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Property

IN THE UK

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PROPERTY: 'ABROAD'

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Newfoundland might be chilly but the neighbours are very friendly. MARLIES BAAL talks to a couple who fell so in love with the country and its people, they now live there

DESPITE housebuilders creating new resorts and holiday homes in Newfoundland, this island remains scenically unspoilt, safe and quiet – just as nature intended. Ian Marshall, who played for Oldham Athletic, Leicester City and Bolton Wanderers, has chosen to live and work in Newfoundland. He has opened a restaurant which he named after his wife Sam and he coaches and plays for the Pasadena Eagles Football Club.

"When I retired in 2002 from professional football I intended to go to live in Florida," he said. "However, I am now here because we saw an advert for property in the Humber Valley Resort, went and looked, fell in love with the country and its exceptionally friendly people and decided to stay."

He has chosen quite a different place from his intended sub-tropical retirement destination, an island off the coast of Canada where temperatures can plummet to -20C in winter and rarely exceed the mid 20s in summer. And yet to Ian, Sam and their four children, this is "possibly the greatest place on Earth".

The only type of person who perhaps would not agree with me would be the city slicker who is after a lot of buzz, nightlife and entertainment," says Ian. However, he does occasionally miss Britain's varied restaurants and culture.

Nearly as large as Great Britain, Newfoundland is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean. The coastline is indented with fjords. Its countryside is rugged, sparsely populated and teeming with pristine lakes, mountains, forests and rivers including 200 Atlantic salmon rivers. It is also a rich habitat for whales, dolphins, seals and puffins as well as bears, moose and caribou.

Indeed, if you were to play a game of golf on one of the 20 or so courses in Newfoundland, you may well have to shoo away a moose as you tee off.

The riches of land and sea also provide the livelihood for many islanders – the "Newfies", as they proudly refer to themselves. Many of them work in the farming, fishing, mining and manufacturing industries and there is great excitement at the moment because there are prospects of further oil finds.

Ian and his family live on the West Coast, which boasts the massive Deer Lake with its beaches and activities and the Humber Valley named after the river famed for its salmon.

In this part of Newfoundland there is also the Gros Morne National park which is a Unesco world heritage site, the stunning Bay of Islands where you might just catch a glimpse of the visiting whales, and Marble Mountain. Newfoundland's ski resort considered to offer the best skiing east of the Rockies.

According to Ian, it was the outdoor pursuits and safe environment that

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Warm welcome but so very cold



OPEN AIR: Ian and Sam Marshall intended to retire to Florida but instead ended up in Newfoundland, entranced by the Bay of Islands resort, main picture, and the Marble View Estates

Play it safe in the great outdoors

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attracted him to the island. "I have four children and we all love the great outdoors. We go skiing and snowmobiling in winter and biking, fishing and golfing in summer.

"The most important thing is that we can be assured of our children's safety. Newfoundland has a very low crime rate and it is great to be able to let your children enjoy nature and outdoor activities without having to worry."

Ian initially bought his property in the Humber Valley Resort, which is carved into the forest with its own golf course and spa. He still owns this place and rents it out through the rental pool but he has chosen Pasadena, a nearby town, to build another residence because all his children's friends and the school are there.

Close by is the Marble View Estates, consisting of 20 prime plots of about 2.5 acres each along the river Humber. Six different designs of log or plank-and-beam design homes ranging from 1,975 sq ft to 2,572 sq ft of living space are on offer from Can\$492,000 (£250,000) to Can\$793,500 (£400,000).

These versatile structures can be completed within a short time. In such countries as Newfoundland, where snow can cover the ground during at least five or six months of the year, it is crucial that the building process can be quickly carried out.

There is no limit to the many extras (at a cost, naturally) available to make a home special. One of only two homeowners so far on the estate has opted for a custom-built log home with 5,400 sq ft of living space.

The specification includes a geothermal heating and cooling system, webcam security, modern lighting, internet accessible heating, light and security controls, wine cellar, home cinema, wired-in sound system, 16ft fireplace and whirlpool style baths.

This property was recently valued at Can\$1,750,000 (£900,000), not least because of its



OCEAN VIEWS: Building work at the Bay of Islands resort has nearly been completed

(£120,100) and for a one-bedroomed chalet it is Can\$231,000 (£114,000).

Being located on a slight elevation above the Bay of Islands, this site offers the most dramatic views.

Whales regularly visit the bay in summer according to Gregg Penny, photographer and

managing director of the resort. He presently lives in Skona House, which overlooks the bay at the heart of the site, but his home will become the clubhouse when the resort opens.

Deer Lake Airport serves both these locations. The Bay of Islands is an hour away and the Marble View Estates about 25 minutes.

There are weekly direct flights from Britain and more via Halifax in Canada. "We need more flights to bring us people from the UK and Ireland," says Ian, "but we need more people to justify them. It will happen because more and more people appreciate that the destination is worth it."

● MORE INFORMATION:

Property duties and other costs: Two registration fees are payable, Can\$101 plus 0.4 per cent of property value and Can\$101 plus 0.4 per cent of the mortgage value.

Air Canada flies to Deer Lake from Heathrow via Halifax. For reservations telephone 0871 220 1111 or visit www.aircanada.com. There are also weekly flights from Gatwick with Astraeus and Monarch from next month.

For more information on Marble View, visit www.azuremarbleview.co.uk; for Bay of Islands, www.azurebayofislands.co.uk or Azure Property International: 020 7851 2930/www.azureinternational.co.uk

location. Indeed, Ian says that location matters in the same way as it does in Britain. Plots near rivers, lakes or the ocean, will fetch a premium, although others can still be extremely good value.

A slightly different proposition, bigger and with its own facilities, is available further along the coast in the Bay of Islands. Building begins this month. Phase one will incorporate a 22-unit condominium block consisting of

one, two and three-bedroomed apartments and 15 one and two-bedroomed chalets on third-of-an-acre plots. Six different designs, ranging from 800 to 1,230 sq ft, will be available for the chalets.

Ultimately there will be six condominium blocks, 60 chalets, 20 estate homes, a hotel, restaurant, viewing deck, swimming pool and a 25-slip marina. The present cost of a one-bedroomed condominium is Can\$245,000