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PREDATOR RIDGE

Okanagan resort retirement delivers active outdoor lifestyle along with peace of mind

# Harvesting the rewards of success

**B**rian Watkins has elevated retirement living to an art form. Looking at least a decade younger than his 68 years, he's relaxed and impeccably dressed for the golf course. Although he's very gracious, it's also clear he is eager to get back outside to enjoy a few more of the Okanagan's 2,000 hours of annual sunshine.

A commercial pilot, Watkins had a rare advantage when it came to planning his retirement lifestyle. He and his wife, a flight attendant, had the opportunity to travel the world and enjoy holidays on every continent. After he retired at age 60, they also toured North America in a motorhome, investigating resort communities from Tofino on the West Coast to Cape Spear, Newfoundland, as well as in the U.S.

At the end of their travels, they knew exactly where they wanted to spend the rest of their lives – right here. "Not Penticton, not Kelowna, but Vernon and Predator Ridge. I say that with a lot of conviction, because I really researched it," stresses Watkins. "For me, it's clean air; no traffic, bridges, tunnels or rush hour. Low crime. It's quiet. I don't hear any sirens, nothing but the birds singing. I enjoy the calm, clean peacefulness we've got here."

The fact that Predator Ridge makes it easy to meet new friends was also a deciding factor. "It's a friendly, personable community. Everybody here is on kind of the same wavelength. We're healthy, we're energetic, we've done something with our lives and this is where we're congregating. We have great new friends, and we all look after one another. I love that."

After holidaying in the resort a number of times, the couple moved to Predator Ridge in June 2013, renting a home while building the house they moved into in December 2014. "It's a lovely home," says Watkins. At 3,700 square feet, he adds that it is "more than we need. But we have

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**Brian Watkins** is a former pilot who now enjoys retirement at Predator Ridge



**Retirees at Predator Ridge enjoy the company of like-minded people and the comfort and peace of mind that come from living in a safe, well cared for community.** SUPPLIED

three bedrooms, two of them set up for guests, and they get used regularly. Our relatives and friends want to come see what we've got here."

After so much travel, the couple looks forward to many years of entertaining at home. "We've been to all those places – Hawaii and Hong Kong, Amsterdam, you name it. It's time to just enjoy this. If you want to come and visit us, we're here. My wife's birthday is coming up next week, and we have people coming from Australia and the U.S."

He and his wife both have golf memberships, and he swims in the resort's fitness centre throughout the winter. She also plays tennis on

the resort courts, and they're both thinking about joining the bocce ball league. (There is also a hiking club, a book club, an art group, a bridge club and more.)

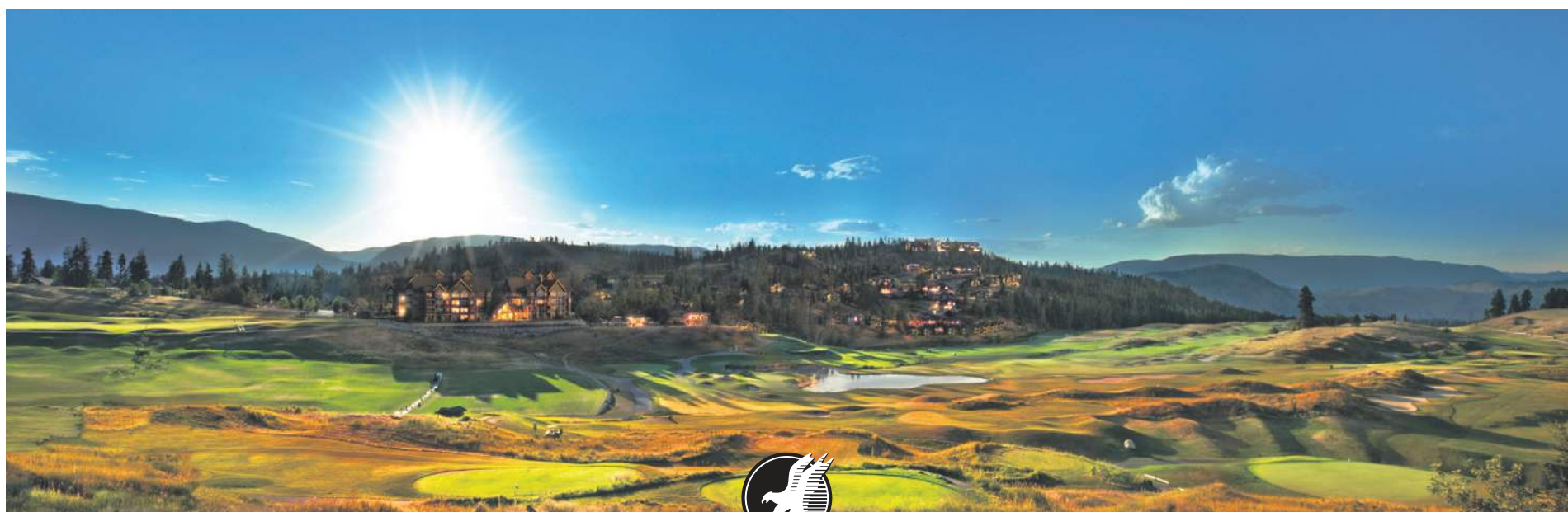
"If you are interested in golf, and I am, this is as good as it gets – the courses are unsurpassed," reports Watkins. "We've also got the lakes, and we plan to get a boat. We've got the summer sports; we've got hockey and skiing – it's all here. It's fantastic."

The strength and reputation of Wesbild, Predator Ridge's owner, means that residents like the Watkins can be confident their dream lifestyle is also a sound financial investment, says Claire Radford, a property specialist who was also one of the first residents of the resort. "They've built an infrastructure base here that is excellent for homeowners. It's all very organized – there is a landscape team, the fitness team and the concierge team."

She adds that the landscaping team looks after all the yards, a service that is very appealing to retirees who are looking for low-maintenance homes or plan to travel for part of the year. "You can garden if you'd like, of course, but if you're going to be away, you can just lock up and go."

Residents appreciate the beautifully cared for neighbourhoods, with bylaws that prevent cluttered or unkempt yards and require high-quality home construction, says Radford. "I get that all the time from potential buyers – they're impressed with the quality standards and consistency. They look at an older resale home and the latest Whitetail show home, and see that, in terms of quality standards, there hasn't been any change at all."

This content was produced by Randall Anthony Communications, in partnership with The Globe and Mail's advertising department. The Globe's editorial department was not involved in its creation.



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