

# SHARED SPACES

'Developers ... have to adapt to market needs by offering appealing amenities'

MEGAN MARTIN

While Montreal's condo market continues to be red-hot this quarter, buyers are becoming increasingly particular about where they decide to purchase a unit. As always, location reigns supreme, but with an abundance of projects across the city, developers are helping to distinguish theirs by offering a range of amenities. In fact, many buyers today expect developments to include a minimum number of shared amenities.

"Developers today have to adapt to market needs by offering appealing amenities that meet the buyers' needs and lifestyle," said Sam Scalia, president of Devmont, a local developer with condo projects all over Montreal.

"The sky is the limit but developers need to make sure that the amenities selected for their projects are timeless and evolve with the long-term health of the building."

In terms of expectations, buyers today tend to want things like a fully equipped gym, pool, sauna or steam room, spa, conference room, party room with a common kitchen, lounge space, and outdoor amenities such as a rooftop terrace, sitting and dining areas with barbecues, and courtyard green space.

In addition to the number of amenities typically included in current condo developments, their complexity has grown in scale as well. Take gyms, for instance.

"Buyers want fully equipped spacious gyms that meet today's training trends that focus on core strength, cross training and all of that in combination with conventional cardiovascular machines and weight training equipment," Scalia said.

"Then, in terms of outdoor spaces, people want rooftop party rooms, terraces, tanning and

lounging areas — all with spectacular views of the city."

These types of amenities are particularly popular among buyers in the city's centre and nearby areas.

"That's because they aren't things you would usually have access to in a downtown home, and it's really all about added convenience and comfort," said Jean Langlois, director of communications and marketing at Broccolini, a local developer that has been in business for more than 70 years and is behind a handful of popular luxury downtown condo projects including L'Avenue and 628 Saint-Jacques. "Condos typically don't offer enormous square footage, so people want spaces they can use as their own outside of their nest. Also, having great common spaces really adds to the community feeling of a building."

The community and convenience factors are key, Scalia said.

"Residents can access the amenities steps from their front doors with no commute required," he said.

"It's a huge time saver, more affordable than having to pay for these services individually. They're available all year around, and it's a great way to meet your neighbours and widen your network."

Devmont, in particular, has experienced substantial success with its amenities-stacked mega-projects dating back to 2010. Working with Montreal designers such as Andreas Escobar and Marc Bherer, the developer's well-known projects such as Rouge, Phases 1 through 6, and Westbury, Phases 1 and 2, feature more than 50,000 square feet of amenities between them.

"Our recipe is designed to meet clients' expectations that define lifestyle and luxury," Scalia said. "We always stay aware of market trends and continuously do our



Shared space in L'Avenue, the 50-storey mixed-use residential/commercial tower facing the Bell Centre, includes this indoor/outdoor pool. IMAGES (4): COURTESY OF BROCCOLINI



An artist's rendering shows the inviting lounge where residents of 628 Saint-Jacques, Broccolini's condo development near Square Victoria, can get together when they're not gathering at the outdoor pool and sundeck (below).

best to innovate and stay competitive."

In addition to popular building amenities, another growing trend — particularly in high-end projects — is service-based amenities, like offering residents a concierge and 24-hour on-site security.

"We aim to offer the best amenities possible by listening to what our clientele has to say, and it's clear that buyers are responding extremely well to concierge-type services being offered," Langlois said.

"It's reminiscent of New York-style luxury and it's something that makes buyers feel very cared about and looked after in their buildings."



That said, it can be easy for buyers to be swayed by the understandable appeal of all types of amenities when shopping for a unit, but it's crucial to keep functionality based on actual needs in mind.

"It's important for developers to design smart amenities that

people will actually benefit from and make good use of," Langlois said. "As a buyer, people should look at amenities the same way and ask themselves if they will really benefit from them because, in the end, it's their condo fees that will be used for the upkeep of said amenities."



Westbury residents will be able to take advantage of various common areas and amenities, including this terrace off the lounge and recreation room (at left). ARTIST'S RENDERINGS (2): COURTESY OF DEVMONT

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