

Wasaga Beach Renaissance

In the early 19th century, Wasaga Beach was a major route that fur traders used to get to the great North West. By the mid-20th century, the town, which boasts the longest freshwater beach in the world, had morphed into a popular resort spot for Toronto area water-lovers. Development occurred in sprawling concentric circles from the waterfront inland, with no focused downtown, and the cottages that once sparkled in the summer sun gradually faded with age and wear. Today, Wasaga Beach is undergoing a renaissance, with new developments rejuvenating this lakeside jewel – and Stonebridge By The Bay is leading the way.

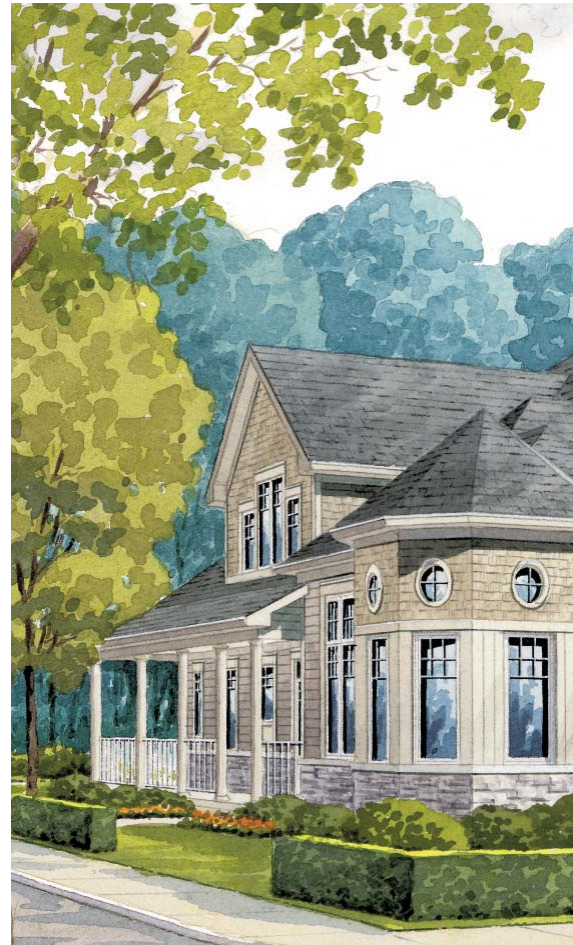
“We have spent the last 12 years putting together over 90 acres of land with the intention of creating a true master-planned community that will become a residential and commercial centre for Wasaga Beach,” says Mark Crowe, a principal in Stonebridge Building Group. “We traveled all over North America for ideas on how we could make Stonebridge stand out in the way that famous coastal towns such as Cape Cod, Martha’s Vineyard, and Granville Island in Vancouver do. We studied the architecture of Robert Stern, and we combined elements from these examples with Wasaga Beach’s visual heritage from the early 20th century. The result will be a community of modern commercial businesses and residences with porches, gambrel roofs and other architectural highlights that hint at the past.”

The professionals at Stonebridge Building Group

were sure they were on to something once they heard WalMart was coming to Wasaga Beach. “We knew at that point that this area would be a major town centre,” Crowe says. “We widened Main Street in front of our property to four lanes, and we’ve created an actual grid of roads that will connect to River Road East and Zoo Park Road. The planning for this community has been phenomenal.”

That planning includes an impressive two km. of 12 foot-wide trails that will wind through the unprecedented number of mature trees, plus the parks and two landscaped ponds in this lakeside community, and connect with the town’s bike paths and trails. “We purchased the land next door, which was the Morris campground,” Crowe says, “and turned it into preserved greenbelt, which forms a beautiful buffer around this pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly community. We even bought property on the waterfront so that every resident of Stonebridge will have access to a private beach club.”

To enhance the special neighbourhood feeling, the company also received permission from the town to install boulevard plantings, which Crowe says makes the streets look more intimate and calms traffic. Stonebridge will, in fact, eventually have a stone bridge that will lead residents and guests over a pond in its main park area, reminiscent of the mounded stone bridges on older golf courses. The level of master-planning includes details such as light standards with a coastal/nautical feel to them,



as well as bicycle racks and planters in the spirit of the charming downtowns of Orillia and Collingwood. Residents will also have the use of an outdoor pool, volleyball courts and more.

“There is a lot of zeal in this community design,” Crowe adds. “The commercial centre will offer stores, restaurants and a hotel, and the 375 residences will be framed by mature trees. Given their proximity to the water, this is rare – a Muskoka feeling without the Muskoka prices.”

The first phase at Stonebridge By The Bay offers innovative, well-appointed villa-style bungalows and two-storey residences clustered in groupings that resemble large estate homes rather than connected separate entities. Prices begin from an amazing \$194,000.

Visit the Presentation Centre located in the Stonebridge Town Centre at Main Street South and River Road West. Hours are Monday to Thursday from noon to 6 p.m.; Saturday, Sunday and holidays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 1-877-420-0880 or 705-422-0880 or visit www.mystonebridge.ca.

