

# Globe Real Estate

TREPANIER MANOR » WELCOME TO PEACHLAND

One developer goes against the prevailing impulse to build big and bigger

## Thinking small in the Okanagan



Architect John Sproule envisioned an Old World/New World fusion of styles at Trepanier Manor in Peachland, B.C. The homes feel like a North American take on an English country cottage. SPROULE + ASSOCIATES

BY HADANI DITMARS

The Okanagan, with its ochre hills and abundant blue lakes, has always been a prime location for recreational properties.

But in the past decade, Kelowna, its epicentre, has morphed from sleepy hamlet to development-mad hot spot, where strip malls and highways have replaced small-town charm.

Cheap and not-so-cheap condo developments have sprouted like mushrooms, while a lack of infrastructure to support a growing population means big-city gridlock at rush hour. Some new high-rise projects near the waterfront look promising, but a growing underclass of street people is a sharp reminder of the perils of rapid growth.

Yet only 20 minutes away, the bucolic community of Peachland – a farming community celebrating its 100th anniversary this year – is an altogether different story.

Here, a small population and strict bylaws have preserved the area's community feel and attractive wilderness areas. And here, like the ma-

turing vines that have made the area Canada's hottest new wine country, the Okanagan's recreational property and hotel culture is coming of age.

Trepanier Manor is a new hotel and residential development that seems to have done everything right.

Strict due diligence on everything from environmental impact to native burial sites and dinosaur bones, as well as on-going community consultation, have won the developers respect and admiration from the notoriously finicky community, who guard their turf passionately.

It's also won Trepanier – the only five-star hotel in the area – the privilege of joining the "Small Luxury Hotels of the World" brand.

The 44-suite hotel, with 20 separate residences, combines Old World charm with New World luxury (think English country cottages with deep Kohler tubs and high-pressure shower heads), and manages to do so with a relatively small footprint.

The brainchild of Scott Wilshaw, a British hotelier who ran the Emerson Resort in

the Catskills and the Judges Country House hotel in Yorkshire, Trepanier was designed by architect John Sproule as the antithesis of the monster homes (and monster resorts) that sadly have wound their way into the local vernacular.

"Some of the buyers for the Trepanier homes [which average 2,000 square feet]," explains Mr. Sproule, "are rethinking the idea of a 6,000-square-foot residence – both in terms of being green – but also more pragmatically in terms of easier upkeep."

And Mr. Sproule's architectural vision – a modern, North American take on the English country cottage – offers residences that are cozily retro, but spacious-feeling, light-filled and open to the surrounding environment.

Consider the Falcon, one of three prototypes, which comes complete with a guest cottage. Zanzibar antique elm flooring contrasts with wainscoting details at the entrance, while extensive glazing and 14-foot open-beam ceilings offer light and space.

The Old World/New World fusion is done seamlessly,

with any sense of jarring dislocation or unfortunate pastiche notably absent.

The Canadian wilderness nature of the site is undeniable. Located on 25 acres of Tabletop Mountain, on a dramatic ridgeline carved by glaciers into steep slopes, the site descends south toward Lake Okanagan, with views of Rattlesnake Island and provincial parkland.

A creek that was shut down by the building of the Coquihalla Highway is being revived, and the site contains extensive forest and a deer corridor. Rather extraordinarily, more than 90 per cent of the site will remain unbuild, with most of it retained as gardens or vineyards integrated into the natural landscape buffer.

The site is laid out in the style of an English village – a very high-end English village in a Mediterranean climate. It begins with a gatehouse that will include a wine and antique shop, and extends to the central residential area designed in "village green" style, where nine homes will be built around a cascading two-level pool and adjacent

to a tennis court and croquet area. As the site descends toward the lake, clusters of homes in twos and threes follow the undulating road, culminating in the hotel and vineyard, built into the ridge. At each juncture there will be an almost theatrical sense of "set piece" that will allow for contemplation of both natural and aesthetic beauty.

In the residences, nods to the outdoor lifestyle of the area are seen in features such as the outdoor courtyards with open-range grills off the more traditional English-style kitchen (complete with an AGA-evocative Bertazzoni stove, and grey brick detailing) and showers in the terraced garden area.

Aesthetically, Mr. Sproule bridges the gap between old and new by using local materials, such as a Kettle Valley stone with a warm, amber undertone, for the hearth.

On a pragmatic level, building materials such as stone, stucco, tile and metal are naturally fire-resistant. And in a neat confluence of aesthetics and practicality, the manor concept – calling for the introduction of roads, Old

World-style gardens and character vineyards – also creates "fire breaks" that are so essential in the arid environment.

The scale and massing of the cottages creates a magical interior ambience, while European-style roof tiles are concrete, rather than slate, for longevity and protection from sun and fire.

Extensive glazing brings the outside in, while the multi-paned windows with wood detailing speak to the traditional cottage style.

While the 1,600-square-foot Falcon home is a surprisingly spacious-feeling delight, the romantic choice would be the adjoining 500-square-foot "guest cottage." With its nod to the Small is Beautiful aesthetic, it wins the charm award hands down against any nearby monster home.

While evoking somebody's granny's cottage in Devon

with a wood-burning fireplace and retro fixtures, it also offers a luxurious soaker tub, windows that let in light and view, and, of course, central heating! Who says you can't have the best of both worlds? » Special to The Globe and Mail

### DONE DEAL » KITSILANO

1835 WEST 13TH AVE.

ASKING PRICE: \$1,645,000

SELLING PRICE: \$1,635,000

TAXES: \$7,113 (2009)

DAYS ON MARKET: 60

LISTING AGENT: Ben Kielb, Sotheby's International Realty Canada

"This home did take a little while to sell," says agent Ben Kielb. "But, when I took on the listing, the home wasn't finished being built by the developer yet. As soon as the house was close to done, the action started. Not long after that, it sold."

Mr. Kielb says the brand-new 2,348 sq. ft. duplex "represents a huge step in the evolution of Vancouver homes."

"It is a perfect home for the empty nester/baby boomer, or the young family," he says. "I think we will see more of these beautiful homes popping up in the future."

The reputation of builder Dan Van Vliet and his Handmade Development also attracted interest in the house, says Mr. Kielb.

The four-bedroom, four-bathroom residence offers the space of a family home with the convenience of a duplex without any strata fees.

The house has walnut hardwood floors, two gas fireplaces and a single-car garage with laneway access as well as an open carport for a second vehicle.

The upstairs includes three bedrooms and two bathrooms with dual flush toilets and 100 per cent wool carpets. The custom kitchen is outfitted with professional-grade appliances, including a 36-inch Wolf range, Sub-Zero refrigerator and Bosch dishwasher. The basement has a bedroom, bathroom and a 21-by-11-foot recreation room.



**I think we will see more of these beautiful homes popping up in the future.**

Ben Kielb, agent

**DONE DEALS BY THOMASINA BARNES**

**HISTORICAL PROPERTY SALES INFORMATION PROVIDED BY LANDCOR DATA CORP.**

### INTERIORS

## Winter's warmth is brought inside



**KELLY DECK**  
THE WEST COAST WAY  
kdeck@globeandmail.com

On the TV series *Take It Outside* we used to organize the episodes around a dramatic device called "the inspiration piece." It's an object we take from the interior of the client's home – a conch, say – that aids in the design of the exterior. "Hmmm," I might say of the shell. "This reminds me of light, airy summer vacations at the beach. That's the kind of atmosphere we're going to attempt to create outside."

The inspiration piece, although it can seem contrived, has roots in a sound design principle: translating the visual cues of a small thing to a much larger space. This week in the column, however, we're going to play with scale and go the opposite direction. We're going to experiment with translating a very large thing (Canadian winter) to a much smaller thing (a room of your home).

The cold season looms. At the moment, the Vancouver trees are brilliant with colour. But the reds and oranges are subsiding to rusts, and soon they'll cease to exist at all. The hues of winter – the weathered browns, the scraped greys and blacks – are beginning to assert themselves. As Frost wrote, nothing gold can stay.

Food is one way we mark the movement from the airiness of summer to the thickness of winter. From tangy fruits and delicate salads we pass into our cold-weather staples: root vegetables, roasts, stews, soups.



**This room design takes its cues from the climate with winter's 'hardness' reflected in dark woods and stone.** BARRY CALHOUN

What unites these latter foods is their sense of weight, coziness and warmth.

That's a smart decorating principle to bring indoors. This time, though, rather than create a haven of comfort as a bulwark against the encroaching Canadian winter – on its own, a fine idea – we're taking the coming winter, the whole of it, as our inspiration piece, and looking at three ways to bring the idea inside.

#### NAKED WOOD

As winter falls, the world goes dormant. Everything that can strip away is stripped away; all that cannot survive dies. Outside, the aesthetic is one of retraction, of reduction, of returning to basics. This denuding of the landscape can be depressing, but also affirming. Only the essential remains.

Let's embrace this spirit of reduction in one room of our home. Clear away the things

that are light and insubstantial. Pack away your fluttery fabrics, the linens and gauzes in pale blues, pinks and greens. Leave them for spring. Concentrate instead on the beauty and substance of a simple, dark piece of furniture, like a chair.

Don't choose a chair with deep cushions, but one on which you can see the texture of the wood. Our immediate response to the starkness of winter is to pile our comforts up high around us, not pare them down. And although using bareness as our guiding aesthetic runs counter to conventional wisdom, some good may come of it.

#### HARD EARTH

Canadian winter hardens the earth with frost. Emulating this in your home may sound perverse. No one likes cold feet, after all, and most prefer the plushness of deep carpet to the bite of frozen dirt. But the

queerness of the idea is what we're trying to get at. Canada in wintertime is a fearsome and inhospitable land – a nearly insane place for a country. And yet we persist here. Our comforts are not so numerous that we can take them for granted.

Cutting away commonplace luxuries – the deep rugs, cushions and overstuffed furniture – from this interior room recalls the precariousness of our Canadian existence.

#### PILES OF SOFT THINGS

Although rockiness and rigidity dominate, Canada's cold-weather landscape is not void of softness. In fall, the leaves drift under the trees and children run through them, disappearing into the piles. Later, the same happens with snow. I remember an old book about a man who'd travelled on foot through Siberia. "The winter wind is what will kill you," he said. "The snow, you can gather up around you and sleep like a baby."

There's enough hardness in our Canadian winter room, then; it's time for a measure of softness. We're not going to attempt this in large, fixed configurations, but in small, movable ones. As you can see in the photograph, a cashmere throw is a warm invitation to huddle up and keep the chill at bay. And what could be better, since we're in this Canadian frame of mind, than shaking out your old woolen blanket – perhaps even a Hudson's Bay Company point blanket.

Our human comforts are the things we make, not the ones we find. In the landscape of this country and this room, with its bare wood and hard ground, comfort is a modest idea and our warmth is contingent on the continuation of the fire, on a blanket we can carry with us.