

The Cottages at Summer's Gate

by Jodi Deur

Almost a century ago, a drive along Lake Michigan from the city of South Haven would have taken you down the well-known "Doctor's Row." Through the trees, you would have glimpsed elaborate cottages belonging to the elite of the day — an awe-inspiring cluster of homes marked by stone pillars and gated entryways. Today, take a similar jaunt down "Doctor's Row" and you will witness the resurrection of this history. Behind the gated entrance emblazoned with "The Cottages at Summer's Gate," construction has begun on a prestigious residential community that infuses the luxuries of modern living with an aura of the past.



A summer haven for some, a weekend retreat for others, Summer's Gate affords each homeowner a relaxing, peaceful escape from the busy world.

has both a resort atmosphere and access to Lake Michigan. "So many people were coming to us wanting to build a cottage but were unable to find a site that suited their desires," explains Bosgraaf. His response to their dilemma was to buy lakefront property south of South Haven and create the private, exclusive neighborhood for which they were searching. Although only three of the homes in Summer's Gate will be lakefront property, homeowners with only lake access will not be shortchanged. "Our clients do not want to be treated as second-class citizens just because they have an access site," Bosgraaf says. "As much thought and creativity will be put into their cottages as those overlooking the water."

The staff at Cottage Home walks beside the homeowner through every step of the creative process, from envisioning the home and deciding on design and layout to choosing colors and interior furnishings. The design team works with clients to create a Summer's Gate cottage that fits their needs, desires and personality. "We have a few pre-designed plans to help clients visualize what opportunities there are," Bosgraaf notes. "Sometimes we work from those, making variations and additions."

Often though, the homeowner will want to start from scratch and create a completely new design. "Brian will sit and listen to what they are looking for and their budget constraints, forming in his mind a vision of the home he can create for them," says Jennifer Klaassen, office manager at Cottage Home. "From Brian's sketches, our drafts person uses his

Summer's Gate will consist of 14 cottage-style homes, built with the flair of "old-world renaissance" along the beautifully landscaped boulevard. A quaint picket fence will border each home, while stone pillars illuminated by carriage lamps will stand guard on either side of the driveway. A summer haven for some, a weekend retreat for others, Summer's Gate affords each homeowner a relaxing, peaceful escape from the busy world. The homes beginning to line the boulevard each have a distinct character, reflecting the various lifestyles and tastes of the owners.

Community areas like the village green enhance the close-knit atmosphere Cottage Home, the builder and designer of these homes, hopes to achieve at Summer's Gate. "When the beach is too windy or cool, the village green offers the perfect place to set up a chair and read, start a game of soccer or eat a picnic supper with the neighbors," explains Brian Bosgraaf, president of Cottage Home. A gazebo overlooking the beach gives homeowners the ideal setting to host guests or family while enjoying the outdoor beauty.

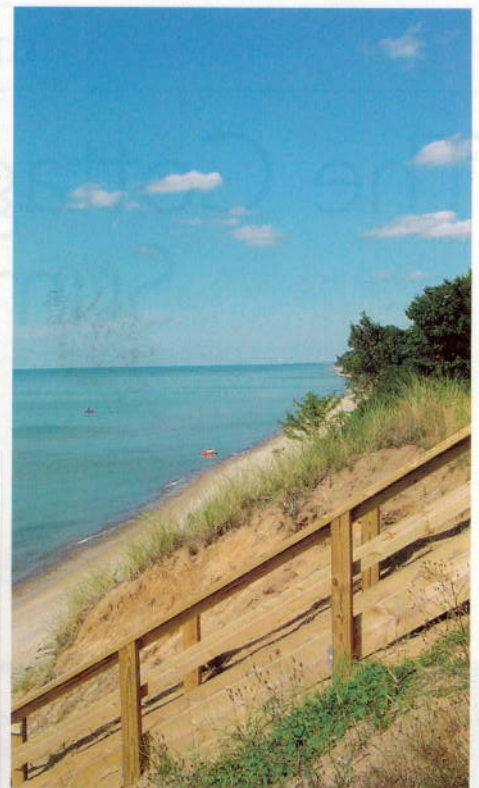
Summer's Gate provides a rare opportunity for homeowners to build in a community that

exceptional ability of being able to draw out exactly what Brian has envisioned."

Once the plans are set, Cottage Home builds the home and then assists in choosing the furnishings. A project coordinator works with the client. "Since many of the homeowners are not from the area or are out of state," says Klaassen, "our staff can e-mail them pictures, discuss options over the phone and can even purchase the furnishings for them." Instead of traveling to the Cottage Home offices in Holland, Summer's Gate homeowners may visit the design studio located near the site to choose their colors and interior furnishings.

As Cottage Home well knows, the key to creating an enjoyable, hassle-free environment is the little details, such as the addition of dock boxes by the beach. "No one enjoys carrying lawn chairs, beach toys or life jackets back and forth," explains Klaassen. "So we thought giving each homeowner their own locked box by the beach would eliminate that extra work." Summer's Gate residents may also be relieved of lawn maintenance, eliminating worries about watering flowers, trimming bushes or mowing the lawn when they are gone.

Since the cottages in Summer's Gate are not the homeowners' primary residence,



security is an important element that couldn't be neglected. Summer's Gate is private and gated, ensuring that property is safe and secure. "Our clients especially enjoy the closed circuit cameras at the entrance way and by the beach area," says Bosgraaf. "By flipping on their television, they can see who is entering the gate and also see whether the water is calm by the beach."

The rain this spring provided the perfect opportunity for Cottage Home to discover how well their new storm drainage design worked. Instead of funneling run-off into a pond or wetland off the property, they designed a more environmentally conscious way to control the excess water. All water runoff is directed into three water gardens along the boulevard, where beach sand and special plants and grasses naturally filter the water and allow it to seep back into the ground. So far, according to Bosgraaf, this environmental experiment has proved to be amazingly successful.

While Summer's Gate is the perfect getaway spot, it's situated close enough to South Haven for an entertaining afternoon or evening out. Whether heading into town to get away from the beach for a day or attempting to while away a rainy afternoon, families will find the town to be an ideal hangout. Home to an eclectic array of ethnic restaurants and quaint shops, South Haven also boasts several challenging golf courses and a large marina.

For information about Summer's Gate, visit www.summersgate.com or call 393-9460.