

# Artsy area, artsy Queen West condo

## Ground-floor units open to become gallery

BY LINDSAY FORSEY

Artists are notoriously finicky about their living quarters. Open a residential building in a hot creative zone, and you had better consider your audience — ART condos is doing just that.

Queen West's vibrant artsy scene, with its one-off galleries, shops and cafés, where the building is going up, is the inspiration behind the new project by Triangle West Developments; the condos will be on Dovercourt Road one block south of Queen Street West.

Described as a "vertical village," the terraced, 11-storey mid-rise is a diverse property with 68 different floor plans in just 148 suites. ART units range from 460-square-foot studios suited to singles up to 1,615-sq.-ft. three-bedroom suites comfortable for mom, dad and kids. Ground-floor live/work units can be customized to accommodate each buyer's need to separate (or not, perhaps) studio and living spaces. Plus, the ground-floor condos will have their own entrances and street addresses, allowing residents to open galleries that will be accessible to passersby. Most of the suites have long uninterrupted walls designed to function as display space for works of art, whether created or purchased.

"We've assembled an extraordinary architecture and design team with people who understand the nuances of Queen West," says Gary Silverberg, Triangle West president and also an exhibited artist. "Many of the people involved with the project live or work in the area and they have created an environment of well-designed, functional residences that support living in smaller downtown spaces."

David Oleson, a principal of Oleson Worland Architects and the lead design architect for ART Condos, lived in the area for many years and designed the Trinity Community Recreation Centre in Bellwoods Park, a few blocks east of ART. "We wanted to preserve the character of the community," Mr. Oleson says. "The terraces face north and descend toward Queen Street, bringing the building in harmony with neighbouring apartments and

homes."

Also involved with the project is Hariri Pontarini Architects, the firm that designed Stephen Bulger Gallery and Camera Bar, both located nearby.

To make the most of the ART space, Mr. Silverberg brought in 3rd Uncle, an interior design outfit with a knack for boutique hotels. The 15-year-old Toronto firm gave Queen West's Drake Hotel its distinctly cool factor, as well as select rooms at the W Hotel in Hoboken.

"The project challenged us to make efficient use of space and main livability in the smallest suites and to replicate the comforts of a private home in the larger suites," says 3rd Uncle principal John Tong. "You can see this in features like movable walls in the studios, high ceilings and the use of built-in appliances and recessed storage."

Japanese-style sliding doors in the studio suites move to hide or reveal the bedroom area, a real bonus when unexpected guests drop by. Buyers can also request a custom-designed bed (shown in the model suite), which has convenient fold-down night tables and built-in under-bed storage perfect for a small abode.

"We also focused on creating functional shared amen-

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ities spaces," Mr. Tong says. "We wanted to make sure there were quiet private areas as well as shared spaces for entertaining, so that people having a cookout don't encroach on others who just want to relax."

ART Condo amenities include a full kitchen and bar on the fifth floor, with a lounge that opens on to an outdoor terrace complete with a barbecue, a hot tub and a fire pit. There's also a movie theatre, a boardroom and a gym in the building. As an homage to the surrounding arts community that inspired the development, potentially including its own residents, a gallery space in the lobby will show work by local artists.

Occupancy is scheduled for 2012 and suites are priced from \$213,000 to \$699,000. The ART Condominiums sales centre is at 44 Dovercourt Rd.

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