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PROPERTY BROTHERS WANT YOU (RATHER, YOUR LOUSY HOUSE)

If you're searching for a fixer-upper to help you get on the high-priced property ladder, the tall, talented Property Brothers want you. They need folks who live in Toronto, are "fun, with unique stories to tell," have a minimum of \$100,000 for the fixer-up part, and be available for 10 days over a period of six to seven weeks. Filming will take place this fall. Those chosen will receive a contribution to their reno and have it completed in seven weeks (wow, we can only dream!). Visit [propertybrothers.castingcrane.com](http://propertybrothers.castingcrane.com). *National Post*



FOR SALE



Price range: \$850,000 to \$2.695 million (new units only)  
Location: Avenue Road and St. Clair Avenue, Toronto

BLUE DIAMOND

Part of the Imperial Village, Blue Diamond will feature contemporary glass and metal, with the heritage façade of an historic church integrated into the building. **Builder** Camrost-Felcorp **Type** 26-storey tower and three-storey townhouses **Suites** Two-bedroom and larger layouts **Size** Units range from 1,185 to over 2,000 square feet. **Occupancy** Fall 2018 **Features** Laminate plank flooring, individually controlled heating and air conditioning, stone countertops **Standouts** The building shares the fitness and leisure amenities of the Imperial Club next door. **Sales office** 1499 Yonge St., Toronto; Monday to Thursday noon to 6 p.m. and weekends noon to 5 p.m. 416-925-2501 or [bluediamondcondos.ca](http://bluediamondcondos.ca) or [thefoxbar.ca](http://thefoxbar.ca).

L.V., *National Post*

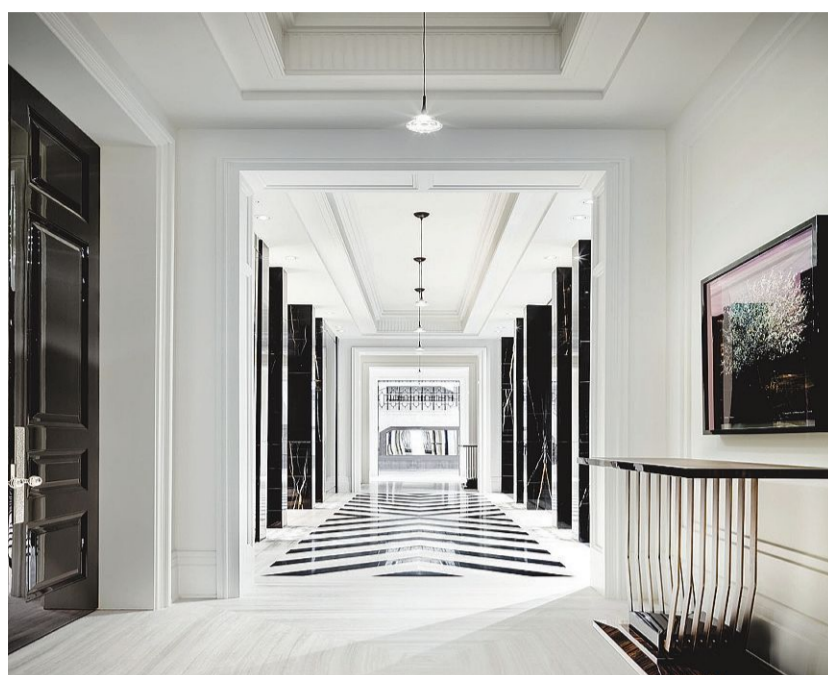


Price range: Starting from the \$800,000  
Location: Davenport Road and Avenue Road, Toronto

346 DAVENPORT

Designed by the architects at RAW Design, 346 Davenport is a boutique project of larger units. Currently in registration, the site is located close to the Dupont subway, Ramsden Park and the amenities of Yorkville. **Builder** Freed Developments **Type** Mid-rise condominium **Suites** Two- and three-bedroom layouts **Size** 1,000 to 4,400 sq. ft. **Occupancy** February 2019 **Features** Units will have smooth-finished ceilings, natural gas barbecue connections on the balconies and terraces, wide-plank engineered hardwood flooring, solid-surface kitchen countertops, back-painted glass backsplashes and Miele appliances. **Amenities** The building will feature 24-hour concierge service. **Sales office** To register, visit [346davenport.com](http://346davenport.com).

L.V., *National Post*



DESIGNED AND BUILT BY FERRIS RAFAULI

Exotic materials and exquisite workmanship must be employed for all facets of Rafauli's "super-luxe" homes. "All elements have to be in check."

GOING SUPER-LUXE, 'JUST BECAUSE'

CUSTOM

Continued from PH1

"One of the things we've gained from doing high-end client work is a real knowledge of what people want in this type of a house," says Sukonick, principal at Toronto-based Matthew Sapera Fine Homes, which has been delivering renovations and new builds to clients in Forest Hill, Lawrence Park, Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe and Nantucket, Mass., for more than two decades. "It's difficult to find great opportunities. This came up and from our perspective it was perfect. We ran the numbers, figured out where we'd need to be at the end and were comfortable that we would be able to get the house sold for the number that made sense, given the investment that would have to go into it — both the investment of money and of time."

With upfront costs in the millions, building luxury on spec (that is, on speculation, without a buyer in mind) can be an expensive and risky project. In fact, it's not the norm these days because there aren't many large properties for sale and homeowners prefer their residence to reflect their personal taste and lifestyle. Still, those who cater to the wealthy know a good thing when they see it.

Ferris Rafauli of Ferris Rafauli-Grandeur Luxury Homes says buyers in his sweet spot — he calls it "super-luxe" — can afford to buy a multi-million-dollar home just because. He knows what they crave and how to provide it.

"The only way you can do that is to emotionally move somebody," he says. "All elements have to be in check: location, execution of the landscaping, the scale and design of the building, architecture being on point with its genre, and following

through on the interior whether it be the furnishing, the flair, the execution of the interior layout and practicality and function. All those things are major keys to having a successful overall outcome. A lot of the ones that sit around and don't sell are missing certain elements."

He compares it to making the perfect martini: "There are important mixes you have to have in the cocktail to make it taste good. Here, you have to have certain elements that make it sellable and make spec successful." That means a neutral palette but incorporating exotic woods like Makassar, slab marble flooring, directional slab flooring, high-end millwork, built-in polished high-gloss finishes and frame-

FR furniture collection installed, the drapery, the finishing, the bedding, the mattresses, the sheets, music playing. You just bring your toothbrush. It's as convenient as going to a hotel and bringing your luggage.... We control everything down to the landscape, the furnishings and all the detail that goes with it. It's magical, actually, because you just open the door and literally move in."

Sapera and Sukonick, on the other hand, would be delighted to find a buyer right about now. Framing on the 8,500-sq-ft., five- to six-bedroom house is complete, most of the windows have been installed and the trades are putting finishing touches on mechanical and electrical components (move-in

built to completion by us, it will have a look and a style," Sukonick says. "But by necessity it will have a little bit of a broad or inclusive feel to it because it's being built to appeal to people with a shared interest in classical architecture combined with a contemporary/transitional influence. Our goal is to create a well-styled home built with our usual attention to detail but with a selection of materials neutral enough that the purchasers will be able to add their own style, move in and it will all appear seamless."

And while it's wise to check out a builder's reputation before signing on the dotted line, that's especially important when buying a house on spec.

"If you come in late, all you see is the surface materials and you don't necessarily have a great understanding of what's happening below the surface," Sukonick says. "Did the builder lay the stone and tiles on top of concrete including a Schluter base system; how many separate control zones are in the radiant heating system? Is the plumber using cast iron stacks for sound reduction? What is the quality level of the recessed lighting?"

But don't rely on the builder's word that they know what they're doing. Make some calls and dig deep. Rafauli urges checking out past projects and getting five to 10 references.

"You need to know who you're getting into bed with: who's the designer, who's the architect, who's the builder?" says Rafauli, whose company is a full-on one-stop shop. "Do they have a following? Equally important as the product is who's behind the product — the person. If they have a reputation that follows them, there's less risk and more assurances than with someone who's just trying to flip a house."

*National Post*

ANY SPEC HOUSE I'D DO WOULD BE CLOSED TO THE MARKET UNTIL IT WAS 100% COMPLETE

work, 10-foot main-floor doors and good sight lines.

Rafauli hasn't had the opportunity to do spec projects lately because he's so busy designing and building custom mansions in Oakville, Ancaster and the Bridle Path that sell for between \$5 million and \$35 million. Most are around 12,000 sq. ft., but he's working on one now on the Bridle Path that's 40,000 sq. ft.

But when one comes up, he says he'd find the process liberating because he'd have the freedom to do what he wants without having to seek anyone's approval.

"If I did a spec it would be closed to the market," he says. "You'd never see it until an unveiling, (when it) would be 100% completely finished: with my FR (Ferris Rafauli) custom lighting, my

is expected next spring). But they'll be ordering flooring shortly and are about a month away from putting up drywall, meaning someone who comes on board now can still customize the layout and choose surfaces and finishings to their liking rather than face higher costs if they want changes.

"The nice thing about coming in at this stage is that they're coming in at a one-year or 10-month horizon," says Sapera. "Whereas if they would have purchased the old house that's on the site and gone through the process of tearing it down, designing a new house, getting permits and approval from city (it would take much longer)."

If nobody bites soon, though, no worries.

"If this house ends up being

MORTGAGE RATES 25.05.16

RATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. SELECTION OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS MAY VARY WEEKLY. FIGURES SUPPLIED BY FISCAL AGENTS

	Variable rate	6months	1yr	2yr	3yr	4yr	5yr	Variable rate	6months	1yr	2yr	3yr	4yr	5yr
<b>BANK</b>														
ATB Financial	2.60	4.00 - 4.00op	2.94 - 4.00op	2.64 - 4.00op	2.49	2.64	2.69							
Alterna Bank	2.35	4.00 - 6.30op	2.85 - 6.30op	2.09	2.59	2.74	2.58							
Bank of Montreal	2.70	4.00 - 6.75op	2.89 - 6.75op	2.99	3.39	3.89	2.49							
Bank of Nova Scotia	2.90	4.55 - 6.45op	3.29 - 6.50op	3.09	3.39	3.89	4.49							
Canadian Western Bank	-	4.00 - 6.45op	3.14 - 6.30op	3.04	3.65	4.20	4.74							
CIBC	2.70	6.95op	2.84 - 6.35op	2.79	2.44	4.09	4.79							
Equitable Bank	-	-	3.14	3.04	3.65	4.39	4.64							
ICICI Bank Canada	2.75	-	2.84	2.84	2.84	2.89	2.89							
Manulife Bank	2.60	4.45	3.00 - 3.20op	2.94	2.84	2.79	2.89							
National Bank	n/a	4.40 - 6.70op	3.14 - 6.70op	3.04	3.39	2.74	2.84							
President's Choice Finan	2.70	-	-	2.79	3.34	3.99	4.44							
Royal Bank	2.60	6.75op	3.14 - 6.75op	2.39	2.44	4.39	4.64							
TD Canada Trust	2.60	-	2.99 - 6.30op	2.84	2.29	3.89	2.59							
Tangerine	2.70	-	3.19	3.24	3.49	3.69	3.79							
<b>TRUST LOAN</b>														
Community Trust	n/a	6.50	3.14	3.25	3.95	4.39	4.64							
Effort Trust	n/a	4.45 - 6.30op	3.35 - 6.30op	3.50	3.70	4.30	4.35							
Home Trust Company	2.35	3.95	2.69	2.14	2.34	2.59	2.64							
Investors Group Trust	n/a	4.20 - 6.50op	3.14 - 6.30op	3.09	3.39	3.89	2.74							
MTCC	2.90	4.55 - 6.45op	3.29 - 6.50op	3.09	3.39	3.89	4.49							
<b>OTHER</b>														
Alterna Savings	2.35	4.00 - 6.30op	2.85 - 6.30op	2.09	2.59	2.74	2.58							
Comtech Credit Union	2.45	6.20 - 6.40op	2.84 - 6.30op	2.89	2.95	2.99	2.89							
DUCA Credit Union	2.50	-	3.09 - 5.75op	3.00	2.99	3.09	2.54							
First National Fin. LP	-	3.10	2.29	2.24	2.39	2.49	2.59							
Industrial Alliance/IAP	-	-	3.44	3.19	3.04	3.29	2.69							
Luminus Financial	3.25	-	3.25 - 6.25op	3.20	3.65	4.00	4.50							
Meridian Credit Union	2.40	4.00	2.84 - 6.30op	2.79	2.64	3.89	2.49							
PACE Savings & C.U.	-	5.00 - 6.70op	2.99 - 6.30op	2.69	3.49	3.99	4.64							
Parama Credit Union	2.65	-	2.80 - 2.95op	2.85	2.95	3.05	3.15							

\*Also offer 7- to 10-year mortgages. op = open mortgage. n.a. = not available from company. ro = renewals only dashes (-) mean companies not quoting at present.

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