

Callaghan offers wild beauty, shops nearby

Deer, ducks share new neighbourhood

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A pair of Canada geese pick their way along the edge of a stormwater pond just beyond Jo-Ann and Bryan Darke's big great room windows.

The birds are a sure sign that spring is here. Soon there will be others: Deer nibbling long grasses by the roadside, a beaver's tail slapping the deep waters of Blackmud Creek, hawks circling for prey above the open fields.

Even the winter drabness of the secluded trails where the Darkes walk their little dog, Ginger, will vanish as towering trees unfurl their leafy canopies.

It's all part of life in Callaghan, one of southwest Edmonton's newest neighbourhoods.

"You don't feel like you're in the city," says Jo-Ann. "You feel like you're in the country. There's trees and there's openness and there's trails."

It was Callaghan's natural beauty that attracted the Darkes, who moved into the community with their 18-year-old daughter, Michelle, last November.

Nestled in Heritage Valley with Blackmud Creek Ravine running along its border, the community bursts with green spaces, parks, meandering trails and breathtaking views.

Those amenities are a major draw to the neighbourhood, located south of Ellerslie Road and 111th Street, says Russell Dauk, vice-president of land and communities for Rohit Group of Companies, developer of part of the neighbourhood.

"You can see the ducks in the stream and the beavers going back and forth," says Dauk. "You can also see deer run off in the distance and hawks soaring."

But, you are also within walking distance of Ellerslie Road and 111th Street, home to a vast assortment of stores, restaurants and banks, says Jo-Ann, who sometimes goes on foot to pick up groceries.

"There's one of everything in there," she says. "There's a Sobeys, there's a drug store, there's a movie place, there's a pizza place, there's Starbucks."

"It's about a 12-minute walk and when I'm back in my house I'm away from it all."

South Edmonton Common and the Edmonton International Airport are minutes away, transit service is within walking distance and the area is served by both Catholic and public schools.

A new elementary/junior high school, just north of Callaghan on 114th Street and 14th Avenue, is set to open in September 2010.

The combination of country living and urban access appeals to a lot of people, says Dauk.

Wayne and Kristeen Klaczek are two of them. The young couple moved from a downtown condominium to Callaghan last summer.

"It's kind of like living on an acreage," says Wayne. "It's wonderful, we really enjoy it."

Part of the pleasure is knowing that their rustic retreat is close to everything, says Wayne.

"We find Anthony Henday very easy to get around. We can get to any



The show home for Westview Builders is pictured above. The company is one of five developers represented in the Callaghan community.



Bryan Darke, wife Jo-Ann and daughter Michelle love to walk with their dog Ginger through the ravine setting and view the wildlife.

side of the city in 20 minutes, half an hour."

Builders represented in Callaghan are Cameron Homes, Carriage Custom Homes, Kimberley Homes, Westview Builders and Rohit.

Ravine lots are available, starting at about \$800,000 for house, lot and GST.

Single-family homes start in the low \$500,000 range.

While the Darkes and the Klaczeks live in single-family homes, Dauk says there are many beautiful townhomes and apartment-style condominiums in Callaghan Ravines, Rohit's project located a stone's throw from the edge of Blackmud Creek Ravine.

Among them is The Gallery, a handsome apartment condo.

"We've had our townhomes and our luxury villas backing onto the ravine open, and now we're introducing The Gallery," says Dauk.

The public is invited to visit Callaghan this weekend, April 18 and 19, for the grand opening of The Gallery's showsuite.

People can also tour the community's six other show homes — four single-family residences and two townhomes — says Amy Power, Rohit's marketing co-ordinator.

"We're going to do a radio remote and a Callaghan poker tour," Power says.

Visitors will get a playing card at each of the show homes. The person



with the best poker hand wins a trip to Las Vegas.

The Gallery has one- and two-bedroom units, as well as two bedrooms plus den. They range in size from about 750 to 1,100 square feet.

"A lot of suites offer great views down into the ravine," Dauk says. Others look out over a mature tree stand and a future school and park site.

The building offers an attractive opportunity to a whole range of people, including first-time buyers, young professionals and empty nesters looking for a maintenance free lifestyle, says Dauk.

Prices in The Gallery start in the low \$200,000-range.

And while residents enjoy not having to mow the lawn or shovel snow, they can still exercise their green thumbs at the community garden Rohit is developing in the neighbourhood.

"We've found there's a lot of peo-



A cosy fireplace is a focal point in the great room of the Rohit show home.



The kitchen, including countertop eating area, in the Rohit show home

ple, particularly if you get into the older demographic, that love to garden," says Dauk. "They don't have to give up their backyard."

For people like the Darkes, the entire Callaghan neighbourhood is their backyard.

"I walk my dog every day," says Jo-Ann. "The trees are 30 to 40 feet high; you don't have to wait for them to grow."

"Yesterday two ducks were coming out from the trees and my daughter was driving home and she said, 'Mom, there were two deers crossing the road.'"

Jo-Ann's suggestion to people visiting the neighbourhood: Get out of the car and walk. "You have to walk down the path system," she says.

"It takes you to the secret of Callaghan ... wonderful nature."

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