

Economist &amp; Sun • Stouffville Tribune

# BUSINESS

Downsized executive launches ...

## A career in sails

BY AMY WEST  
Staff Writer

From Bay Street to the British Virgin Islands, Bill Everitt has used his business savvy to launch a successful and unique yacht charter company.

The former executive started XTC Charters, a company offering professionally skippered adventure vacations in the Caribbean and Great Lake waters aboard a variety of modern luxury yachts that can accommodate different group sizes and types of vacation.

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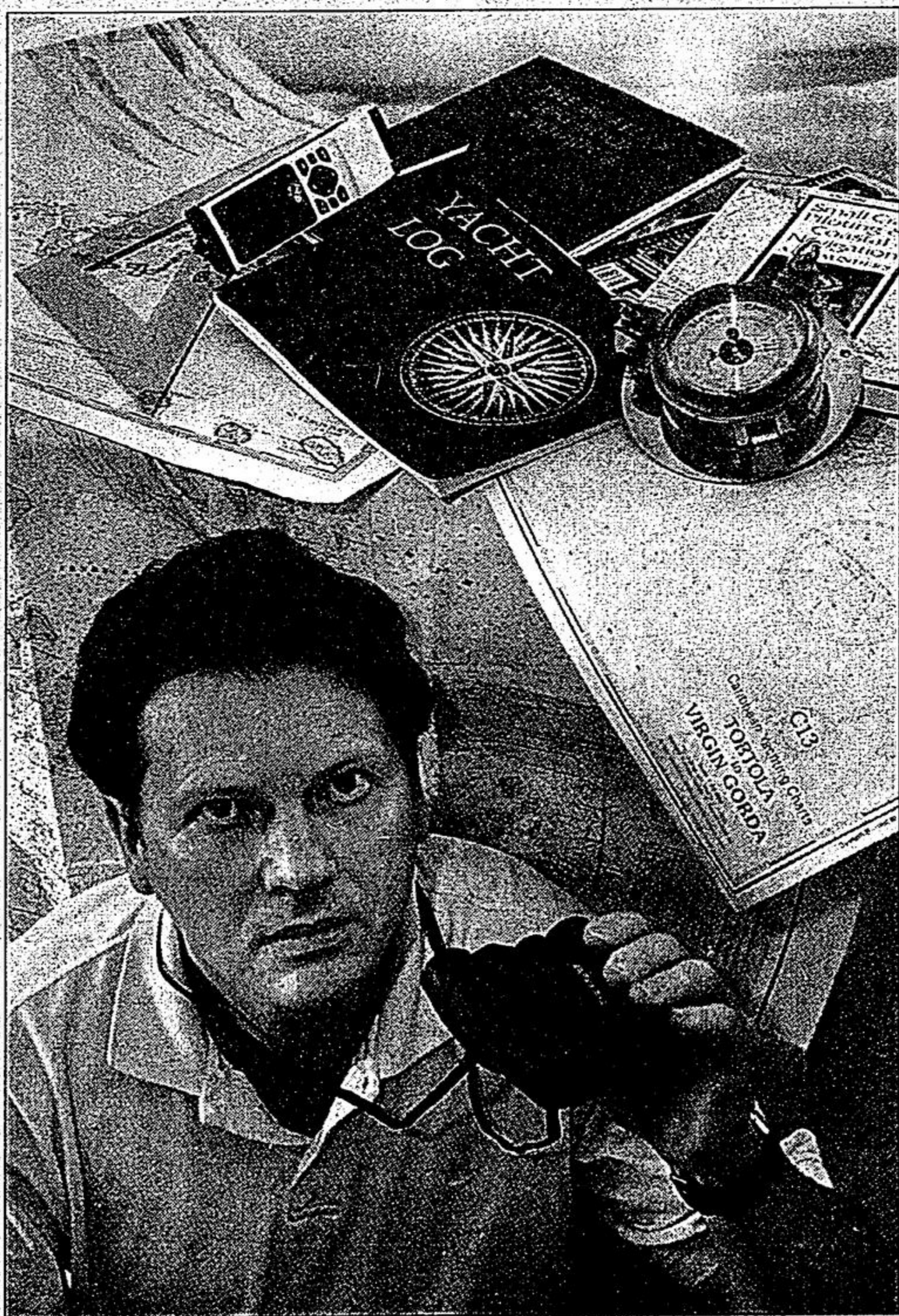
But what makes Mr. Everitt's company unique is the level of passenger participation and the fact adventure cruises are offered all year. They sail south in the winter and north in the summer.

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So, ever dreamed of sailing your own yacht? Aboard an XTC Charter boat, you can hoist the sails, steer the ship, even run your own galley, if you want to.

Or, you can sit back, relax and enjoy the scenery while the crew does all the work.

"It's a good way to sail because clients can be in control but not be anxious because there is a qualified skipper on board at all times," Mr. Everitt explained.



STAFF PHOTO/ROB ALARY

Newmarket native Bill Everitt says the key to success with his yacht charter business is constantly developing new vacation destinations.

A Newmarket native, Mr. Everitt began sailing as a hobby 20 years ago and, after corporate downsizing in 2000 left him jobless, decided to turn his passion for boating into a money-making venture.

Taking chances is nothing

new to Mr. Everitt. In 1973, he travelled 1,200 miles from Quebec to Cape Breton Island in a horse-drawn covered wagon.

"I did it for the challenge and my love of the outdoors," said Mr. Everitt, who became a farrier after his travels.

"I had trouble finding anyone to shoe my horse, so I took courses at an agricultural college out east and became a farrier and shod horses full time until 1982."

In 1981, Mr. Everitt moved back to Ontario and began teaching hoof care and iron work at Seneca College in King.

In 1990, he started a corporate stint in the high-tech industry, initially as a management consultant and then as a senior executive with a large company.

Even then, he began having visions of starting his own charter business in the Caribbean.

"I started sailing by chartering boats for summer vacations.

Over time, I acquired my advanced coastal cruising and my navigation standard certificates with the Canadian Yachting and American Sailing associations and I'm now in the process of finishing my U.S. Coast Guard captain's license.

"My original plan was a 15-year one," Mr. Everitt said. "But, after losing my corporate job, I decided to move it ahead five years."

He bought his first boat, a Hughes 31-foot yacht, in 1993.

Today, he has formed an alliance with various other charter companies in the U.S. and British Virgin Islands.

"These alliances allow me to offer additional vacations without purchasing more boats," he said.

In addition to offering Caribbean getaways, XTC Charters has expanded its business to cover the Great Lakes. Vacationers can sail the waters of Lake Superior, Lake Huron or Georgian Bay.

For the more adventurous, die-hard sailor, the voyager cruise offers non-stop sailing on a num-

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## Cottage sales on upswing in region

BY JEFF MITCHELL  
Staff Writer

A red-hot real estate market, rock-bottom mortgage rates and plans for retirement are kindling interest in York Region's cottage country, according to local realtors.

"I do see an increase in interest in these types of properties," said Jackie McEachern, an agent with Prudential Renascent Realty in Sutton. "It seems to be at all levels of price range."

Nationwide, there has been a trend toward higher prices and quicker closures on recreational properties, according to a report issued by Re/Max. The company sampled 40 markets across Canada and concluded cottage sales are keeping pace with home resales and new home purchases.

With interest rates at their lowest since the 1960s, home buyers are moving quickly to take advantage of financing deals. The real estate market has been particularly vibrant in the GTA, where records are falling each month.

Recreational properties are seen as "blue chip investments" by purchasers, said Pamela Alexander, CEO of Re/Max Ontario-Atlantic Canada.

Leading the way among recreational property buyers are baby boomers looking to invest in properties outside the city, Ms McEachern said.

"Most of them, I would think, would be in the baby boomer age ... they're all going to be retiring within the next seven to 12 years," she said.

"I think one of the main things is they're planners," she said. "That group of people plans their future."

City residents are looking for lake properties for second homes and summer residences, Ms McEachern said. They're also buying with a view to living full time in the country after retiring. Georgina's attraction is it provides a rural setting close to the city, she said.

Lake Simcoe's south shore provides

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