

GREAT GULF

There's a great home waiting for you in Oakville, Milton, Brampton, Bradford or Toronto at www.greatgulf.com

NEW IN HOMES & CONDOS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2017 SECTION H

ON ON2

> HOW WE LIVE

Lobbies with purpose and poise

Serving the social role of a front porch, a building's entrance hall makes an important first impression



COLE BURSTON FOR THE TORONTO STAR

From left, Lifetime Developments' vice-president Brian Brown, designer Melandro Quilatan and owners Jacob Plago and Lily Chan at the Bond.

ELAINE SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

While floor plans and amenities top the shopping list for condo buyers, each building has another unique calling card: the lobby.

"Lobbies are very important when you live vertically," says Jared Menkes, vice-president of highrise and residential development for Menkes Developments, the builders of Pears on the Avenue, a 20-storey condominium in Toronto's Yorkville neighbourhood.

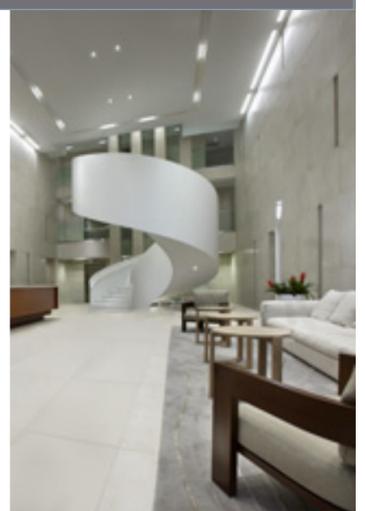
"You don't have a front porch anymore, so the lobby becomes that social environment for residents. It's where they meet and talk," Menkes says.

"It's also the first impression people have when they visit the building. People want to impress their friends and family." This duality was one of the principles that guided the building's designer, Alessandro Munge, principal and founder of Studio Munge in Toronto.

He created a welcoming and elegant lobby with a stunning focal point: a large, spiral stairway that leads to a gym overlooking the pool, a party room, a theatre, a yoga room and an outdoor terrace.

"I wanted a freshness and a modernity that was timeless and warm, even though modern design is usually cold and sterile," Munge said.

LOBBIES continued on H5



MENKES DEVELOPMENTS

The spiral stairway creates a sculptural focus at Pears on the Avenue condominium.



"Lobbies are very important when you live vertically . . . The lobby becomes that social environment for residents. It's where they meet and talk."

JARED MENKES
MENKES DEVELOPMENTS



TRIDEL
BUILT FOR LIFE

Downtown Toronto's Next Great Neighbourhood.

Introducing the city's next great neighbourhood. Living that goes beyond the building. Amenities that are beyond the expected. Via Bloor is more than a condominium. This new promenade at Bloor and Parliament will be a community that invites you to shop, eat, live and explore. Living at Via Bloor means access to brand new retail, green space and the neighbouring amenities of Rosedale Ravine, the Don Valley, Sherbourne and Castle Frank Subway Stations and the Danforth.

Via Bloor™

Presentation Centre
4800 Dufferin Street,
Entrance B
North York
416.649.2500

EIGHT DECADES OF HOME BUILDING. OVER 80,000 HOMES BUILT. TRIDEL COMMUNITIES ARE BUILT GREEN. BUILT FOR LIFE.®

©Tridel 2017. ®Tridel, "D" design, Tridel Built for Life, Tridel Built for Life Design, and Built Green. Built for Life are registered Trademarks of Tridel Corporation. Project names and logos are Trademarks of their respective owners. All rights reserved. Illustrations are artist's concept only. Building and view not to scale. *Specifications subject to change without notice. E.&O.E. February 2017.

tridel.com

condo or townhome?
 ask your Baker.

trust your new home
 search to baker-re.com



ON ON2

ON ON2

> GTA HOME AND RENO SHOW

How to handle a DIY staircase refurbishment

Contractors provide tips for what can be a messy and complicated project

IAN HARVEY
 SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Stairs and stairways are often last on the list when it comes to home renovations, even though they are often front-and-centre, the first thing you and everyone else sees after opening the front door.

Although not prohibitively expensive, refurbishing stairs is a messy and skilled job beyond the reach of average DIYers.

The basics, though, aren't hard to grasp, and with a little planning and help, you can take the rights steps to elevate your stairs. Older homes, especially, will need stair repairs and upgrades, says Jordan Spear, a RenoMark contractor and featured speaker at the GTA Home and Reno Show, which runs Feb. 17-20 at the International Centre in Mississauga. Spear is scheduled to deliver his presentation, *Old Homes: What Lies Beneath*, on Feb. 20 at 2 p.m.

When it comes to restoring staircases, "the first thing is to look at the structure for safety," says Spear, who specializes in restoring century homes. "You want to make sure the treads aren't too worn and 'capping,' and that the nosing is secure and that the railing is all secure and the components solid."

Changing the basic physical design of a staircase usually isn't an option because it could mean major structural changes that are expensive and time consuming.

"Don't go for cheap and easy repairs," advises TV contractor Damon Bennett, another RenoMark contractor.

"If you can, get in underneath the stairs to see how they're secured. I've seen so many things hanging by just two nails."

Refinishing and staining

First, assess the wood, says Chris



DREAMSTIME

Stairs are often overlooked when it comes to home renovations.



JORDAN SPEAR
 Peel back the carpet and you may find some treasure worth restoring.



DAMON BENNETT
 Painting is an option for worn or low-grade stairs.



JORDAN SPEAR
 Runners can be added for safety purposes.

Palmer, also a RenoMark contractor who will appear at the Home and Reno show.

Stairs made from good hardwood, such as oak or maple, are usually worth refinishing. Peel back a sec-

To refinish, remove the carpet and underpad, pull out all the staples, then fill and sand before painting or staining.

"You can't put water-based stains on oil-based stains, so make sure you get the right product," says Spear.

Capping

An alternative to re-carpeting is re-treading, or capping with new treads. Sometimes called false treads, they can sit on top of the existing ones. After that it's a matter of replacing or repainting the risers.

Re-treading involves knocking out the existing treads. Replacing them and capping aren't as easy as it sounds, warn the trio of renovators. Capping will also change the rise of the step and you'll be short at the top and high at the bottom. Even just a half-inch difference can cause a stumble. There are veneer tread options in the \$20-\$30 range but the ideal is solid wood, at \$30 and up, depending on the type of wood. Also, you'll either have to make your winders, or have them made.

To have a set of 14 stairs capped with red oak treads and risers, including three winders, (plus a corresponding new banister with new newels and spindles) will cost \$5-6,000 — or more, depending on where you are, who does the work and how much work is required.

Still, compared to the time and effort involved in painting stairs, and the spectacular end result with a set of new stairs, it may be a good option.

Painting

With worn stairs or low-grade stairs, aside from re-carpeting or capping, the other option is painting.

As with staining, preparation is everything. Pull out all the staples, fill in all the holes — some contractors go for auto body filler as an epoxy to fill big gouges and blemishes — then sand, sand and sand again. A shop-vac attachment for your sander will help, as will sealing the work area with plastic sheeting. Remember to

wear a dust mask and eye protection.

Check out the pro-level painting stores such as Dulux, Sherwin-Williams or Benjamin Moore for their special tread paint that's water based and designed to take foot traffic. If there's a previous oil-based stain or bonding and transition coat of primer, like Bulls Eye.

A good paint supplier can match the paint to the trim or to the wall, or even to a stain if you are installing new railings. Painting the treads a dark colour and the trim and risers in white is a popular look. It may take several smooth coats, half a stair at a time or on every other step, if you need to go up and down while they dry.

Railings, carpet and rods

If you're re-carpeting because the wood isn't worth refinishing, consider upgrading the entire look with new railings. Do you replace wood spindles with wrought-iron or vice versa? Esthetics aside, it's also question of skill. Taking a railing apart can be tricky, notes Bennett.

"You can't cut them out if you want to use them again so you've really got to be careful," he says. "If you don't do it right, it will look off. It's really best to get someone in who has the experience and skill."

Also, he says, even just painting or re-staining the railing can present issues. "You've got years of skin oil on the banister so you'll need a good cleaner to remove that before you start sanding or you'll just embed it deeper into the wood."

Stair runners are for both esthetics and firm footing, especially for kids and seniors. "The finish is smooth so they can be slippery," he says. "I've seen people lay tile on stairs but it's not my choice — too slippery, too dangerous."

Runners can be bought by the foot and installed. Or you can have carpet cut and the edges bound to create your own runner, which can also match existing carpets.

Designers aspire to create timeless style

LOBBIES FROM HI

"If I wanted my home to feel like a gallery, I'd go to the AGO (Art Gallery of Ontario), but I want to come home to something different."

"This has a beautiful residential feel, using textures and layers and inviting, gorgeous finishes, and the staircase is a sculptural opportunity to connect two spaces."

Munge believes lobbies play an important role in the lives of a building's residents.

"People in condominiums live in 500- to 1,200-square-foot boxes and are confined to them," he said. "The public spaces are equally important to them, if not more so."

The public space was something Lily Chan and Jacob Plago took into account when they purchased a two-bedroom suite in the Bond on Adelaide St. W.

"The combination of a nice floor plan, nicely planned amenities and the location were important to us," said Plago, 29, who works in financial services downtown. At the Bond, he'll have access to a pool, a golf simulator and a play station room.

"The lobby is nicely laid out. It provides a sense of permanence and makes you feel more at home. It has a modern esthetic and helps you feel comfortable in your own space."

Chan, 32, an optometrist, is pleased to have a nice space where "guests can sit and wait for us."

One of the lobby's notable features is a light pillar.

Brian Brown, vice-president of Lifetime Developments, the Bond's developer, said the pillar adds a meaningful vibe.

"It's a very cool, hip, young neighbourhood," Brown said. "It's very important to get the lobby correct and reflect the neighbourhood and who's living there. It establishes the quality of the building."

"We want to feel that the lobby is inviting and welcoming, but it's also a high-traffic area, so the quality of the materials must be able to withstand the weather and traffic that goes through it."

"Generally speaking, we try to create something reflective of trends

and styles, but still timeless so that the owners of the building won't need to revise it."

At Imperial Plaza, on St. Clair Ave. W., the lobby dates back to the 1950s, when the structure was built as the headquarters for Imperial Oil. The building was recently converted into condos after the company relocated to Calgary.

The public lobby's vaulted ceilings retain the original 1950s light fixtures; a pair of murals depict the history and the future of oil; a massive clock's golden tiles gleam.

Energy and people fill the space since the lobby houses an LCBO outlet and a Longo's grocery store, conveniences most condo dwellers yearn to have in their building.

"It's grand, impressive and distinctive," Joseph Feldman, development manager for Camrost-Felcorp's Imperial Village project, says about the lobby.

"There is marble, granite and the amazing clock. In the 1950s, they overbuilt everything and spared no expense."

The result is an active lobby that sees a working crowd during lunch hour and later "residents in their pyjamas going to pick up dinner."

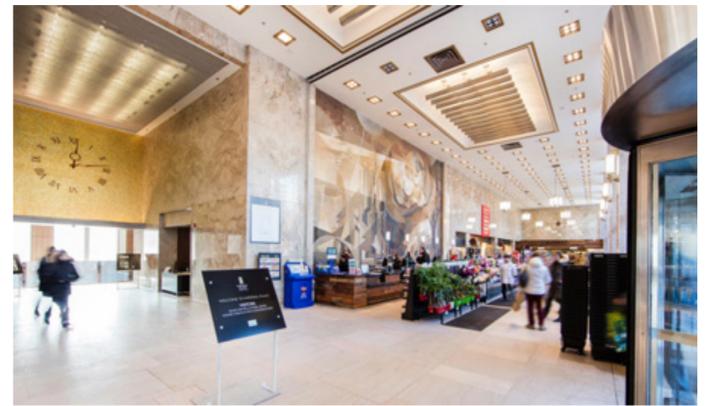
There's also a private, 2,500-square-foot lobby for residents on a lower level and 22,000-square-foot of amenity space that includes a golf simulator, theatre, games room, squash courts and a fitness club.

Feldman, though, sees the public lobby as the jewel in Imperial Plaza's crown.

"We received an Award of Merit from Heritage Toronto for restoration," he said. "We took a commercial, corporate space and created a sense of community. Retail brings shoppers in and it's always bustling. It's very different than your standard condo."

He notes, however, that the lobby design depends on the project, something with which his fellow developers agree.

"You need to cater to the neighbourhood and every lobby is unique," Feldman said. "If you had a standard concept, they would lose their sparkle."



CAMROST-FELCORP

The Imperial Plaza condo's lobby stays true to the luxury with which the building was designed with in the 1950s.

Buildings that make a statement



> PEARS ON THE AVENUE

Address: 170 Avenue Rd.
 Developers: Menkes Developments
 Lobby Dimensions: 2,000 sq. ft.
 Units: 20 storeys, 175 units
 Completion Date: Occupied
 Contact: info@menkes.com



> IMPERIAL PLAZA

Address: 111 St. Clair Ave. W.
 Developers: Camrost-Felcorp
 Public Lobby Dimensions: 8,500 sq. ft.
 Units: 23 storeys, 400 suites
 Contact: sales@imperialcondos.ca



> THE BOND

Address: 290 Adelaide St. W.
 Developers: Lifetime Developments
 Lobby Dimensions: Approximately 750 sq. ft.
 Units: 42 storeys, 393 units
 Completion Date: 2017
 Contact: info@thebond.ca

COMING THIS SPRING
A NEW LEADING LIGHT AT
TORONTO'S WATERFRONT

THE **NEWEST** OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE AT DANIELS WATERFRONT

The evolution of art, culture, and life on Toronto's waterfront. Hot off the heels of the Lighthouse West Tower, Daniels welcomes **Lighthouse East Tower** at Daniels Waterfront — City of the Arts — an iconic, waterfront address, steps from Lake Ontario, Sugar Beach, gorgeous parklands, trails, dining, shopping, entertainment, and more. Experience life connected to the lake, the city, and the arts at **Lighthouse East Tower**.

SUITES FROM THE \$300s

Daniels
WATERFRONT
 CITY OF THE ARTS

JOIN THE INNER CIRCLE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EXCLUSIVE PERKS BEFORE THE GENERAL PUBLIC

A one-time membership fee of \$500* will be applied to your purchase of any Lighthouse East Tower suite. And, you'll also receive:

- An invitation to the **FIRST ADVANCE SALE**
- **FIRST CHOICE** of suites, floors and views
- Members-only invitations to Daniels' hosted events
- Access to insider information

REGISTER TODAY!
DANIELSWATERFRONT.NET
416.221.3939

Daniels
love where you live™

In Partnership with WJ Properties

*Should you decide not to purchase at Lighthouse East Tower, your \$500 will be fully refunded. No questions asked. The Inner Circle Program is open for a limited time only.

Exclusive Listing: CityLife Realty Ltd. Brokerage. Brokers Protected. Illustration is artist's concept. Specifications and prices are subject to change without notice. E&O.E. All brand names, logos, images, text and graphics are the copyright of the owners, The Daniels Corporation. Reproduction in any form, without prior written permission of The Daniels Corporation, is strictly prohibited. Actual view may not be exactly as shown.