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The Strand Lakeside Resort

by Steven Threndyle

Few residential developments tell the story of the economic transition of B.C.'s Okanagan Valley quite like The Strand Lakeside Resort, a \$40-million project on the shores of Okanagan Lake. Located six kilometres south of Vernon, this 28-acre property used to be a llama farm before its purchase five years ago by David Murphy of Foxbridge Development Ltd.

Foxbridge has big plans for the property, which includes 1,000 feet of waterfront — an increasingly rare commodity on Okanagan Lake. Following the specific tourism waterfront planning guidelines set out by the City of Vernon, The Strand is a five-phase project that opened in September 2007, with the completion of 104 townhomes in its first phase. Foxbridge has done various residential projects in Alberta and B.C., but The Strand is its first recreational project.

The overall look and feel of The Strand is influenced to some degree by the successful Seaside resort community in Florida. This new urbanism approach to resort development seeks to foster interaction and build community ties by providing visual amenities and gathering places combined with recreational facilities. One of the first of those recreational amenities will be a 48-berth marina that extends over 330 feet out into the lake.

"We took the town idea which they have in Seaside and Okanaganized it," says Murphy. "The colour schemes are brighter, richer, and more earth-tone oriented in order to more effectively reflect the surrounding natural landscape," he says.

Phase 1 occupies just three acres of an overall 28-acre holding.

Poon McKenzie Architects from Calgary were retained to design the buildings, which Ron Poon describes as a "contemporary lakeside resort." Poon MacKenzie works on many recreational

properties. Its portfolio includes Rundle Mountain Estates near Banff, Windtower Mountain Lodge in Canmore and the Quattro project on Vancouver Island.

"Our goal here is to make a pedestrian-friendly recreational resort that has something to offer all homeowners, not just those lucky enough to be on the lake," he says. "The south-facing ground-floor units are some of my favourite in the entire development," says Poon. "The courtyard and common areas are designed for people to linger and to engage in conversations with neighbours, while many units have outdoor patios for eating and entertaining outside. They're the perfect complement to the recreational amenities available on site and near by. It's a very outdoors oriented development."

The development sits on a secluded road heading south of town toward Ellison Provincial Park, far from the hustle and bustle of Highway 97, the main provincial highway that cuts through the centre of the Okanagan. "It's a peaceful, quiet location," says Poon, "a hidden gem, really. And we wanted the buildings to augment the natural setting. We chose bright, vibrant colours that work with the sunlight well in the summertime when the resort will be filled up, and that also add a cheerful element in the off-season when the skies are grey."

Units in Phase 1 range in size from 575 square feet to luxury penthouses up to 2,300 square feet. Forty per cent of the units have views of Okanagan Lake, while the rest face onto the inner courtyard. "We have spent over one million dollars in landscaping in order to create a relatively formal common area in the centre of the complex," says Murphy. "The beachfront side will be oriented towards recreation and there is a three-hole putting green on the roof, as well as a common area where people can mingle

and relax." Indoor/outdoor gas fireplaces are being utilized in all of the units. "People are looking forward to spending as much time as possible outside, and the outdoor fireplace allows them to keep warm once the sun goes down," says Murphy. "There's also a stunning visual effect of having all of these fireplaces flickering away in the night. You can even see them from across the lake."

Phase 1 is a four-and-a-half-storey, wood-frame building featuring concrete-reinforced floors, insulated, acoustically engineered walls between suites and custom-designed low-E energy-efficient windows to keep units warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Seven floorplans and three interior decorating packages are available.

Andrea Raimondi from Calgary-based Ingenium Design Group says, "Each of the three colour schemes creates a distinctive ambience, yet they all create a sense of relaxation. The suites incorporate a variety of upgraded features, particularly the spa-inspired finishes and fixtures."

Inside, all units feature solution-dyed, nylon-enhanced, graphic loop carpet in the living and bedroom areas; solid-core, flat-profile doors; painted baseboards and door casings and satin-nickel interior door hardware. Polysheer custom-designed window coverings shade all outside windows.

The master bedroom includes a luxurious polished-slab granite countertop in the ensuite bath with lofted vessel sink and Danze single-lever brushed-nickel faucets in the sink and shower. The bathroom features a drop-in-style soaker tub by MAAX, oversized 18-inch-by-18-inch porcelain tile flooring and pebble mosaic on the shower floor.

The kitchen area features European inspired flat panel, solid wood cabinetry with under-cabinet lighting, polished slab granite countertops, a rectilinear, full-height, ceramic-tile backsplash, above-counter Silgranit composite granite sink with a Danze single-lever, extractable spray faucet. The sleek stain-

less-steel appliance package consists of a smooth-top self-cleaning range, ultra-quiet multi-cycle dishwasher, side-by-side refrigerator, an over-the-range space-saver microwave with integral hood fan. There is even a stainless-steel glass-front 24-bottle capacity wine chiller.

From a construction standpoint, project manager Gord Malwich of Septra Projects Ltd. says, "With the opening of Phase 1 this fall, we're quite pleased with how it's all turned out. Despite local labour shortages, we've made remarkable progress and are very close to being on schedule and on budget." ■



LOCATION

7295 Okanagan Landing Road
Vernon, B.C.

OWNER/DEVELOPER

Foxbridge Development Ltd.

ARCHITECT

Poon McKenzie Architects

CONSTRUCTION MANAGER

Septra Projects Ltd.

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT

Weibe Forest Engineering

MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL CONSULTANT

Hemisphere Engineering

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Ingenium Design Group

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Stonefield Developments

TOTAL AREA

Phase 1: 140 units ranging from 575-2,300 square feet, for a total of 111,000 square feet

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COST

\$40 million