

HOMES RESALE&RENTAL

THE UPBEAT

Alive to Strive project helps
capital area dialysis patients
stay active, E3

Editor: Anita Murray, 613-596-3709 • homes@ottawacitizen.com

Top 10 New
Home Buying Tips



Tarion.com

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2012

OTTAWACITIZEN.COM/HOMES

THE OTTAWA CITIZEN, SECTION E

CONDOS GO TO THE COTTAGE



PHOTO: COURTESY COTTAGE ADVISORS OF CANADA

The Sandbanks development will eventually house 237 summer homes that are a maximum of 800 square feet each with two bedrooms, kitchen, great room and a porch.

Latest spin on our love of going to the lake adopts the lock-it-and-leave-it approach

PATRICK LANGSTON

Affordable units with open-concept design? Check. Maintenance-free common areas? Check. Bustling downtown neighbourhood? No check. That's because, while we are talking about condos, we're talking cottage condos, the latest spin on Canada's longtime love affair with country properties.

Cottage Advisors of Canada opened its first cottages last summer at Sandbanks Summer Village, a seasonal condo resort on East Lake in Prince Edward County.

The 32-hectare site close to Sandbanks Provincial Park and about 285 kilometres southwest of downtown Ottawa will eventually house 237 summer homes along with swimming pools, a fitness centre, tennis court and a boatload of other amenities, including kayaks and canoes. There is a private beach on East Lake, 6.5 hectares of wetland and a 16-hectare woodlot that will

contain cottages but also walking trails.

The project (sandbankssummer.com) is called Summer Village because municipal regulations mean cottagers can live there a maximum of 129 days a year. Few cottagers use their second homes in the winter anyway, so the site simply closes from November until April.

Priced from \$179,900 to \$259,900, they are free-standing, individually owned cottages operating on an urban condo model. In addition to the purchase price, which includes the land on which the cottage sits, owners pay \$225 a month in year-round

condo fees. Like urban condo fees, they cover upkeep of everything outside the cottage's front door, which is kind of nice if you don't want to spend your holiday time trying to remember to get the septic tank emptied and repairing the boat dock.

"We're a busy family, we're always on the go, so the last thing we want is to go to the cottage and then have to cut the grass and take care of it," says David Cole. He and his wife, Sharon, bought a Cressey model for \$240,000 last year and had a chance to enjoy it in the fall with their nine-year-old son, Josh. The cottage — 1,000 square feet with an open-concept plan, a generous kitchen island and a loft — is about an hour from their Kingston home.

Unlike the rustic isolation that many treasured in vacation homes of the 1950s and '60s, cottagers now routinely look for spots that buzz with activity. And with just the one child, Sharon says she and her husband are always conscious of companionship for Josh. "There's less worry than having him on his own at an (isolated) cottage."



The Cottage Show

For more cottage ideas, visit the annual Cottage Show and Big Backyard Show next weekend, which has moved from Lansdowne Park to its new home near the Ottawa Airport.

While you're there, you can bid on one of four unique Muskoka chairs hand-painted and decorated by local artists in support of Cottage Dreams Cancer Recovery Initiative, a charity that provides time away at a donated cottage for cancer patients.

Where: CE Centre, 4899 Uplands Dr.
When: April 13 to 15
Hours: Friday, noon to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tickets: \$12; free for those 17 and under. Parking is \$7.
Information: caneastshows.ca

See COTTAGE on page E2



Amenities include swimming pool, fitness centre, tennis court, kayaks, and canoes.

THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

HOMES • RESALE & RENTAL



Canadian cottagers, says Howard Hall, president of Cottage Advisors of Canada, are big on upgrades: We spend about 1.5 times as much as our neighbours to the south. Sandbanks Summer Village offers options such as granite countertops, hardwood floors and beadboard walls. In other words, we love the outdoors and nature; roughing it, not so much.

Cottage: TV and Internet included

Continued from page E1

The development also offers cable television and high-speed Internet connections, de rigueur in any self-respecting summer home these days.

The wood-frame cottages, meant to echo local farmhouse architecture, are a maximum of 800 square feet with two bedrooms, kitchen, great room and a porch. Nine-foot ceilings and oversized windows are standard. Some models, like the Coles', offer an optional, 200-square-foot loft.

Cottages — 47 have been built so far, with 50 more planned for this summer — are grouped in pods of 10 to 12 around common green areas with firepits and gazebos.

That's not unlike the shared terraces with barbecues and outdoor kitchens now standard in urban condo projects.

Like the mix of busy recreational facilities and quieter natural areas that defines the development, that pod structure is meant to build community while also offering opportunities for privacy.

As a bonus, owners can recoup some of their cost by using the resort management company to rent out their cottages. The \$50-million project is the first Canadian venture for Cottage Advisors, which has built similar resorts in the United States.

It settled on Prince Edward County because of the area's growing popularity and attractions, says Howard "Chip" Hall,



The wood-frame cottages, which are designed to echo local farmhouse architecture, are a maximum of 800 square feet with two bedrooms, kitchen, great room and a porch.

president of Cottage Advisors of Canada and vice-president of the United States-based parent company Cottage Advisors LLC.

Those attractions range from wineries and locally produced organic food to heritage architecture, hiking and fishing.

Sandbanks Summer Village is designed with a wide demographic in mind. Hall says: single professionals, young families, empty nesters.

"It comes down to, 'Can this person afford a second home?' If they can, then they are our demographic."

About 70 per cent of buyers so far are from the Greater Toronto Area. The balance are from Ottawa, Kingston and surrounding regions, with others from as far away as Venezuela.

Canadian cottagers, he says, are big on upgrades: We spend about 1.5 times as much as our neighbours to the south. Sandbanks Summer Village offers options such as granite countertops, hardwood floors and beadboard walls.

In other words, we love the outdoors and nature; roughing it, not so much.

There are other spins on cottages. You could buy one outright, although the Coles discovered that \$300,000 to \$400,000 wasn't an unusual asking price for what they wanted in a building and location. And even then, says David, "We would have had to start renovating right away."

Renting a newish cottage in popular Ontario vacation spots such as Prince Edward County

or the Muskoka area averages \$1,500 a week.

Time-share arrangements, in which you contract to use a cottage for a certain period of time each year, are a possibility, though difficult to find. Like a rental, you have no ownership of the building or property, just the right to use it.

Fractional ownership is increasingly popular. Owners buy a share — usually one-tenth — in the cottage and get to use it one designated week per season plus an extra week each year. Share prices vary depending on the development, but typically run \$60,000 to \$90,000 for a 1,800- to 2,000-square-foot cottage. Annual maintenance fees are another \$2,000 or so.

Shares can usually be sold,



David and Sharon Cole wanted a summer getaway spot with activities for their son, Josh.

deeded or rented out. The downside is that a single share will get you only one week in the peak summer period, although buying two shares may get you back-to-back weeks in each season.

Fractional ownership projects in Eastern Ontario include Whitewater Village on Lac Rocher-Fenchu west of Ottawa (whitewater-village.ca) and Frontenac Shores on Mississauga Lake, north of Kingston (frontenacshores.com).

It's not surprising that cottage ownership options like these are proliferating. Almost two-thirds of Canadians see cottage ownership as a sound investment, according to a Royal LePage report, but soaring prices put the traditional cottage on a lake beyond the reach of most of us.

As April unfolds, the Coles are anxious to get back to their home away from home.

"We want to create memories for our family," says David. "This is something we can do every year and look back and ask, 'Do you remember the summer we did such-and-such?'"

Sharon says the downside of their cottage so far is that it's not on the lake. If a lakeside unit does come up for sale, she'll consider it.

Her husband says: "It doesn't matter to me if there's no lake right here. I just want to be able to go to my cottage, open the fridge and get a beer and spend time with my family."



Priced from \$179,900 to \$259,900, the homes at Sandbanks Summer Village are free-standing, individually owned cottages operating on an urban condo model.



Nine-foot ceilings and oversized windows are standard.