

# CALGARY HERALD

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## RECREATION & INVESTMENT PROPERTIES

Soon-to-be-retired Calgary firefighter Brian Meier and his partner, Debbie Henderson, are among the first buyers at Canyon Desert Resort in Oliver, B.C.

### Beat the weather in sunny Oliver

Calgary couple buy golf villa  
in Canyon Desert Resort in B.C.

BARB LIVINGSTONE  
CALGARY HERALD  
OLIVER, B.C.

When it's cold and blustery outside — in the summer! — and all you pine for is 18 holes on a golf course, or a walk on a beach, what's a Calgarian to do? If you are Calgary firefighter Brian Meier or his partner, Debbie Henderson, you look for a move to the sunny southern Okanagan in

your retirement. Meier and Henderson are among the first buyers in a new project called Canyon Desert Resort, a golf and lake community in Oliver, B.C. "We have a place in Arizona where we spend our winters, but we were looking for somewhere to spend our summers, since I will be retiring within a year," says Brian, 55.

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The area is so beautiful and it's four hours to Vancouver or Spokane and a half-hour to Penticton. And there is lots to do — from the wineries, to golf, to a five-minute walk to the lake.

BRIAN MEIER

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### PLACE: Hot climate

The couple had looked in Radium and Kimberly, B.C., but Meier's search also took him to Oliver and its appealing dry, hot climate — Canada's version of Arizona.

And that led to Canyon Desert Resort, which is being undertaken by Calgary-based Bellstar Developments Inc. in partnership with the Osoyoos Indian Band.

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Developer teams up with Indian band

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Bellstar and the band were already partners in a luxury real estate resort in Osoyoos, B.C., called Spirit Ridge — a project Meier visited, as well as talked about with friends who are owners there.

"I did my research on Bellstar and what I found was very positive," says Meier. "Spirit Ridge is a great complex — high quality with a variety of price ranges and recreation opportunities."

Like Spirit Ridge, Canyon Desert is to be a multi-phase project that will start with full-ownership golf villas around an already existing golf course — one that is consistently

rated the best-maintained course in the Okanagan.

And even better: for the purchasers of the first 21 golf villas in the Canyon Desert Resort project, there is a lifetime golf membership at the course.

The first to purchasers will also receive five years of unlimited golf.

The Canyon Desert Resort, itself, will be an estimated five-phase project that starts with golf residences along the Nk'mip Canyon desert golf course (the name will be changed to the Canyon Desert course once a couple of holes are moved and upgraded).

But the resort will then expand to include beach homes along Tuc-El-Nuit Lake, along with an inn with a culinary arts school. There will also be vineyards that will allow residents to participate in winemaking.

The first phase will be 21 golf villas — to be built around the eighth and nine holes of the golf course, which will be connected by golf cart pathways.

Prices start at \$299,000 and there are four floor plans to choose from.



Courtesy, Bellstar Developments Inc.

An example of a home in the development as seen in this drawing.

Analysis by Bellstar Developments Inc. shows that the current market includes people looking to downsize or retire in the near future — those who want an attractive property at the right price, says Curt Jansen, director of resort real estate for the company.

"The primary market is boomers who want to retire in the next few years," he says.

"These are mainly people who want to spend maybe six months in Arizona and six months here. Instead of being a competitor to Arizona, we see this project as being a complement."

With Oliver sitting just 25 kilometres from the U.S. border, there's easy access for travelling to American hot spots.

Part of what will be offered in this project is ample RV parking and storage for residents.

Although Canyon Desert has not been heavily promoted as yet, Jansen says there has already been strong interest from Albertans and the local B.C. market.

A golf villa showhome is expected to open this month — and construction on the first phase is to begin in spring 2011.

The four floor plans include a spacious loft villa and will highlight open plans within, including nine-foot ceilings that flow toward outdoor living/entertainment spaces.

There are also front courtyard pa-

tios and two-car garages that include bonus storage rooms for a golf cart or other leisure toys.

The villas range from 1,050 square feet of indoor living space to 1,550 square feet.

But besides the interior space, each villa has more than 1,000 square feet of outdoor living space to take advantage of the desert-like Oliver temperatures.

Along with the golf lifestyle, buyers will have beach access to the lake, which is restricted to non-motorized crafts such as sailboats, kayaks and canoes.

They will also get the other amenities of the South Okanagan, including the 21 wineries that are in the area, and the small-town flavour of Oliver — but with quick accessibility to the larger centres of Penticton and Kelowna.

For Brian Meier and Debbie Henderson, the attractions are all there.

"The area is so beautiful and it's four hours to Vancouver or Spokane and a half-hour to Penticton," says Meier. "And there is lots to do — from the wineries, to golf, to a five-minute walk to the lake."

For a couple of Calgarians unimpressed by last summer's local weather, the biggest selling point may be "It is always 25 C to 35 C there in the summer — and I am tired of Calgary's winters," says the soon-to-be Okanagan resident.



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