

New in Homes & Condos

»TORONTO STAR«

SECTION H
SATURDAY
OCTOBER 29, 2011
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THRILL BILL

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CARLAW

New condo project opens up public space, **H8**

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CE 01/2

DON MILL

An urbane addition to a once-suburban neighbourhood

Flaire's design hints at the area's past but embraces the modern

YVONNE MARTON
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Flaire Condominiums — with its sculptural design and sinuous, curving balconies that flare as they wrap around glass towers — is contemporary, but with a retro mid-century nod to its Don Mills neighbourhood.

Composed of two 11-storey towers that rise from a four-storey podium, Flaire has a resort-like courtyard setback from the road. Designed by architects Giannone Petricone, the entrance canopy with its ultra-modern V-shape and glass-enclosed lounge space, like a firm handshake, makes a confident first impression.

One of six condominium residences and one conversion project (LifLofts) on the 16-hectare (40-acre) Shops at Don Mills site, the development — a partnership between Cadillac Fairview Corp. and FRAM Building Group — offers an "urban village" concept of residences, indoor and outdoor recreational spaces, retail stores, office and professional spaces, restaurants and food emporiums.

Located at Don Mills Rd. and Lawrence Ave. E., the neighbourhood is based on a town-square master plan.

FRAM president Frank Giannone says proximity and flow gives Flaire a sense of connectivity. He adds the established destination shopping and dining location offers a sense of familiarity.

"On a day like today with so many people on the street you don't have to tell them that this is a people place. It really is an urban village and it feels like that."

DON MILLS continued on H14



AARON HARRIS FOR THE TORONTO STAR

CentreCourt's Andrew Hoffman and Jane Marco of Ronald McDonald House stand beside the sculpture "Compassion" by Richard Sturgeon.

GIVING BACK

For every online registration, developers will donate \$5 to four different local charities

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Condo developers tend to boast that their projects will give something back to the communities in which they're being built.

With Karma Condos, though, this is truly the case.

As part of the marketing campaign for Karma, a 52-storey, 508-unit glass tower to be built at 21 Grenville St. — just west of Yonge St. and a block north of College St. — Lifetime Developments and CentreCourt Developments will be donating \$5 to local charities for each person who registers on the project's website.

The money raised will go to support one of three charities of the registrant's choosing: Wellspring, a network of community-based cancer support centres; Sketch, an organization that provides opportunities for homeless or at-risk youth to engage in the arts; and Ronald McDonald House Toronto. (Go to www.karmacondos.com to register.)

Funds for Ronald McDonald House — a refuge for critically ill children and their families here from out of town to receive specialized treatment at the Hospital for Sick Children and Mount Sinai Hospital — will go toward the adoption of a private room at a new 28-room facility that's just being completed at 240 McCaul St., the largest Ronald McDonald House in the world.

"I think this is a terrific example of a developer looking for ways to resonate with their target audience while benefiting somebody else at the same time. So it's really a win-win all around," says Jane Marco, executive director of Ronald McDonald House. "It's a different kind of approach," she adds. "We've had philanthropic support from developers before, but never in this sort of fashion."

At the downtown Toronto Wellspring Centre, funds from the Karma registrations will help purchase specialized rehabilitation equipment. And Sketch will use the Karma money to furnish a studio for theatre arts, martial arts, dance and meditation.

KARMA continued on H14

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CE 01/2

HOMES & CONDOS

Future of Don Mills is bright

DON MILLS from H1

“So you can easily see yourself coming to live here. You don’t have to convince somebody that this is what is going to come in the future.”

Niall Collins, senior vice president of development with Cadillac Fairview, says a community feel is essential.

“It is a place where you can live, you can work, you can play; there is activity for all of those — it’s a real community, a little hamlet.”

Originally known as the Don Mills Centre (one of the earliest suburban malls in Canada), the site has been reborn with high-end stores and boutiques like Coach, Michael Kors, Anthropologie and the showroom of luxury eco car Fisker, as well as restaurants and food emporiums from some of Canada’s biggest culinary stars.

Celebrity chef and restaurateur Mark McEwan operates the 22,000-square-foot gourmet marketplace McEwan, as well as the upscale eatery Fabbrica.

“You can be downtown in a heartbeat. It’s very, very connected and people have just begun to discover this,” McEwan says. “I sort of bought into where I think Don Mills will be in five years. I like the neighbourhood now — but I know



Flaire features a sculptural design and curving balconies that flare as they wrap around glass with a nod to its Don Mills neighbourhood.

where it’s going and I think the future bodes incredibly well for it.”

Giannone says their team travelled through the U.S., Canada and Europe to research the urban village model and find out what works for the Canadian climate.

At the heart of the Shops at Don Mills is the centrepiece: a large public square with a distinctive clock tower designed by Douglas Coupland and a water feature designed by Karajal of Quebec.

Rimmed by restaurants, the square is an all-season gathering

place even featuring a skating rink through the winter months.

With a park and large community recreation centre in the planning stages (residences also have their own fitness facilities) there are events and occasional festivals that create a neighbourhood hub sensibility.

Internal streets names pay homage to prominent historical figures (the land, once owned by businessman E.P. Taylor, had originally been set aside for a brewery.)

But residents of the pedestrian-

friendly enclave will also be able to embrace the outdoors from their own units. With few nearby buildings exceeding three stories, there will be enviable views from the curvaceous balconies — some of which offer 225 square feet of additional living space.

Collins says the shape of the building allows units to have more than one aspect.

“In the evening the city glows from the lake and the balconies are incredibly generous — there are great opportunities to enjoy the outdoors on that balcony with a fantastic view.”

Residents will also be able to enjoy alfresco living from the fifth floor podium rooftop deck with its Miami-inspired cabanas, barbecue fire pits and seating alcoves.

Giannone emphasizes the design details that will give Flaire “a presence of address,” some of which are the floor-to-ceiling windows; sculptural pieces of artwork in the common spaces and custom kitchen and baths all designed by Alessandro Munge of Munge Leung.

Of the neighbourhood, McEwan is upbeat: “I think coupled with the development of Don Mills and with 2,050 nice condo units projected five or six years out — it’s going to be an amazing community.”

‘Encourage our entire team to be involved’

KARMA from H1

“We thought (the registration fundraiser) would be a unique way to engage registrants,” says Andrew Hoffman, president of CentreCourt Developments. “It allows them to choose a local charity that we’re passionate about and it encourages even greater support for those charities over time through awareness and exposure to them.”

Designed by architectsAlliance, Karma Condos will have units ranging from 277-square-foot studios to 819-square-foot two-bedroom plus den suites. Prices start at \$189,900 and go to the mid-\$500,000s. Penthouses will be as large as 1,200 square feet and priced in the \$600,000 range. The sales centre opens to the public in mid-November.

Interiors are by Cecconi Simone and highlights include nine-foot, smooth-finished ceilings; engineered wood flooring in the entryways, corridors, kitchens, living/dining areas and bedrooms; balconies and floor-to-ceiling windows with north- and south-facing views.

Kitchens at Karma come with a choice of natural stone or quartz countertop, with glass backsplashes and a stainless steel appliance package, including an Energy Star electric cooktop, 24-inch stainless steel oven, stainless steel microwave, and a refrigerator that’s blended in with the cabinetry.

Bathrooms will have cabinetry that’s custom-designed by Cecconi Simone and will feature natural stone or quartz countertops with undermount sinks, five-foot soaker tubs and glass shower stalls.

In terms of amenities, Karma will have a fitness centre with weight room and his-and-hers steam rooms. There will be a party room with a bar, projection screen and fireplace, and a private dining room.

The condo’s “Players Club” will have a poker table, billiards table and table tennis. There will also be a screening room and a “Station K” gaming room. Karma will have an open-air outdoor terrace, with lounge and barbecues.

There will be 4,000 square feet of retail space located at the base of Karma Condos, part of which will be incorporated into a preserved heritage home that sits on the site. “Architecturally it’s combining the historical old with the modern glass base and glass towers sitting above,” Hoffman says. “So it integrates well into the development.”

Karma is being aimed at young professionals, University of Toronto or Ryerson University teachers and students, and hospital employees who work at nearby facilities along University Ave.

Registrations for Karma have been strong early on, Hoffman notes, with over \$10,000 in charity funds raised so far. “And we expect to see those numbers grow.”

The number of registrations is “well ahead” of the normal trend for downtown condo projects, he says. “Normally we see fewer people register and more people show up at the sales centre or deal with things through direct communication, rather than registering and waiting for the developer to follow up.”

Hoffman figures the level of interest has a great deal to do with the appeal of the Karma charity campaign, “and my hope is that it’s going to grow and hopefully go viral as more people talk about it.”

“I think (the developers) are trying to inspire people to look further and to benefit the greater society’s good,” says Marco.

The developers aren’t just focusing on potential buyers in their campaign to help local charities, mind you. “We’re going to be engaging our entire team both at CentreCourt and Lifetime — our brokers and consultants — to get involved,” Hoffman says.

They themselves will be spending time working with the charities, he notes, including a scheduled evening in November where they’ll take part in Ronald McDonald House’s Home for Dinner program, providing a meal for resident families. “We want everyone on the Karma team to feel good about giving back to the community.”

And he’s not just saying that.



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