

When the Golf Course Isn't Enough

By SALLIE BRADY



Stuart Isett for The New York Times

MORE OPTIONS Town homes at Bear Mountain in British Columbia, which also sells high-rise condos in a walkable village. Some golf resorts are offering a greater choice of designs and amenities.

The new breed of golf community has a strong personality with distinctive architecture, loads of amenities, and a real sense of place.



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SLEEK A model town home at Bear Mountain in Victoria, British Columbia.

The Edwardian High-Rise

Bear Mountain; Victoria, British Columbia;
www.bearmountain.ca

"It looks like a castle," said Cynthia Thompson, 45, of the Highlander, a 15-story condominium modeled after Victoria's century-old Empress Hotel, just after she and her husband, Greg, 50, bought a two-bedroom golf retreat there.

Tired of the heat of Phoenix, where they live in a golf community, the couple wanted a summer vacation property. When they called Bear Mountain to book a tee time on its Jack Nicklaus-designed course, they were told they could take part in the resort's Fly and Try program, which would reimburse them for airfare and a hotel room if they bought property.

"We had never considered buying in Victoria, but it's beautiful," Mrs. Thompson said. "The course is amazing, and I don't think we'll need a car."

Many of the 1,300-acre resort's condos are being snapped up by Americans from hot-weather locales like Texas, California and Arizona. Condos start at 530 square feet for 350,000 Canadian dollars (\$367,450 at \$1.07 to the Canadian dollar) and go to 2,000 square feet for 2.1 million Canadian dollars.

"The average age of the buyer here is 48 to 52," said Dale Sproule, director of real estate. He added that the development's owners - led by the ex-National Hockey League player Len Barrie and including former and current N.H.L. stars like Joe Nieuwendyk and Ryan Smyth - have helped attract a young crowd. "We're selling as fast as we can build," Mr. Sproule said.