

No Place Like Home

A unique lifestyle community on the lake

By **DAVE GORDON**
Special to *The CJN*

As baby boomers hit retirement age, a new crop of services and products has appeared to make the golden years more comfortable. A new community 90 minutes from northern Toronto is in the works that caters to empty nesters and baby boomers, and offers all the amenities of a condo with all the perks of a cottage.

The development is Sophie's Landing, a gated waterfront lifestyle community in Orillia on the north shore of Lake Simcoe, just west of the Narrows, where Lake Simcoe meets Lake Couchiching (www.sophies-landing.ca; 705-329-7710).

Developer Eric Kerzner, whose company Signature Carleton is spearheading the project, named the development after his daughter. He intends to take his brand of planned communities across Canada and the United States.

With a background in hotels and resorts, he de-



veloped the first lifestyles community in British Columbia eight years ago, with a focus on the luxuries usually found only in upscale resorts.

Kerzner is now focused on developing a product to serve the boomer market in Toronto. He recognized the lack of any gated communities north of Toronto. Sophie's Landing is designed with empty nesters and snowbirds in mind, who are heading for retirement and want a home that's maintenance-free.

The complex, made up of 85 units, is already 80 per cent sold. It includes a games room, two swimming pools and billiard tables. Because the community is on a lake, there is a private marina with 36 boat slips and a floating gazebo. Public areas include a fireside espresso lounge, waterside terraces and a party room with a full kitchen and a barbecue area. The property also offers winding nature trails, a putting green and a fitness and spa facility.

The peaceful location puts residents within easy access to cross country skiing, skating, golf courses, fishing, mountain biking and snowmobile trails. Nearby Orillia holds regular festivals, and Casino Rama is a few minutes away by car.

Kerzner notes that "everything is within walking distance. We chose this location for the amenities nearby."

Sophie's Landing will be finished at the end of 2009. Still available are detached bungalows with optional lofts, full basements and attached garages. Prices start at \$329,900 but go up to \$750,000, with home size starting at 1,000 square feet and going to 3,500 square feet. The average is 1,500 square feet.

Kerzner wants to make Sophie's Landing better than planned subdivisions in the city.

"We encourage purchasers to make changes, start with the base model and change things to fit their lifestyles and needs. We don't want two homes alike. We don't want it to seem like a subdivision."

The community, designed to evoke a French country village with easy pedestrian access, has already been rated the number 1 lifestyle community in Ontario by *Active Adult* magazine.



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