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Homebuyers at Geranium Homes' Forest Trail Estates receive ThinkPad tablet

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Special to the Star

Forget the fruit baskets or expensive wines.

[Geranium Homes](#) is putting a new twist on the traditional house closing gift with the gadget it is giving buyers at its [Forest Trail Estates](#) development in Ballantrae.

Buyers of homes there will receive a ThinkPad tablet computer loaded with information — ranging from the agreement of sale and purchase to a guide about the home's systems and maintenance, from the septic system to when to clean the eaves trough.

"Based on the clientele and product we've been dealing with, we wanted something that spoke to them and the ThinkPad was a way to address the melting pot of different demographics. It's a wonderful tool," says Geranium president Boaz Feiner. "I could give them eight pounds of paper, but this way, their entire homeowner package is on the tablet and maybe they'll actually look at the information."

Feiner says there seems to be two techno camps: computer users and non-users.

"I put myself in the non-user camp, but I became attracted to these notepads and tablets and they really bridge the gap. If I can use it, anyone can use," he says. "I'm a brick and sticks kind of guy."

While it's great to have closing gifts, if homeowners don't use them, Feiner says, it's just a waste. So far, feedback has been very positive from the homeowners who have received them.

Feiner says each ThinkPad is customized with a buyer's own account and they are listening to suggestions, such as downloading appliances specifications onto the devices.

With Forest Trail Estates, Geranium is establishing a niche for "affordable luxury" in the GTA with 50 European-style manors on one-acre lots with "realistic" square footages, says Feiner. The homes, with contemporary layouts, start at 2,500 square feet.

They are geared to people wanting to move out of large subdivision homes into an estate-style residence with a large yard, yet don't want to custom build. Prices start at \$1 million.

Designs include bungalows and bungalow-loft designs from 2,573 to 4,181 square feet and two-storey homes from 3,145 to 5,253 square feet, all with three-car garages. Facades are influenced by English country heritage style with strong rooflines, decorative brickwork and shutters, expansive porches, gable ornaments and projecting windows, while French Chateau inspiration is evident in cascading rooflines, porticos, eyebrow windows and gable details with decorative chimneys. Exteriors are clay brick with detailing in stone, board and batten, etc. and all homes are built to Energy Star standard.

Part of the site is on the Oak Ridges Moraine; streets and homes have been designed to fit within the natural surroundings. Schools, shopping and major transportation routes are close by.

The sales centre is on Highway 48 just south of Aurora Rd. in Ballantrae. Call 905-642-1900 or visit geraniumhomes.com.

