

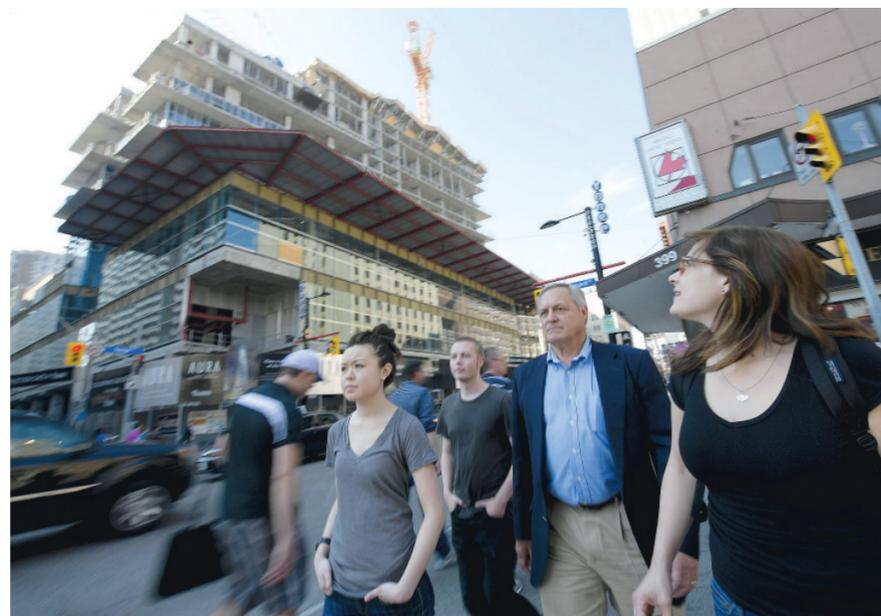
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## THE PARLANCE

NANCY MACKINLAY  
BUYER OF A MARKET  
WHARF CONDO



Even after a weekend of being up [at my parents' cottage] and fully appreciating what nature has to offer, there's always that feeling of when I get back to the city I'm happy to be home. It's never, 'Oh no, here's the rat race again.' It's always a relief



PETER J. THOMPSON / NATIONAL POST; AARON LYNETT / NATIONAL POST

David Amborski (second, right), Ryerson professor for the School of Urban and Regional Planning, with third-year undergraduate students (from left to far right) Sarah Powell, Stephen Cooke and Abby Besharah.



Call one of these towers home, from left: L Tower, Market Wharf and Karma Condos.

## CENTRAL STOREYS

Steve Cameron lives with two university buddies in a rented townhouse near the Distillery District. But as a 27-year-old single guy working at a family-run real estate finance lending firm in the heart of the financial district, he wants to live where he works and plays. That's why INDX, a 54-storey, 700-suite condo project by Lifetime Developments and CentreCourt Developments at Bay

and Adelaide looks so promising to him. From the bachelor-pad-type black kitchen counter tops to the poker room, golf simulation room and the lobby's shoe-shine station and dry-cleaning drop-off area, it's a building that's hoping to beckon career-focused keepers like Mr. Cameron. "I'm really dedicated to my career, really focused on putting in as many hours as I can to get as far ahead as

I can in the next few years," he says from his office. "To do that, the best place to be is down here. The financial district has become a place that is more conducive to a young professional's lifestyle, with a lot of great restaurants and pubs to go out to. ... My time is worth too much to be sitting on a Go Train or in traffic for two half hours every morning and every evening." As of February 2012,

there were 13 active projects with 5,103 units in the downtown core between Bloor and the Gardiner Expressway and University and Church, according to RealNet Canada Inc. That's down slightly from the previous year with 15 projects and 5,848 units. Average price per square foot rose to \$939 from \$868. Here's a sampling of what's on the go today:

## WALK THIS WAY

## DOWNTOWN

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fresh ingredients as well as a chicken parmesan sandwich at her favourite eatery, Uno Mustachio. She and her boyfriend frequent the bars and restaurants on The Esplanade and go dancing at Foundation Room lounge. They're fixtures at Cherry Beach dog park where Ruthless can run free and play in the water. And they are no longer distracted by the traffic, sirens and street noise — in fact, Ms. MacKinlay says the "constant buzz" energizes her.

"Even after a weekend of being up [at my parents' cottage] and fully appreciating what nature has to offer, there's always that feeling of when I get back to the city I'm happy to be home," says Ms. MacKinlay, an account executive at an uptown advertising agency. "It's never, 'Oh no, here's the rat race again.' It's always a relief"

Downtown living might not be for everyone, but those doing it couldn't imagine being anywhere else. It's the energetic vibe and sheer convenience that draws them in. From the Eaton Centre and Yonge-Dundas Square to the financial district, the St. Lawrence Market area, Chinatown and Nathan Phillips Square, there's the action day and night. Condominium developers are certainly responding, with crane and dump truck operators doing brisk business along the Yonge Street strip and on almost every main street between Bay and Jarvis. While some would find the clatter intolerable, true downtowners bask in every moment.

Liz English, 27, is one of them. She grew up in Don Mills but moved to the Queen and Church area at her first opportunity. A human capital consultant, she works eight street lights away, so walks to work ("I really have no excuse to be late," she quips) and uses her Zipcar membership once or twice a month to buy groceries or meet with clients. Most of her friends live downtown, too, and she's honing her urban cycling skills this spring so she can take advantage of the Bixi bike system. She's a regular at PJ O'Brien Irish Pub behind the King Eddy Hotel and meets friends after work for a gin-and-tonic at the Fairmont Royal York's Library Bar. Brunch is at Le Petit Dejeuner or Origin on



King Street, while Beer Bistro and Terroni near King and Yonge are "guaranteed dinner hits." Everything she needs is just steps from home — including stores like Hasty Market and Kitchen Table for late-night treats — and the sound of helicopters landing on St. Michael's Hospital don't even bother her like they did when she first moved in.

"Access to the [underground] PATH and being beside the Eaton Centre make it really easy for me to accomplish errands throughout the week and I'm not saving all of my to-do list for a Saturday afternoon," she says. "It allows me to explore the city and indulge in visiting the ROM or St. Lawrence Market and taking photos in St. James Park, so it's nice."

With the influx of new residents, many of the downtown attractions are evolving, too. St. Lawrence Market has introduced an executive chef series where people can interact with chefs and dine on five-course meals. On weekdays, the market has become a lunchtime magnet for employees working as far over as the financial district. Spokeswoman Rebecca Grima says the entire neighbourhood has changed to cater to residents, with new restaurants, furniture stores, banks and grocery stores opening up in recent years.

Yonge-Dundas Square has also grown into a popular hub, with area residents among regular spectators at evening concerts, movies and cultural festivals. Event manager Sara Peel says there's even a "quiet day" [usually Mondays after an eventful weekend] where the

only noise is that of the water fountains. The point is to let residents, Ryerson University students and other passersby "use the square as their backyard."

Given its proximity to Yonge and Dundas, Ryerson builds the downtown core into its programming and encourages interaction between students and area residents. The AMC movie theatres are used during the day for lectures, with the cinemas equipped with pop-up podiums for lecturers and portable desktop panels that attach to the theatre seats, so students can take notes. The university has nearly completed transforming Maple Leaf Gardens into a 200,000-sq.-ft. athletic and recreation centre complete with basketball/volleyball courts and a full-sized hockey rink, with Loblaw supermarket at its base.

Students also take their projects to the streets. For example, professor David Amborski of Ryerson's School of Urban and Regional Planning encourages students to use the downtown landscape to examine condo and commercial development and understand market trends. The vicinity gives them hands-on experience with such issues as homelessness, waterfront development and live-work districts. Students can easily hook up with local Business Improvement Areas and interact with municipal leaders situated in nearby City Hall. Mr. Amborski's colleague has his students ride a streetcar across town to observe the city in action and report on their findings.

Still, it's not only young people flocking downtown. Kamal Bhatia, a 55-year-old motivational speaker, lives in Mississauga. He's excited for 2014 when he and his wife will hand over the house to their two sons, now 24 and 22, and head to a one-bedroom Ice2 condo by Lanterra Developments at the foot of York Street. They plan to walk everywhere and take in the theatre, restaurants, dance clubs and nearby waterfront. As he puts it: "When the empty-nester situation arises, it's better to be in a smaller place and have a less complicated life and put your feet up and enjoy the wine or the cognac."

For Mr. Bhatia and many others of his age and stage, downtown is the perfect spot to do just that.

National Post

## 88 SCOTT

58 storeys, 480 units **Builder** Concert Properties **Location** Scott and Wellington **Suite Availability** 400 to more than 2,000 sq. ft. and priced from the \$300,000s to \$800,000s **Hot Tickets** Designed as a "vertical neighbourhood" with amenities located on three levels so all residents can enjoy the views; lobby lounge and news café at street level and split-level Sky Lounge on floors 46 and 47 **Status** Registration **Occupancy** 2016 **Contact** 416-216-8588; 88 Scott.com

## AURA AT COLLEGE PARK

78 storeys, 985 units **Builder** Canderel Residential **Location** Yonge and Gerrard **Suite Availability** 98% sold. 2,335 to 11,370 sq. ft. and priced from \$2.3-million, 50 units just released on three new floors **Hot Tickets** Top-floor penthouse has five bedrooms, six bathrooms, direct access into a grand arrival hall, whirlpool/hot tub in an enclosed terrace and sunroom **Status** Under Construction **Occupancy** June 2013 **Contact** 416-962-8688; collegeparkcondos.com

## BACKSTAGE

36 storeys, 284 suites **Builders** Cityzen Development Group, Fernbrook Homes and Castlepoint Realty Partners **Location** Yonge and The Esplanade **Suite Availability** 90% sold. 531 to 1,039 sq. ft. and priced from \$390,900 to \$676,900 **Hot Tickets** Directly behind the Sony Centre, close to the financial district, the historic St. Lawrence Market neighbourhood and public transit **Status** Under construction **Occupancy** Spring/summer 2014 **Contact** 416-777-2533; backstagetoronto.com

## INDX

54 storeys, more than 700 units **Builders** Lifetime Developments and CentreCourt Developments **Location** Bay and Adelaide **Suite Availability** 356 to 821 sq. ft. and priced from mid \$200,000s to \$550,000 **Hot Tickets** Interior suite finishes designed as a modern day "bachelor pad" with open spaces and chic black counters; lobby offers dry cleaning and grocery drop off/pickup at concierge and shoe shine station **Status** Registration **Occupancy** December 2015 **Contact** 416-987-4639

## KARMA CONDOS

50 storeys, 495 units **Builders** Lifetime Developments and CentreCourt Developments **Location** Yonge and College **Suite Availability** More than 90% sold. 277 to 819 sq. ft. and priced from \$200,000s to low \$600,000s **Hot Tickets** Approximately 3,700 sq. ft. of retail at grade including a preserved heritage home that's integrated into the at-grade level of the building **Status** Actively selling **Occupancy** September 2015 **Contact** 416-551-2744; karmacondos.com

## L TOWER

58 storeys, 600 units **Builders** Cityzen Development Group, Fernbrook Homes and Castlepoint Realty Partners **LOCATION** The Esplanade **Suite Availability** 98% sold. 722 to 1,114 sq. ft. and priced from \$479,000 to \$762,250 **Hot Tickets** Penthouse floor has spectacular 10-ft. ceilings and views of downtown Toronto and Lake Ontario **Status** Under construction **Occupancy** Summer/fall 2013 **Contact** 416-777-2533; thelttower.com

## LIVING SHANGRI-LA TORONTO

66-storey glass tower housing a 202-room hotel and 393 residential units **Builders** Westbank Corp and Peterson Group **Location** University and Richmond **Suite Availability** More than 80% sold. Residences from 1,537 to 1,833 sq. ft. and \$2.1 to \$2.4 million; Private estates from 891 to 3,306 sq. ft. and \$993,500 to \$5,643,500; Signature suite at 4,431 sq. ft. and \$7,540,500; penthouse suite at 3,336 sq. ft. and \$9,322,500 **Hot Tickets** Penthouse has 1,400-sq.-ft. terrace with hot tub, some suites have two-car private garages **Status** Under construction **Occupancy** 2012 **Contact** 416-599-0333 or 1-866-599-0333; livingshangri-latoronto.com

## MARKET WHARF

34 storeys, 465 units **Builder** Context Development **Location** Market Street and The Esplanade **Suite Availability** 90% sold. 885 to 1,738 sq. ft. and priced from \$535,900 to \$1,251,900 **Hot Tickets** 10,000-sq.-ft. private residents' amenities space **Status** Under construction **Occupancy** Now **Contact** 416-861-8181; marketwharf.com

## MASSEY TOWER

61 storeys, 600 units **Builder** MOD Developments Ltd. **Location** Yonge and Shuter **Suite Availability** 378 to 882 sq. ft. and priced from the high \$200,000s to \$800,000 **Hot Tickets** The four-storey portion of the historically designated 1905 Canadian Bank of Commerce Building (situated on the site) will transform into Massey Tower's elegant new entrance and lobby; builder is donating a portion of the property to neighbouring Massey Hall concert hall (also a historic site) for new space and restoration **Status** Registration **Occupancy** November 2016 **Contact** 416-966-0197; themasseytower.com

## SIXTY COLBORNE

25 storeys, 281 units **Builder** Freed Developments **Location** King and Church **Suite Availability** Starting at 435 sq. ft. and priced from high \$200,000s **Hot Tickets** Entertainment spaces with modern floor plan concepts **Status** Registration **Occupancy** 2015 **Contact** 416-601-0060; freeddevelopments.com

## TRUMP INTERNATIONAL HOTEL &amp; TOWER TORONTO

60 storeys, 261 hotel condominiums, 118 residential units **Builder** Talon International Development Inc. **Location** Bay and Adelaide **Suite Availability** 75% sold. Talon condominiums from 571 to 1,641 sq. ft. and priced from \$978,000 to \$3.1-million; residences range from 1,310 to 3,273 sq. ft. and priced from \$2.3-million to \$6.3-million **Hot Tickets** 31st floor features STOCK Restaurant and Quartz Crystal Spa **Status** Hotel open, residential portion under construction **Occupancy** Hotel suites underway, residences closing in mid- 2012 **Contact** 416-214-2800; trump-toronto.ca