

## The Cariboo for You?

Ralph Fossum

Scene of the famous Gold Rush, the Cariboo is a pioneer area in BC—seemingly host to saloons, instant wealth, swindles, and shoot-ups. The truth is, shoot-ups were rare, and saloons—like the ones in Western movies—were *very* rare. Prospectors and early ranchers were hard workers in a harsh and undeveloped environment. Going to town or to a dance on a Saturday night was the big event of the month.

I've lived here 25 years. In Cariboo terms, that qualifies for "resident status"—one step beyond "relative newcomer!"

Why are people attracted to the Cariboo? Romance, history, a unique quality?

We have cowboys, rednecks, old-timers, horses, cows, and even outhouses. *Changing, versatile, and involved* are our action words; they indicate touches of reality, the past, good will, a sense of community, and humour. That's us—a cast of Cariboo characters.

I recently asked a wealthy gentleman who has lived around the world why he chose to buy rural property near 100 Mile House. A man of few words, he pointed to the sky and said, "Blue . . . clean! You can drink the water. The political climate is safe and stable, and I can speak the language. You people pretty much take these things for granted but I assure you, the combination is rare in the world!" That just about summed it up. I went on to add the word "affordable." Property is relatively inexpensive, compared to the more popular parts of the province.

### A Place to Live

A recent *Province* newspaper survey included the Cariboo in its Top 10 list for "summer holidaying." Holidays, certainly—but what about a place for living? The Cariboo ranks #3 as a new

BC destination for living outside the Lower Mainland. Why? More space—less money! The most common expression I hear from those new to the Cariboo is: "We want to get out of the rat race." You know what they're talking about: rush hour, noise, pollution, large numbers of people, lack of consideration, crime . . .

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*The favourite question is, "Got any lies to tell?" That's Cariboo talk for, "Any good stories today?"*

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Rural Cariboo living does have its advantages: no rush hour, spacious living, friendly neighbours, room for dogs and horses, snowmobiling, outdoor activity at the doorstep, etc. There are also a few negatives: distance from facilities, no symphony orchestra (but we try!), school buses, long winters, fewer medical

facilities; you must have a bit of spunk to live here, but what is living all about?!

### The Notary's Role

Friends and neighbours often come into my office together to make a deal: one is the seller, one is the buyer. Oh oh: conflict of interest! When I dutifully mention conflict of interest, they say: "What conflict?—we're friends!" And, of course, I have to be a good Notary and explain what conflict of interest means. What do I do? I honour their handshake. That's how many deals arrive at my office; then I put them on paper.

Simplicity, affordability, space, friendly neighbours, some history, down-home folk, cowboys, fishermen, and old-timers—Cariboo characters. The favourite question is, "Got any lies to tell?" That's Cariboo talk for, "Any good stories today?" ▲

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