

CANADA

For sale: Treasured island, \$75 million

780 acres comes with airstrip, golf course, 5,000-sq.-foot house, six guest cottages, a fake village and a fleet of electric cars

by [Tamsin McMahon](#) Jun 17, 2012



Treasure Island

It's not everyday one of the Gulf Islands goes up for sale. Granted, the \$75-million price tag for James Island would put it out of reach of most Canadians hoping for a West Coast retreat.

Seattle telecom billionaire Craig McCaw is selling his 780-acre island off the coast of Sidney, B.C., 18 years after he picked it up for \$26 million and turned the former wartime munitions factory into a private getaway that has hosted the likes of Pamela Anderson and Bill Gates.

McCaw—who sold McCaw Cellular to AT&T for \$11.5 billion in 1994—and wife, Susan, a former U.S. ambassador to Austria, were too busy to use the island much, says Mark Lester of Sotheby's International Realty Canada. "They have other properties available to them; their kids are school-aged. It's just a little bit of a different scale than most of us."

The island comes complete with almost everything your average billionaire might need: private airstrip, a golf course designed by Jack Nicklaus, a 5,000-sq.-foot house, six cottages for guests, a fake village from the Old West and a fleet of electric cars. The reclusive McCaw also spent millions digging up old fuel tanks, burying power lines and reducing the island's deer population through birth control shots.

McCaw, whose brother John is the former owner of the Vancouver Canucks, tried to sell the island for \$70 million in 2001 after the dotcom collapse wiped out a sizable part of his fortune, but eventually took it off the market. This time, Lester says he's received calls from interested buyers in Canada, the U.K., and the U.S. He's also produced marketing materials in Chinese in hopes of luring an Asian buyer. "We've seen a real influx of Chinese investment in British Columbia," he says. "We certainly can't ignore that."

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