



Rolf Bouman: "Most of the 1,100 properties I've developed over the years, nobody else wanted because they took a lot of work to develop."

Developer proud of sales

No apologies for selling waterfront to wealthy

By **MARY ELLEN MacINTYRE**
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AULDS COVE — Rolf Bouman makes no apologies for developing, marketing and selling waterfront properties to Europeans and wealthy Americans or Canadians.

He also doesn't apologize for working hard during the last 25 years and never taking a cent of government money.

"I don't expect to get anything unless I work for it. I am entitled to nothing without a lot of work," said the founder and president of **Canadian Pioneer**

Estates Ltd., Canec Land Developments Inc. and (Ad)venture Canada Publishing Inc.

Some say developers like Bouman drive up the price of real estate so high that only a select few can afford to buy waterfront property in this province anymore. And assessments

have risen to a point where many owners have to sell because they can no longer pay the taxes.

Bouman, a 45-year-old German immigrant, has heard the criticisms since he came to Canada as a young man. He shrugs and smiles in response.

"Most of the 1,100 properties

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Proud

I've developed over the years, nobody else wanted because they took a lot of work to develop," he said.

"And it stands to reason, if land gets developed, it becomes more valuable, and that's the same everywhere in the world."

Bouman says the properties he has developed and sold in Richmond, Inverness and Cape Breton counties have generated millions in taxes for those municipalities over the years. He has also developed and sold land in Guysborough and Antigonish counties.

"They're not all waterfront properties, maybe about half," he said.

The people to whom he sells properties often buy them for vacation purposes, but most eventually become full-time

residents.

"They first fall in love with the scenery, then the people and the culture," Bouman said.

"Canadians have a distinct sense of humour and friendliness, and Canada is regarded around the world as a safe country and a fiscally sound country.

"Many have stayed and opened tourism businesses, like campgrounds and other operations, and they employ people."

Last fall, Bouman and former Progressive Conservative premier Rodney MacDonald visited Germany to speak with groups of business people interested in buying property in Nova Scotia. MacDonald said in a recent interview that he has known Bouman for years.

"He's a hard-working fellow who's brought a lot of investment into Cape Breton, and he worked from the ground up, without any assistance," MacDonald said.

The two haven't formed a business partnership per se, but they're working together on some projects.

Bouman said MacDonald's knowledge and expertise is invaluable.

"We work together and have held some meetings with European investors in Canada and in Germany," Bouman said.

He hastens to add, though, that he has no political affiliation.

"The other man I admire is (former prime minister) Paul Martin, and he was a Liberal, but he put in good fiscal management when he was in power and put Canada in the driver's seat," Bouman said.

Bouman's businesses, based in Aulds Cove, on the mainland side of the Canso Causeway, also involve developing and marketing Mi'kmaq artists, while his wildlife photography sideline has put out three books of pho-

tographs.

"They work hand in hand because the photography books show potential investors some of what is here in Nova Scotia, and the Mi'kmaq artwork is very unique and very interesting," he said.

While raising a family, Bouman has built up his businesses to the point where they are debt-free, he said. But he doesn't plan to rest on his laurels.

"There is still much to do, and I believe in hard work," he said.

Nonetheless, Bouman believes his product is not a hard sell.

"Worldwide, people envy Canada's prosperity and its abundance of natural resources, and virtually no one wants to immigrate to the United States," he said.

"Nova Scotia is beautiful and the people are wonderful, so there is a lot to offer."

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