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Nesting by their favourite golf course

Edmonton couple snap up new vacation spot beneath the Kokanee glacier

By JANE CARDILLO

Special to the Edmonton Journal

The lure of a championship golf course just steps from their own backyard was too much for Pauline and Barry Jeffords to resist.

The Edmonton-area couple are among the first buyers in a new vacation home community in Crawford Bay on Kootenay Lake in British Columbia.

Dominated by the Selkirk and Purcell Mountain ranges, along with blockbuster views of the magnificent Kokanee Glacier, the Kokanee Springs Resort Club is a golfer and outdoor enthusiast's delight.

Set amid more than 300 hectares of cedar forests and meandering trails, 40 minutes from Nelson in southeastern B.C., the resort boasts its own one-and-a-half kilometre-long beach and private airstrip. Nearby, the village of Crawford Bay is home to some of the finest artisans in the province. Visitors can spend lazy days checking out the wide selection of one-of-a-kind objects created by silversmiths, glass blowers, potters and carvers.

But for the Jeffords, the big attraction to Kokanee Springs was the golf course that has been operating there for more than 40 years. Characterized by long fairways and immense rolling greens, every one of its 18 holes is framed by spectacular views of the mountains and the glacier.

Canadian golf publication *SCORE Golf* rated it as one of the top courses in the province.

The Jeffords discovered it 10 years ago and have been going back twice a year ever since.

"We were hooked," Pauline says.

So when Bellstar Hotels and Resorts, developers of the new resort, announced plans to build homes in the area, Pauline and Barry were in.

"We use the golf course all the time when we're there," Pauline says. "It's so beautiful. There's wildlife there and it's just so peaceful. It's wonderful."

The cottage the couple bought is a two-bedroom with loft, nestled well back from the course in a stand of century-old cedars. It should be ready for them to enjoy by the fall. The 900-square-foot home is one of 17 Bellstar plans for the first phase. People can choose one, two or three-bedroom designs. Each has an enclosed patio and screened-in porch with double-sided fireplace.

"They're beautiful," says Pauline.

The developer is also building two, three-storey, 12-unit buildings. From their perch on a ridge 30 metres up, they overlook the first tee.

The cottages start in the mid-to-upper \$200,000s while the apartments start at under \$200,000.

This is the first recreational property the Jeffords have purchased. They believe it provides good investment opportunities.

The homes come completely furnished, from toasters and cutlery to flat-screen televisions and furniture. When they're not being used, owners have the option of putting them into the resort rental pool.

"I'm still not retired, my husband is, so I only get so many holidays a year," says Pauline, who says they plan to lease out their cabin to help with costs.

People have been coming to Kokanee Springs and staying at the Kokanee Lodge, Bellstar's on-site hotel, since 1968, says Greg Garbula, vice-president of the resort.

The cottages and apartments give vacationers new options.

"They'll have either whole ownership or quarters or half ownership, depending what they feel their usage will be," Garbula says. "They just tell us what weeks they're here. And when they're not, we'll rent it out for them and that will offset a majority of their costs."

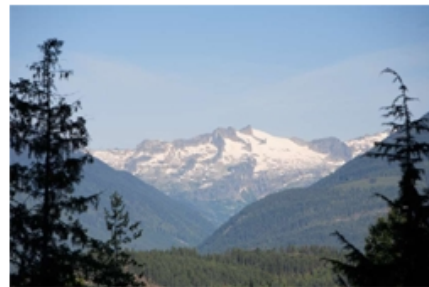
Future plans include a spa, swimming pool, wine bar, restaurant and a new pro shop.

It all adds up to an unforgettable holiday experience, says Curt Jansen, director of resort real estate for Bellstar.



The Jeffords' new Kokanee Springs Resort Club Cottage is about to begin construction. From left: Al Pollard, Pauline & Barry Jeffords, and Viv Pollard.

PHOTO: SHELBY JEFFORDS



Kokanee Glacier

PHOTO: DON WEIXL



Kokanee Springs golf course

PHOTO: DON WEIXL

"It is kind of the Jasper Park Lodge of the Kootenays," Jansen says. "It's that kind of setting where you feel like you're in this beautiful little resort in the middle of the wilderness and it's something special."

For the Jeffords, it's a little slice of paradise.

"We may just live there permanently," Pauline says. •

What you should know

- Kokanee Springs Resort Club is located on the eastern shore of Kootenay Lake, about 40 minutes from Nelson and one hour from Creston. It is about a nine-hour drive from Edmonton and six hours from Calgary.
- The longest free ferry in the world crosses Kootenay Lake at Nelson.
- From Aug. 15 to 21, the resort hosts The Golfing Goddesses, golf school at its 18-hole championship course. The first-ever women's golf school is open to all ages and levels. The event includes a wine-tasting evening, beach barbecue and windup tournament dinner and dance.
- In the winter, the resort runs a downhill ski club at the Whitewater ski resort in Nelson. People can catch the ferry to Nelson. From there, the resort runs a daily shuttle van to Whitewater.
- Summer temperatures hover in the mid-20s. In winter, it rarely drops below minus four.