

SALTSPRING ISLAND

Compact home with elegant yet casual style suits island life

BY PEDRO ARRAIS / Times Colonist staff

Vancouver developer David Sorensen got a head start on the landscaping of his Summerside development on Saltspring Island by about 100 years. By compiling a tree inventory in the design stage, which included a map of each tree's root systems, he was able to build around most of them, leaving 85 per cent of the trees standing on the former farm.

These trees, some of which are more than 100 years old, allow the four-year-old development to blend into the existing landscape with minimal intrusion.

"In my company, the environmental consultant is usually the first person to look at a project, then the arborist and finally the civil engineer," says David Sorensen, who, with his brother John, are the principals of Sorensen Fine Homes. He says that he is successful in preserving the treescape of a lot because he takes the time, sometimes up to eight months, to study the topography of a site before he decides on road access placement.

Sorensen also won the hearts of Saltspring Island heritage conservationists by preserving the original 1912 farmhouse that came with the property. The partially restored building includes two guest suites, which residents can book when they have overnight company, and also serves as a central clubhouse with an adjacent indoor saltwater pool.

The farmhouse also served as the design model for the Arts and Crafts-style on the 2.22-hectare property, says Sorensen.

The development has been built and marketed over four years. Units in the first phase were about 1,300 square feet and now are valued at \$320,000. The phase being sold now features larger homes. Townhouses of 1,850-square-feet are listed at \$425,000 and offer two bedrooms and a den on three levels, with three and a half baths and a single garage.

Inside, you'll find gas fireplaces, wood-framed windows, granite counter tops and a choice of stainless steel appliances.

Please see SALTSRING, C7



Unlike urban subdivisions, which all too often involve ripping up every living thing on the land to be developed, new homes on Saltspring Island are surrounded by mature trees.

Above: Summerside development was planned from the start to retain as much of the existing silviculture as possible.

Left: Bishop's Walk near Ganges takes advantage of the existing greenery to create a cool, pastoral ambience.

John McKay/Times Colonist



New townhome developments on Saltspring Island feature living space designed for a casual, comfortable lifestyle.

Left: A show home at Bishop's Walk has a comfortable living room just steps away from a cheery dining area and kitchen.

Right: A fireplace provides the focus to the living room on cooler evenings.

John McKay/Times Colonist



A wise buyer will check out vendor's claims of what's included

Dear Condo Smarts: What happens when what you buy is not what you get? I purchased a two-bedroom condo in False Creek, and with it came two parking spaces, two small storage lockers and a marina slip for my boat. All of these were itemized in the sales agreement drawn up by the seller. The strata council now informs me that the permit on my boat slip has expired and to renew it will cost me \$5,000 a year. The seller claims he bought the two parking spaces from the developer, and had a 99-year lease on the marina slip. Where do I go now?

Casey M.

Dear Casey: You are going to need a lawyer to review these lease agreements and your agreement for sale.



TONY GIOVENTU
Condo Smarts

Many property lease agreements were never properly filed or negotiated in the first place, or do not comply with the Strata Property Act, so you may have some nasty surprises.

The first thing you need to determine is the designation of the parking spaces, storage locker and marina slip. Are they common property, limited common property or part of the strata lot?

If they are filed as common property of the strata corporation they remain as common property of the strata corporation unless the designation is changed in accordance with the Strata Property Act.

Next, you should determine whether the strata has any bylaws and/or rules that pertain to the use of the spaces, lockers and slip. The bylaws may have a significant effect on the use of the property, including rentals and leasing.

If the strata corporation has changed common property to limited common property, or has sold off a portion of the common property and made that portion part of the strata lot in question, the transaction should be recorded with the Land Title Registry on your title and on the strata plan's records. A strata corporation, or developer acting as the corpora-

tion, may create leases for use of property, such as the use of the parking, lockers and the marina slip. Just because a seller discloses they have a specific parking space, a defined storage locker, an allocated marina slip or designated helipad, doesn't make it true.

Before anyone signs an agreement for sale, here is a checklist to follow:

- 1) Always read the registered bylaws of the strata corporation.
- 2) Verify in writing with the strata corporation which parking, storage or marina spaces go with the property.
- 3) Obtain a copy of the registered strata plan and any filed amendments and review your share of the costs and use of space.
- 4) Closely read the minutes of the corporation. Both the minutes of council

meetings and general meetings tell an interesting story about the use of property.

5) Obtain a Form B Information Certificate and read the strata rules for common property. If you have any doubts or questions, put them in writing and get the seller's agent to respond. Don't wait till the day of sale to talk to your lawyer. By then, it's usually too late.

Tony Gioventu is executive director of the Condominium Home Owners' Association (CHOA). Send questions to him c/o New Homes, Times Colonist, 2126 Douglas St., Victoria, B.C. V8T 4M2 or by e-mail at tony@choa.bc.ca. Contact CHOA, toll-free, at 1-877-353-2462. The association's website is www.choa.bc.ca.



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