



TIM HACKETT THE VISION BEHIND LONG BEACH LODGE RESORT

Tim Hackett still has the original copy of a correspondence course titled, "How To Build A House," that he purchased while in high school during the 1960s. Did he know then that his destiny rested within those pages? He contends he had an inkling, but never imagined he would realize his dreams to the degree he has.

As a kid he loved to build forts. He would rustle up materials from wherever he could scrounge them, just to be able to create something with his hands. The eldest of three children, his father a bureaucrat with the Victoria School Board, Hackett's dropping out of school in Grade 11 did not bode well with his parents. At the age of 17, his dad coerced him into a job as a school janitor to teach him about responsibility and work ethic. Hackett worked nights as a janitor, but during the day, he followed his passion of working with anything wood. He built decks - lots and lots of decks.

Holding down two jobs, within four years Hackett had managed to save \$7,500. At the age of 22, on a tip from his mom, he went to look at two empty lots for sale in Sidney. Standing in the middle of the property he knew what he had to do. He had to build houses.

For Hackett, his first trip to a bank to burrow money remains as a crystal clear film clip in his mind. The bank manager looked him up and down and stated, "Son, if you want to borrow money, you have to prove you don't need it." He turned to his dad, who, believing in his son, co-signed a loan that equated to one-fifth of his dad's personal net worth at the time. Together, father and son built the first house on one of the two lots in Sidney.

And so began a dynasty. With his brother Tony, he built the second house on the twin lot in Sidney. Hackett admits it was fairly standard stuff. He refers to the houses he built then as "seven up and seven down" describing a split entry home, very typical of housing in the early 1970's. At age 24, he purchased ten lots in Gordon Head, and brother beside brother, the two men would frame and finish homes, sometimes working until 3 in the morning.

Exponentially, it just grew from there. Gordon Head. Broadmead. Sunnymead. Land was cheap. Demand was growing. In 1976 Hackett built his first 50-suite apartment building on Craigflower Road, a building he owns to this day.

At age 28, he took a breath, looked up and realized he was a millionaire. "I never focused on the money," said Hackett. "I just wanted to do a good job. I wanted to build something that would last and people could afford."

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Ahead of the trend, but foreseeing a future need, he moved to building condominiums and multi-family dwellings. During the 80s Hackett made millions and lost millions, but the gains always outweighed the losses. There were rough patches, fast cars, fancy boats, a four-year marriage and good and bad partnerships. During all of this, he stuck to his ethics and his reputation grew.

His company, called Tod-Hackett Group Ltd., was as much a tribute to his grandfather, Timothy (Tod), as it was an inside joke. People assumed that Tod was his business partner and Hackett was not one to change their minds. If people were chasing him down for money in the early years, he'd say he had to discuss it with his partner. By the time they called back, he'd have come up with the money and no one was the wiser.

Recognition for a Tod-Hackett built home grew. It meant quality and craftsmanship. His building career had reached the twelve hundred door mark. He could lay claim to having built homes with front doors opening onto some of the most prestigious neighbourhoods in Greater Victoria, but still something was missing - a dream home for himself.

Hackett's deep sense of West Coast esthetics, married well with his love of wood, stone and water. He was itching to create something uniquely his, which spoke to his appreciation of the stunning natural elements that surrounded him daily in his native British Columbia.

In 1997 he found the perfect seven acres off West Saanich Road, north of Victoria, and built what turned out to be the 7,000 square foot template for his later masterpiece of Long Beach Lodge Resort in Tofino.

He poured every ounce of his vision for man living in harmony with his natural surroundings - strong wood beams, rough honed local stone, polished wood floors, dramatic sky-to-sea glass windows, with vistas of the ocean and mountains - this house captured it all.

Forty years ago, in the early 60s, Hackett was one of the intrepid trekkers to travel to what was then considered the farthest reaches of BC. Driving over grueling logging roads across the mountainous spine of Vancouver Island, Hackett and his friends would camp on the beaches of Tofino, miles away from civilization. Even as a young man, Tofino whispered to him. It indelibly etched a place in his heart. There was magic to this lost world that could not be described in words. Over the years he had returned many times, and each time the place drew him deeper into its enchantment.

In 1999 he got wind of a property that had come on the market on Cox Bay, a beach he knew well. Within the year it was his and he knew exactly what he wanted to build in this majestic setting. His dream was to create a resort that honoured its surrounding.

Once again working with his brother Tony, they collaborated on a design that pulled in the elements of earth, wind, sea and sky. Powerful post-and-beam Douglas fir timbers, natural granite for the fireplaces, expansive windows that allowed the outside in, letting the ocean and wind swept beach act as a large canvas of original art.

Opening in May of 2002, the "WOW" factor is certainly present at Long Beach Lodge Resort. Guests are at once awed and welcomed, realizing this place has been built for their pure enjoyment. Comfortable and comforting. Luxury without pretense. Sophisticated yet approachable. No aspect has been overlooked.

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Hackett worked closely with Kimberly Williams, a well-respected interior designer from Brentwood Bay, who had helped him with his Saanich Peninsula home. Williams handpicked the furniture and artwork, going so far as to “test-drive” the bed sheets to ensure guests were pampered with the best and the coziest possible.

All this meticulous attention to detail has paid off and resulted in Long Beach Lodge Resort being chosen by the Canadian Home Builders Association as the 2002 Project of the Year for its design, function and use of space and compatibility with its environment.

Further more, it was the feature spread in the November 2003 issue of the auspicious Architectural Digest, which heralded the resort as a refuge that celebrates the best of Canada’s West. All this in less than two years; it is an unheard of accomplishment and a testament to vision and passion marrying well.

Hackett has enjoyed his transformation from builder and developer to hotelier. His is full of praise for the team he has assembled to manage Long Beach Lodge. He looks out on his future knowing he wants to learn more about the world of five-star amenities and first-class service.

Thinking back to the house building correspondence course purchased so long ago, Hackett mused sagely, “I think I can honestly say I got my money’s worth. Maybe I should have it framed as inspiration for the next thirty years of this incredible journey.”

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Media contact:

Tartan Public Relations

Sarah Milner or Deirdre Campbell

Tel: (250) 592-3838

smilner@tartanpr.com or deirdre@tartanpr.com