

THE HISTORY OF SANDPIPER RESORT

This resort was the home of the Pretty Family and was known as Pretty Estates Resort until April of 2016 at which time new ownership renamed it Sandpiper Resort - - home to Rowena's Inn on the River, Sandpiper Golf Course, and the River's Edge Clubhouse.

The Pretty Family saga comes with many twists and turns.

PRETTY FAMILY:

Charles Nelson Pretty and Rowena Elizabeth Peters were married on October 10, 1917. Charles and Rowena had four children: Charles Watson, Rowena Charlotte, James Ivan, and Elizabeth Anne (known as Betty Anne). After they married, Charles and Rowena shared a home in Vancouver with Charles' parents.

Rowena Charlotte, the eldest daughter, was tragically killed in a car accident in April, 1968. She was 45 years old and left behind her husband Christopher Michael Foster Lepine and six children. Charles Watson passed away five months later due to a massive heart attack. He was forty-nine years old and left behind his wife Dortha and two children. In less than six months, Charles Nelson and his wife Rowena lost two of their beloved children. Charles Nelson passed away in 1992, at 102 years of age.

PURCHASING LAND IN HARRISON MILLS:

The Prettys purchased a 160 acre parcel of land from a widow, Mrs. Jackson, who was allowed to live in the home as long as she wished. The property, as it still is today, has frontage on the Chehalis and Harrison Rivers extending out for some distance. Charles and Rowena would travel by train from Vancouver to Harrison Mills and paddle by canoe to their home on the river, staying a few days to renovate and to make alterations and extensions.

Since BC Hydro had not made its way out to the Fraser Valley yet, Charles Pretty had a dam constructed to produce electricity for their home and adjacent buildings. It is still in existence today, and used for the Inn.

During the winter seasons of 1947 and 1948, the climate was bitterly cold. One early morning, the barn and workshop caught fire as the flames spread quickly through to the hayloft area. The cattle died quickly from the oxygen being sucked so quickly from the building. The loss was devastating for the family. The only buildings saved, other than the root house made of stone, were the dairy walk-in fridge and the freezer room, which is still in existence today. They later assumed that the cause of the fire was from leaving too many of the heaters on. Following this disastrous winter was the famous flood of 1948, which mercifully avoided the Pretty property because of the sloping land.

BUSINESS HISTORY:

Charles Nelson was in the Timber Brokerage business with his father, and continued the business for a number of years after his father passed away. He had also turned the property into a dairy farm and purchased extra land for additional fields from the Indigenous Nations across the river.

Charles Nelson developed a large silvertip fox farm as well on the present property, where the guest cottages are now located. Charles Nelson Pretty then went into the logging industry and at one time, it was said to be the largest privately-owned logging company in B.C.

LEISURE:

Charles Nelson also designed a 52-foot pleasure yacht called the "Voyageur III". Charles and Rowena had the boat for many years and had many fun filled days traveling up the river for picnics and along Harrison Lake. A dock was previously located at the front of the house where the boat could be moored in the summer during high water season. They belonged to the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club as well, where the family enjoyed many wonderful excursions.

RENOVATING THE ESTATE TO BECOME SANDPIPER RESORT:

It was decided by the remaining siblings, Betty Anne and her brother Ivan, to turn their home into Rowena's Inn on the River. This allowed others to have the enjoyment and entertainment as they and their parents had through their many privileged years of being in this beautiful and tranquil area.

In 1995, their dream became a reality. In memory of their mother and sister, they named the manor Rowena's Inn on the River. Along with the Inn, Ivan had a dream to build an 18-hole golf course surrounding the house, and so it was implemented and is enjoyed by many. It was named Sandpiper Golf Course. The scenery that can be viewed while golfing is as breathtaking as the course itself.

Betty Anne's nephew, Christopher Lepine and the son of Rowena Charlotte, Betty Anne's sister, was the General Manager until fall of 2014. Betty Anne, who bought out Ivan's share after he passed away in July of 2001, was the only remaining sibling from that generation. She was the sole owner up until April 15, 2016, and continued playing an active role in the development and decision making of the resort.

Betty Anne moved to West Vancouver and will be dearly missed by all those who knew her.

Please watch our videos to hear Betty Anne share her story!



SANDPIPER
RESORT