

DREAM HOME Surrounded by sweeping views of emerald farmland, a 7,000-square-foot rancher on the Saanich Peninsula has a peaceful atmosphere, inside and out. See page J15.

RECREATION & INVESTMENT PROPERTIES

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Christina Ryan, Calgary Herald

Parents Sue and Dave Alle with children Cheryl and Phillip. The family has purchased a one-eighth ownership in a beachfront home at La Bella Vita Resort and Spa.

Make your castle on Mexican sand

Villa Veneto at La Bella Vita Resort offering ownership segments

MARTY HOPE
CALGARY HERALD

Off in the distance, lights from the small fleet of shrimping vessels twinkle in the Sea of Cortez.

With not a cloud in the Mexican night sky, the lights can be seen from the rooftop deck of the Villa Veneto.

It's a beachfront home at La Bella Vita Resort and Spa — a sandy, seven-hectare strip of land being developed by LBV Holdings Ltd. headed by Calgarian

Sam Sidhom. La Bella Vita lies within the larger, 15-hectare gated development of Playa La Jolla, which is about a 15-minute drive from the city of Puerto Penasco (Rocky Point).

Villa Veneto is the second beachfront home created by Sidhom.

Like the first one, Casa del Mar, it is being sold in one-eighth full-equity ownership segments starting from \$189,900.

FROM PAGE J12

VILLA: 'Ready to roll'

Each owner will get six weeks use per year.

As an existing home, Villa Veneto has been totally re-finished inside and out to bring it up to modern-day specifications — and to offer residents opulence to support the magnificent natural scenery around it.

"It was a six-month project and now we're ready to roll it out," Sidhom says from the sales and information centre at Springbank Airport just west of Calgary.

Villa Veneto has a main house and a casita (guest house) within a walled property, which has extensive landscaping leading to the main entrance.

"What we have is more than 3,500 square feet of uncompromising luxury," says



“What we have is more than 3,500 square feet of uncompromising luxury.”

SAM SIDHOM, LBV HOLDINGS LTD.

ment of La Bella Vita Resort and Spa. The first beachfront home, Casa del Mar, is now sold out, with Dave and Sue Alle claiming the final one-eighth ownership opportunity.

For the couple, it was a case of being in the right place at the right time.

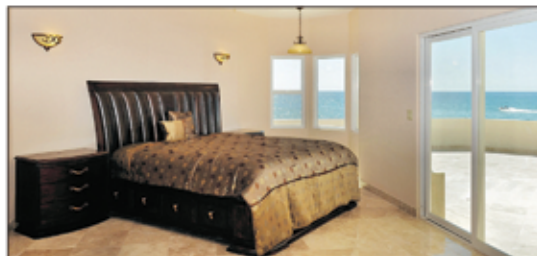
The Alles went to the Calgary Herald Recreation and Investment Properties show, which is part of HomExpo and had a "look at the displays for vacation properties," says Sue.

SEE LOOK, PAGE J14



Photos courtesy, LBV Holdings Ltd.

The La Bella Vita resort property in Puerto Penasco, Mexico.



The master bedroom has views of the Sea of Cortez.

ALSO SEE

■ 'Arizona's beach' lures homebuyers

J14

Sidhom.

The interior of the home features a brick domed ceiling at the foyer, marble floors, alder cabinets, granite countertops and stainless steel appliances.

There's also a fireplace in the great room finished with Canterra stone, along with plenty of large windows looking to the Sea of Cortez — and a rooftop deck accessible from the beachside of the home.

Villa Veneto is part of the ongoing phased-in develop-

THE BUYERS

Dave and Sue Alle.

BACKGROUND: Dave is president and owner of Reggin Industries. Sue is a registered nurse at Rockyview Hospital.

"Any time's a good time to go to La Bella Vita," says Sue, readying for a family vacation to their shared ownership beachfront home — Casa del

Mar — on the Sea of Cortez near Puerto Penasco, Mexico. They bought the home after talking with La Bella Vita's developer, Sam Sidhom, at the Calgary Herald Recreation and Investment Properties Show in 2008, spending that February at the resort. Shortly afterwards, they purchased

the final one-eighth ownership share in the home and the couple spends six weeks per year at the development. "It is a good fit for our lifestyle," says Sue, adding that they take long walks on the beach, golf and fish — or just relax and listen to the sound of the ocean a few feet away.

DEVELOPER: La Bella Vita Holdings.

FROM PAGE J13

LOOK: Expansion

"As we were walking around, Dave recognized a business acquaintance — Sam Sidhom — and we started talking about Puerto Penasco and La Bella Vita."

A month later, the Alles were in La Bella Vita for a holiday to test the waters, so to speak.

“We love the location right on the beach and go for many long walks.”

SUE ALLES

"We loved it and bought into Casa del Mar as it was a perfect fit for our lifestyle," she says, adding she and Dave stay there about four times per year.

"We love the location right on the beach and go for many long walks — or just sit and relax in the sun and enjoy the sounds of the water so close by," says Sue.

With Puerto Penasco being so close, dining, fishing or golf amenities are handy.

The beachfront homes flank the central pool area of the development. As part of the expansion, a spa/salon/fitness centre will be



Photos courtesy, LBV Holdings Ltd.

The exterior of Villa Veneto, the second beachfront home at La Bella Vita Resort and Spa which is developed by Calgary-based LBV Holdings Ltd.

ready for use this month.

A negative-edge pool, also known as an infinity or vanishing edge pool — the second of three pool areas — will be open next spring.

Developer financing is available on all available inventory starting from 6.9 per cent. There are just 10 of 24 bungalow-style apartments left in the current phase.

At build-out, La Bella Vita will consist of 120- bungalow-style walk-up apartments, 46 townhouse villas in two- and three-storey layouts, and 62 custom homes.

While the Sea of Cortez is the star attraction of the community, a main



This building near the central pool will hold an owners' lounge and spa.

boulevard leading up to the development will be lined by palm trees.

The rear of the property is near the Morua Estuary, an ecotourist's haven for fishing, snorkelling, or just casually discovering the myriad shoreline and water habitat.

There is also a protected bird-nesting area.

Just along the estuary is an oyster shack where visitors can try their hand at shucking — and eating. Beyond the estuary to the north are a line of desert mountains.

It was all of this, plus the area's serenity and natural beauty, that attracted Sidhom to the region — first as a home-buyer 12 years ago and later as a developer.

"There was very little four years ago," says Sidhom. "It wasn't a concrete jungle then — and it won't ever be."

La Bella Vita is a four-hour drive from Phoenix, Ariz., including an hour's drive into northern Mexico.

'Arizona's beach' lures homebuyers

MARTY HOPE
CALGARY HERALD

Puerto Penasco is a city of about 65,000 people located in the northwest part of the Mexican state of Sonora about 100 kilometres from the Arizona border.

It is located on the small strip of land that joins the peninsula of Baja California with the rest of Mexico.

The area is part of the Altar Desert, one of the driest and hottest of the larger Sonora Desert.

Because of the lack of water, this area had no permanent settlements until the 1920s.

In the 1930s and 1940s, a rail line connecting Baja to the rest of Mexico passed through the city and allowed for the development of a permanent town.

For most of its history, the area has been associated with fishing, which is still a major source of income.

However, since the 1990s, there has been a push to develop the area for tourism, as it is already heavily visited by people from Arizona and California.

Puerto Penasco, called "Rocky Point" in English, has been nicknamed "Arizona's beach" because the cities of Phoenix and Tucson are closer to it than Mexicali or Hermosillo and many Arizonans spend weekends there.

The Malecon, or boardwalk, in Rocky Point is one of the most well-known features of the town.

It is located in the Old Port of Rocky Point.

Completed in 2007, the Malecon provides a calm, relaxing place for families or couples to gather and enjoy a tranquil evening — watching the sunset or the boats, while enjoying fresh seafood feasts or a cold drink at any of the establishments along the Malecon.

There are also many vendors in this area, selling shrimp, fish, clams, ponchos, sunglasses, blankets, and T-shirts. On weekends, especially holidays, or event weekends, it is common to find live music being played by local bands in various locations along the boardwalk.

SEA OF DREAMS

The Gulf of California is also known as the Sea of Cortez, Sea of Cortés or Vermilion Sea. It's a body of water that separates the Baja California Peninsula from the Mexican mainland.

It is bordered by the states of Baja California, Baja California Sur, Sonora, and Sinaloa, with a coastline of about 4,000 kilometres. Rivers flowing into it include the Colorado, Fuerte, Mayo, Sinaloa, Sonora and the Yaqui.

The gulf's surface area is about 160,000 square kilometres. The name "Gulf of Cali-

fornia" predominates on most maps in English today.

The name "Sea of Cortés" is the one preferred by most local residents.

The gulf is thought to be one of the most diverse seas on the planet in terms of wildlife.

Baja California, itself, is actually one of the longest, most isolated peninsulas in the world, second only to the Malay Peninsula in Southeast Asia. The Gulf of California is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Marty Hope, Calgary Herald

The main harbour in Puerto Penasco near La Bella Vita.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

PROJECT: La Bella Vita Resort and Spa.
DEVELOPER: LBV Holdings Ltd. of Calgary.
AREA: Puerto Peñasco, Mexico.
BEACHFRONT HOME: Villa Veneto, at more than 3,500 square feet, comes with a casita, double-garage, extensive landscaping, opulent interior finishings, and a rooftop deck.
PRICE: The home is being sold in one-eighth ownership shares starting from \$189,900 each.

LOCATION: About a four-hour drive from Phoenix. From Phoenix, go west to Gila Bend and pick up Highway 85. Cross the international border at Lukeville, Ariz., and take Highway 8 into Puerto Peñasco. From there, take the Caborca Highway east and follow the signage.

OPEN HOUSE: La Bella Vita will be holding regular open houses at its sales centre near the Springbank Airport outside Calgary-weekends from noon to 5 p.m. To get there,

take Highway 1 west of Calgary to exit 169 (Springbank Road). Go north to Township Road 250. Turn left and then right on MacLaurin Drive (airport entrance), take an immediate right on Dehavilland Way and left on Noorduyn Park. Watch for the La Bella Vita signs. A map and detailed directions are available on the website.

INFORMATION: Visit www.labellavita.com. For appointments call 402-288-3777.

— Marty Hope



Courtesy, LBV Holdings Ltd.
A pool area at the project.



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Overlooking the Sea of Cortez, Villa Veneto is nestled within La Bella Vita Resort & Spa, and just minutes from Puerto Peñasco. This opulent beach home, complete with casita, double-garage and rooftop terrace with views of the deep blue waters and white sand beaches, is truly away from it all, but near everything.

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