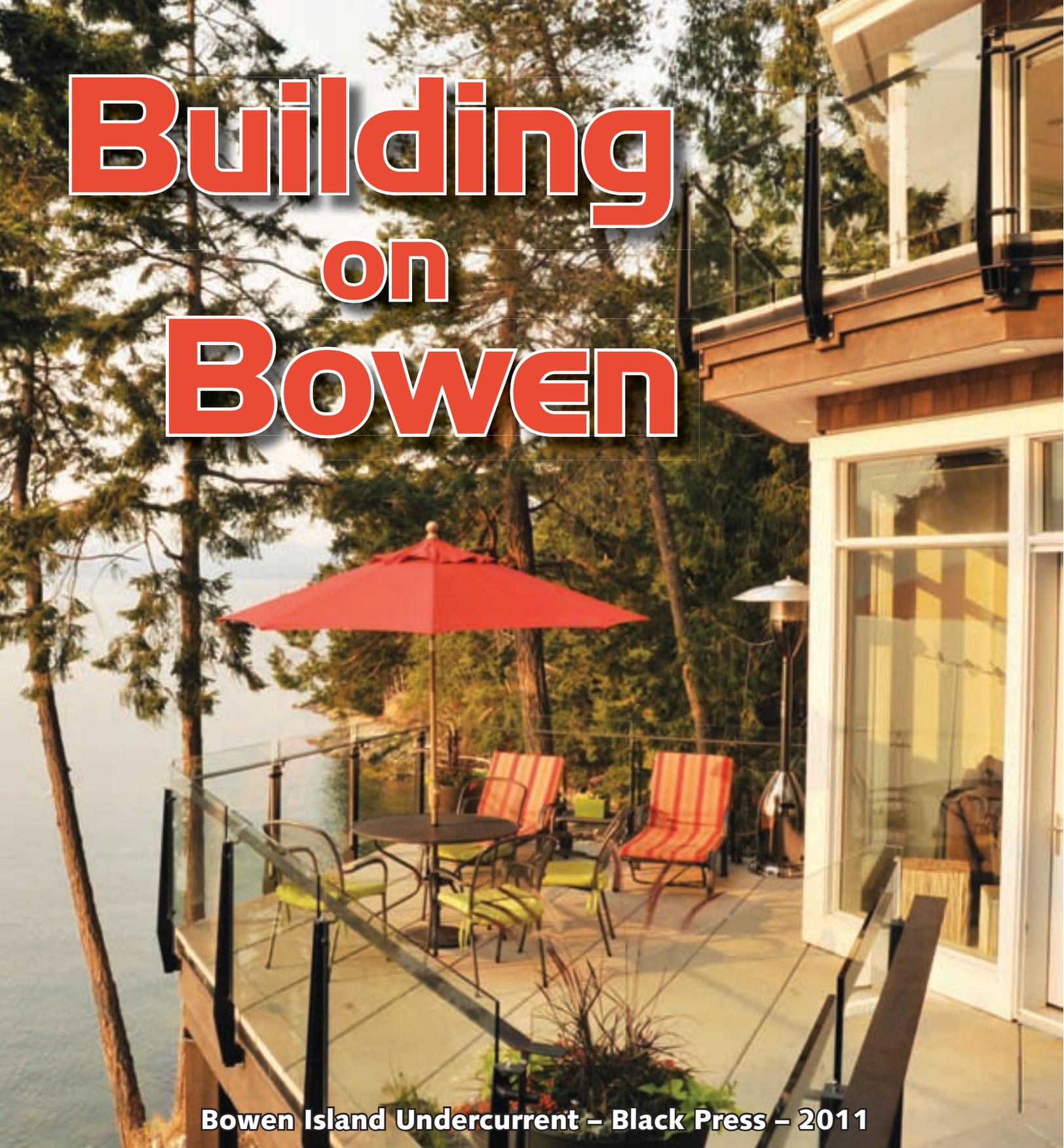


# Building on Bowen



**Bowen Island Undercurrent – Black Press – 2011**

**Your guide to all the people who can help you build on your dreams: architects, contractors, landscapers, masons, water experts, drillers, blasters, realtors, interior designers, renovation specialists, painters, plumbers, roofers, suppliers, and neighbourhood developers.**



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# Building on Bowen

Bowen Island is situated in Howe Sound on the west coast of British Columbia. It is only a 20-minute ferry ride away from the city of Vancouver, but a world apart. The pace of living is slower – the speed limit on the winding road does not exceed 40 km/h. Deer are bound to wander into one’s back yard. It is a community where most know each other’s names and Bowen is said to have the largest number of children per capita of any BC municipality.

The island is only 20 square miles but it supports two biological zones: the dry Coastal Fir Zone with some of the largest remaining forests of Arbutus and Douglas Fir, and the Coastal Western Hemlock Zone that receives a lot of rainfall and is found only on a few islands in Howe Sound. With its

mountains, lakes and streams, Bowen is home to a wide variety of wildlife.

Bowen Island is roughly the size of Manhattan but the number of inhabitants is vastly different. Manhattan’s population exceeds a million and a half. Bowen has approximately 3,000 full-time residents. In the summer, that number almost doubles when the “summer people” arrive to enjoy their get-aways.

More than half of Bowen’s residents commute to work by ferry or watertaxi that provides easy access to the mainland.

Local businesses offer a wide variety of services. This Building on Bowen Guide lists an impressive array of talent that is available for those who want to buy, build, renovate or maintain a home on Bowen.



**About the cover: Bowen Island architect Frits de Vries has designed a number of homes on the island. One of his local projects received the 2008 Residential Wood Design Award and was a 2007 Georgie Award Finalist. Please see his ad on page 11. Cover photo courtesy of Frits de Vries Architect Ltd.**

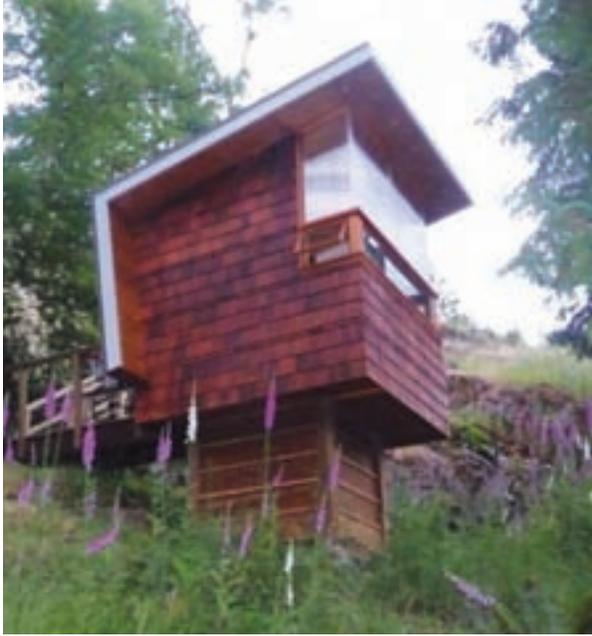
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**This is an innovative building of a home office that was designed by Bowen Island architect Michael Epp who has brought numerous local projects to fruition. Please see his ad on page 10.**

*Michael Epp photo*

## BEFORE YOU DIG

# Permits and Licences

Bowen Island Municipal Council is responsible for governing the municipality under the authority of the Community Charter, Local Government Act and the Island Trust Act.

Bowen Island is the first island municipality within the Islands Trust. It is also a member municipality of Metro Vancouver. Its policies reflect the requirements of both those governing bodies.

The municipality suggests that an up-to-date property survey should be consulted before building a fence, gazebo or shed, taking down trees or updating the landscaping. Property surveys are valuable tools and, with today's advancements in GPS technology, it is possible to determine the precise location of all property lines, easements, setbacks and buildings. The Bowen Island Municipality is a member of BC OneCall - Call BEFORE you dig. It is recommended to contact BC OneCall prior to commencing any applicable permitted works.

Permits are needed to construct a driveway access, to hold an event parade or procession, occupy a municipal highway and remove trees in the municipal highway. The building inspector deals with building permit applications, rezoning applications and subdivision applications.

A development permit is necessary when proposing to develop or subdivide property in a designated development permit area in the Bowen Island Municipality Land Use Bylaw. To find out if a property is within a designated development permit area, it is recommended to refer to the Official Community Plan or contact the community planner at (604) 947-4255.

At this time, Bowen Island Municipality does not require licences for businesses.

All the relevant documents can be found on the municipality's website at [www.bimbc.ca](http://www.bimbc.ca). A phone call to the municipal hall at (604)947-4255 can provide clarification to the department or staff responsible for a specific request.

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## WATER ISSUES

# The rains on Bowen...

Bowen Island gets a generous amount of rainfall – 1.5 to 1.8 metres a year – that feeds Bowen Island’s entire fresh water supply.

Despite that, the island is prone to seasonal water shortages. That is due to the fact that most of the annual rainfall comes during the winter. A large portion of the rainwater flows into streams to be carried into the sea. Some stream water is stored for days, weeks, or months in wetlands, ponds, lakes, and reservoirs. Only a small percentage sinks into ground to join the slow-moving groundwater system. Shallow groundwater returns to the surface as springs, adding flow to streams.

The land cannot store enough of the winter rains, so water shortages occur during the summer months.

Bowen Island residents get their water from diverse sources such as reservoirs, wells, and streams. Some households have started to make use of rooftop water. Other methods of “rain water harvesting”

are also encouraged.

Forests, streams, lakes, and wetlands provide the island with vital water supply and filtration services.

Like roads, power lines, and water pipeline systems, the “green infrastructure” provides essential services and requires some level of protection and, if necessary, restoration to function effectively.

Over the last several years, Bowen Island Municipality has negotiated green infrastructure protection with landowners seeking to develop their lands. A network of greenways has protected streams, wetlands, and lakes in the Josephine Lake area.

Approximately half of Bowen Island homes are served from a municipal water system, with the remainder supplied by private communal water systems or utility, shared or individual wells.

Community systems are administered privately, and all systems are subject to the Drinking Water Protection Act, Water Act, Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines and provincial requirements.

**Most of Bowen Island’s rain falls in the winter and flows quickly back to the sea. Only a small percentage sinks into the ground. That can lead to seasonal water shortages that affect parts of the island in the summer months.**

*Kira Martin-Chan photo*



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# ...fall mainly in the winter

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Most of Bowen Island does not have community wastewater collection and treatment systems, and instead relies on ground disposal of effluent from septic systems on private lots, or shared septic fields. Septic fields are safe, economical, low-maintenance facilities for sewage disposal on Bowen Island, but they do need an annual check.

These systems are administered and permitted by the Ministry of Health through the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. Bowen Island Municipality owns and operates a wastewater collection and treatment system in Cove Bay, which serves approximately 65 sewer connections including approximately 25 businesses and 40 residences.

With files from DG Blair and the Bowen Island Municipality.



**Killarney Lake is part of Bowen's network of lakes and waterways. It lies within Crippen Regional Park and is a popular destination for hikers. A loop trail circles its perimeter. It passes a picnic area and a small beach along the way. A stretch of boardwalk spans a marshy area at the north end of the lake. Bowen Island is blessed with extensive forest lands – an effective clean water factory.**

*Lorraine Ashdown photo*

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Even woodsheds can be works of art. Architect Michael Epp designed this woodshed that allows for air circulation to prevent rotting.

*Michael Epp photo*



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Zen Garden. Martha Perkins photo

## STRIKING A BALANCE

# Energy efficiency

Taking energy efficiency into consideration for constructing or renovating a house is not only beneficial to the environment, it can result in substantial savings on heating, cooling, lighting and other operating costs.

Insulation plays an important role in retaining heat and methods such as earth sheltering can be very effective. Earth sheltering uses the insulating properties of the soil to decrease the strain on mechanical heating or cooling systems as the earth's ambient temperature is roughly 10° Celsius.

The location and exposure of a building will influence the extent of passive heating and cooling through sunlight, shade and ventilation that regulates interior temperatures.

In addition to traditional, some Bowen households make use of

wind power, solar power and heat from a ground source.

Natural lighting that makes use of daylight can lower the electricity bill as long as the windows do not contribute to heat loss. Bowen's newest energy-efficient home features triple-pane windows that let in ample sunlight while reducing heat loss. Energy efficient appliances, LED and compact fluorescent lamps, water heat-recovering units and solar heated showers can all contribute to reducing the energy footprint of a home.

Rainwater harvesting also contributes to making a home sustainable. A popular method is to have water run from the roof into the barrels from gutters or cisterns.

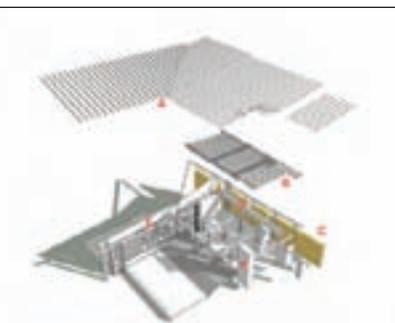
Alternative building materials that have been successfully used on Bowen Island are straw bale, hempcrete and rammed earth.



Building Green on Bowen since 2005



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#### Framing Model

- A Locally milled D.Fir rafters
- B Dropped ceiling of D.Fir exposed joists
- C Thermal mass (concrete wall)
- D Clerestory 'light' wall
- E Passive 'solar' gallery
- F Storage closet for operable wall system



#### Building Section

- A Clerestory window and clerestory 'light wall' to illuminate art wall with natural daylight
- B Thermal mass of wall stores cool evening air
- C Operable wall system that flushes the interior with cool evening air when open
- D Large overhangs on the west shade the interior from direct solar gain



## AT HOME:

# Bowen style

BARBARA WAHLER

Many leave home to find respite from hectic daily lives. We find peace and tranquility right outside our doorsteps.

While some might argue that interior design is irrelevant to the laid-back rural lives we choose to lead, it has a down-to-earth side where form is meant to follow function and looks and purpose get equal attention.

Here's a look at some ideas for good design that keep our Bowen lifestyle in mind.

We don't want to block the light or views that we hold so dear, but we shiver in the winter as our heat escapes and we swelter in the summer as our furnishings

fade. Attractive, efficient, window covering options can preserve the view, lower energy bills and prolong the life of our favourite things.

Manufactured lighting can be used to balance or enhance our available natural light and the introduction of colour can add contrast that brings brightness into our spaces.

We love the outdoors but that can create chaos when we come back inside. Baseball bats and golf clubs, back packs and bicycle helmets, the list goes on yet the average home has a small "entry closet" with a single rod behind closed doors.

How about an open space, purpose built for how you live?

**This is one of the kitchens designed by Studio B. The big windows limit the availability of wall space, so a central island is the optimum solution to create ample cupboard and counter space. The kitchen can be a great place to cook together, chat over a cup of coffee or a glass of wine and socialize.**

*Peter Baumgartner photo*

Michael Epp Architect · MAIBC

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## “Whether professional or amateur, every creative soul needs a space to work.”

Cubbies, benches, hooks and shelves make it easier to put things away than to drop them on the floor. We cherish our wood floors but our rain boots, hiking shoes, runners and Crocs track everything from sand and mud to leaves, grass and pebbles. There are lots of alternative options that are beautiful, durable and maintenance free.

We are a community committed to arts and culture. Whether professional or amateur, every creative soul needs a place to work. A place designed to keep things organized, cared for and within easy reach that allows work to be spread out without the need put it

away before sitting down to dinner. Perhaps your love of the arts is more about appreciation than production? There are creative ways to mount and display collectibles that can showcase them without creating competition for the “art” framed by our windows.

We want to stay here on island as much as we can. Whether telecommuting or running a business at home, a well thought-out workstation with adequate, accessible storage and electronics and equipment conveniently placed and permanently connected can increase your efficiency and give you personal time to spare.

Can we entertain these

possibilities as we call for smaller homes to preserve our green spaces? Untapped potential is the first thing that I look for in every space and I almost always find it. Regardless of budget or size of your project the point is to design with your own real life in mind. Make every square foot do its job, expressing who you are and supporting how you live.

*Barbara Wahler is the creative mind behind Studio B. She works on Bowen Island and is a professional member of the Interior Designers Institute of BC, the American Society of Interior Designer and the National Kitchen & Bath Association.*

*Barbara has presented seminars, taught at the university and has developed a series of consumer studio workshops.*



**The kitchen of the Pearson residence, designed by JWT Architecture, reflects the client's values, dreams and aspirations. Environmental features such as utilizing the thermal mass of concrete for cooling, and rainwater harvesting, were incorporated into the design of the house.**

*Rob Yagid photo*

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**BOWEN AUTHOR DISCOVERS WHAT IT TAKES TO BE**

# Almost Green

When James Glave set about building a house on Bowen, he wanted it to be as green as his principles.

As the name of his book about the process implies, it didn't quite work out that way.

Almost Green: How I Saved 1/6th of a Billionth of the Planet is a humorous, self-deprecating chronicle of Glave's "grand sustainability project."

Glave was not expecting the road of good intentions to be paved with carbon-heavy asphalt, but he was surprised by the number pot-holes, let alone the potentially hazardous financial sink holes. After discovering that the eco-friendly house of his dreams out of whack with the bank account of reality, he settle on a miniature version - an

eco-shed.

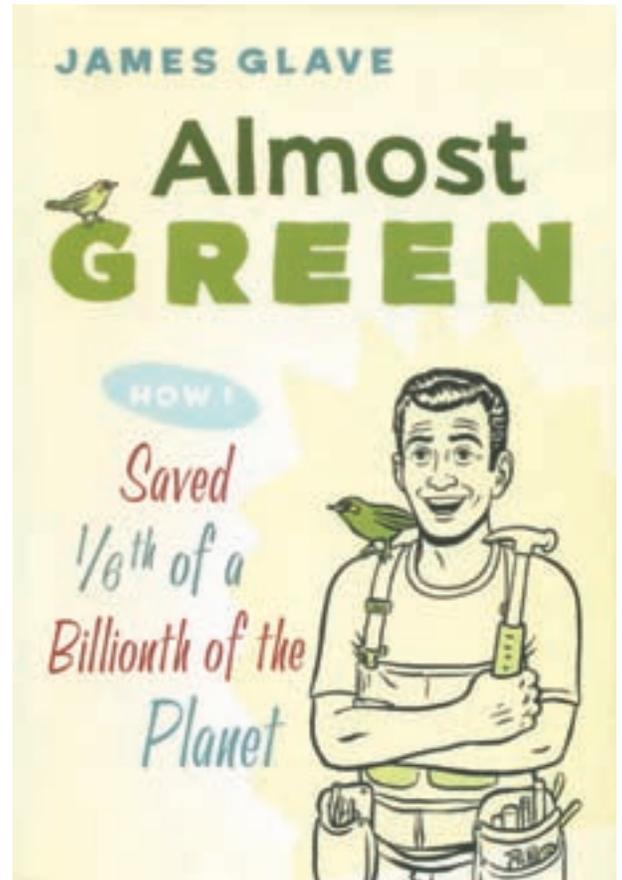
Along the way, he takes an honest look at not only his own behaviour, and what motivates him to act in a certain way, but also some of the challenges inherent in our quest to tread lightly on this world.

One of the positive themes that emerges is the construction equivalent of the 100-Mile Diet.

Glave turns to contractors and friends on Bowen and finds they are a treasure trove of much-needed skills and knowledge. At the end of the book, Glave says that "green is more a direction than a destination."

But, he stresses, it's vitally important to start heading in that direction - even if you can only afford to take baby steps.

*Martha Perkins*



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**879 Windjammer**



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**1222 Miller Rd.**



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**1189 Adams Rd.**



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**1506 Whitesails Dr.**



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**1625 Whitesails Dr.**



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**1288 Oceanview**



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**1772 Emily Lane**



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- 709 Windjammer - April 29
- 1594 Tunstall Blvd. - April 29
- 1755 Emily Lane - April 28
- 607 Collins Rd. - April 19
- 880 Windjammer - April 14
- 1256 Scarborough - April 12
- Lot 8 Arbutus Place - April 8
- 1010 Cowan Rd. - April 6
- 906 Windjammer - March 30
- 974 Village Dr. - February 23
- 1243 Fairweather - February 13

**1868 Hood Point**



**1824 King Edward Bay**



# BUYING A HOME on an island

The idea of living on Bowen Island appeals to a variety of people – people with different backgrounds and in different stages of their lives. Some may decide that it is a great place to raise a family, some want to work on Bowen, others want to retire here. Bowen's realtors are ready to help determine what home or lot will be suitable for each buyer.

When deciding to buy a home, it is important to look at the reasons behind taking this step. Some people want to build equity, others dream of owning their own place to raise a family. It may be important to have a residence where one can entertain friends and business associates. In some cases, the family needs a bigger house or a space for a home office.

Bowen Island has a number of different areas that have their own charm and characteristics, from the sweeping views over Howe Sound to the north, to the sunny slopes on the south, the beautiful sunsets on the west side and the close-knit commu-



Views to the north from Hood Point. *Susanne Martin photo*

nities around Snug Cove. Some parts of the island are more private and secluded, others are in close proximity to schools, recreational facilities, community services and Bowen's commercial hubs. Other considerations are commuting times, the access to public transport. But on an island the size of Bowen, nothing is really far away.

Some of Bowen's neighbourhoods are well-established, other areas have been recently developed. A few neighbourhood associations offer newcomers an opportunity to get involved in activities

like picnics and clean-ups.

When choosing a home, it is advisable to think about long-term plans. The size of the home and the property, the location, the state of repairs and whether it is one level, or multi-level will affect how long this will be a suitable place for the family.

Bowen realtors can help to determine which properties fit a buyer's need by using the (MLS) Multiple Listing Service. They are also available to help with financing and inspections, and to bring the transaction to fruition.

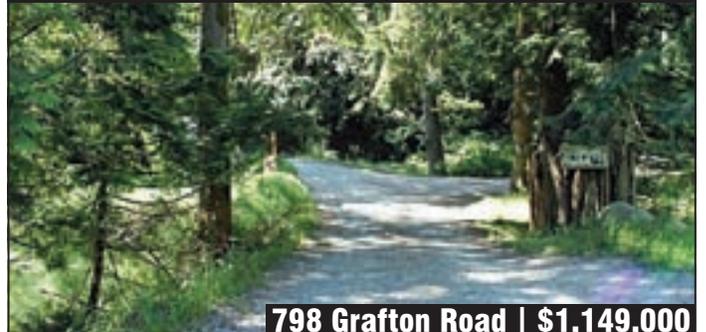
## CATES HILL WATER VIEW LOT



**971 Seaview Place | \$329,000**

This excellent building lot in popular Cates Hill on Bowen Island is the last undeveloped lot in this neighbourhood of newer homes. This is your chance to design a custom home on a .247 acre level property with excellent water and mountain views. Septic, water and hydro at lot line. Call Audrey at 604-349-2189.

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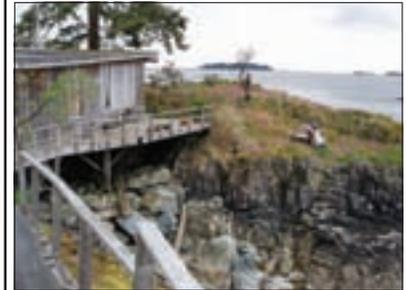
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# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS don't leave it for a rainy day!

Emergencies and disasters can strike without warning and force you to evacuate your neighbourhood or confine you to your home. Here is a checklist to prepare:

## Utilities

Know how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches or valves. Keep any tools you will need near gas and water shut off valves. Turn off the utilities only if you suspect that lines are damaged or leaking or if local officials instruct you to do so.

## Fire Extinguisher

Be sure everyone knows how to use your fire extinguishers and where they are kept.

## Smoke Alarms

Install smoke alarms on each level of your home. Individuals with sensory disabilities should consider installing smoke alarms

that have strobe lights and vibrating pads. Follow local codes and manufacturer's instructions about installation requirements. Also, consider installing a carbon monoxide alarm in your home.

## Insurance Coverage

Check if you have adequate insurance coverage.

## First Aid/CPR & AED (Automated External Defibrillation)

Take Red Cross first aid and CPR/AED classes. Red Cross courses can accommodate people with disabilities. Discuss your needs when registering for the classes.

## Inventory Home Possessions

Make a record of your possessions to help you claim reimbursement in case of loss or damage. Store this information in a safe deposit box or other secure (flood/fire safe) location

to ensure the records survive a disaster. Include photographs or video of the interior and exterior of your home as well as your assets and possessions. Make copies of receipts and canceled checks showing the cost for valuable items.

## Vital Records and Documents

Vital family records and other important documents such as birth and marriage certificates, social security cards, passports, wills, deeds, and financial, insurance, and immunizations records should be kept in a safe deposit box or other safe locations.

## Reduce Home Hazards

In a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury and damage. Have a professional repair defective electrical wiring and leaky gas connections. Place large, heavy objects on lower shelves and hang pictures and

mirrors away from beds. Use straps or other restraints to secure tall cabinets, bookshelves, large appliances (especially water heater, furnace, and refrigerator), mirrors, shelves, large picture frames, and light fixtures to wall studs. Repair cracks in ceilings and foundations. Store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products away from heat sources. Place oily rags or waste in covered metal cans and dispose of them according to local regulations. Have a professional clean and repair chimneys, flue pipes, connectors, and gas vents

Information and additional tips for emergency preparedness is available at [www.GetPrepared.ca](http://www.GetPrepared.ca). Please find out who your local neighbourhood emergency people are and what recommendations they might want to add.



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# A PLACE THAT FITS IN West Coast modernism

JAMES TUER

What makes West Coast architecture so unique? Well, for most of us, it starts with the setting, our coastal bluffs, magnificent forests, and mountain and ocean views create a unique inspiration which is both Canadian at heart and has drawn many talented designers from places around Canada and beyond.

At the crux of West Coast modernism is a relatively benign climate (at least by Canadian standards) that has allowed architects to exploit the relationship between nature, exterior spaces and the interiors of our homes. Low-pitched roofs, broad overhangs and extensive window panels sum up the basics of a typical west coast modern house, whether it be a classic Arthur Erickson or a new home by a young budding Vancouver architect.

Inspiration does not stop there. I, for one, draw as much inspiration (and ideas) from our heritage of vernacular seaside utilitarian buildings such as boat sheds located in Egmont, as I do from the individual site. Utilitarian materials such as corrugated steel and exposed concrete were once thought of as too cheap to clad a home in.

Today, home owners seek out these materials for their durability and environmental benefits – concrete is a great natural air conditioner as well as a heat sink in the winter. Speaking of materials, what makes many modern buildings unique on the island is the extensive use of Douglas



**Residence at Evergreen: Broad overhangs, large expanses of glass and timber beams (with an Asian influence) are the basic ingredients of West Coast Modernism.** *James Tuer art*

fir and cedar. Cedar is filled with natural oils and resins that repel both water and insects. It looks great un-treated and takes a paint or stain as well as any other material. In fact, the First Nations people used Cedar for just about everything including clothing as well as building enclosures. Douglas fir is sort of a miracle wood. It has a natural beauty that challenges the most exotic of hardwoods (and is still considered a softwood) and has one of the greatest abilities to carry heavy building loads over large spans. For me, it just gets better with age, talking on a gorgeous patina as it ages.

Looking to the future, sustainability is changing the way architects approach West Coast modern design. Key to sustainability is energy use. Environmentally-aware designers now match orientation with glazing and are cognizant of the energy loss (or

gains) that flow through window walls. In our projects we counter this by maximizing south facing glass and in some case specify triple pane argon glass panels, which when combined with wood mullions doubles the energy efficiency of an otherwise quite poorly performing wall.

The West Coast is one of those few places where society as a whole has embraced the idea of a modern architecture. Perhaps it's the setting, or perhaps it's the warmth of the natural materials we use. What is for sure is that a well conceived modern building in an island setting such as Bowen will remain timeless long after we are gone.

*James Tuer is the principal of JWT Architecture. He holds a Certificate of Practice (COP) for architecture in British Columbia and South Carolina, is a member of the American Institute of Architecture, and a member of the British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects.*

## Penny Naldrett

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# Deer-proof gardens

We love to see deer wander through a meadow or the forest. But when they treat the flowers, fruit, vegetables, trees and shrubs we have grown from seeds or purchased at a plant sale or nursery as their own private salad bar, we draw the line.

The best way to keep deer from feasting on a garden is to fence them out. A deer in distress is able to jump over an approximately eight-foot fence but that is the exception. Usually a barrier of that height is adequate. Lower fences serve as a deterrent, but are sometimes not entirely effective. It is usually the case that fences are more effective if the deer can't see what goodies lie in wait on the other side.

The fencing has to completely enclose the garden to protect it. Fencing only one side or even leaving the gate open will typically result in deer finding their



Susanne Martin photo

way inside.

If it is impossible to enclose the entire property due to restrictions of the terrain, fencing can be placed around individual plants or groups of plants. If the fence protects a smaller area, it doesn't need to be eight feet tall. But it needs to be tall enough to keep deer from leaning over the fence to eat. For small groupings of plants, a fine mesh bird netting can be placed over the top.

There are many sources that suggest lists of deer-proof plants. Those are plants that

deer do not find palatable. Creating a garden from these choices will minimize the impact of deer. But if food is scarce, they will eat whatever they can find.

A dog can also be an effective deterrent. It serves as a noisemaker and a moving object and also presents a threat. But if the dog is inside or on a leash, the deer may soon disregard it.

Bowen's gardeners and landscapers have a lot of experience in deer-proofing local gardens and will be able to suggest the best method for every property.



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