

# \$100,000 kitchen like a work of art

BY DAVID MENZIES

I know what a \$100,000 car looks like (a 2008 BMW 650i). I know what a \$100,000 house looks like (a modest Toronto bungalow, circa 1979). But a \$100,000 kitchen?

Welcome to the Living Shangri-La Toronto condo-hotel, the latest swank project making headlines in Toronto. When completed in 2012, this 66-storey tower will encompass 220 hotel suites, 288 residences and 73 “private estates.” Condos start at \$950,000 and top out at \$12-million. And every unit includes a \$100,000 kitchen.

Of course, the six-figure kitchen is a superb combination of form and function. But it appears something is missing — the refrigerator/freezer.

Harvey Reehal, principal of Vancouver-based Inform Projects, the supplier of Shangri-La’s interiors (James Cheng is the designer), shows that appearances — even in the kitchen — can be deceiving. The state-of-the-art Sub-Zero refrigerator has been hidden behind luscious oak cabinetry made by Boffi of Italy. The fridge is a generous 36-inches wide by 24-inches deep and has two integrated freezer drawers. Better yet, the refrigeration motors are tucked away, which frees up extra storage space (a \$3,000 option).

As for Boffi’s exquisite oak cabinetry, Mr. Reehal encourages observers to run their hands in a counter-clockwise

motion over the wood’s buttery-like smoothness. “It’s very much like satin, isn’t it?” he says, noting nine coats of water-based lacquer were applied to the oak.

Also embedded into the cabinetry is a conventional oven, a convection/microwave oven and a coffee/espresso maker by high-end German manufacturer Miele.

The cabinet drawers, meanwhile, feature a “suppressed closing system,” meaning it is impossible to slam the drawers shut. They gently glide. A stainless steel slim-line hood provides ventilation, and the kitchen also features a wine hutch and a flat-panel LCD TV.

The centrepiece of the kitchen, however, is a granite countertop measuring 11 feet by 3.5 feet. It resembles the coat of a Dalmatian, although at certain angles, one can spot metallic-silver splotches glistening in the light. Mr. Reehal notes this particular slab of Italian granite was selected both for its beauty and its rarity.

The countertop encompasses two sinks and five professional-grade (68,000-btu) natural gas burners.

Mr. Reehal says a six-figure kitchen isn’t out of the ordinary these days. He notes the kitchen has emerged as perhaps the most important room in the house. “If you look at how the kitchen is positioned, it’s the centre of attention,” he says. “It’s not hidden away — it’s right in the living space. Even when it’s not being used, it’s almost like a work of art. You want your guests to see this kitchen.”

*Financial Post*