



recreational & investment properties

FAST FACTS

AREA: Flathead Valley, Montana
 DEVELOPER: The Milhous Group
 PRICE: Bungalows start at \$3 million
 CONTACT: Visit www.thekootenai.com
 or call 406-837-3000 for more info.

History comes alive at Kootenai

It's a breathtaking piece of history tucked amidst the pines in Flathead Valley, Mt.

For more than 100 years, The Kootenai has been a quiet respite on 42 untouched acres of forest along the crystal clear waters of Swan Lake.

Nicole Vaive
SUN MEDIA

Once a retreat for wealthy mining icons, this legendary place has been carefully restored, and the result is the most exclusive residential lakeside community in the West.

"We wanted to restore a piece of Montana history and bring to life the original grandeur of this exceptional property," says Paul Milhous, developer of The Kootenai and partner in The Milhous Group.

"The Kootenai represents the melding of two distinct eras and offers the best of both worlds — today's modern luxury with the essence and charm of a simpler time."

Indeed, The Kootenai's original cabins, barn

and lodge were in disrepair when Milhous and his brother Robert purchased the property, but rather than raze what stood, they set to work restoring the buildings.

Logs and floor beams were set back to their original spots, and buildings were given crawl spaces to accommodate the wires and plumbing that go with modern living.

The result: A jawdropping collection of homes surrounding the crown jewel of the rustic development, the Kootenai Lodge.

"The history of this place is that the Anaconda Mining Company came up here at the beginning of the century and what they did was save this one spot on the lake, and they never cut any of the trees," Milhous says.

"The whole site has virgin timber on it — we have Ponderosa pines that are 700 years old.

They built a cabin or a house in the beginning, and as family members came they kept adding more of these cabins and then they

built this huge lodge, which is where they'd go to have parties."

At 14,000 sq. ft., the central gathering is finished with bark-on logs and boasts a stone fireplace, media room, fully-equipped kitchen and a wraparound porch overlooking the lake.

Once having hosted guests including John D. Rockefeller, Will Rogers and Charles Lindbergh, the lodge is now a gathering place for the families who vacation amidst the towering pines.

Built of sturdy log construction, each home ranges from 4,100 sq. ft. to 6,100 sq. ft., with up to five bedrooms, including lush master and "VIP suites," Milhous says.

Kitchens are top of the line — stainless appliances and granite countertops intermingle with rustic apron sinks, patterned wallpaper, ceiling beams and solid wood cabinetry.

Each room is cosy with richly-hued rugs over weathered hardwood flooring, plaid, floral and textured fabrics co-existing as window cover-

ings, furniture and accessories.

"We're restoring 11 of the original cabins — we have one just completed, another to be completed in late June and then we're building 31 new homes and these are very, very high-end, with the best of materials," Milhous says.

And though these homes are up for sale, the lifestyle is one of luxury hotel living.

Concierge service caters to every whim before homeowners even arrive onsite, while a pool, spa and waterfront homes create an atmosphere of leisurely lakeside living.

Nearby, golf courses, five-star restaurants, shopping and spas await — but here, life is a slice of the past.

"You will not find anything else like this," Milhous says. "These are 100-year-old cabins that we've totally modernized and rebuilt from the ground up.

"It's on a historic register — you'd never destroy anything like this."

