

# NEWHOMES

## A taste for something different

Whether living here or just to visit, Prince Edward County has a great vibe



MARTIN SLOFSTRA  
EDITOR'S  
NOTE

It being a long weekend, we thought to change it up a bit and look at a great place to live or to visit, Prince Edward County, just a couple hours or so east of Toronto.

First things first, there is an amazing vibe here even beyond the area's reputation as a tourist area, a mecca for boaters, the sandy beaches of Sandbanks provincial park nearby, and of course, wineries at every turn.

So much so, that our long-time Outdoor Living columnist Carson Arthur chose it to be his new home and a good place to set up shop. You can read about his experience in our Cover Story.

My taste of it came earlier this summer via a visit to the newly opened Drake Motor Inn near the shores of Lake Ontario in the small town of Wellington, Ont.

The newest 12-room Drake pays homage to the classic roadside motel along with modern twists such as pet-friendly guest rooms, vending machines and vintage art.

This sounded good to me and I could not wait to check it out. Most of my motel experiences over the last few years seem straight out of *Schitt's Creek* — stuck in time in places needing a refresh.

The moment we drove up, the impact is immediate — modern signage, a brightly coloured wall, nicely landscaped grounds.

Once inside the rooms, the playful vibe continues. Carefully selected furniture reflects a mid-century mod-



At the Drake Motor Inn, a colourful exterior wall and funky sign make for a striking first impression.

ern theme, and the artwork from a variety of Canadian and international artists is pleasing. Also, of note, the common sitting and patio areas including a fire pit that is especially popular with guests.

Scott Hart, general manager of the Drake Motor Inn (and nearby historical Devonshire Inn, also owned and operated by Drake) says a lot of thought has been given to "reclaiming the motor inn experience and capture what it used to be."

The vibrant colours, the vivid design, the mid-modern decor in every room, are a nice change from the cookie-cutter chains that we see all across North America.

Our experience doesn't stop there, we also take a walking tour of the lakefront town of Wellington, Ont., an up-and-coming tourist destination that seems poised for much bigger things.

Busy summer season now behind it and basically full since opening day in June, Hart says there will lots to do for guests this fall including events such as the upcoming Pumpkin Fest (October 19) while reminding us that the local vineyards and a fine selection of local restaurants are open all year.

The drive-up motor inn experience, it seems, is due for a comeback, and on so many different levels, the Drake Motor Inn absolutely delivers.



The colourful town of Wellington, Ont. is an up-and-coming tourist destination.



Mid-century modern decor and artwork takes its inspiration from the motor inn experience of a bygone era.

## Active House symposium shifts conversation to comfort, health, energy



RICHARD LYALL  
RESCON

Next month's Active House symposium (Sept. 16-17) shines a spotlight on the future of housing to Toronto, focusing on the welfare of the occupant, the quality of the building and the environment.

You may have read about Active House in these pages a while back — it's a European building practice that is based on a balanced and holistic approach to building design and performance.

Toronto's Evergreen Brick Works will see delegates from at least seven countries — Canada, the U.S., China, the U.K., Italy, Denmark and the Netherlands — involved in a two-day Active House symposium on Sept. 17-18.

It will be the first time that Canada will host the Active House summit. The event will include interactive talks, presentations, education and networking with building professionals from around the world.

We'll be there among the many builders, architects, academics, engineers, regulators, designers and students who have an interest in the future of housing.

While it will be a very technical conference, there will also be a dash of personal experience mixed in, including from Velux engineer Russell Ibbotson, who lived in Great Gulf Homes' Active House model home in Etobicoke during six months in 2016-'17 before its owner took the possession of the single-family home.

During the time that he, his wife Bethany and three children (four now) lived there, Ibbotson was busy measuring energy consumption and temperature fluctuations. His family provided the practical context for the benefits of liv-



Active house supports the vision of buildings that create healthier and more comfortable lives for their residents

ing in this kind of home.

"You need those real-life scenarios to measure what life is like in an Active House home. My wife didn't have to wear slippers in the morning in the middle of winter," Ibbotson says. And then there was a discovery on the kitchen's soundproof wooden floors. "I could jump up and down on the floor and my beer on the counter didn't spill."

And then there was a magical moment he had with his daughter, Eleanor (then 3), who said to him while lying down staring at the stars through the Velux skylight in her upstairs bedroom: "It's just like living outside."

"Those are the emotional moments where we can explain our holistic experience to everyone," he adds.

A shared vision for new homes is what drew Great Gulf to become heavily involved in Active House shortly after it was founded 10 years ago, says the Toronto-based executive who will open the two-day event.

"Active House supports the vision of buildings that create healthier and more comfortable lives for their residents without impacting negatively on the climate and environment," says Tad Putyra, Great Gulf president and COO for low-rise. "This will move us towards a cleaner, healthier and safer world.

"We use wood in our homes, including mid-rise residential buildings, because it is a sustainable resource of the future. We've already built several Active Houses in Ontario and use these as prototypes. We have included some of these elements in our current projects which are being extensively tested and implemented in our homes to improve our standard product. This includes improvement in daylight, climate control and overall building science."

Shaun Joffe, Great Gulf's executive director of sustainability and building sciences, adds: "This will be a great conversation centred around innovative residential construction: these buildings are evaluated on the interaction between three core principles: comfort (the indoor climate conditions); energy consumption; and the impact on the environment."

It's going to be an amazing event. For more information and to register, go to [active-house.ca](http://active-house.ca).

**Richard Lyall, president of RESCON, has represented the building industry in Ontario since 1991. He is also a frequent speaker and writer on issues related to the construction industry. Contact him @RESCONprez or at [media@rescon.com](mailto:media@rescon.com).**