



## **Beach club's \$50-million view**

**Newest resort will pump millions a year into the local economy, owners say**

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**Page: A1**

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Parksville's newest and one of its biggest and most luxurious resort-condominium hotels opened its doors Saturday with media tours and a banquet fit for royalty.

The \$50-million Beach Club Resort Hotel, built on land formerly occupied by the famous Island Hall Resort, where Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip once stayed, is a fitting successor to the Island Hall which is ready to forge its own legacy, officials said.

The 149 suites were sold as quarter-ownerships, meaning that four people typically own each suite and share its occupancy throughout the year.



**Parksville Mayor Sandy Herle cuts the ribbon to officially open the \$50-million Beach Club Resort Hotel on Saturday with (from right) owners Darren, Brad and Rob McAdams. The red hair peeking over the Shaw camera belongs to the Parksville Chamber's Cheryl Dill.**

When the owners are absent, the suites are rented as hotel rooms.

Darren McAdams, a director with Sandcastle Holdings Ltd. of Victoria which developed the property, said he likes the fact that the units were sold to owners who have made an investment in Parksville as a community.

All but 12 are sold.

Prices for the 1,260-square-foot two-bedroom units range from \$189,000 to \$205,000 per quarter, he said.

The Resort will boost the City's tax base and will provide mostly full-time jobs for about 100 people.

McAdams said the economic impacts will benefit the entire region, not just the city, and downtown merchants will also benefit as thousands of new visitors come here to relax, walk the beach, eat, shop and golf. No study has predicted the full impact of The Beach Club Resort but McAdams expects it may be millions of dollars a year.

There have been concerns, however. Some people complained about the noise when the piles were being driven deep. Others resent the loss of ocean view.

"We're hearing less of that, now that the facility is open and they can see it," McAdams said.

"I respect everybody's opinion," he said. "Everybody's entitled to it. I would like to see them reserve their judgment until it's complete."

Completion is slated for October of 2009, when the \$35- to \$40-million Residences at the Beach Club is expected to be ready. This eight-storey building located behind the main resort will feature 56 residential condo suites -- only 19 remain unsold -- and a commercial component.

"People are buying for one of two reasons," said George Hare, of Recreational and Residential Project Marketing. "They either have fond memories of Island Hall and summers at the beaches in Parksville or they are looking for a lifestyle where they can escape the hectic pace of daily life and head to their own luxury waterfront resort getaway."

The Beach Club Resort offers in-room service beginning later this month, valet and bell service, concierge, fitness centre and oceanfront pool and hot tub. It also features Parksville's newest restaurant, Pacific Prime Steak and Chop Restaurant, and the area's newest spa, Stonewater Spa & Salon.

On Saturday, sisters in law Doreen Blake and Margaret Levasseur enjoyed a pedicure in the spa.

"It's heavenly," said Levasseur, who with her husband Richard was celebrating their 56th wedding anniversary. This was her first-ever pedicure, and it was done by Jodi Burke of Parksville.

"It's not going to be my last," Levasseur said, smiling. It was a special day also, Levasseur said, because her husband had a 28-point hand in cribbage, a rare feat.

Blake of Qualicum Beach, who also has a home in Palm Springs, said the Beach Club "looks absolutely beautiful."

McAdams is breathing a sigh of relief. Getting the building up wasn't easy, he said, and it took six months longer than planned.

"It's been a challenging construction climate, there's no doubt about it."

Early on there was trouble with the water table, which was higher than expected. As a result, he told media, "the whole underground parkade... is generally a (waterproof) tank system, which to my knowledge hasn't been done on the Island before."

Then there were troubles with a labour shortage. With so much other construction happening on the Island and Lower Mainland and with some trades people leaving for Alberta, a shortage of sub-contractors was felt, said John Quested of the Resort.

But perseverance paid off, McAdams said. His main emotion now is relief, he explained, because it has all come together and he can sit back and watch his children play on the beach.

"We have a facility that the city can be proud of," he said.

Residents of the area may visit any time, he added. "It's a hotel. They can walk right through the lobby and go through to the beach."

Outside the ballroom, where five weddings are already booked, is a three-metre public walkway down to the beach, giving people better access to the water than there was under the old Island Hall.

"It's certainly improved," McAdams said.

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