

Location and price on the sunshine coast

Gibsons development offers great value along with fantastic views

BY CHRISTINA SYMONS, SPECIAL TO THE SUN JULY 20, 2013

When you arrive on the Sunshine Coast en route to Gibsons, (after a 40-minute ferry ride from Horseshoe Bay) you have a choice to make. Head along the highway to upper Gibsons for suburban-style shopping and amenities, or mosey down to scenic lower Gibsons and enjoy the seaside allure of vintage boutiques, gelato stands, oyster bars and cafes.

The difference between the upper and lower neighbourhoods is one of the characteristics that make Gibsons unique. In fact, it's almost as though there are two towns in one.

And if Gibsons' ample charms - including recognition as the Most Livable Community under 20,000 population (a 2009 international award backed by the UN) - convince you to stay forever, or invest in a weekend getaway, you can enjoy the best of both worlds from the vantage of Island Vista, a new townhome development set midway between the upper and lower districts.

Just a five-minute drive to the ferry terminal, each of the eight homes offers southeast views over Gibsons Harbour to Keats Island and the mountains beyond. The tall, handsome units are clad in cedar and HardiePlank siding with sleek metal roofing and modern glazed front doors. The architecture is a West Coast riff on traditional urban street-front housing, according to builder-developer Eugene Evanetz.

"I chose this lot because of the views," says Evanetz, noting that the area has already been built out so new construction shouldn't be an issue or impediment. "And at 50 feet deep, the property lent itself to a New York-inspired brownstone approach, which I love, but in this case we designed it for the West Coast."

The interiors are decidedly upscale with classic solid white oak flooring, granite stone countertops and island, imported ironwork features, high-end stainless steel appliances, gas fireplace, inviting open fir timber staircase and a wide exterior glass wall to provide an indoor-outdoor experience from the comfort of the main living space. Upstairs, each two- or three-bedroom unit features pure wool carpeting and cove ceilings with two full baths, gracious storage and closet areas.

"We went for really good quality finishes and features," says Evanetz, confident that folks familiar with real estate prices in Greater Vancouver will recognize the value of this calibre of architecture, interior and finishing, at a small-town price.

"You'd spend twice as much for this on the North Shore or Vancouver," Evanetz contends.

The Gibsons units, which average 1575 square feet of living space, come in at approximately \$230 per square foot. Compare that to real estate figures provided by Urban Analytics Inc. noting an approximate price range of \$500 - \$600 per square foot for typical condominiums on the North Shore, and up to \$720 or more per square foot in Downtown Vancouver.

The Gibsons townhomes also promise added value in terms of space. Opposite the kitchen and powder room is a flex space, ideal for a home

office, play area or studio. On the main floor there is a large 600-square foot garage which provides tandem parking for two cars, a work area and access to the paved drive, entry foyer and rear patio. A balcony off the second floor is ideal for lounging and barbecuing.

Owners Cheryl and John Stewart, who have resided on the Sunshine Coast since 1991, opted for an airy end unit and are enjoying the convenience and ease of townhome living at Island Vista.

"We were looking for something

that would take us right through retirement," says Cheryl, noting that they even installed a private elevator inside their unit (an option which is accommodated by the base design) to enhance future accessibility.

The Stewarts turned their extra garage space into a workshop and enjoy the generous decks and patios of their unit which offer sun in the afternoon as well as fresh breezes. They also appreciate the common landscaped areas and the convenience of townhome living in a small town like Gibsons.

"We've always liked Gibsons, being near the water and the relaxed lifestyle here," says Cheryl. "And we vacation during winter so we wanted a place we could just lock up and go."

Living halfway between upper and lower, Gibsons seems to be the ideal location for this couple.

"We're close to everything here," John says. "The community centre is within walking distance, our friends are nearby, the bus is right outside and we are just five minutes from the ferry terminal if we need to go to Vancouver."

Island Vista Project location: 665 Crucil Rd. at Gibsons Way, Gibsons Project size: Eight townhomes Residence size: 1562-1591 sq. ft plus 600-sq. ft tandem garage-workshop Price: \$359,000 to \$369,000, plus HST Developer: Group Pacific Developments Ltd.

Interiors: Colour Edge Consulting and Design Sales centre: 665 Crucil Rd. at Gibsons Way, Gibsons
Hours: Saturdays noon - 3 p.m.; or by appointment.

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Occupancy date: ready now

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