



The new vacation home

Q&A

WITH ROB CHETNER

by SUSAN M BOYCE

SUMMER'S IN THE AIR, AND FOR MANY PEOPLE THAT immediately conjures up thoughts of escaping to the summer cottage. A vacation home is where days are carefree, dress code is casual, and lifelong friendships are often forged toasting marshmallow over a campfire.

Frequently, however, this idyllic lifestyle comes with a hidden cost beyond the actual price tag – it's hard work maintaining your part time retreat. Now, one Vancouver-based developer is creating an alternative – a strata community that lets owners “lock it and leave it” secure in the knowledge their vacation property will be maintained so it's ready for use the next time they arrive. It's a trend he believes will gain significant traction among increasingly busy urbanites because it puts the joy back into owning a recreational property.

This issue, *New Home Guide* chats with Rob Chetner, partner at Trasolini Chetner Construction Corporation, about Boucharie Beach and his vision of this new style vacation getaway.

Q: You've already built one condo-style vacation project in Kelowna, The Waterfront, which won numerous awards both provincially and locally. At Boucharie Beach you're taking a different, innovative, and perhaps controversial approach by building just 35 cottage-style homes on a prime, 12-acre lot. What's your motivation for creating such a small number of homes when you could put in a tower with 100 or more suites?

A: Most resorts today are high density, but we wanted to recreate and reinvent the old-fashioned experience of a true summer cottage – a place where you have your own space but can still meander across the lawn to the neighbour's for drinks before dinner and where the kids can be free to run around outside all day long. It may not be the highest use of the land, but we believe it's the best use of it.

There's also something magical about having direct connectivity to the outdoors –

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01 The Waterfront in Kelowna features condominium style vacation homes.

02 Boucharie Beach offers true cottage-style vacation homes without the hassle of maintenance.

03 Boucharie Beach's central pool is a perfect complement to the natural waters of Lake Okanagan just beyond.

04 Rob Chetner's two sons take an exuberant leap into the lake to celebrate summer.



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especially with the lake right there. In a condo, you have to go through a lobby and upstairs to get “home.” Here you just walk out and you’re at the beach.

Q: Why Boucharie Beach?

A: Growing up in Calgary during the late 1970s, my family went to a resort in Kelowna that my best friend’s parents had found way back in the 1950s. It had four cottages, and it was a magical place. Us kids lived for that holiday time – always the last one or two weeks in July and the first week in August. We’d come down the hill, see the resort and the boats, hear the gravel crunching under the tires, smell the trees, and instantly it was shoes off because summer had begun.

When the original owners, the Boucharies, felt they were getting too old to keep up the property, I immediately started negotiating with them to buy it. Our plan is to continue that feeling of being at the cottage. We’re even building a community fire pit because sitting round the campfire roasting marshmallows, sing songs, and play the guitar is something everyone seems to love.

Q: Clearly your time as a child at the old Boucharie Beach left a huge impression on you. How important is the legacy aspect of a vacation home?

A: It’s an amazing gift to give your children. When you see the smiles on little kids’ faces, you know it’s a happy place. For me, being able to take the summer property where I grew up and reinvent it with a modern day twist is priceless – especially as true waterfront become more and more rare.

I’m certain a number of the original people will buy here

now they have the opportunity because they see the value in passing along that tradition. We’re also already seeing friends and families going in together to buy a home, and I wouldn’t be surprised if some people buy homes that are side-by-side with their siblings or friends.

Q: Why strata for a vacation home?

A: When I’m talking to people, I find a recurring theme is that some of their fondest memories are of their second home – be it a lakefront cottage like I went to, a ski chalet, or even a snowbird house in Arizona or California. But too often the maintenance is overwhelming. A friend of mine has a sun cottage on Skaha, and he laments because half the time up there is spent painting and weeding and repairing things. It really takes away from his enjoyment and use of that cottage.

With a strata, once you’re here it’s all quality time – and yes, I know that sounds like a cliché but it’s true nonetheless. I pinch myself many times each day my family and I spend at our cottage just to remind myself how lucky we are.



Transolini Chetner is found on the web at traschet.com or check out boucheriebeach.com for information about this innovative vacation home community.