

**COVER STORY**



This elegant master suite in the Aquattro show home is the ultimate in luxury – including the back-to-back double sinks and inviting soaker tub.

Jennifer Blyth photos

**Beach-side**

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the people interested in Aquattro tend to be those intending to live there, as opposed to investors.

“The purchasers I’m seeing are not motivated so much by price, but by the quality of construction, the natural setting and the attention to detail. We’re offering something no one else has got in the natural amenities.”

In terms of green space, Aquattro borders the Esquimalt Lagoon, home to birds and other wildlife. Approximately 40 per cent of the land will be kept as open green space for use as a public park, for enhanced stream habitat and to preserve views.

A fish-bearing stream, now being restored and restocked, runs through the property, while the rear of the property accesses 650-acres of old growth forest at Royal Roads University, as well as five kilometres of walking and hiking trails.

In addition to the setting, built amenities include Aquattro’s clubhouse, 22,000-square-foot amenity centre, and, in the current sales centre, an interpretive centre for the green space, lagoon and estuary, maintained by The Land Conservancy.



Daniel says many of the real estate shoppers coming out are “local tourists,” who may have lived in Victoria for years but rarely go to the West Shore. “They can’t get over the stunning views and the space provided by this tranquil, beach-side setting that’s so close to town, but feels like another world,” he says.



**Geothermal heating & cooling**

With utility prices on the rise, the builders at the West Shore’s Aquattro development have the solution – at least for their residents: geothermal.

Because of naturally occurring aquifers on the Esquimalt Lagoon-area site, the builders have designed a geexchange system that both heats and cools homes, reduces energy requirements and provides the strata with fixed costs for the geexchange system at this 563-unit development.

“Homebuyers are asking us more questions about environmental sustainability, and with a geothermal system like Aquattro’s, they know they can enjoy the comfort of a luxury home with a lighter carbon footprint and a smaller heating bill,” says Woodburn Management’s Peter Daniel, developer of Aquattro. “We’ve already installed the first phase of the system in our show suite so that people can see that it’s possible, and that it works.”

A geexchange system uses the heat stored in the earth from a ground or water source to heat and cool a building. In colder months, heat is drawn from the earth, either through a closed or open loop system, which transfers that heat via a water loop to a heat exchanger.

A heat pump then upgrades the heat to provide the level of warmth required for the building. In warmer months, the system reverses itself, providing cooling by transferring heat from the building back into the ground. Geexchange systems are highly efficient and the energy required to run the geexchange equipment is up to 75 per cent less than what is required for a conventional heating system.

“It sounds extremely simple, and in many ways it is,” says Daniel. “But

**In the know:**

■ The use of geexchange energy for each 2,000-square-foot residence at Aquattro will equate to offsetting up to two tonnes of greenhouse gases each year, the builder says. By creating the same amount of heat while using up to 75-per-cent-less energy, residents will significantly reduce their carbon footprint.

■ The long-term energy cost savings for the environmentally friendly heating system can be substantial. The fixed charge for the geexchange system combined with the significant reduction in energy to run geexchange equipment results in an initial cost that is competitive with conventional energy. This cost becomes even more favourable as commodity prices increase.

it means a significant reduction in heating costs when projected over several years due to the monthly fixed cost over the next 25 years related to the geexchange loop-field, which is very attractive for homebuyers. It’s the kind of innovation that will help the B.C. government – and the people of B.C. – meet its aggressive targets for greenhouse gas reductions.”

Aquattro is working with **Terasen Energy Services** to develop the system, which Terasen will own and manage at completion. Terasen designs, constructs and operates energy systems with sustainability as its focus.

**AROUND THE HOUSE**

**Design District goes official**

Victoria is as yet unofficial home décor destination just became official. Along with LoJo, Broad Street and other downtown destinations, merchants recently announced the official amalgamation of the newly branded “Design District.”

Offering a unique collection of furniture, fabrics, hand-knotted rugs, lighting, eclectic artwork

and an abundance of home décor accessory shops, the Design District features more than 25 businesses related to design, concentrated in one neighbourhood. Bordered by the Inner Harbour, Market Square, Herald Street and Canada’s oldest Chinatown, the area features attractive streets and hidden alleyways. Signs identify-

ing the district will be going up under the regular street signs. The Design District occupies a historic part of the west side of Victoria’s downtown where industry warehouses were once common. Early décor stores anchored the area and now condominium developers and other design businesses are discovering the area’s appeal.



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