



GREEN IS THE NEW BLUE

“I believe second homes are more reflective of the kind of person we really want to be than our principal residences. We’re more relaxed. More comfortable with ourselves. More inspired. Second home life brings out the best in us.”

—Michael Coyle
Former Chief Strategy Officer
Intrawest Corporation

Among people searching for as yet undiscovered places, Sunshine Coast has, for 100 years, been one of the Pacific Coast’s favorite getaways, famous for its clear blue skies and dazzling blue water. Today, this idyllic coastline is also the site of one of British Columbia’s most eco-friendly communities – a development that its planners and designers describe as being “deep green.” Wakefield Beach, consisting of 46 spectacular timber and glass homes, reflects the strong environmental ethic of its developer Lance Sparling, a Vancouverite who, upon turning 50, decided to leave both the city and a very successful business behind and move to the Sechelt Peninsula to spend the second half of his life creating small communities with the same engaging sense-of-place as the small towns, villages and island cottages he remembers so fondly from his childhood. But Sparling is quick to point out that “developers don’t actually create communities – it’s the residents who infuse them with that spirit. It’s my role to provide places and spaces in which that can happen.”

What makes the Sunshine Coast so appealing as an escape route from heavily populated urban life is its ease of access from Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. Yet, this stretch of the Sechelt Peninsula remains serenely beautiful, peacefully tranquil and, by comparison with other waterfront locations in British Columbia, including the Gulf Islands and the Okanagan, remarkably affordable. The Sunshine Coast lives up to its name with as many as 2,400 hours of sunshine per year. Bright days outnumber gloomy ones by a wide margin because the mountains of Vancouver Island catch much of the rain coming in off the Pacific.

Appropriately, the architectural firm that oversaw the planning and design of this green getaway in the bluest of settings, is named Blue Sky, famous for their own interpretation of contemporary West Coast architecture. It’s a style characterized by distinctive, curved roof lines, an artistic use of timber and glass, and the firm’s ability to bring the outdoors indoors and vice versa.



Besides their green roofs, each home uses geothermal heat pumps, clean forced air heating, energy efficient appliances, low-flow plumbing fixtures, high-performance window glazing, and a form of wall panelization that reduces wood waste, increases the insulation factor and makes construction more precise. Forma Design, the landscape architect, specified indigenous trees, shrubs and plants for landscaping that requires no irrigation. Exterior lighting is solar powered. The entire community has been designed to encourage people to walk from place to place rather than using their cars. Wakefield Beach overlooks one of the most beautiful, low-bank beaches on the Sunshine Coast. "That's no coincidence," says Sparling, "Wakefield stands on one of the earliest-settled properties on this stretch of coastline and the original owner, a Mr. Wakefield, had his choice of prime waterfront locations. He picked the one with the best beach. His homestead grew into Wakefield Inn but that building eventually deteriorated beyond repair. We saved all that we could – the fireplace mantels are made of wood reclaimed from the Inn. The rest of the useable materials were donated to Habitat For Humanity."

"We think of roofs as being hats, one of the most important design elements of any house. Like a hat, a roof is the most visible expression of a home's personality. It represents the style and spirit of the structure below it. Too few designers pay attention to the importance of roofs."

–Kim Smith, Partner, Blue Sky Architects



Wakefield Beach was master-planned in three tiers, fanned out along the 700 feet of waterfront. Because the site slopes down, naturally, towards the ocean and because Blue Sky has designed three, two and one-story residences that progressively follow the contours of the land, every home has unrestricted, south-facing views of the beach and the sea. To ensure that his first community made the most of the site, Sparling called upon a small advisory group of friends that included, among others, Peter Busby, an industry leader in green design; Micheal Coyle the former Chief Strategy Officer for Intrust Resorts; and Jake Chalmers, partner and President of Envisioning + Storytelling, a Vancouver-based firm that has guided the planning and design of more than 100 of North America's most admired destination resorts and small resort communities. The result is a community at Wakefield Beach that one buyer described as being one of those truly rare places that "is better than the sales pitch," which is exactly what Sparling had hoped for when he began. Based on the response to Wakefield Beach he has established a company called Wakefield Homes whose 30 employees have plans to continue developing properties based on green initiatives alongside the blue Pacific. Seeing what Sparling has achieved with this enclave of homes, and reporting on what owners are saying, the Westcoast Homes section of the Vancouver Sun recently wrote, "encore, encore, maestro!"

If you are interested in Wakefield Beach, either as a seaside getaway or as your primary residence, call (604) 741-9899, toll-free 1 (888) 741-9899 or e-mail info@wakefieldbeach.com. If you're out for a weekend drive, you'll find Wakefield Beach off the 6500 block of the Sunshine Coast Highway. Homes range in size from 1,431 to over 2,200 square feet and in price from low \$700,000's to over \$1.5 million. A small number of the 46 homes are still available for purchase.<<<

