

# CALGARY HERALD

## An orchard, the beach, Calgarians, too Palm Orchard project in Todos Santos in Mexico

BY MARTY HOPE, CALGARY HERALD APRIL 10, 2010

Todos Santos? Never heard of it. Hotel California? Sure, a chart-topping hit single for The Eagles in 1977.

True, but it's also a hotel in Todos Santos, Mexico -- and no, not the one Don Henley sang about.

The Palm Orchard? Never heard of that, either?

There is a strong Calgary connection to all of this. The real Hotel California is owned by former Calgary resident Debbie Stewart; and The Palm Orchard is being developed by Jim Brinkerhoff, whose relatives operate Brinkerhoff Drilling in Calgary.

The Palm Orchard is a master-planned project that will have more than 60 residences, as well as large amenities buildings, on nearly nine hectares of beach/orchard land a stone's throw from the sleepy town of Todos Santos.

Brinkerhoff's company, Coloradobased Wind River Resources, is expected to begin construction on the first 20 or so residences later this year, with occupancies beginning next summer.

It will also start work on phase one of the resort amenities.

During a visit about five years ago to Todos Santos -- a place he calls his "favourite Baja town" -- Brinkerhoff heard about a palm orchard created by California horticulturalists who planted about 15,000 trees.

The discovery ended a seven-year search for the right property and for the vision Brinkerhoff had for a development.

"It was magic to me," he says, recalling his first view of the property -- "one of the most beautiful places I had ever seen."

He also knew the land deserved the right kind of development, one that would be environmentally and sustainably sound.

Described by Brinkerhoff as a "next-generation resort," the Palm Orchard will be small, debt-free and designed to coexist with the mango and palm orchards, exotic plants and a working organic garden.

"The Palm Orchard takes a back-to-basics approach to creating lasting value," says Brinkerhoff, adding that the plan and design is high quality, but informal, authentic and unpretentious.

The current residential plan calls for residences in seven different neighbourhoods ranging from the upper \$300,000s US to possibly as high as \$3 million.

The homes will be bungalows as well as two-and three-storey homes -- some with detached casitas -- and stacked townhouses. Sizes will range from 500 to more than 20,000 square feet.

“Calgarians have been travelling to Cabo for years,” says Brinkerhoff.

“Todos Santos is an undiscovered retreat for Calgarians that’s only one hour from Cabo. It’s still very accessible, has an authentic Mexican lifestyle and offers tremendous oceanfront living at a fraction of the cost of Cabo.”

Brinkerhoff will be hosting an information session in Calgary on April 24 for anyone interested in learning more about The Palm Orchard and Todos Santos.

It will be held at Centini Restaurant and Lounge at 160 8th Ave. S.W. (in the Telus Convention Centre) from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. To register, visit [info@palmorchard.com](mailto:info@palmorchard.com) or call 303-408-7477.

“Our vision for Palm Orchard is to create a boutique development that celebrates the best of Mexico -- great culture, a beautiful setting, amazing value and great people,” he says.

Just down the road in Todos Santos is the best-known hotel in town, Hotel California, which Debbie Stewart and her late husband, John, bought and renovated after leaving Calgary in 2002.

They had lived in Cabo for a few years, but wanted to find some place smaller and quieter. They decided on Todos Santos, where they found the boarded-up hotel.

These days, it’s a popular stopping place for visitors to the area, says Stewart.

“When people check into the hotel, they just don’t want to leave here,” she says, slightly echoing the lyrics of the famous song. “Our guests return to stay with us every year and they are bringing their friends and family along with them.”

The hotel has 11 rooms and suites that have been individually decorated with furniture and art from throughout the world.

There is also an oasis that can be seen from private terraces on the poolside lounge.

## CHECK IT OUT

Hotel California is owned and operated by Calgarian Debbie Stewart, who moved from Calgary to Cabo San Lucas with her late husband, John, in 2002. The couple eventually moved from there to Todos Santos. At the time, Hotel California was closed and boarded up for sale. “Nobody really knew what to do with it as it was pretty

dilapidated,” says Debbie. These days, the 11-suite hotel is a popular stopover spot for vacationers, she says. “We just kept learning as we went along and created something very special and magical.”

## |WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

PROJECT: The Palm Orchard, a project of more than 60 residences.

AREA: Todos Santos, Mexico.

DEVELOPER: Wind River Resources.

PRICE: Residences of 500 to more than 20,000 square feet are priced from the upper \$300,000s US up to \$3 million.

INFORMATION: An information session in Calgary is slated for April 24 at Centini Restaurant and Lounge at 160 8th Ave. S.W. (in the Telus Convention Centre) from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. To register, e-mail [info@palmorchard.com](mailto:info@palmorchard.com), or call 303-408-7477. For additional information, visit [www.palmorchard.com](http://www.palmorchard.com).