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Time for'tico'

Laidback lifestyle in eco-friendly development

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Canadians have an affinity for Costa Rica.

What's not to like--sunshine, warmth, blue water and white sand. And, oh yeah, a laidback lifestyle locally referred to as "tico time."

Ashley Willard is vice-president of marketing and strategy for Latitude Destination Properties and represents the eco-friendly enclave of Tranquilo, 90 minutes from the capital city of San Jose.

It's the perfect place for those who are into observing and protecting nature while catching a few waves or venturing into the forests.

Nestled between the lush forests and the Pacific Ocean, Tranquilo is being carefully developed to ensure just the tiniest of developmental footprints.

It will take up just six of the 300 hectares making up the private nature preserve that is called Punta Leona.

Guillermo Carranza, who was the person behind much of the country's infrastructure development and construction of several high profile buildings and neighbourhoods, is the owner of Punta Leona.

It's his vision that is the driving force in the creation of Tranquilo.

The first phase of residential construction involves the building of 30 quarter-ownership condominium residences in two buildings.

In total, there will be seven buildings.

The initial sales release is planned for May 9 for the San Jose market. From May 21-24, the international marketplace will get a first look at the project when that release takes place.

"I'm very selective about which projects I take on," says Willard. "And with Tranquilo, I get out of bed excited because it is such a special piece of land."

The residences being built are being marketed as affordable. "We are trying to match people with how much they want to pay," she says.

Product and prices range from 667-square-foot studios for \$54,900 for a quarter

ownership up to 4,850-square-foot penthouses from \$599,900.

In between are one-, two-and three-bedroom residences priced from \$94,900 to \$284,900.

Willard was in Calgary for a seminar at which she was talking about Tranquilo, what it has to offer and the relationship Costa Rica has with Canadians.

In 2008, for instance, figures she presented showed that 26 per cent of real estate in this Central American country was owned by Canadians.

"It's amazing the number of Canadians we see. They're coming from Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Kelowna, Saskatchewan--and even Ottawa," Willard says.

IN SHORT

PROJECT: Tranquilo, which is being developed on six of 300 hectares of a private nature preserve called Punta Leona. The first phase will include the building of 30 quarter-ownership condominiums in two buildings. In all, there will be seven buildings.

LOCATION: Costa Rica, a 90-minute drive from San Jose.

DEVELOPER: Guillermo Carranza.

PRICES: Range from \$54,900 to \$599,900.

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