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Bryan Baeumler

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SATURDAY, MAY 23, 2015 SECTION H

ON ON2

They're talking about an evolution

Local luminaries discuss Toronto's dynamic Entertainment District in video series for The Bond condos

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Zark Fatah has been part of a decades-long evolution in the Entertainment District that began, for him, working as a nightclub bartender in the mid-'90s.

Back then, recalls Fatah — now a partner in Capture Group, the firm behind high-profile downtown spots such as nightclub Maison Mercer, Hammam Spa and Blowfish Restaurant — Toronto had just a handful of clubs.

Fast forward through years of intense effort by Fatah and fellow promoters to inject energy into Toronto's nightlife scene. They brought in DJs, threw theme parties and did all sorts of other cool and creative things to "give people a reason to go out."

By the dawn of the new millennium, the city's nightlife scene "really blew up," he says. "I think at one point there were 84 entertainment liquor licences for nightclubs."

The evolution continued and shifted, and recent years have seen a decline in Toronto's clubs with a corresponding rise in the restaurant scene — particularly in the Entertainment District, a change in which Fatah has again been a catalyst.

"We have a world-class entertainment scene now, and I'm proud to talk about that any time."

And talk about it is what Fatah does in a new video campaign by Lifetime Developments called *The Connected Collection* that spotlights the dynamic, diverse community the Entertainment District has become.

And dense, with tall condo towers bringing thousands of new residents into the neighbourhood.

Fatah is one of eight people who have played a key role in shaping the area's coming of age and who discuss their connection — or bond — to the neighbourhood in one-minute video spots.

They include Charles Khabouth, CEO INK Entertainment; Khao San Road res-



KEVIN VAN PAASSEN FOR THE TORONTO STAR

Zark Fatah, left, and Lifetime Developments vice-president Brian Brown at Maison Mercer during a break in taping for a video series featuring Fatah.

"This area of Toronto really is, I would say, the most dynamic district in Canada."

ZARK FATAH

taurant owner Monte Wan; and comedian/improviser Hayley Kellett.

"Entertainment is now not just nightlife," Fatah says in his minute-long video. "There's theatres, there's lounges, private clubs, hotel lobby bars, so this area of Toronto really is, I would say, the most dynamic district in Canada."

The campaign is in support of Lifetime's The Bond, a 42-storey condo that's currently under construction at 290 Adelaide St. W., just west of John St.

Launched in 2011, the project, designed by Core Architects, is nearly sold out. But the developer received permission from the city to add two extra residential floors to the tower, so additional units are now available (suite design is by Tomas Pearce Interior Design Consulting; prices start at \$391,900).

Also being released for sale is the Bond's \$3.99-million penthouse, a 3,568-square-foot, full-floor unit with a 1,913-square-foot terrace. And there's a new collection of terrace suites.

"The Entertainment District is a huge success for the city, and it's where people want to live these days," says Lifetime Developments vice-president Brian Brown, whose firm has done several projects in the area. "

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>> HOMES & CONDOS

A love letter to the Entertainment District

LIFETIME from H1

It's really evolved and changed over the last decade into something special.

Hints of the evolution were given by Jane Jacobs, the outspoken and world-renowned Toronto urbanologist.

“When you combine things that are used in the evening, like theatre, with things that are used in the day, like offices — if you combine the daytime and the evening uses, you get two shifts of people who then patronize the area,” Jacobs noted to a *Star* reporter in 1992 about the neighbourhood’s active mixed use.

By last year, the Entertainment District accounted for over 10 per cent of new condo construction across the city. On top of its social and cultural draw, the area's public transit access and proximity to the Financial District give it strong residential appeal.

The seven short *Connected Collection* videos, plus a short documentary-style piece putting them all together, will be released once a week. The first came out yesterday on Facebook and YouTube.

The campaign also features a walking-tour video that takes the viewer to visit popular spots in the Entertainment District, including a coffee shop, the TIFF Bell Lightbox and Montecito restaurant — all neighbourhood amenities for residents of the Bond.

“You’re watching somebody go through the district, and seeing them through the day into the night and late evening,” Brown explains. “So you really get a full appreciation for how diverse it is, how many different personalities the district itself has and how people can experience so much by living in the neighbourhood.”

The third part of The Bond campaign builds on a successful Instagram promotion last year by Lifetime; the builder invited people to submit photos of their favourite Entertainment District spots using the hashtag #BondTO. New print ads for The Bond will include submitted photos in a mosaic that fills up the



An artist's rendering shows The Bond penthouse, a full-floor, 3,568-square-foot suite with a 1,913-square-foot terrace priced at \$3.99 million.



Poolside at The Bond, which is designed by Core Architects.

> THE BOND

Location: 290 Adelaide St. W.
Developer: Lifetime Developments
Architect: Core Architects; interior design by Tomas Pearce Interior Design Consulting
Size: 42 storeys
Units: 393; 327 sq. ft. to 3,568 sq. ft.
Price: \$391,900 to \$3.99 million
Info: thebond.ca | info@thebond.ca



outline of the condo building.

It's understandable that Lifetime would craft what is in effect a love letter to the Entertainment District. Brown points out the firm has played a role in the growth of the area. Before The Bond, there was M5V at King St. W. and Blue Jays Way; and Lifetime has started construction on

the highly anticipated Bisha Hotel and Residences, in partnership with Khabouth's INK Entertainment. In all, the firm has been involved with more than 14 downtown projects and sold more than 6,000 condo suites over the past eight years.

"From the beginning, we've had a commitment to the Entertainment

District and its evolution,” says Brown, who sat on the area’s BIA and took part in the John Street Cultural Corridor, a stretch of widened sidewalks and expanded pedestrian space running from Grange Park behind the AGO south to the foot of the CN Tower.

"But back then, we were selling a

vision; telling people this is what's going to happen in the Entertainment District. Today, they can come down and actually experience what's it's like to be there. It's matured, and it's got great momentum and diversity.

"And that's what we wanted to celebrate with this campaign."

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