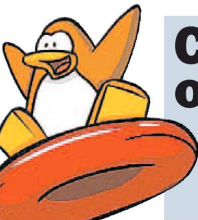


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TIMES COLONIST

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VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

This Uplands home is Canada's most expensive on the market

\$28.5 million



The Sweet Pea at 3195 Humber Rd. in Oak Bay's Uplands neighbourhood boasts 450 metres of rocky oceanfront, shown in the aerial photograph above, as well as an indoor swimming pool and spa and doors covered in gold leaf.
Above: Bruce Stotesbury/TC; top right: Russ Heint/Sotheby's International Realty.

'Trophy properties' geared toward elite foreign buyers

BY CARLA WILSON
Times Colonist staff

Look out world: Greater Victoria's latest residential real estate offerings have shot past \$20 million, positioning themselves as the most expensive in the country.

The frontrunner is a \$28.5-million Humber Road property in the Uplands area of Oak Bay that boasts a 15,900-square-foot house on 2.5 acres, including more than 450 metres of oceanfront. Not far behind is a \$24-million waterfront estate in Metchosin that has an 8,000-square-foot home on 67 acres.

The properties, which are being handled by real estate agent Rob Milloy of Sotheby's International Realty Canada, make other recent multimillion-dollar listings in Greater Victoria — an \$18.5-million mansion in Central Saanich and

a historic \$17.5-million estate in the Uplands — look like a bargain.

They also outclass anything else listed on the Multiple Listing Service anywhere in Canada (one Ontario acreage is marked as \$3.5 million, its agent says). The next most expensive listings are a \$22-million stone chalet in Whistler and a \$19.5-million mansion in Toronto's exclusive Rosedale neighbourhood.

Milloy calls the two Greater Victoria listings "trophy properties," and plans to market them to an elite group of international buyers. He figures shoppers in that price bracket will be worth at least \$100 million.

The Uplands property, called Sweet Pea, but which is ripe for a name change, says Milloy, is a seven-bedroom mansion, complete with an indoor swimming pool and spa, doors covered in gold leaf, spectacular grounds, a desalination plant and an enhanced security system that slides shutters over windows at the touch of a button. It also has an expansive media room that would suit the likes of movie mogul Steven Spielberg, says Milloy.

The property has been owned since 2000 by Todd Axelrod, who heads Gallery of History Inc., a publicly traded company that deals in rare documents and memorabilia.

Axelrod bought the estate in 2000, tore down most of the original house and carried out a multimillion-dollar renovation. The estate had earlier been owned by Frank Hertel, who fled to Venezuela after being charged in the 1980s with conspiring to evade more than \$1 million in



\$24 million: Described as an "architectural sculpture," this 8,000 square-foot Metchosin home sits on 67 acres and is the second most expensive house for sale in the country.
Russ Heint/Sotheby's International Realty.

taxes. This isn't the first time the property has been for sale for a record price. Last year, it was listed at \$25 million — what was then the highest asking price ever in Greater Victoria — but wasn't sold.

Finished last year, the five-bedroom Metchosin home, called Swanwick Ranch, is an "architectural sculpture," Milloy says. "I've never seen a property like it."

Its modern, award-winning design features a canyon of water bubbling toward the ocean through cascading pools of water. This waterway is part of a geothermal heating and air conditioning system that pulls water from the ocean and runs through the house, separating the living and bedroom areas, Milloy said.

Swanwick also includes a guest house, boat house, covered pool and champi-

onship-quality tennis court.

Despite the fact that no Greater Victoria home has sold for even half the amount of his new listings — the record for a single-family home was \$10.5 million last year, for the same house now listed at \$17.5 million — Milloy is confident his asking prices are reasonable.

He said he priced the Uplands home by surveying the other waterfront properties for sale in the area and calculating how much the home would cost to build today.

"I think we can fully justify that," he said.

Likewise, the Metchosin property reflects the costs of its recent construction, he said.

Milloy expects it will take between six months and a year to sell the homes.
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The bride has white hair, not a white dress

Couple in their 90s met, fell in love at seniors' residence

BY SANDRA McCULLOCH
Times Colonist staff

Frank Hunt and Lillian Main could be the most affectionate couple in Ross Place, a Victoria residence for seniors.

Hunt, 96, will be taking the 92-year-old Main as his bride at noon next Thursday, the second trip to the altar for both. They're looking forward to married life — time spent talking, gardening and, well, doing what married couples do.

"Well, why not?" Main said during an interview yesterday. "You don't lose it just because you get old!"

The couple — who have already been married a collective 133 years — met at the seniors' residence where meals are shared in a common dining room.

Hunt remembers spying Main as she was reading a newspaper in the dining room "and I went across to her and said, 'Didn't your mother ever tell you it was rude to read at a table?' And that's what started our romance."

"It seemed to me we were landing at the same table every meal," said Main. "I would either look for him and go there or he'd look for me and come where I was."

Both had enjoyed long first marriages; his lasted 71 years and hers, 62. Both also spent winters in Arizona during retirement, but never crossed paths until they met at Ross Place.

Main "never even dreamed" she'd be falling in love and marrying in her 90s.

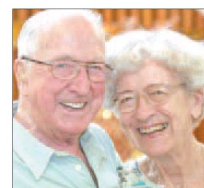
"It feels very, very nice. It's really what you hope for when you live all by yourself in a little apartment, and run back and forth to a care home to look after a spouse who's there permanently."

Hunt popped the question in the dining room where they'd enjoyed so many meals. "She said, 'Are you serious?' and then she said yes," said Hunt.

She's picking up her wedding dress today, but it's not like the one she wore for her first marriage. "I'm not a virgin anymore so I don't wear white," she said.

The wedding has the seniors' home abuzz and their respective families are excited as well. His two sons "are all for it." Her three children "are loving it."

After their church nuptials, the couple plans to honeymoon at Brentwood Bay. The two are the envy of many Ross Place residents, said Hunt: "They think we're lucky."
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Soon-to-be married couple, Frank Hunt, 96, and Lillian Main, 92, have a collective 133 years of marriage experience.
Bruce Stotesbury/TC

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