

# Community has rural charm – close to city

By Claudelle Boudreau, Special to the Record

Local developer/builder Mike Schout initially purchased 120 acres of land in New Hamburg about 15 years ago with thoughts of industrial development. Close to the highway and strategically placed between New Hamburg and Kitchener, he thought the location was excellent for what he had in mind.

“It turned out the land wasn’t really feasible for that type of development,” said Schout in a recent interview.

The composition of the rolling land actually made the setting more conducive to residential development so Schout changed his line of thinking. “At that time, adult communities were really growing in popularity so we started concentrating our efforts on that idea,” notes Schout, who owns Stonecroft Corporation with two silent partners.

Not wanting to get into traditional land lease lifestyles, Stonecroft Corporation decided to do something ‘different’. They wanted to offer active adults the opportunity of ownership in a serene setting – abundant in rural charm but with all the amenities of nearby city centres. With that Stonecroft New Hamburg was born.

A 490 home community – currently in the second of 10 phases – Stonecroft New Hamburg has attracted great response from an eclectic group of buyers, says Schout. “We seem to be appealing to the typical empty nester – those who are at a stage in their life and want to downsize but have the means to customize plans to suit a busy lifestyle.”

Sitting on 47 hectares in New Hamburg – a rural community situated along the banks of the Nith River and surrounded by gently rolling hills – there is no denying that location plays a large part in Stonecroft’s appeal. The project consists of an abundance of green



**This two-storey bungalow, owned by Gregg and Joanne Murtagh, is a customized version of the Waterford – one of 11 plans available in Stonecroft New Hamburg.**

space including 5.6 km of walking trails as well as a quaint kettle creek. Close proximity to K-W, Cambridge, Guelph and even Toronto, means that homeowners are able to enjoy dining, shopping, theatre and more.

For Gregg and Joanne Murtagh, the diversity of the region was one of the main things that drew them to Stonecroft in the first place. Semi-retired and leading a more than active lifestyle, the Murtaghs are representative of Stonecroft’s clientele.

Originally from the Ottawa area, the Murtaghs were living and working in Bucharest, Romania, when they first heard about Stonecroft. Though the couple knew they were coming back to Canada, they didn’t have a specific location in mind. Their four children were grown and living in different areas - two in Ottawa, one in Calgary and one in Georgia. “We saw this as a new beginning for us – a new phase in our life,” says Joanne.

They began researching developments online and considered a number of projects in a number of cities. “We did the circuit – Peterborough, Kingston, Niagara and Guelph – before deciding on this one,” she says.

“We liked the location

and the style of the homes as well as the concept,” says Gregg. They chose the Waterford as their base plan, but customized the two-bedroom bungalow to suit their lifestyle. “We created the main floor as our primarily living space,” notes Gregg. They altered the floor plan to accommodate a larger foyer, added transoms and French doors throughout and converted a front bedroom to a den/sitting room. The master bedroom with ensuite, a main bathroom, a large family room and open-concept kitchen are also located on the main floor. The basement is also finished and features a games room as well as a sizeable second bedroom and bathroom.

“We’re really pleased with how it all came together. They (Stonecroft) were very easy to work with and were flexible in dealing with our design changes,” says Joanne.

With 11 bungalow plans to choose from (ranging in size from 1,140 to 1,810 square feet), Stonecroft New Hamburg offers something for everyone. Prices start from \$219,000 and plans can be customized says Schout.

“We will also be building a 14,000 square foot community centre in our third phase. It will feature an indoor pool, a multi-purpose room, a games room, a kitchen and a library and will very much be a part of the community,” he notes.

Earlier this month, Stonecroft New Hamburg most recently won Project of the Year (multi-unit) in the Waterloo Regional Homebuilders’ Association Sales & Marketing Awards of Distinction.

For more information, call 519-662-6621 or toll-free at 1-866-278-7577. The presentation centre, located at One Stonecroft Way in New Hamburg, is open daily from noon to 6p.m. The company’s website address is [www.stonecrofthomes.com](http://www.stonecrofthomes.com)



**Joanne and Gregg Murtagh recently moved into their custom-built bungalow in Stonecroft New Hamburg. Originally from Ottawa the couple found out about Stonecroft after doing some Internet research while living and working in Bucharest, Romania**