

## QUEEN WEST

# Making ART of living small

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Some condos are vertical villages in name only. The residents co-exist, but there is no community, no commonality. They never coalesce into neighbourhoods.

ART, a new midrise condo planned for the Queen West area, has been designed holistically to encourage a true mix of buyers. With 68 different floor plans for 148 suites, it exudes individuality.

Each floor will function as a mini-

neighbourhood, says Sandro Zanini, of Hariri Pontarini Architects, whose firm designed the 11-storey building along with David Oleson of Oleson Worland Architects.

The tight-knit team that builder Gary Silverberg ([www.garysilverberg.com](http://www.garysilverberg.com)) assembled is a testament to his vision.

All live or have lived and worked in the Trinity Bellwoods area and understand the building's chief life-style amenity is the location.

Appropriately called the Studio District, the area draws its energy from the artists, photographers, designers, musicians and hipsters

ART continued on H16

H16 ★ TORONTO STAR ★ SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2010

## HOMES & CONDOS

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ART from H1

who inhabit it. From organics to oysters, from naughty to nice, you'll find it all here.

"This area celebrates creativity in every way," says Silverberg, an artist in his own right.

His "Art is Business, Business is Art" motto — enshrined in one of his paintings — underlines the fact that the two are not mutually exclusive.

So, it was fitting that Silverberg threw a media lunch in the former autobody shop to showcase his plans and introduce his team amidst art-bedecked walls.

(Toronto art critic Gary Michael Dault is on board as an art consultant; to wit, the lobby of the new building will act as a gallery for local artists.)

Over beef carpaccio with smoked goat cheddar, Qualicum Bay scallops with prawn ravioli and a selection of desserts, catered by Amuse-Bouche (also in the neighbourhood), and complemented by wines by Stratus Vineyards, from Niagara-on-the-Lake, Silverberg said that his team's "roots run deep in this area."

Oleson, lead design architect, worked on the Trinity Community Recreation Centre while design duo John Tong and Paul Syme,



The midrise condominium ART will reflect the vibrant, creative vibe of the local area and will emphasize small space living and outdoor gathering.

partners in 3rd Uncle Design, designed the interiors of the Drake Hotel.

And when Zanini sat with Silverberg at a local coffee shop at Queen and Spadina, "In the time it took to drink a double espresso macchiato, ART was born," Zanini says.

Though this is Silverberg's first condo, he has been involved in real estate for 33 years; his family, for 85 years. Both his father, Al Silverberg,

and his uncle, Sid Silverberg, were named to the GTHBA (now BILD) Hall of Fame in 1998.

Gary has partnered on everything from loft conversions to whole communities in the GTA.

He says he understands how to live in small units. He and his family have a 670-square-foot condo at Whistler, B.C., and they spend several weeks a year there, he said.

So his project emphasizes life out-

side the confines of the unit.

The fifth-floor patio, which takes advantage of the northern light, encourages socializing, with long banquettes and a gas fire pit and hot tub, with cozy seating areas.

Inside, there's a fireplace, bar and kitchen.

Tong, too, says he understands small-space living. As a reluctant landlord in Parkdale, he says he has watched tenants adapt their spaces, converting dens to bedrooms and bedrooms to offices.

He says technology allows us to live "lighter," with laptops and iPods and flat-screen televisions. His firm honed its skills by specializing in designing boutique hotels.

He says he likes to go into great hotels and ask for the smallest room. ART encourages the minimalist lifestyle with efficient use of space.

In the model suite, every square inch has been considered. The sleeping area has sliding panels to open up or conceal it and bedside tables that fold away when not in use. Drawers are built into the bed.

The bathroom has clean, contemporary lines. Lighting is integrated into the mirror. A four-inch shelf runs underneath. With only a stall shower, there's room for a stackable washer/dryer.

The kitchen, at 10 feet wide, has a single sink, hidden dishwasher and

24-inch fridge, all sleekly tucked away.

An open island, which 3rd Uncle designed, has a floating cabinet below, and suffices for dining.

A simple seating area abuts the kitchen/dining area. Sliding metal panels hide the television when not in use.

While the studios start at \$213,000 for 460 square feet, there will also be three-bedroom-plus-den suites, rising to 1,615 square feet, with prices topping out at \$699,000.

All suites will have either terraces — some huge — balconies or French balconies.

Live-work units at ground floor will be one and two storeys, aimed at fostering creativity, be it art, music, fashion, sculpture or dance.

The lobby will function as an art gallery, featuring artifacts showcasing the building's history as well as the work of local residents and area artists. And the second floor will house a 12-seat movie theatre, meeting rooms and business centre.

And, to complement the urban lifestyle challenge of having a car, ART is offering half-size parking spaces, which include a Smart Car, for \$30,000. (Buyers can take delivery of the car now.)

There will also be space for bicycles and scooters.

• The building is at 44 Dovercourt Rd., at Sudbury St. Occupancy is slated for 2012. For further information, see [www.artcondos.ca](http://www.artcondos.ca).