

Real estate
PROFILE

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An artist's rendering shows the rooftop terrace of Rouge Condominiums, with a view of the oratory and Mount Royal. IMAGES COURTESY OF DEVMONT

A Q&A WITH DEVMONT'S SAM SCALIA

LORRI BENEDIK
SPECIAL TO THE MONTREAL GAZETTE

Real-estate developer and president of Devmont, Sam Scalia, and his brother, Joseph, the company's vice-president, were raised by Italian immigrant parents who instilled in them the belief that hard work leads to success. Growing up, their parents modelled this behaviour and stressed the importance of education and the pursuit of excellence.

Sam Scalia embodies these values. In business, he trusts his gut but knows that this intuition is rooted in knowledge and a deep understanding of his industry. We sat down to talk recently at his office on de la Savane St.

Question: Where did you grow up?

Answer: My family lived in a middle-class neighbourhood, in St-Léonard. All the homes on our street were very similar — semi-detached triplexes. Everyone around us was Italian — our neighbours, friends and classmates. We were four kids at home; I have two older sisters and a brother, Joseph, who is eight years younger than me. He is also my closest friend and business partner.

Our dad was in construction. Summers, from age 13, I worked with him. While friends were out playing, I was learning all about the business.

What studies did you pursue?

I did well in school, especially math and science. I was a pretty serious kid. When I was about 15, my long-term life goals were already in place. I knew I would be a real-estate entrepreneur, like my dad.

I went to Vanier College, in Pure and Applied Science, and then headed to McGill. I graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. My brother got a Finance degree from Concordia. After graduating, I accepted a two-year contract in Toronto with SNC-Lavalin. It was a fascinating project — creating a facility that turned waste into energy, which was then returned to the city grid. We were a small team so I got to work on equipment, de-

sign, mechanical processes and even contracts. When that job was done, I returned to Montreal and for the next two years stayed with SNC-Lavalin, working on an offshore drilling project.

When did you begin your real-estate career?

In 1994, I built a three-condo project, on my own. Joseph joined me a couple of years later. In 2000, we launched Devmont and developed properties in Rosemount, Côte-St-Luc and along the Lachine Canal.

In 2008, we began working on Côté Ouest, a (300 condo units) joint venture with the SHDM (Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal). The location was exceptional, at the centre of the island of Montreal — in the area known as Le Triangle, bordered by Jean-Talon St., Décarie Blvd. and de la Savane. It was great because our mission is harmonious with the SHDM mandate — to enhance the living environments of Montrealers.

How did Rouge come about?

I had a gut feeling about Le Triangle, with its proximity to a metro station (Namur) and two main arteries: Décarie Expressway and Highway 40. Côté Ouest sold quickly and we had plenty of visitors from adjacent boroughs, seeking higher-end condos. That's when we came up with Rouge. It combined two of our goals — to bring value to the neighbourhood while creating a lifestyle project, which changes the way condo ownership is perceived.

What do you mean by a lifestyle project?

At Rouge, each dwelling stretches beyond its walls. In all six phases, owners have access to exquisitely-designed amenities that add value to their units and lives: a full-size gym, spas, (with views of Mount Royal), pools, rooftop barbecues, lounges and indoor playgrounds. These common areas represent an additional 12,000 square feet of space for Phases 1 to 4, and 25,000 square feet for Phases 5 and 6.

We began developing Rouge in 2010 and have delivered one build-



Sam Scalia, real-estate developer and president of Devmont.



An artist's rendering shows Phase 6 of the Rouge condo development, scheduled for occupancy in 2017. Devmont began developing Rouge in 2010 and has delivered one building almost every year since.

ing almost every year. Phase 6 will be ready for occupancy in autumn 2017, and is already selling well.

What are your outside interests?

I spend a lot of time working, but also love fitness. I swim, cycle and work out several times a week. My two-to-three-kilometre swim is a favourite activity because it's the only time when I am completely incommunicado.

Another activity, of great importance to Joseph and me, is our philanthropic work. For five years, we have sponsored MultiCaf Community Kitchen (in Côte-des-

Neiges) to the tune of \$50,000 per year, including our contributions and fundraising endeavours.

What puts the spring in your step?

I wake up each morning with my parents' words of wisdom in my head, like a math equation: "hard work + perseverance = success." That motivates and energizes me.

Every person defines success differently. At Devmont, Joseph and I create quality living spaces that have a positive impact on many people. We make them happy — and if that's not success, I don't know what is.



Rouge Condominiums, seen as a "lifestyle project" by developer Sam Scalia, offers a range of amenities and common areas for owners that include, in Phase 6, the 51-foot interior swimming pool shown in the artist's rendering above (left) as well as a rooftop terrace with barbecues and various seating options in the rendering above (right).