

West Coast wonder

By **STEVE MacNAULL**
The Daily Courier

Everyone likes to have a look inside a multi-million dollar mansion. So when The Daily Courier had the chance to check out the \$5.9-million, 6,000-square-foot West Coast contemporary beauty in Highpointe built by Timberhaven Homes, we did and we took our cameras with us.

"With this home, we really built something that stood out from the rest," said builder Scott Ross of Timberhaven Homes.

"It's contemporary West Coast style, but unique in that it also has clean lines and we used lots of wood, stone and windows. It's private and is a great entertaining house with its huge kitchen, living and dining rooms, patios and decks."

The home is for sale for \$5.9 million, listed with realtor Tim Down of Sea to Sky Premier Properties and Christie's Great Estates.

While the viewing The Daily Courier attended was the first open house, the home has received lots of attention before.

That included wins at the Thompson Okanagan Housing Awards (Tommies) for best home priced over \$3 million and best master suite.

Over the past five years, Ross has built six other multi-million dollar houses in the Kelowna area.

But the Highpointe show piece is special.

"It's the most expensive home I've ever built," said Ross.

"And I had an investor so I could do the house on speculation and do it with the vision of the best it could be. As such, the right buyer will come along who appreciates all that and has the money."

The "right buyer" according to

Ross could be an NHL hockey player; a wealthy business person from Vancouver, Calgary or Edmonton; someone from Kelowna who sells their lake-front home to move to a view property; or an international money-bags who wants a second home.

To create the home, Ross bought two plots of land totalling 1.65 acres within the exclusive Highpointe gated community off Clifton Road overlooking Okanagan Lake and the city.

Highpointe is the subdivision where hockey great Wayne Gretzky and singer Elton John are rumored to have bought lots.

Word is John sold his lots because he decided not to build there and if Gretzky does have a plot, he hasn't had anything started yet.

On the rocky face of the property, Ross built the main 6,000-square-foot, four-bedroom house with big patios and decks facing the views.

From the street, the home appears to be all modern straight lines, flat roof and windows with rock detailing.

Above the main house perched on another rock outcropping, is the 1,000-square-foot pool house with pool jutting out from the cliff and a putting green tucked into the hillside.

The two houses are connected by a bridge over the courtyard.

"Construction took 17 months, so it started just as the recession

did," said Ross.

"It was good in that we were building rather than looking for a buyer during the recession. Now that the economy is improving, we will find the right buyer. In fact, the person that buys this house will have the kind of money that they were above the recession."

Tim Down, the realtor marketing the house, is getting the word out globally.

"Through our affiliation with Christie's Great Estates we have access to the largest agency worldwide," he said.

"The luxury real estate group really markets lifestyle and that's what Kelowna has."

Canada is known internationally as a stable, safe, secure, clean, friendly and welcoming country.

The Okanagan takes it up a notch as the area with the best climate,

stunning scenery and a recreational lifestyle revolving around the lake, golf and ski resorts.

"Waterfront isn't necessarily the most desirable anymore," said Down.

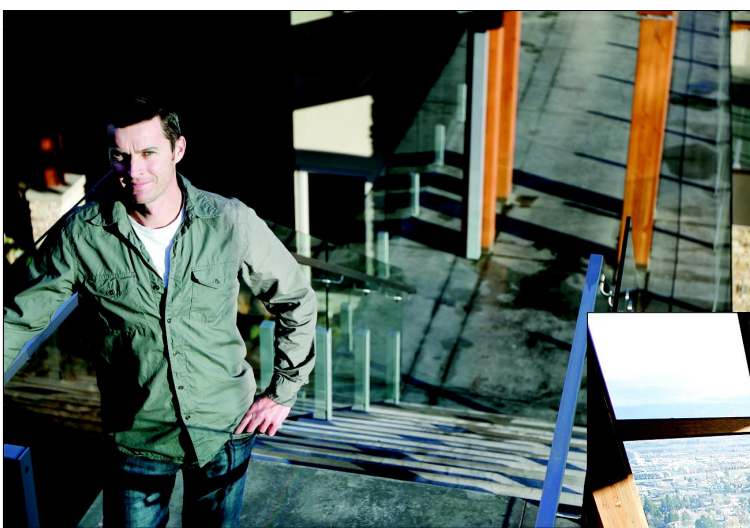
"We find money is coming off the lake and up the hillsides for the views. The reality is a high-end buyer can have a spectacular view home with pool like this and then still have a boat on the lake to have the best of both worlds."

Developer Scott Ross cut his

teeth working for other companies building multi-million dollar chalets in Whistler.

When he struck out on his own with Timberhaven five years ago he decided to move to Kelowna where international money was finding its way to high-end homes.

"I'm in that market where I'll only build two or three premium homes per year for people that want the unique and special that comes with a custom home," said Ross.



SAMUEL DOBRIN/Special to The Daily Courier

This contemporary West Coast mansion, top, in Kelowna's exclusive Highpointe neighbourhood is for sale for \$5.9 million. Left, the 6,000-square-foot, four-bedroom house was built by Scott Ross of Timberhaven Homes. Bottom, A modern chandelier hangs over the double-height living room.

Flair flies to the rescue of stranded vacationers

It's not good for the bottom line, but it is good business. Without any contractual obligation or way of getting paid, Kelowna-based Flair Airlines has flown home hundreds of Canadian vacationers stranded in Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

Flair was chartered by Go Travel South to fly sunseekers from eastern Canada cities to the resorts of Cancun, Puerto Plata, Santa Domingo and Punta Cana.

But under financial difficulties, Ottawa-based Go Travel South abruptly stopped its winter tour program last week.

As part of the sudden halt, Flair was dismissed by Go Travel South.

However, while it's under no legal obligation to fly back down and bring back passengers, Flair decided to do so at a cost of \$300,000.

"Going to get these stranded passengers is the only right thing to do," said Flair general manager Chris Lapointe.

"If we didn't step up and help, these individ-



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MACNAULL
Valley Views

uals would have been put in a very difficult situation."

Flair started to do business with Go Travel South three months ago.

Flair understands Go Travel South didn't sell as many tickets as it hoped in January, but thought February was better.

Lapointe says Flair was just as stunned by the cancellation as everyone else.

Go Travel South accounted for about 20 per cent of Flair's business.

It's now looking for other customers that want to charter its Boeing 737-400 jets.

Moving on

After 10 years as winemaker at CedarCreek Winery in Kelowna, Tom DiBello has left to pursue something else.

DiBello was integral in CedarCreek's success over the past decade, including two winery-of-the-year honours and numerous medals for its wines at competitions.

When contacted by The Daily Courier, DiBello said he couldn't elaborate because he was still finalizing things with different parties.

But he did say he was staying in the Okanagan.

Reading between the lines that sounds like he may be setting up his own business to be a consulting winemaker for several wineries in the Valley.



The Daily Courier

Winemaker Tom DiBello has left CedarCreek Winery, likely to become a winemaking consultant for several wineries.

In the meantime, CedarCreek's assistant winemaker Bill Pierson has taken over while the winery searches for a replacement using a California-based consultant.

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