

Couple enjoys digs at Quarry Park

BY KATHY MCCORMICK, CALGARY HERALD MARCH 4, 2011



Dale Hindle and Julia Bonnett can't wait to have their new high-end townhome at Boulevard Townes of Quarry Park built by Birchwood Properties.

Photograph by: Christina Ryan, Calgary Herald

The couple finished school last year in Vancouver, living in a condo that was barely 400 square feet.

Now they've doubled that space in the multi-family home they are renting in Calgary's Lake Bonavista community.

But that's only until the fall.

"We need space," says 24-year-old Julia Bonnett. "We always knew we wanted to buy, but it took a lot of looking and we had a certain criteria that we had set for ourselves."

More elbow room was near the top of the list, but the couple's decision went much further, says Bonnett, a pharmacist who is engaged to chemical engineer Dale Hindle.

"We wanted a certain level of finish," she says. "We wanted the lifestyle of a two-car garage, double sinks in the ensuite and high standards in the kitchen."

They found all that and more in the latest condo development by Birchwood Properties — Boulevard Townes of Quarry Park.

The townhome project, which recently opened its first two show homes, has 38 units in the first phase of what will eventually be a six-building complex.

Sales have been brisk, says CEO and president Jeff Cheverie of Birchwood Properties.

“Given that the multi-family market has been a challenging market, we are delighted that we are approximately 50 per cent pre-sold prior to the opening of our model homes,” he says.

“The project is unique in Calgary’s south offering a high-end level of interior and exterior finishing and architectural detail in a spectacular community setting.”

The homes range from 1,512 to 2,010 square feet and include two- and three-bedroom units that are spacious and bright.

The two-storey designs include one model that has a unique turret design on the corner. A three-storey loft model is now being built as an additional show home.

The features in the homes include a wide-open floor plan with large windows that cover almost full walls to let in the light.

Standards feature hardwood floors, double, detached garages, quartz countertops and stainless steel appliances, and full basements to add to the living space.

The furnace, electrical boxes and hot water tanks are in the attics of the units, allowing the full basement to be open to development, as shown in the two show homes.

The homes have a great street presence due to steep-pitched roofs, decks, acrylic stucco and stone exteriors, and the turrets at corners.

The neighbourhood of Quarry Park, which is being undertaken by Remington Development Group, is a huge draw as well, says Cheverie.

Birchwood is currently the exclusive multi-family home builder in the area, with Cardel Homes constructing the single-family homes.

“It offers people the opportunity to own a brand-new, high-end townhome in a mid-city location with the amenities of retail, employment and the river, with parks and pathways on your doorstep,”

The neighbourhood is between Douglasglen and Riverbend in southeast Calgary, just steps from the Bow River.

And that attracted Bonnett and Hindle.

“When we lived in our little apartment in Vancouver, we could walk everywhere from grocery stores to restaurants,” says Bonnett.

“Quarry Park has provided us with that same opportunity. It’s truly a live/work/play neighbourhood, and it’s very close to Fish Creek Park. At the same time, it’s not far from downtown.”

The master-planned community is on 127 hectares and will have as many as 2,000 homes — in both single-family and multi-family projects — by completion.

The mixed-use development includes a large office component, as well as the recent Market at Quarry Park, which includes retail services and amenities.

“Quarry Park is particularly appealing due to the opportunity to ‘live, work and play’ in the same community,” says Cheverie.

“The brand-new Quarry market, the proximity to the Bow River and Carburn Park, as well as the proximity to employment make the project very appealing.”

The young couple is typical of some of the buyers in the complex so far, says Cheverie. “The majority of our buyers are empty nesters, particularly those who either live in the south already (areas such as Douglasdale, Riverbend, Lake Bonavista, Willow Park) or work in the area.

“Since the show homes have opened, we have also received a strong response from young professionals.

“This is exactly what we expected.”

Everything about the project has resonated with the young couple. “We wanted to put our own stamp on our home with upgrades, so we did things like creating our dream kitchen,” says Bonnett.

“If we had bought a single-family home, we couldn’t have had as much fun with it because of the price difference.

“We also didn’t want the responsibility of a home at this time in our lives. We wanted to be able to turn the key and go. We wanted something with minimal upkeep.”

All of that gives Cheverie confidence in the year ahead. “Because of the positive early response, the niche nature of the product and the pent-up level of demand, we believe that Boulevard Townes will sell out during 2011,” he says.

The company also believes the current predictions for multi-family housing starts are “reasonable,” he says. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. recently increased its estimate for multi-family housing construction, revising it upwards to 3,300 construction starts for 2011.

“However, we expect to outperform the market and be one of the few projects that are launched and sold out in 2011,” says Cheverie.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Project: The Boulevard Townes of Quarry Park.

Builder: Birchwood Properties.

Developer: Remington Development Group.

Area: Quarry Park in the southeast.

Prices: From the low \$400,000s plus GST.

Directions: Take Deerfoot Trail south to Glenmore Trail. Turn east, then right at 18th Street S.E. Follow through Riverbend to Quarry Park Boulevard and follow the signs to the sales centre.

Hours: Open from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays, and noon to 5 p.m. weekends and holidays.

Information: www.boulevardtownes.com

THE BUYERS

Julia Bonnett and Dale Hindle.

Ages: They are both 24.

Background: The young couple completed university last year, living in Vancouver at the time in a 400-square-foot apartment. When they moved to Calgary, they doubled the size of their home — but at 800 square feet, the rented apartment was still too small, and not theirs. “We always knew we wanted to buy, and there was a certain criteria that we were looking for,” says Bonnett, a pharmacist. That included not only a larger space, but the convenience of townhome living, finishes that were of a high standard, a price that would allow them to “put our own stamp on our home” with upgrades, and location, she says. They found everything they were looking for in Birchwood Properties’ The Boulevard Townes of Quarry Park. They bought a 2,000-square-foot townhome.

Project: The Boulevard Townes of Quarry Park.

Builder: Birchwood Properties.

Developer: Remington Development Corp.

Possession: This fall.

CLOSE TO RIVER

Quarry Park consists of 127 hectares between Riverbend on the north and Douglasglen on the south.

It also borders the east side of the Bow River.

The mixed-use development includes the large Market at Quarry Park, which has shops and services in place.

The project also has office space and a residential section that will have 2,000 homes by completion — including single-family and multi-family housing of all types with a European flavour. Parks and walkways run throughout the development.

Cardel Homes is so far the only single-family builder in the development. Birchwood Properties is constructing the multi-family site.

The developer of Quarry Park is Remington Development Corp. Visit www.quarrypark.ca

BIRCHWOOD KEEPS GROWING

Birchwood Properties, which started in the late 1990s, is under the helm of president and CEO Jeff Cheverie.

Some of its past projects include Jack and Jill in Cranston and Access Cougar Ridge.

"Birchwood is continuing to expand in 2011 and offers a broad range of choice to consumers," says Cheverie. "Our offerings in 2011 include estate-style single-family homes in Currie Barracks, lifestyle townhomes in Quarry Park, entry-level single-family homes in Evans Ridge in Calgary's northwest, and our market-leading inner-city homes through City Life Homes in Calgary's best inner-city markets."

kmccormick@calgaryherald.com

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