

# A builder's lot in life

## Sloped land, height restrictions require inventive solutions

BY PEDRO ARRAIS, TIMES COLONIST JUNE 24, 2009



Because of a sloped lot, this three-storey Cordova Bay home appears from the street to be only two storeys.

**Photograph by:** Darren Stone, Times Colonist

Building a new house on a less than perfect lot puts the creative skills of a home builder to the test. Ideally, modern homes are designed solely around the needs of the homeowners. But when faced with the demands of clients and the reality of conforming to building codes, builders have to come up with inventive solutions.

Jaswinder and Gurmeet Hundal hired home builder Rov Dosanjh to construct a house on an 8,500 square-foot panhandle lot in Cordova Bay. The lot, high up on a ridge, features a magnificent, unobstructed view of Cordova Bay and the mountains beyond.

Unfortunately the lot was squeezed between two homes and suffered from a 3.7-metre drop in elevation. The home would also be constrained by required municipal setbacks and height restrictions.

The resultant 3,200 square-foot three level house satisfies the clients, while blending harmoniously with the rest of the neighbourhood.

"We didn't want to overpower the existing homes in the neighbourhood," said Dosanjh, principal of Ryan Properties.

"We didn't want to build a monster home."

Only two of the three levels of the home can be seen at the front. The third level is only obvious from the back of the house. Half-timbered stone columns frame the entrance to the house.

Adjacent to the main entrance, is a formal dining room, its dimensions defined by an inlaid dark espresso border on the maple floor and a coffered ceiling.

The great room, kitchen and breakfast nook share the views from an unbroken bank of windows that wraps around the side of the house. French doors open to a small patio off the breakfast nook.

As the couple spends most of their time on the main level, the granite-tile fireplace in the great room has a provision for a flat-screen television.

The kitchen features maple cabinets, granite countertops, a tumbled stone backsplash and stainless-steel appliances.

The Hundals' wanted the master bedroom on the main floor so they would not have to use the stairs frequently. The master is located at one end of the house and the couple can enjoy the commanding views from their bed. A double-sided fireplace warms the bedroom while the other side faces a soaker tub.

The coffered ceiling, wide crown mouldings and recessed nooks for flower arrangements in the master bedroom give the space a timeless look.

Dosanjh credits his wife, Satnam, for the majority of the interior design of this and other houses he has built.

There are two guest bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs -- enough room to accommodate visiting children and grandchildren. The lower level also includes a recreation/media room and home office. Even with the lower level slightly below grade it still has a view of the water and mountains.

Because of the slope of the lot, one side of the home office on the lower level serves as the retaining wall for the hillside.

"The style of the house was important to my clients. We had to make compromises to deliver the interior room for the clients without visually sticking out," says Dosanjh, who has been building houses since 1991. "We managed to fulfill their expectations without having to apply for variances."

As a member of the Canadian Home Builders' Association, Dosanjh plans to enter this house for consideration in this year's CARE awards.

[parrais@tc.canwest.com](mailto:parrais@tc.canwest.com)

[Previous](#)

[Next](#)



Because of a sloped lot, this three-storey Cordova Bay home appears from the street to be only two storeys.

**Photograph by:** Darren Stone, Times Colonist

