

Climate change

Mark Cullen says it's real for gardeners, **H4**



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BEYOND THE BRICKS

Brad Lamb has been a vital force in the "Condo Period," helping to spur and shape the growth of the industry over his 20-plus years in the business of condominium development.

In like a lion

Brad Lamb is a force to be reckoned with in the condo world



KEITH BEATY/TORONTO STAR

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Brad Lamb understands why people might think he's a jerk. On his HGTV reality series, *Big City Broker*, the six-foot-five, smooth-headed Lamb could at times come across as a bit unpleasant.

"I think everybody has good days and bad days and loses their temper sometimes, and when you have camera crews following you around 24/7, they're going to capture that," Lamb says one afternoon in the boardroom of the King West headquarters of his development company and brokerage.

"I thought it would be interesting for people to see what actually happens in the real estate sales and development world, versus some staged performance.

"So we let them film it and it was honest.

LAMB continued on H14

THE ANNEX

Luxury living at The Perry

High-end condo finishes elevate urban standard

TRACY HANES
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Condos in the Yorkville and Annex neighbourhood have come to exemplify style, sophistication and luxury.

So the principals at Mansouri Living knew the bar would be high for the project they planned to build at 128 Pears Ave.

The result is The Perry, a modern elegant building that will establish some firsts on the Toronto condo scene. It's the first development in North America to include kitchen and other components by international design firm Poliform. Plus an innovative window system will allow interior living spaces to open expansively to the outdoors. Buyers will also receive a one-year membership to an exclusive concierge service. The Perry will open to the public in June.

"The underlying vision for the project was to create a boutique, intimate building," says Maryam Mansouri, vice-president of Mansouri Living, which represents the evolution of a home construction business founded 30 years ago by her father, Sharok, the company president.

He and his wife, Fereshteh, are architects who met as university students in their native Iran and came to Canada in 1984. Maryam's sister, Nargues, is also a company vice-president and the sisters are concentrating on building a lifestyle brand focusing on urban condo projects.

"In the early stages of The Perry, we worked with the neighbourhood and the city to find something appropriate for the site and the marketplace. We went with an 11-storey building.

THE PERRY continued on H14



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» HOMES & CONDOS



KEITH BEATY/TORONTO STAR

As a broker, Brad Lamb persuaded people to buy in the downtown core.

A force to reckon with

LAMB from H1

"But that's like 1 per cent of my personality being shown, and you either hate me or you like me, right?"

He pauses and smirks. "And even that little 1 per cent is probably an acquired taste."

But the show proved quite popular, playing in more than 20 countries worldwide, he notes. Truth is, the series can now serve as a historical snapshot of the early stages of Toronto's current condo boom. "We'll throw it into a time capsule," Lamb quips. "The Condo Period."

Like him or hate him, Lamb has been a vital force in the Condo Period, helping to spur and shape the growth of the industry over his 20-plus years in the business. He did so first as a broker, selling people on what he calls the "Manhattanization" of the downtown core; and in more recent years as a developer of his own condo projects.

"What we did in Toronto in the early to mid-1990s was change how people thought about condo living and living in the city," explains Lamb, 50. "We knew that what young people wanted was to be downtown, to have a stylish New York-style lifestyle.

"And we were right — that's exactly what they wanted and they're all down here now."

Lamb continues to drive the local condo market.

Last year his brokerage, Brad J. Lamb Realty, recorded approximately 1,300 sales, generating \$650 million in revenue. The development arm, Lamb Development Corp., completed 450 sales in 2011, about \$200 million in revenue, according to Lamb.

This year the company is beginning construction on King Charlotte, a 32-storey tower at King St. W. and Spadina Ave. It's also launching the second phase of The Brant Park, a 200-unit building at Adelaide St. W. and Brant St.

Also in 2012, Lamb is starting work on Theatre Park, a controversial 47-storey tower that will be going up right beside the Royal Alexandra Theatre, as well as Riverside Towns at Queen St. E. and Broadview Ave.

Lamb Development recently announced plans to expand westward with a condo project in Calgary.

Dubbed 6thandTenth, the 230-unit, 31-storey tower will be located in the city's Beltline neighbourhood, close to the downtown core.

Lamb started his career as an engineer while also investing in property, buying his first townhouse in London, Ont., and selling it for a tidy profit.

Before long, Lamb grew bored with engineering and got his real estate licence in the late '80s.

He started off working for Harry Stinson's real estate company and became a specialist in condo sales.

In 1995, Lamb launched his own agency, Brad J. Lamb Realty, with a focus on selling entry-level condos to first-time buyers. Six years later, he started Lamb Development Corp.

As a developer, Lamb's success has much to do with his immense appetite for risk, notes friend and business associate Gary Freedman.

"What separates the men from the boys in real estate development is your ability to tolerate risk," says Freedman, the principal of Hyde Park Homes, who is partnering with Lamb on Riverside Towns. "And the key to Brad's success is that he's able to take risks that other people aren't willing to take.

Freedman points to the Theatre Park condo project as an example of Lamb's audacity in action.

"(The site is) this little tiny parking lot next to the historic Royal Alexandra Theatre, probably the most historic theatre in the country," he says. "Nobody in their right mind would have thought he'd be able to build that building.

"There were a lot of people thinking he'd never recover from that one."

Lamb persevered, though. And despite immense pushback from the city planning department on the project, contributions toward public art and a promise to create a park on the property eventually helped Lamb secure approval for Theatre Park. (Construction is starting on the project.)

Lamb prevailed, and while he still bears scars from the fight, he's confident the finished product will speak for itself.

"When it's done," he says defiantly, "people are going to say 'holy (deleted), why don't we have more of those?'"

Scoping out property near a new transit line

About a month ago in this space, I promised to write a series of columns over the next year focused on how our industry mobilizes when a transit plan is given the green light.

With the understanding that people will want to live near a transit line, this is my chance to explain the ins and outs of the development process — what some of us call "from dirt to door" — and what's involved in building communities along a planned route.

I want to take you from researching a piece of land right through to completing construction and give you visual cues so that you will be able to recognize the stages of a residential development in your neighbourhood.

When a new transit line has the support of city council, it's the culmination of years of work studying the neighbourhoods and the needs of the people who live there. To support the transit line, there has to be people to ride it and the tax base to support it. That's where our industry has a role to play in building homes.

Contrary to popular belief, it's not as easy as it looks. There is a science and a discipline to this process. Before we can look at building homes along the planned transit



PAUL GOLINI JR.

line, we have to look at what the province and the city are doing in the area, what exists there and what is proposed for the future.

The province has plans and policies that direct where and how cities grow, one example is the province's Growth Plan for the

When a transit line has the support of city council, it's the culmination of years of work

Greater Golden Horseshoe, and the cities also have guiding documents like official plans and zoning bylaws. All of these have to be reviewed because they tell us where residential development would be supported.

We do all of this research before investing in a parcel of land because we want to invest in support, as opposed to buying a fight.

In addition to researching the policies, we get down on the ground and do market research studying the neighbourhoods.

Look at who lives there, who would want to live there, how they travel and if there are employment and services in the area. We also test the project to see if it's economically viable and start to engage the community by talking to ratepayer groups to find out how they want their neighbourhood to grow.

Before closing a deal on a parcel of land near this future transit line, we are heavily investing time and energy by engaging architects, urban designers and planners to put together a preliminary design that could work on the site. That project has to be tested against all of those documents I mentioned earlier to ensure that it fits with the existing and future needs of the neighbourhood.

Next month, I'll take you to the next step in the city-building process, which involves investing in a parcel of land and banking on the transit project proceeding as planned.

Paul Golini is the chairman the Building Industry and Land Development Association (bildgta.ca) and can be found on Twitter @bildgta, Facebook, YouTube and BILD's blog (bildblogs.ca).



A CLOSER LOOK AT THE PERRY

Project: The Perry, theperry.com

Developer: Mansouri Living, mansouriliving.com

Architect: Drummond Hassan of Young + Wright/IBI Group Architects, rywararch.ca

Interior designers: Matt Davis and Anwar Mekayech, The Design Agency, the designagency.ca

Landscape architect: Diana Gerrard of gh3, gh3.ca

Location: 128 Pears Ave. at Davenport and Avenue Rds.

Description: 11-storey contemporary building with 45 suites

Suite sizes: 687 to 3,950 sq. ft.

Price range: Starting in the mid-\$500,000s

Amenities: Piano lounge, terrace, dining room with catering kitchen, meeting room, guest suite, 24-hour concierge, fitness and wellness centre, one year membership to Quintessentially concierge service.

Sales centre: 199 Avenue Rd. (by appointment only), www.theperry.com

Sophistication and luxury

THE PERRY from H1

"That's pretty rare in the Toronto condo world. It has only 45 suites and is fairly exclusive," says Mansouri.

The Perry will include 2,500 square feet of commercial space at street level that will house a high-end fitness and wellness centre with private access from Pears Ave.

The Perry team was carefully chosen and includes Drummond Hassan of Young + Wright/IBI Group Architects, interior designers Matt Davis and Anwar Mekayech of The Design Agency and landscape architect Diana Gerrard of gh3. They came together for an integrated design process that also included Mansouri, who holds a master's degree from the University of Waterloo's school of architecture.

"The essence of the project is contemporary but we've incorporated really rich finishes and details into the suites and common areas," says Mansouri.

"The palate of today's buyer is very refined and they definitely have an appreciation for a contemporary aesthetic, but it's not always easily achieved.

"You have to spend more time in the design process and in refining details. You can't distract the eye with busy details or extra accessories or components.

"Drummond has such an intelligent approach when it comes to design," she adds. "He looks at it very cohesively and holistically

and was very conscious of the context of the site and building. We appreciated his sensitivity to design."

The entrance to The Perry from Pears Ave. will be distinguished by custom-crafted solid wood doors with a classic chevron pattern, stained in dark grey for a contemporary flair.

Separate from the rest of the building will be two street-level urban townhouses framed in charcoal limestone and with open-concept interior layouts.

Mansouri also was impressed by the clean, modern interiors created by The Design Agency that blended cohesively with the architecture. The gallery-style lobby will boast a modern fireplace, Calcutta marble floors and a custom-made sculptural concierge desk.

"They (Davis and Mekayech) are very grounded. It's very easy for some designers to put their interior design brand first and make that a centrepiece. For us, it's about good design and good intention and good components," says Mansouri.

"They created a lot of proprietary design details especially when it came to the kitchen and Poliform is a huge part of the project."

Among the signature elements of The Perry will be the components created by Poliform, a high-end Italian company which recently opened a showroom in Toronto.

"Poliform has been involved in a few condo projects but in minor parts of interiors, such as upgraded kitchens or wardrobes," says Man-

souri. "For us, it's a package and every suite will come with Poliform vanities, kitchens and wardrobes. 'Offer luxury as a standard' has been our mantra since the beginning."

The Perry kitchens will also include high-end Gaggenau appliances.

The suites will have nine-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows, which will employ an innovative lift and slide system so the living room becomes a true indoor/outdoor living space opening to a Juliet balcony, standard balcony or terrace.

Another perk for buyers will be a year's free membership to Quintessentially, a private members' club with a 24-hour global concierge that can accommodate requests for everything from travel arrangements to dry cleaning to restaurant reservations. The Perry will also have its own 24-hour concierge.

Mansouri says it was important to offer an intimate green space and Gerrard came up with an "amazing" outdoor amenity that will be clad in blue and mulberry granite.

"We call it the Serenity Terrace and it will be wrapped in white pine trees," Mansouri says. "We partnered with Kiosk in Toronto to furnish the common areas in the entire building from their selection of pieces and the exterior terrace will have beautiful, crafted artful pieces by Paola Lenti (a luxury furniture brand based in Milan)."

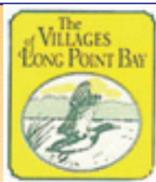
Mansouri says the building is geared to the end user as "it's truly a building people will live in and feel at home in. We are very excited about it."

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