

Fraser Valley project offers cottagers 'four walls'

By Jean Sorensen

Despite the popularity of quarter-sharing and time-sharing, many traditional recreational cottage buyers still want to own the "four walls" and not share a space, wall or lot with a neighbour, says George Hare, president of Residential and Recreational Project Marketing Inc. (RPM) in Vancouver. But the traditional buyer still wants all the amenities a resort development can offer, and with the steep rise in fuel costs today, the commute to the cottage is becoming more of an issue.

All these considerations have spurred the development of the Fraser Valley's newest recreational property development known as The Cottages at Cultus Lake, which includes 218 summer cottages set over a treed 45 acres. Cultus Lake is the closest provincial park east of downtown

Vancouver, approximately 100 km east and only 10 km from Chilliwack. The city has a population of approximately 76,000 and has a strong agricultural sector and a secondary manufacturing industry related to the forest industry.

The new \$100-million Cultus Lake cottage development will feature Craftsman-style homes ranging in size from 966 square feet to 1,900 square feet. There will be 13 different interior designs offered, including one bedroom, one bedroom plus loft, two bedrooms, two bedrooms and loft, three bedrooms and three bedrooms plus loft. Prices start at \$324,900 with occupancy slated for fall 2008.

The resort is a gated community and features the \$3.5 million Pavilion Club recreational centre, complete with outdoor pool

and hot tub, fireside lounge, theatre, fitness centre and family activity areas. There are also tennis courts, a children's playground, boat storage areas and a network of private hiking trails.

Each lot is approximately 5,000 square feet and title to each home and lot is freehold. The recreational development, on private land and not in a flood area, is about a block from Cultus Lake, a popular and long-time recreational retreat for Lower Mainland residents. There is a monthly maintenance charge of \$75 to cottage owners. The cottages will all be protected by B.C.'s new homes warranty program.

"We think these are really going to be legacy purchases," says Hare, adding that the largest market response has come from the B.C. Lower Mainland, where buyers are mainly in the 40- to 60-year age range. These cottages will allow families greater opportunity to "reconnect", Hare says. The cottages may turn into permanent residences for some retirees – who sell the family home in an urban area – and then live by the lake in summer only to flee south in the camper for the winter months. Or, empty-nesters may find these lake side cottages a venue for calling the family together and reliving many of the childhood memories at a favourite vacation spot. Working seniors who want downtime can use the units as a short-stay retreat. The easy access makes it convenient to "take off even for a day during the week," says Hare.

The properties have been designed with large porches in the front and rear to accommodate groups gathering just to socialize or to barbecue. While there are no garages, storage sheds are built to a set standard to ensure that the properties retain their quality appearance. The cottages are also being fully insulated so that they can be used during winter.

The development is by Cultus Country Investments Ltd., a part-



The recreational development is about a block from Cultus Lake.

nership between two well-known residential developers, Jon Van Geel (president of Adriana Pacific Development) and Dave Balsor (Ocean Park Development). Collectively, they have over 65 successful residential and commercial developments including B.C. projects like Sequoia Ridge, Northpointe, Huntington Park and Rosemary heights.

Van Geel says there is a real need to create recreational developments near the Lower Mainland, but finding large tracts of land has become an on-going issue. The 45-acre tract currently under development was a long-time tent and trailer park that came up for sale and presented an ideal opportunity for development.

"Cultus Lake is one of the most popular areas in the Lower Mainland and people have been going there for generations," says Van Geel. But, as well as finding a large area of land in a recreational area, Van Geel and Balsor realized that the end price to the consumer had to be within reach. "Places like Whistler and the Okanagan have increased dramatically in price," says Van Geel. "We wanted to cater to the mainstream recreational client and wanted to keep the homes affordable."

Van Geel says there has been

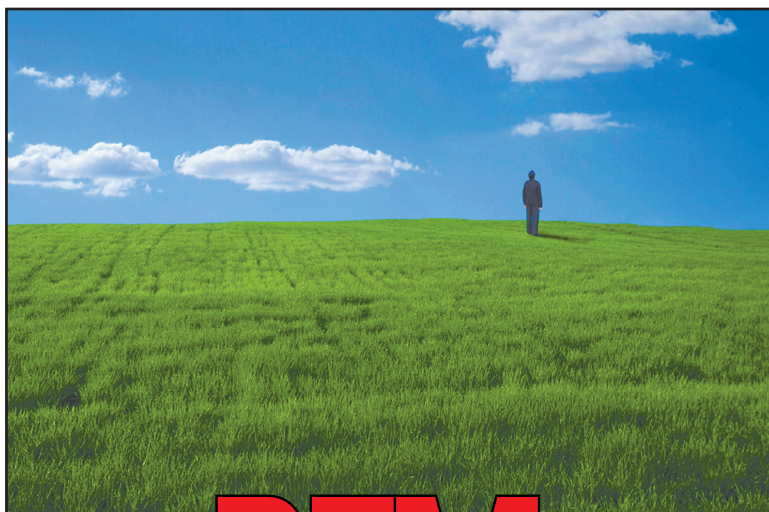
a concerted effort to keep the natural feel of the forested area within the old campsite. "It's a very heavily treed area and there have been painstaking efforts to keep as many trees as possible so that all the cottages have maximum tree retention," he says. As well, many of the roads wind through towering evergreens.

"It is an expensive roadway to build," says Van Geel, but the "road will look like it has been there forever."

Van Geel says that development approval was received in mid-August and construction on infrastructure services should be completed in late fall. Home construction will begin soon after.

Two units are being built on site to showcase the development. One is being used as a sales office while the other is a display unit. The sales centre office is at 1785 Columbia Valley Rd., Lindell Beach, B.C. Or, visit www.cultuslakecottages.com.

Hare says his company is willing to work with real estate agents who bring forward clients. "We are currently doing pre-marketing and generating leads. We are taking a \$5,000 refundable deposit that will secure the individual a position to purchase," he says, adding that the sales date will be some time near the end of September. ■ REM



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