

CANADA'S PREMIER FINE HOME AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

DREAM HOUSE

DESTINATIONS



HOME
FURNISHINGS

\$6.95 CAD/USD
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008
WWW.DREAMHOUSEMAG.COM
PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT
#41510519
Display Until November 15, 2008



The Discovery Club

Privileged membership offers the
experience of a lifetime!

Taking the PLUNGE

BY RYAN STUART

Becoming one of the locals on Salt Spring Island is as easy as sampling the community way of life.

USUALLY THE MOST NEIGHBOURS WILL HAVE IN COMMON IS A STREET ADDRESS, THE VIEW AND A POSTAL CODE. SO WHEN GRAHAM BAVINGTON AND HIS COWORKERS AT THREE POINT PROPERTIES STARTED TO THINK ABOUT HOW TO SHOW PEOPLE ONE OF THE VICTORIA-BASED COMPANY'S NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS, BISHOP'S WALK ON SALT SPRING ISLAND, THEY DECIDED CHANGE THE WAY THEY SELL AND MAKE IT AS PERSONAL AS EACH CLIENT IS UNIQUE.

There's no show home, display suit or development office. Prospective buyers aren't pressured to do one thing or another. Instead Bavington and his team go old school – they talk to the buyers to find out what they want.

"We thought about it as a buyer – do we want to have to fit into the glass slipper?" he says. "Everyone is looking for something slightly different, so we decided to make the process as one-on-one and as personal as the buyer's wants and needs." And Bavington takes it one step further to make sure the buyers get a good idea of what life on Salt Spring Island and at Bishop's Walk will be like. "We find people want to fall in love with the lifestyle they could be living, as much as with the property and location," he says. "Today's buyers need a real estate concierge."

In April, Bavington and a team from Three Point Properties hosted 10 interested couples for what he calls, "A gourmet adventure weekend."

"We want to explain to them what Salt Spring is all about," he says. "When they go home we want the client to have a very good idea what they want to do." And that doesn't mean they

have to buy. There are no strings attached. Bavington says he honestly wants people to be sure Salt Spring is the right place. "Making an investment like this shouldn't be a one trip deal," he says. "You need to try it on for size."

Many of the couples had some history with Salt Spring – they came on vacation or spent time on the island as kids – but even so the weekend was a chance to see the possibilities. Bavington and his team arranged all the transportation and accommodation to Salt Spring – it's easy to reach via direct floatplane flights from Vancouver Airport's seaplane terminal. And then they tried to recreate what it would be like to live at Bishop's Walk.

The development is on a hill above Ganges, the main town on Salt Spring, overlooking the harbour and town below. The land originally belonged to the local diocese, hence the name. "There's nothing else like it on Salt Spring," Bavington says. Despite the airy view it will be only a 15-minute walk into town along paths through the development, down a country lane and through a neighbourhood. "It's a rural setting, but a short walk to town," he says. "It's a great juxtaposition – the best of both worlds."

Bavington walked the guests to all the local Ganges hangouts. Organic coffee at the Salt Spring Island Coffee Co. Meat pies at the Embe Bakery. Fresh local shellfish at the Oystercatcher Seafood Bar & Grill. Arts and crafts shopping at the Saturday market and local galleries. One afternoon they took a cruise aboard a yacht and sampled local wines and beers, while touring the island from the water. Later they had an opportunity to take a flight around the island by seaplane. It was all low key and low pressure. "You participate in as much or as little as you want," he says.



The concierge service had another advantage for the participants, one that surprised Bavington. The couples got to interview their perspective neighbours. "They got to find out if they wanted to live near one another," Bavington says. "They got to meet the neighbours before they bought." It was a successful interview. "Invariably all became friends," he says. "The community unfolded before my eyes."

As Bavington toured the couples around Bishop's Walk's 29, three-quarter-acre lots spread out on a lightly treed, northeast facing hillside, they didn't separate into couples or cliques like at an open house. Instead they toured and dreamed as a group, like friends.

With panoramic views the potential to build a spectacular home are limitless. In tune with the concierge service, building at Bishop's Walk is a collaborative affair between the developer and the homeowner. Three Point Properties will get as involved as the owner wants, from taking care of almost everything to only approving the design. Bavington expects the Bishop's Walk homes to mirror the natural surroundings, with lots of wood and stone in West Coast arts-and-crafts style.

Some spec homes will be built by Three Point Properties to "help get some people's juices flowing," Bavington says. But with so much character and panoramic views it won't take too much effort for each buyer's inspiration to get fired up. All that's left after that is to find out what else the neighbours have in common.

Three Point Properties will arrange familiarization tours of Salt Spring Island and Bishop's Walk. Visit them online at www.bishopswalk.com. DH

Many of the couples had some history with Salt Spring – they came on vacation or spent time on the island as kids – but even so the weekend was a chance to see the possibilities.

