

Lifestyle Communities Good Things in

Smaller Packages

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By Devorah Garland

Today's new "active lifestyle communities" are dynamic, luxurious developments aimed at the powerful baby boomer demographic. Canadian Business magazine reported these mature, retiring or semi-retired buyers—Boomers—will drive three-quarters of Canada's housing growth over the next decade (July 17-August 13, 2006 issue).

"Boomers have worked hard, they own property, they have the financial means and don't have to commute," says Gerry Kowalksi, developer of Silver Beach (www.silverbeachdevelopments.com) a 4-season lifestyle community located 5 minutes from the village of Haliburton. From his research—"they want to live around lakes year 'round, in cottage country"—he's creating a club and lakeside setting for 59 stylishly appointed homes.

"Boomers are still moving up in the world, but living in tighter spaces—downsizing, but not down-quality," says project architect Ian Malcolm. That's why the extra-wide townhomes and soaring bungalofs, priced from \$439,000, offer luxurious, high-end amenities and pre-wiring for electronics including satellite TV dishes and high-speed internet service.

A sandy, 800-ft.-long beach has 28 boat slips for private ownership; the 5,000 sq. ft. clubhouse will be equipped for exercise, health and social programs; golfing is next door, and "there are two brand-new hospitals" nearby, Kowalksi says. The pro-environment Boomer will appreciate the tankless water heaters, innovative, zoned, hydronic heating systems, 2 "excellent new wells," new municipal sewers, and "proper drainage for storm water—no phosphorus run-off into the lake," he says.

Award-winning Sophie's Landing (www.sophieslanding.ca) from developer/builder Signature Carleton is meeting Boomer demand in an urban setting with a "social, club lifestyle, a feeling of pampering, but with security—which we identified as a concern," says project manager Craig Crane.

Orillia's only gated community is a top-ranked lifestyle development with a French-village-style, resort setting for 85 individually personalized bungalow villas. With 7,000 ft. of Lake Simcoe shoreline, there's 36 privately owned boat slips and a 4,000 sq. ft. club with spa, pool, waterside BBQ and fireside lounge. Newly released Phase II is priced from the mid-\$300,000's. Crane says 50% of Phase II has sold out in just 6 months—in a "slow market. It's astounding! Boomers know what they want," he says.

