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# New Homes and Condos

Fri, April 25, 2008

## Year-round playgrounds No roughing it at these cottage getaways

By LINDA WHITE, Special to Sun Media



Our neighbours to the south may think Canadians live in frozen tundra all year long, but we know better. Our distinct seasons not only define us, they're inspiring a new real-estate trend: luxurious four-season properties that target baby boomers who want it all and families who love the great outdoors.

"People want a cottage year-round, not just May to September," says Gerry Kowalski of Silver Beach Developments, located on the shores of Kashagawigamog Lake in the Haliburton Highlands.

"We've created a 'four-season playground' for people who want to downsize, not downgrade," Kowalski says. "We're targeting active adults. Some are staging themselves for retirement and know that cottage property is becoming scarce. They can make this a recreation home while transitioning themselves into retirement."

Sophie's Landing Lakeside Club, a gated waterfront community in Orillia, is another resort-style development aimed at the powerful baby boomer generation, this one designed like a French country village. "Amenities inside the gates are first-class. We're catering to a high-end group with properties that are easier to maintain than cottages," says developer Eric Kerzner, president of Signature Carleton. "You can lock and leave."

The location of these four-season properties is a big part of their appeal. Silver Beach, for example, is just over two hours from the GTA and five minutes from the town of Haliburton. Boating, fishing, a private white sand beach that inspired the development's name, walking trails and golf courses are all nearby. Kashagawigamog Lake is the prime lake in Haliburton's prestigious five-lake chain.

Sophie's Landing, a little more than an hour north of Toronto, has a private marina, fitness and spa facilities, waterfront trails, fireside lounge and swimming pools located within its gates. Just outside, there's a 65-acre park with beaches and trails

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connecting to the Gordon Lightfoot Trail, golf, skiing, Casino Rama and theatre in heritage downtown Orillia.

Muskoka Bay in Gravenhurst is 90 minutes north of Toronto. "Muskoka is emerging as a great place to live all year long," says developer Peter Freed. "It offers a different pace of life ... It's for people who just don't want to sit in traffic jams all day but can still go back to the city for theatre and to visit friends and family."

Four-season properties appeal to cottage lovers who don't want to rough it.

"Baby boomers are a demanding generation," says Kerzner. "The average amount spent on upgrades in our first phase was \$100,000. Buyers may be in their late 40s and 50s and realize this may be their last house. Ultimately, many will end up spending six months in Sophie's Landing and six months in Florida."

At Muskoka Bay, options include a spacious loft that can be used as a guest suite or home office. "These aren't first-time homebuyers," says Freed. "They know what they want. They're putting in the kitchens they've dreamed of and setting themselves up for family visitors. They've got an 'I made it' frame of mind."

Silver Beach homes are among the most high-tech in the province. Features include energy-efficient hydronic heating systems with zone-comfort controls that allow the homeowner to control temperatures on each level. Homes also come with an extensive telecommunication pre-wiring package to deliver telephone, high-speed Internet and HD satellite TV to almost every room in the house.

Unlike more remote settings - the classic image of an away-from-it-all cottage in the woods - these developments offer easy access to a range of services and an immediate community.

"As we age, we become less independent," says Kowalski. "We want proximity to one another. People can still have their privacy but don't want that isolation."

### **Muskoka Bay**

- 1,200- to 3,000-square-foot bungalows prices from \$486,900 to \$1 million+
- Amenities include a 14,000-square-foot cliff-top clubhouse and infinity pool
- Adjacent to award-winning Doug Carrick golf course
- Nearest town: Gravenhurst
- www.muskokabay.com

### **Silver Beach Developments**

- 1,300- to 2,800-square-foot bungalows priced from \$299,000 to \$559,000
- Amenities include 5,000-square-foot clubhouse,
- Located on 18-acre property in Haliburton Highlands
- Nearest town: Haliburton
- www.silverbeachdevelopments.com

### **Sophie's Landing Lakeside Club**

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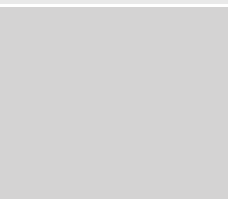
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- Phase 2 is a gated community of 35 bungalows priced from \$329,000
- Amenities include private marina, fitness and spa, fireside lounge
- Located on Trent-Severn Waterway near 65-acre park, Casino Rama
- Nearest town: Orillia
- [www.sophieslanding.ca](http://www.sophieslanding.ca)

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Proprietor and Publisher - Sun Media (Toronto) Corporation, 333 King St. E., Toronto, ON, M5A 3X5