

Online resources aid in property search

BY ALEX FRAZER-HARRISON

The Internet has truly revolutionized the way consumers seek out and research information on recreation and investment properties.

Gail Wallace of Calgary recognized this growing need when she launched the Canadians Investing and Retiring Abroad website (www.invest-retire-abroad.com) in October.

"I realized that people were hungry for information — health care, taxes. I got to meet a lot of developers, people writing books and doing newsletters," she explains. "I thought, why don't I cre-

ate a website that's a one-stop resource tool and put everything I know and everyone I've come to know in one site?"

The key to such a resource is credibility, says Wallace, who has 25 years experience in media and sales. "Although I have a disclaimer on my website, at this point everyone who is on there I either personally know or I have researched their company," she says.

The site also provides resources such as a calendar of events (real estate/investment seminars and events throughout Western Canada) and links to international philanthropic organizations.

Wallace says the demand for "a one-stop tool" is demonstrated by the fact her site averaged close to 500 hits per day in its first few weeks, and it's still early days; right now, the site covers destinations in Mexico, U.S., Caribbean, and even the Mediterranean. Wallace says she's planning to expand her coverage further.

"The timing (for this resource) is

perfect because of the turn of the markets," she says. "We want to make sure consumers have all the information so they can make wise, informed decisions."

Here are some additional online resources for those planning to use the Internet to research potential purchases and investments:

■ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. offers mortgage loan insurance for second homes, which can include recreation properties if certain criteria are met. Visit www.cmhc.schl.gc.ca and search for "Flexible Financing Options."

■ Cross-border tax expert David Ingram and the CEN-TA Group offer a wealth of information about taxation considerations for people buying abroad at www.centa.com.

■ Douglas Gray, author of *The Complete Guide to Buying and Owning Recreational Property in Canada* and dozens of other books, and the National Real Estate Institute Inc., runs www.homebuyer.ca, which offers tips and advice on buying real estate, including recreation property.

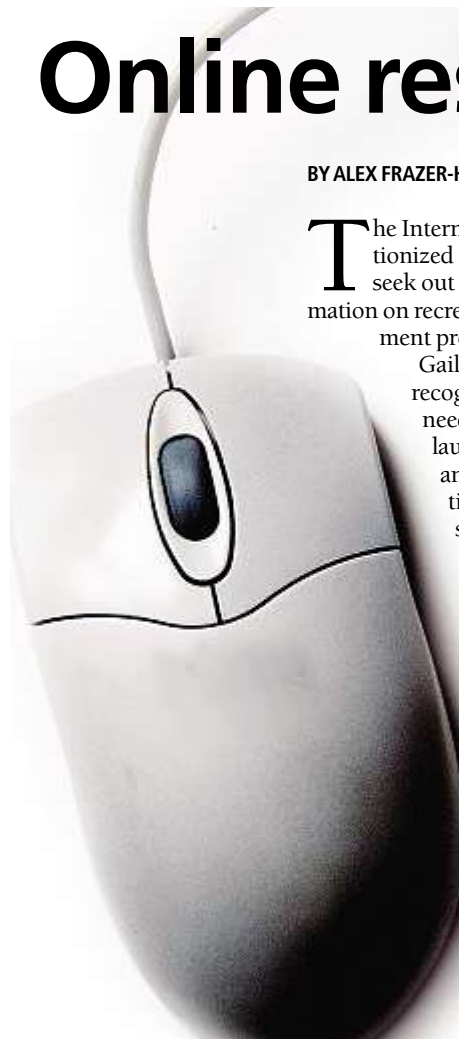
■ There are websites geared towards properties in a specific province. One example is Relocation BC (www.relocationbc.com), which provides links to MLS listings in the province, as well as many community profiles.

■ Also in BC, real estate expert Bob Dirks discusses the different types of land ownership options geared towards waterfront properties and acreages — on his website, www.bobdirks.ca.

■ Need tips on living the cottage lifestyle? Check out www.cottage-mania.ca.

■ Financial websites can also be sources for information, such as TD Waterhouse, which has an article on the difference between fractional ownership and timeshares at www.tdwaterhouse.ca/insights/jul06/article3.jsp, or Scotiabank's tips on financing vacation properties at www.scotiabank.com/cda/content/0,,CID10218_LIDen,00.html.

■ Planning on renting out your property to vacationers? Check out the extensive tips and advice at www.holidayhomes.ca/advice.htm.



ADVERTISING FEATURE

Phoenix realtor tops the competition by understanding Canadian buyers

Linda Gerchick, CCIM, warns that although many Canadians are taking advantage of the lucrative opportunity in the Phoenix real estate market right now, many are being taken for a ride by hungry agents. "I hate seeing anyone being taken advantage of, or sold a property in a gang-infested area — especially an unsuspecting Canadian since I work almost exclusively with Canadians. You can't see it during the day, but all agents know it's there. And unless you are working with someone who's been around for a while with a solid reputation, we are seeing too many out-of-country buyers being taken," says Gerchick.

Gerchick is the realtor of choice because she understands what Canadians are looking for and is able to make the real estate transaction as hassle-free as possible. She is able to find the perfect property for her clients in the shortest time possible by preparing the groundwork well before the client arrives, narrowing down the search to save the client time to fully enjoy their vacation. "My goal is

to find the property that best fits the client's needs and then make the transaction as smooth as possible." The way that this can be accomplished is by having the right property, the right financing vehicle, the right property inspector, all the way to the right property manager if that property is an investment property. Gerchick even has someone to furnish the property if that is the buyer's needs. She has access to a cross-border accountant as well as the entity solution for the Canadian buyer. Linda Gerchick likes to think of herself as a one-stop shop for the buyer.

Gerchick has been in the business for 13 years and has been ranked as high as top two in the world for the Re/Max organization. She is a certified commercial investment member — likened to a PhD in commercial real estate and loves her career. To contact Gerchick, call 1-888-682-3103 or 480-248-1264. Linda's email is Linda@justsoldit.com, and her website is www.justsoldit.com.

She is looking forward to working with you today!



Phoenix realtor Linda Gerchick