

# OCEAN, GOLF - WHAT COULD BE BETTER?

## RETIRED CALGARY TEACHERS BUY CONDO NEAR MAZATLAN, MEXICO

**By Marty Hope, Calgary Herald** *August 7, 2010*

As far as shopping trips are concerned, Dale and Lynda Lyster came home with everything they set out to buy.

In 2003, the Calgary couple read about Estrella Del Mar, a gated, master-planned oceanfront resort near Mazatlan, Mexico, that had a golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr., attached to it.

It sounded like it might be just the place for that wintertime getaway destination the Lysters had been seeking -- warm weather, the ocean and golf.

What could be better? So they checked it out.

Estrella Del Mar is located on 326 hectares of property with nearly six kilometres of beachfront on Stone Island.

The project is about a half-hour drive or so from Mazatlan and 10 minutes from the airport.

"We initially went to escape the cold Canadian winter and find a place for future retirement," says Dale. "We loved the beauty and seclusion of the development that was balanced with access to modern and authentically Mexican Mazatlan."

Estrella Del Mar consists of home sites and condos built by the developer, Colorado-based Club Acquisition Co.

There will be a total of 700 condos.

The first two phases are sold out and work has started on the third phase, which will see 68 units turned over to owners by the end of August.

The one-, two-, and three-bedroom condos are priced from \$325,000 US.

Constructed using American standards and specifications, the condos come with granite countertops, GE appliances, travertine flooring, solid wood cabinets and kitchen islands. They also have laundry rooms, hardwood flooring, central heat and air, Internet access and satellite TV.

The 1,200 home sites at Estrella Del Mar include beachfront sites with access to the Trent Jones 18-hole course -- as well as sites on the golf course, itself -- and are priced from \$89,900.

About a month ago, Las Villas Hotel and Spa opened its doors. Located on the resort property, the five-star hotel features 71 rooms facing the ocean.

At the time the Lysters decided to buy a condo, Dale had retired from the Calgary Board of Education and was running a family business.

But with Lynda still teaching full-time for the board, they developed their own fractional condo with six friends.

Each fractional partner went to Mexico twice a year for a month, with visits rotated so that every partner had different time periods over a six-year schedule.

"We discovered we wanted even more time in Mexico to enjoy the new friendships and the Mexican culture -- and have bought a second condo and a building lot on the fifth fairway of the golf course for future development," says Dale.

Who can blame them?

Beach and ocean on one side join a golf course on the other -- along with a turtle sanctuary, lush landscaping, the resort's amenities, and the Mexican lifestyle and culture.

"It's an amazing place to live," says Dale, adding that Lynda is now retired and doing volunteer work in Calgary.

The Lysters are among the 275 owners at Estrella Del Mar and part of a "significant contingent" from Calgary and Canada, says Pat Butler, president of Club Acquisition Co.

A key component in the Calgary ownership level has to do with the flights being offered by WestJet, he says.

"Direct access by WestJet takes people from the cold and snow of Calgary to the warmth and sun of Mazatlan -- and in the same time zone, with a lower cost of living, medical services at Sharp Hospital and the history," says Butler.

DID YOU KNOW?

PROJECT: Estrella Del Mar. On 326 hectares of land with six kilometres of beachfront, it has condos and building lots, along with a 71-suite hotel and a five-star spa that recently opened. There is an 18-hole Robert Trent Jones, Jr., golf course, turtle sanctuary, spa, restaurants, pools, tennis courts and sightseeing opportunities.

DEVELOPER: Club Acquisition Co. of Aurora in Colorado.

AREA: Stone Island, a half-hour drive from Mazatlan, Mexico.

PRICES: Condos are priced from \$325,000 US, while home sites are priced from \$89,900, with construction averaging \$130 per square foot.