

# Realty Reality TV show to explore B.C. housing

## Energy-efficiency one of the questions experts ask prospective homeowners to consider

BY SCOTT SIMPSON, VANCOUVER SUN    OCTOBER 16, 2013



An inspector points out potential problems with a house as Realty Reality is filmed.

VANCOUVER — A new television show produced in British Columbia offers prospective homebuyers a lighthearted dose of reality about important but often overlooked aspects of buying residential real estate.

The show, Realty Reality, focuses on actual house hunters and their realtors as they explore potential dream homes around the province. But it also brings in experts who take a closer look at unanticipated challenges that can arise after the deal is done.

Some of the challenges are cosmetic — such as changes to outside landscaping. Others are practical, such as making a heritage-type home more energy efficient.

“You can’t hit people over the head and proselytize,” said Karen Davies, owner and producer of Cedarwood Productions.

“We’re trying to make each episode of the show very useful and quirky and fast-paced, but at the same time we do have the inspector component — someone who comes along and looks at the

homes and chats and makes comments. For every episode, we have a relevant specialist.”

Davies and her husband Dai, a former BBC producer who is creative director for Cedarwood, have produced other B.C.-based shows including *The Hard Way*, now airing weekly on CHEK, and *Flavours of the West Coast*. FortisBC is the leading sponsor for Realty Reality, which debuts in January.

Davies said the initial challenge was to identify engaging homebuyers and realtors for each episode.

“And then you have to find the story, and the expert who can talk to that story. It has been quite a process but it has come together very well and in a lighthearted way hopefully makes people think about some of the issues.”

Lindsay Nielsen, associate producer, believes the show can teach viewers how to protect themselves from huge unanticipated costs — through both advice on making energy-efficient upgrades and cautionary tales.

“We want people to know the questions to ask to make sure they know what they’re getting into,” Nielsen said. “One of our real estate agents was talking about one of his clients who lived next door to a church which had a tank that seeped oil under his house and contaminated their water, contaminated their land.

“It cost them \$550,000 to fix it and make the land safe and livable again.”

In a more common instance, the show looks at opportunities for a homebuyer to save money over the long run by installing a newer furnace.

“A lot of the houses don’t necessarily have the high efficiency furnace and hot water system.

“Although you’re putting in the money up front it’s good for the environment and you are also saving a lot of money per month, so it’s long term gain for short term investment.”

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