

New in Homes & Condos

»TORONTO STAR«

SECTION H
SATURDAY
JULY 24, 2010
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SOME SANDING REQUIRED

Oil is the best remedy for tired outdoor wood, **H9**



AN AMAZING RACE & BBQ

Building industry takes to the streets to raise money for Habitat for Humanity, **H11**

Top 10 Home Buying Tips

Tarion.com

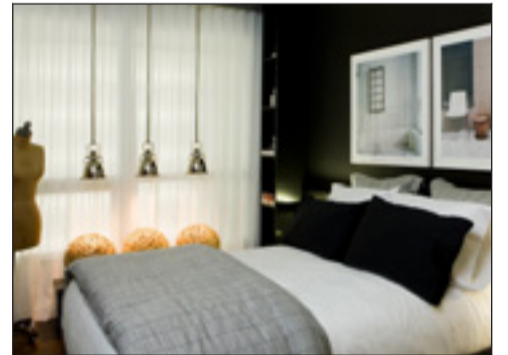
ON 012

THINGS WILL BE GREAT WHEN YOU'RE . . .



DOWNTOWN

DNA3 sales centre lets purchasers experience every aspect of the project, including the King West lifestyle, **page H8**



From the sales centre, top and above two left pictures, to the model suite, two right pictures above, designer Anna Simone has captured the DNA lifestyle at their presentation centre.

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

A module for sustainable living

Toronto partners bring modernist California-style eco homes north

IAN HARVEY
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

A little California sunshine is coming to Toronto — via Winnipeg.

It's in the form of four new unique and ultra-eco homes for sale at a half-hectare (one-acre) site on Senlac Rd. overlooking a ravine.

For about \$1.6 million, buyers will get the keys to a 2,200-square-foot modernist style home (with a 1,000-square-foot basement) which keeps energy and water wastage to a minimum, complete with a high-

efficiency ground source heat pump to provide heating and cooling. The concept is being sold by Nexterra Green Homes, a new Toronto development company founded by Gary Lands and Barry Campbell, veterans of the industry who have signed up with LivingHomes, a California-based design firm which creates sustainable homes as modules which are assembled like a giant Lego on site.

MODULE continued on H8



The contemporary homes will be a departure from traditional style.

Have You Seen Our Completely New Way To Live?



www.mattamyhomes.com

see centre spread for details

ON 012

HOMES & CONDOS

Homes to be built in Manitoba plant

MODULE from H1

And Winnipeg? The modules will be built at a factory in the Manitoba capital by Conquest Homes and shipped complete with windows, fixtures, paint, tile and flooring to Toronto where they will be crane-hoisted on to a prepared foundation. Assembly takes about a day or two per home on site.

LivingHomes CEO Steve Glenn says the Santa Monica company has lots of interest from Canada and this is the first foray into this market.

"Toronto's a great city with the greenery and the modern buildings downtown," he says, noting the box-like homes with wood siding and modernist configurations that are more common in California are a little different than most of the traditional-style homes in Toronto, but given the city's appetite for design, will fit in well.

Glenn tapped architects like Ray Kappe to design the homes and had to make some adjustments for the Toronto climate.

"We're using R38 insulation rath-

The appliances, cabinets and other home systems are designed or selected with green in mind

er than R30 in the walls, R50 in the ceiling over R30 and triple glazed glass with argon gas rather than double glazed with argon gas," Glenn says. "And we've had to engineer a way to get fresh air into the house during winter and circulate it."

The design also cuts back on the amount of glass because of heat loss, a factor which isn't an issue in California.

With the size of the lot and the demand to get four homes on it rather than one or two, there isn't a lot they could do about passive solar heating, says Glenn. "We did what we could do."

Lands says a showcase home will be built first and the others added once buyers sign deals.

"It takes about 60 days to build the modules and then a week or so to ship and then install them," he says, acknowledging that trucking a house in modules from Manitoba doesn't seem the most green route. "I would have loved to build them here but there really wasn't anyone

set up to do it the way we wanted."

All the appliances, cabinets and other home systems are designed or selected with green in mind, says Lands, but the key feature is the geothermal heating and cooling system.

"The pipes go down about 600 feet," he says of the system, which pumps a brine solution from a surface heat exchanger through the earth where the temperature is a constant 15 degrees to cool in summer or heat in winter. A fan then blows air over the unit in the house much like a forced air furnace.

Geothermal uses 35 per cent less energy than a gas system and will pay back in operating costs over about 15 years, but is three times more costly than a traditional gas furnace.

Because the green roof with decking is flat and already beefed up structurally, installing photovoltaic panels is fairly simple.

"We could have installed them and then set up a deal with the Ontario micro Feed-In Tariff program," says Lands. "But it makes more sense for the homeowner to do it since they have to commit to 20 years and meet certain conditions."

The concept is there, he says, since it will help reduce the energy costs of the home to near zero.

"FIT will pay 80.2 cents per kilowatt hours for 20 years, so it makes sense to sell it since to try and use it yourself you'd have to have a place to store the energy (meaning batteries)," he says. "This way, you are selling electricity for way more than you're buying it and offsetting the cost of what you consume."

LivingHomes is the first to build a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certified home in the U.S., and Nexterra plans for the homes to comply with LEED Platinum residential standards as well as Energy Star ratings.

"The market for these is not first-time home buyers, but those in their 30s or 40s, maybe empty nesters," he says. "There's a trade-off in the cost of the home to build with all the green technology which is the size. Sure, they can get 3,000 or 4,000 square feet down the road but we think people can live very well in a well-designed house with 2,200 square feet and the smaller size pays for the technology."

Nexterra plans to carve out a niche for modernist, eco-friendly homes and is also looking at building in Calgary, he says.



The kitchens feature CaesarStone countertops, back-painted glass backsplash and stainless steel appliances.

Rolling on King West

Canderel Stoneridge has sought to improve on its winning formula with DNA3

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

When it comes to condo sales centres, Anna Simone believes what buyers see is what they should ultimately get.

Simone, a principal with interior design firm Cecconi Simone, stressed this one recent afternoon during a sneak preview of the \$1.2-million presentation centre she helped design for DNA3, the third and final phase in Canderel Stoneridge's condo cluster on King West.

Located at the corner of King and Shaw St. — formerly the site of a Chrysler dealership — the third phase of Downtown's Next Address is a two-tower, mixed-use development with 600 units that range from 340-square-foot studios to 900-square-foot loft townhomes. Prices go from \$180,000 to just over \$400,000.

"Toronto is a sophisticated market and there can't be smoke and mirrors with buyers," Simone says. "When they walk into a sales centre, they want to get a sense of what their future home is going to be like. They want to see the real deal."

With that in mind, DNA3's 7,000-square-foot sales office takes the presentation centre concept to a whole new level.

Sales centres these days have certain standard features: a model of the project, renderings and suite layouts, and flooring and colour samples. They often include a full model suite, as well. Touchscreen TVs have become a popular gadget, enabling would-be buyers to go on a virtual tour.

DNA3's presentation centre goes a step further, giving prospective purchasers a chance to experience most elements of the condo in real, life-size form.

Essentially, visitors to the DNA3 sales centre can go on a condo test drive. Upon arrival, they pass through an indoor version of the King West streetscape, complete with trees and images of fashion models and photos of trendy local shops lining the walls. Buyers then walk into a replica of the condo's lobby area and board a faux elevator meant to resemble the one that will be in the condo tower.

Once visitors exit this "elevator," they stroll down a hallway decorated the way the corridor will look in the building — carpeting, paint, lighting fixtures and all. They can then walk up to the front door and enter the 630-square-foot model suite, just like they're entering their future home.

Once inside they'll see what's on offer at DNA3, including nine-foot ceilings, hardwood flooring and an open-concept layout. The kitchens will have CaesarStone countertops, an island, glass backsplashes and stainless steel appliances. Bathrooms will have porcelain tile, framed-glass showers, soaker tubs and custom Corian sinks.

The DNA3 presentation centre al-

THE DNA OF DNA3

Developer: Canderel Stoneridge
Architect: Graziani + Corazza Architects
Interiors: Cecconi Simone
Address: 1030 King St. W. (at Shaw St.)
Size: Two towers; 600 units ranging from 340 sq. ft. studios to 900 sq. ft. loft townhomes.
Price: From \$180,000 to just over \$400,000.
Kitchens: CaesarStone countertops, back-painted glass backsplash, stainless steel appliances.

Bathrooms: Porcelain tile, custom Corian sink, soaker tub, mirrored medicine cabinet with sandblasted mirror surround.

Amenities: Fitness centre, yoga/aerobics room, rain room, games room, three party rooms, theatre room, business centre, meeting room.

Second-floor terrace: Sundecks, private dining areas, misting station, lounges, barbecue areas.

Occupancy: March 2013
Online: www.dnacondos.com

so allows visitors to experience what life will be like on the third-floor rooftop terrace, with exact replicas of the lounges, private dining spots and barbecue areas.

"It gives buyers a level of comfort," Simone says. "You're seeing not only what your future home will look like, but also what the feeling of your public and common areas will be. So there's no element of surprise here."

The way Simone sees it, Canderel Stoneridge's willingness to show buyers everything underscores the company's credibility. "If a developer is confident about who they are and what they're delivering," she says, "they're not going to hesitate."

Riz Dhanji is quite confident about what Canderel Stoneridge is delivering with DNA3. Dhanji, the firm's vice president of sales and marketing, notes that DNA1 and DNA2 — across the street from DNA3 — helped spur a revitalization of the once industrial King

Buyers want to get a sense of what their home is going to be like

West neighbourhood. What's more, by offering as standard finishes that were considered upgrades at the time — stainless steel appliances, granite countertops — "we set the bar for quality and finishes. We were pioneering in what we did."

DNA 1 and 2 are getting the "highest resale values of any other buildings in that pocket of King West," Dhanji says.

With DNA3, Canderel has sought to improve on its formula. The developer gathered feedback and suggestions from existing clients and incorporated those ideas into plans for DNA3.

More retail, they told the developer. Accordingly, DNA3 will have 20,000 square feet of space in its podium for shops and services. (DNA 2 had 8,000 square feet of retail.) Increased amenity space was another commonly heard suggestion. So DNA3 will have 6,000 square feet of it, versus 1,500 square feet total at the other two buildings. In addition to the rooftop terrace, DNA3 will have three party rooms, a games room and theatre room. There will also be a fitness centre, aerobics/yoga room and, in lieu of conventional showers, a rain room.

If things get too hot up on the terrace, DNA3 will have special "misting stations" to help cool things down.

"You just walk underneath it and you have this wonderful mist that cools you off, then you go back and continue tanning," says Simone, who got the idea on a trip to Arizona.

"It was so hot, but you'd walk around and they would mist everything to cool things off. I thought it was a great idea — we should have mist." After all, she notes, "not that many people use outdoor pools."

The DNA3 presentation centre opens in September. The project is being marketed to first-time buyers and move-up buyers, those in the 25- to 40-year-old demographic who want to be in the thick of the King West action. To generate buzz for DNA3, the sales centre has a special events centre in the space that used to be the car dealership's showroom.

For the previous DNAs, an events centre served as a venue for fashion shows, art exhibits, and promotions for the Molson Indy and Toronto International Film Festival. Dhanji says something similar is planned for DNA3.

"We'll be hosting number of parties from the film festival to neighbourhood parties, with tie-ins with fashion, design and everything that relates to the building itself. We really want to get our brand out there."

Special events help. But in the end, few things are more important in reinforcing the DNA brand than the project's slick presentation centre. "It allows prospective purchasers to walk through and touch and feel the elements they're going to have in that building," says David Klugsberg, a vice president with marketing firm LA Inc., who has worked on all three DNA projects. "It's an environment that speaks to the personality we're trying to create with the final product."

Strong personality and branding are key, he says, given that pre-construction buyers can be nervous about buying a condo based on only a plan. "When people are buying a condo, at the end of the day they're buying a suite to live in," Klugsberg says. "So having a strong brand sets it apart. It touches peoples' emotions and gives the project a personality. Buyers can then take ownership of that brand."

The idea, in other words, is for DNA to become a part of them.



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