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# Bungalows feature French country styling

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The bungalow house, introduced to the western world in the late 17th century, has origins shrouded in an ancient East Indian past of thatched one-storey homes with wide verandas. Though seeing many evolutions since, the bungalow's one constant is its pleasing human scale.

It's easy to enthuse about bungalows: no stairs, a layout to stimulate family together time, and manageable space that's easy to maintain. Which is why more developers are adding them to their inventory, not just for downsizers looking to go easy on their knees, but also for younger families.



The games room in the upstairs loft is decorated in a warm, comfortable country theme extra space for entertaining, or for boomerang kids to hang out. (SUPPLIED PHOTO)

In Stouffville, for example, Geranium Homes reserved a portion of their Cardinal Point site for bungalows — some with lofts and others with a raised foundation (meaning the lower level is higher than normal). So that buyers can see exactly what that means, the developer has created two model homes on offer.

Sue Webb Smith, Geranium’s marketing director, says that decision was made in order to familiarize buyers with how the bungalow can be used in different ways, even though just 36 have been launched.

The bungalow loft model is decorated in a country theme with French and American features. The loft has a games room, bedroom and ensuite, all of which Webb Smith says is ideal for boomerang kids — i.e. home after university — or for guests. So enticing those kids may never leave home, so having that distance between bedrooms — one on the main and the other in the loft — ensures everyone has sufficient privacy and space.

The main floor of this model is expansive, even for an open-concept layout. Encompassing vintage kitchen with a tin ceiling and bead board cabinetry, dining area with a table that seats 12, and spacious living room around a fireplace, it defines great room.

The cream palette and French country furniture makes the space a casual, pretty and relaxed atmosphere for family or friends. What’s more, you can take family and friend time outdoors to the covered back porch with ceiling lights and cabana seating.

Upstairs, the country theme assumes an Americana edge, with a bedroom outfitted with a black four poster bed and dresser, and family games room with cream sofa, tufted leather ottoman, and American flag pillows.

The second model shows the raised bungalow form to advantage. Designed with an eye to urban professional buyers, it’s chic and sophisticated with a chocolate, taupe and cream palette, sparkling metallic finishes, and modern touches. The dining room, fitted out with a round glass table and four chairs for family dining, has sufficient space to accommodate formal dinner parties for 12 or more.

A wrought iron staircase leads from the dining room to the lower level, where there’s a large games room kitted out with wet bar, multiple wall-mounted flat screen TVs, engineered hardwood flooring, and sports paraphernalia. There’s also a bedroom and full bath, plus walk out to the back yard and porch.

All of which speaks to the buyer, who Webb Smith believes is “transitional—in their 40s, maybe without children, wants to entertain, and wants their home to feel urban. They prefer a home with some yard, rather than a condo, or luxury townhouse. But they don’t want to deal with maintenance issues of a huge home.”

The project was originally intended for a move down market looking to cash out of larger homes in Stouffville or farther west from Aurora, Markham, Richmond Hill. It's been priced reasonably — starting at mid-500,000s — but high enough to allow for a little luxury.

“The way the resale market has gone in the past few years, average homes go for around \$500,000, so anyone moving here from Toronto or Richmond Hill won't need a mortgage,” Webb Smith says.

Increasingly, buyers, no matter what their age or stage, want to settle where they can become part of a community — and that usually means being able to get places by walking and not spending time in the car fighting traffic.

Originally the Cardinal Point site was designated as larger lots because of its location just east of Highway 48 and bordering Stouffville's main street.

“It was to be all single-family homes,” Webb Smith says, but since the developer also wanted to “do some intensification,” 300 townhomes were built and are selling steadily.

Once Geranium received town approval for single-family housing on the 42-foot wide by 100-foot lots, they decided to include bungalows. The end result is a nicely mixed community of slightly higher density that eases the strain on neighbouring farmlands, and is the first Energy Star qualified project in the area.

More importantly, the project offers a unique chance for country living — close to ravines and the nearby Durham Forest — while still in walking distance to shops and main street conviviality.