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WE THREE KINGS

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New condo warranty questions? Find the answers.



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SHANGRI-LA

Where the living is easy

Condo owners at luxury project get access to high-end hotel amenities

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

"You're very tense," the masseuse at the Vancouver Shangri-La Hotel spa informs me as she works her strong fingers deep into the network of tight knots clustered across my back and neck.

The five-hour cross-country flight I'd just been on hadn't helped matters. Not that I was complaining, this was hardly a taxing assignment.

I'd jetted out to Vancouver to stay a night at the opulent Shangri-La and experience all the luxury the city's newest five-star hotel-condo has to offer. The city's tallest tower, it's the place where A-list celebs like Sting, Justin Timberlake, Jackie Chan and Tom Cruise bed down when they're in town.

My mission: Soak up the Shangri-La vibe and give readers and prospective condo buyers at Toronto's Shangri-La, a 66-storey hotel-residential project which opens next year on the southwest corner of University and Queen, a sense of what to expect.

Like with the Vancouver Shangri-La, condo owners at the Toronto development will have access to hotel amenities, including a fine-dining restaurant, housekeeping service and a fleet of Mercedes-Benz with drivers to take you anywhere downtown.

There will also be Shangri-La's trademark spa, Chi.

After an hour at the Vancouver Chi spa — sipping ginger tea and having my kinks worked out by expert hands — I could certainly see how one might enjoy living Shangri-La-style, especially if it's only an elevator ride away from your condo.

Groggy but refreshed post-spa, I readied myself for dinner at, the Vancouver Shangri-La's critically acclaimed dining spot, which is helmed by three-star Michelin chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten.

SHANGRI-LA continued on H15



The Chi Spa at Shangri-La's Vancouver location epitomizes luxury living and the same level of five-star services will be available to residents at Toronto's new Shangri-La hotel and condos.

EXHIBIT

Unobstructed views on display

Condo will have 'understated dialogue' with ROM's Crystal

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Architect Rosario Varacalli didn't need to look very far for inspiration when he was designing Exhibit Residences, a 32-storey condo soon to be built directly across from the Royal Ontario Museum.

Daniel Libeskind's Crystal, the striking 2007 addition to the ROM, was an obvious muse.

Varacalli, director of design and construction for Exhibit builder Bazis International, felt that the north side of Bloor St. should not merely serve as a "background of architecture" for Libeskind's iconic work. (The Exhibit site is currently home to a McDonald's and several other businesses).

Instead, Varacalli wanted his tower to have what he describes as an "understated dialogue" with the ROM adjunct.

EXHIBIT continued on H15

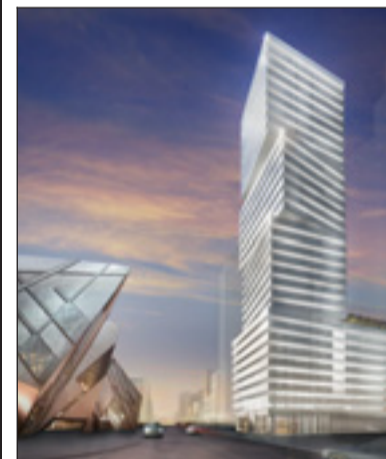


Exhibit on Bloor St. W. will comprise four stacked cubes.



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THIS OLD THING!

Sideboard a nice Victorian piece

JOHN D. SEWELL
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Q: I acquired this English sideboard from my mother nearly 20 years ago. She had bought it from her postman 40 years earlier for £5 plus a box of chocolates for his wife. It came with us from England in 1969 and sustained some cracking in transit, now carefully disguised.

The piece, for which we still have both of the original cabinet keys, measures 1.62-metres high by 1.5-metres wide (64 by 59 inches) and we've always assumed it's made of oak.

I'd like to know if it's worth repairing and refurbishing or whether I should just let it live to old age and die in peace.

If it turns out to be worth a fortune, I'll sell it and take my mother to Australia (her lifelong dream)!
Helen, Toronto

A: You have a very nice sideboard, but I don't think it will be paying your way to Australia. The spiral turning on the legs and backboard, commonly called a barley or Jacobean twist, has been used by English, Dutch and French furniture makers since the 1600s. The carved oak crest topping the mirror is a touch common to many Victorian-era pieces.

Your piece dates from around 1880 and boasts many subtle and attractive features, such as the exotic wood veneer door panels, the beaded edges of the doors and drawers and the caned panels. Younger buyers nowadays, however, are drawn more by eye appeal and may not recognize the merits of this fine but not especially flashy piece. On today's market you could expect perhaps \$1,350 from someone who will use and appreciate it as you have.



Exhibit is homage to Crystal

EXHIBIT from H1

Accordingly, the Exhibit highrise will comprise four stacked cubes that are offset from one another and jut out in different directions — Crystal-like — making the building seem slightly off-kilter as it climbs into the sky.

The four cubes are covered in frittered glass, which Varacalli says will give the tower an "ethereal sort of quality."

Exhibit will include 200 residences, ranging from 650 square feet to over 2,000 square feet. Prices start at around \$500,000 and go to over \$2 million for the penthouses (which are located in a penthouse cube that takes up the building's top nine floors).

The development team includes Bazis International, Metropia Urban Landscapes and Plazacorp, the same group behind Emerald Park condos at Yonge St. and Sheppard Ave.

Exhibit's grand opening is planned for the end of the month and construction is slated to begin in fall 2012.

The project is being aimed at a broad portion of the market, as fits a condo located in the heart of the city.

"It's an urbane site," Varacalli says. "So you'll have singles, couples, the elderly — everybody. It's for people who enjoy the city."

Exhibit's interiors and common spaces are designed by Toronto's Burdiflek, better known for their retail designs, including Holt Renfrew and the Stratus Vineyard in Niagara.

Diego Burdi, one of the firm's principals, wanted the suites to have a contemporary and simple feel, with a neutral design palette. "The spaces are what I would call modern-classic," he says. "They'll stand the test of time."

The units have hardwood flooring that Burdi says was developed exclusively for the project.

His firm also custom-designed the kitchen cabinetry (which will have hidden hardware, making the cabinets look built-in). Bathrooms will have custom vanities, as well.

Most Exhibit suites will have either a balcony or terrace, both in some cases.

The units are oriented north or south and the vistas are guaranteed. Indeed, with the ROM, Queen's Park and the University of Toronto to the south, and residential neighbourhoods to the north, Exhibit inhabitants will enjoy unobstructed views for "forever and a day," Varacalli says.

Exhibit's name is a nod to the various cultural hotspots located just outside its doors: the ROM, the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Gardiner Museum of ceramic arts and Philosopher's Walk, which connects through to the University of Toronto.

The condo is also steps from Yorkville and a stone's throw from Canada's most expensive stretch of retail, Bloor St. W. (a.k.a. the Mink Mile), and its who's who of high-end designer shops, including Prada, Chanel, Tiffany's and Gucci.

Exhibit will have retail located in the tower's first two levels, and the first glass cube will cantilever out over Bloor, providing protection from nasty weather.

The building's amenity space includes an "outdoor oasis" that will include a terrace with sculpture garden and reflecting pool. There'll be a bar and lounge, party room and private dining areas.

One floor above, overlooking this oasis, will be a fitness centre that includes a yoga studio and fireside lounge.

"For anybody living in the building, it's like having your own private park," Burdi says.

EXHIBIT ON DISPLAY

Location: 200 Bloor Street W.
Developers: Bazis International Inc., Plazacorp, Metropia Urban Landscapes
Size: 32 storeys
Units: 200 suites; 650 sq. ft. to 2,000 sq. ft.
Price: \$500,000 to \$2 million
Amenities: Fitness centre, rooftop garden/patio, party room, bar/lounge.
Sales centre: 162 Cumberland St., 416-967-7778, www.exhibitresidences.com

Brandtner linocut has eye appeal

Q: I have a piece of signed artwork by Fritz Brandtner which may originally have belonged to my mother. I believe it's a linocut that was attached to a Christmas card. Brandtner and his wife Mitze also signed the accompanying card. It's black and white and measures 11.5 by 9 centimetres (4.5 by 3.5 inches). I am curious about the value.

Kathryn, Toronto

A: Artist Friedrich Wilhelm (Fritz) Brandtner was born in Germany in 1896 and came to Canada in 1928, settling in Montreal. He spent much of his time teaching art to children, particularly in local hospitals. Brandtner belonged to the Canadian Group of Painters and was a member of the Canadian Society of



Graphic Art.

His linocuts (prints made from linoleum) are sought after. (Artists tended to follow an unwritten code about limiting their print runs to 50 or less, which accounts for their rarity.) A study in Cubism, clearly influenced by Picasso, this piece has the advantages of eye appeal, desirability and small size, which makes it easily displayed. You could expect a buyer to pay about \$700.

Singing the praises of a Handel

Q: I've had this Handel lamp for nearly 50 years. I found the shade hiding under a table at an antique shop and bought it for \$25. I had it wired and used it for 20 years as a hanging lamp over an antique desk.

Several years later, I visited a stained glass retailer on Toronto's Queen East and asked whether he had any original Handel lamp bases. He produced the base and a hardcover book with my lamp pictured. It read: "In 19-- this lamp sold for \$35."

The lamp is 61-centimetres (24-inches) high and the shade is 46-centimetres (18-inches) in diameter.

Judy, Toronto
A: Founded in the 1890s, the Handel company is a household name in the antiques world with a reputation for making high-quality glassware and lighting. Some of its lamps have sold

for close to \$100,000.

Most Handel products are clearly marked with the name moulded on the underside of the foot or emblazoned on a fabric tag. The company produced many bases in this candlestick form and your filigree lamp was made between 1910 and 1915 in Meriden, Conn. The most important thing in matching bases to shades, unless the base is specific to one shade type, is making sure the proportions are true to the eye: the height of the lamp should be in keeping with the diameter and depth of the shade.

Your lamp shows careful artistry with metal silhouettes of palm trees paired with glass panels in the colours of a tropical sunset. Handel lamps are a good investment and this one should easily be worth \$2,500.



John D. Sewell is an antique and fine art appraiser. To submit an item, go to "Contact John" at www.johnsewellantiques.ca. Measure your piece, say when and how you got it, what you paid and list any identifying marks. A high-resolution JPEG photo must also be included. (Only email submissions accepted.) Appraisal values are estimates only.

Nothing mythical about this Shangri-La

SHANGRI-LA from H1

Market offers dishes that have been described as "sublime and "intense," with "casual but impeccable service" by the *Vancouver Sun*.

Toronto's Shangri-La will get its own high-calibre dining spot, says Michael Braun, an executive with Westbank Project Corp., the Vancouver-based developer and owner of both the Vancouver and Toronto Shangri-La projects, with the Peterson Group as partners.

It was recently announced that David Chang, head of New York's Momofuku empire, will be opening two of his trademark restaurants and a bar in a building adjacent at Toronto's Shangri-La.

"I'm not trying to bring New York to Toronto," Chang told the *Star's* Jennifer Bain in a phone interview earlier this month. "We just want to serve good food. It's our job to find out what Toronto wants. It's our job to empathize and find out what the needs are."

Braun joined me for dinner at Market. Over a mouth-watering spread — steamed shrimp salad, rice cracker crusted tuna, black truffle pizza, Parmesan chicken — he discussed Westbank's plans for the Toronto Shangri-La.

The condo portion of the project will include 370 units, ranging from 859-square-foot one-bedroom suites to 3,262-square-foot two-bedroom-plus-den "private estates." The tower's top floors will include a pair of two-floor, 6,700-square-foot penthouses. (The hotel will have 200 suites.)

Residences at the Toronto Shangri-La start at \$1 million for a 1,100-square-foot suite. Private estates are priced from \$2.7 million and the penthouses are selling for \$18.8 million each. The project went on sale back in 2007 and is around 75 per cent sold at the moment, Braun says.



Toronto's Shangri-La hotel-residential project is slated to open next year.

Full occupancy of the hotel and residences is planned for September 2012.

The building is designed by James K.M. Cheng Architects, the same firm that did Vancouver's Shangri-La and the city's other new luxury project, the Fairmont Pacific Rim and helped develop the concept of Vancouverism. Cheng's team is working with Toronto-based Hariri Pontarini Architects.

The condo kitchens will have high-end Boffi wood cabinetry, polished granite slab countertops and Miele and Sub-Zero appliances. There's marble flooring in the bathrooms with oversized tile in the master ensuite. There will also be a Kohler "Tea-for-Two" cast iron tub in the master ensuite.

All suites have electric fireplaces

and motorized sun shades in the higher-priced units; estate residents also have a private two-car garage. "It's almost like buying a hotel room in a way," Braun says, "you're just adding your furniture."

The real advantage of owning a suite at Toronto's Shangri-La is having full access to all the hotel amenities.

Valet service, for example. "You can pull up front and either park in your own stall or just hand the guy the keys," Braun explains.

And, in the event you need to head anywhere in downtown Toronto, or even out to the airport, there is a car and driver ready to take you. Shangri-La has a partnership with Mercedes-Benz, "so there will be a couple of S-Classes and R-Classes to drive people around in," says Braun.

LIVING SHANGRI-LA

Location: 180 University Avenue
Developer: Westbank Corp & Peterson Group
Architect: James KM Cheng Architects/Hariri Pontarini Architects
Occupancy: Summer 2012
Size: 66 storeys, 370 units
Units: From 859-sq.ft. one-bedroom to 6,700-sq.ft. penthouses.
Prices: Residences from \$1 million; private estates from \$2.7 million; penthouses \$18.8 million
Sales centre: 200 University Ave., Unit 300. By appointment: 416-599-0333 or 1-866-599-0333, info@livingshangri-latoronto.com, www.livingshangri-latoronto.com

A nice touch; sensible too. "If you're going to a restaurant, you don't have to worry about the drinking or the parking thing."

Famished but can't be bothered to fix yourself something to eat? Shangri-La Toronto condo buyers can simply head downstairs for a meal in the restaurant. Or they could order room service from the restaurant, whether it's a burger for one or a feast to fuel a dinner party. "If you entertain it's like having built-in catering," Braun says.

Condo getting a bit dusty? You can arrange for the Shangri-La housekeeping service to visit.

After dinner, I follow Braun up to the Shangri-La's super-luxe penthouse on the 61st floor. The two-storey suite, with floor to ceiling windows offering stunning panoramic views of the Vancouver nighttime skyline, has been sold for \$17.3 million.

The Toronto penthouses will be 6,700 square feet each and priced at \$18.8 million.

Shangri-La's Toronto project is the company's second in North America, and Braun says the owners plan to continue their expansion into most major American markets.

The public art at the Toronto Shangri-La will be the work leading contemporary artist Zhang Huan. Huan was selected by the developers after a global search conducted with the Art Gallery of Ontario serving as an adviser. His installation will involve fabricated birds surrounding the Shangri-La tower, "appearing to animate and activate the entire facade," says Braun.

The Shangri-La name may be new to Toronto, but it's a known quantity worldwide, particularly in Asia (the company is based in Hong Kong). "Shangri-La is the fourth most recognized brand in Asia, after Coca-Cola, Nike and Cathay Pacific," Braun says.