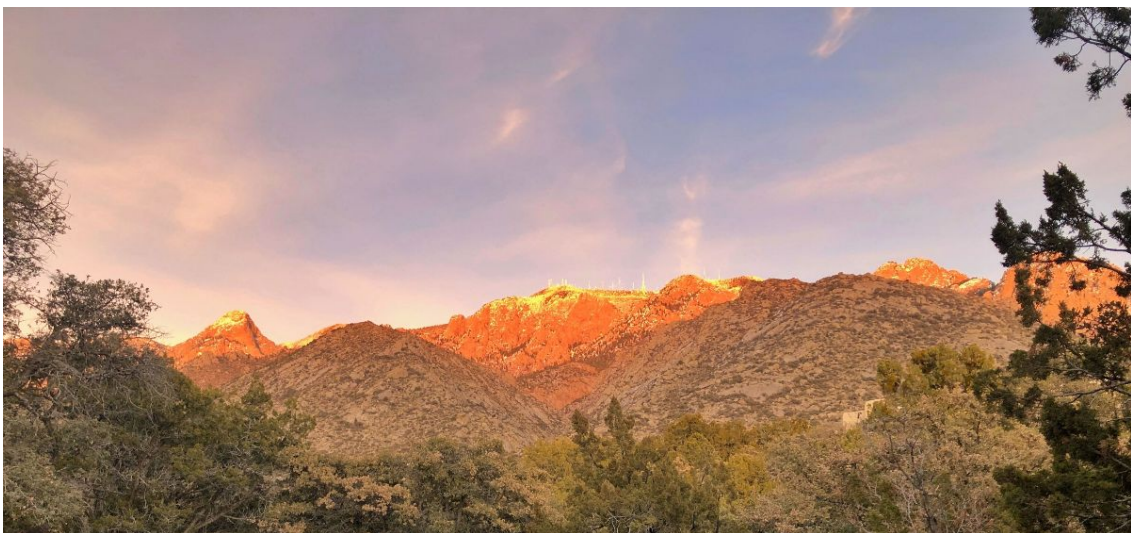
The Tierra Monte subdivision feels like an extension of the Sandia Heights neighborhoods, just further up the mountain & on rockier ground. The real estate prices there are similar, also, ranging from around a half a million up to well over a million dollars. In the 1960s, when the first custom homes were being built there, Tramway Blvd was a two-lane dirt road, & Forest Route 333 washed out regularly. Slowly, over the ensuing decades, the community filled in with some interesting architectural styles on display. If you've ever been near the Sandia Peak Tram & looked north, you may have seen the massive & dramatic



7733sqft Colonial Revival style home, replete with typical red brickwork in a rectangular shape, prominent front columns, & a grand two-story entry parlor with balconies...it's hard to miss (It recently sold for \$600,000).

Over 50 homes now live in Tierra Monte & a drive up the numerous dead end streets in the community is a lot of fun. The unique building shapes, sizes, styles & interior conveniences that are put into play, make for some interesting viewing. Sixteen homes have sold in the past five years there; the least expensive sold for \$460,000, & the most expensive home, which was double the size of the least, sold for \$1,100,000...

Just above & below are images from the small community. The two far top images in the newsletter were also taken from a home in Tierra Monte. The last image, two below, is a sunset scene facing back up toward the Sandia Peak, from a Tierra Monte back yard.







**University-Area Home For Sale, In The Historic**  
**[Silver Hills Neighborhood](#)**

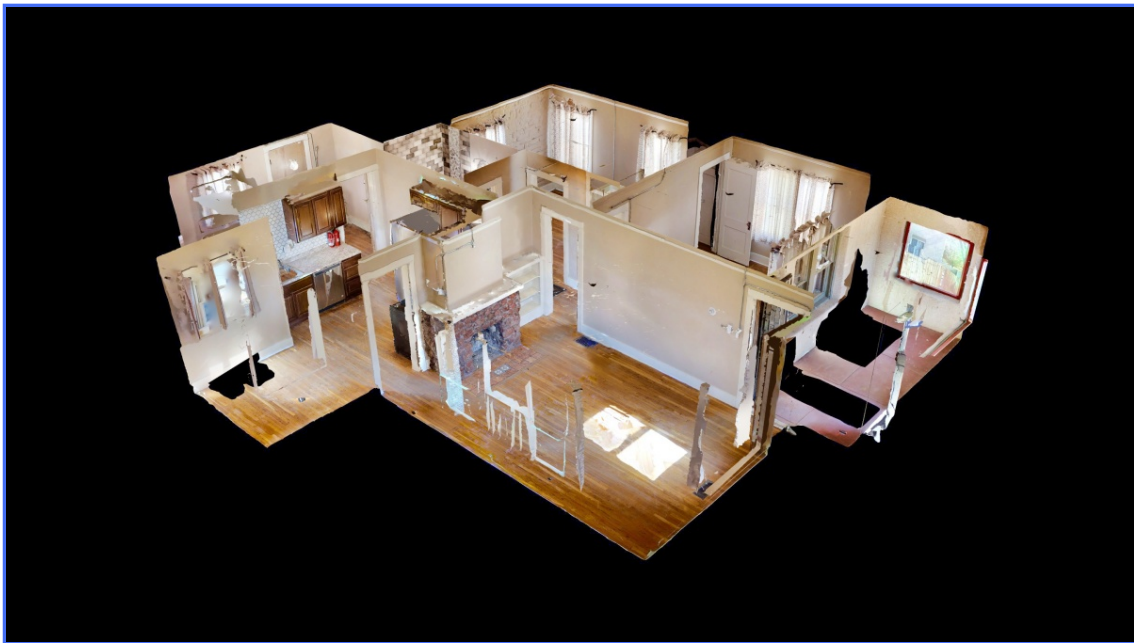
**[Welcome to 2109 Gold Ave SE](#)**

Sweet 2-bedroom light & bright adobe-built home in Silver Hills, an historic neighborhood sandwiched between UNM & CNM--easy walk/roll to both. Good to know: nicely updated plumbing & electric, new kitchen cabinets with 'wave-drop' backsplash, stainless appliances & great breakfast nook.

The street is zoned for the addition of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), which are being built in that section of the neighborhood, potentially adding a lot more value to the property.

[Click on the image below to view the 3-D Virtual Walking Tour!](#)

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Unless otherwise indicated, all photos by Chris Lucas.

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## Chris Lucas

Owner/Broker

**505.463.5317**

[Chris@chrislucasabq.com](mailto:Chris@chrislucasabq.com)

[ChrisLucasABQ.com](http://ChrisLucasABQ.com)

[NobHillNeighborhoods.com](http://NobHillNeighborhoods.com)

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**Our mailing address is:**

PO Box 40081

Albuquerque, NM 87196

To reach Chris: 505.463.5317

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