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Donovan Penthouse Premium Package

Indulge

- Wood grained cabinetry with brushed nickel hardware
- Designer selected round ceramic tile backsplash
- Recessed pot lighting and convenient under cabinet task lighting
- Luxurious polished square edge granite countertops
- Stainless steel undermount rectangular sink with striking gooseneck kitchen faucet
- Stainless steel and frosted glass accent pantry-storage cabinet
- Panasonic stainless steel under counter microwave oven

Live

- Geothermal heating and air-conditioning for year-round energy savings
- Large, private rooftop patio complete with hot tub, outdoor kitchen with Vermont Casting BBQ, undercounter bar fridge and sink.
- Pre-wired and installed Audio-Visual package including large screen TV and stereo throughout your home including your rooftop patio
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- Wide plank 4 ¾ " hardwood flooring throughout (except den) and 4 ½ " baseboards
- Whirlpool stacking front loading extra capacity washer and dryer

Soothe

- Custom-made vanity countertops with integrated sink, brushed nickel single lever faucet and designer vanity lighting in main bathrooms
- Deep soaker tub with ceramic tile tub surround and designer selected brushed nickel single lever faucet
- Frameless glass shower with tile surround, scored tile flooring, oversized brushed nickel showerhead and single lever shower faucet
- Polished square edge stone countertop with double square undermount sink with brushed nickel single lever faucet in ensuites

Sub Zero & Miele

- Sub Zero refrigerator with custom cabinet panel finish
- Miele stainless steel gas cooktop with overhead Miele slimline stainless steel hoodfan
- Miele stainless steel convection wall oven
- Miele 6 wash cycle dishwasher with custom cabinet panel finish and incognito controls

Quality

- Solid concrete and glass construction by Cressey with a reputation for innovative design, excellence in workmanship, quality materials and outstanding customer service
- Architecturally crafted by Rafii Architects
- At Donovan, the Telus Future Friendly Home means every connection is pre-wired and multifunctional for all of your internet, television and phone service needs. One connection. Endless possibilities.
- Premium 2-10-10 year home warranty from Willis Warranty offering:
    - 2 years of material and workmanship coverage
    - 10 year water penetration which is double what the government requires and what most builders offer
    - 10 year structural coverage

Pamper

- Luxurious relaxation centre with steam room and sauna complete with change rooms and spa lounge
- Fully equipped 3000+ square foot fitness center with yoga studio
- Designer lounge with kitchen and media centre suited for all your entertaining needs
- Rooftop landscaped terraces perfect for outdoor lounging

The developer reserves the right to make modifications to floorplans, project design, materials, and specifications to maintain the high standard of this development.

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THE VANCOUVER SUN

LEARNING REAL ESTATE | L6

EDITOR MICHAEL SASGES 604-605-2467 • SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2006 • E-mail homes@png.canwest.com

HOME THOUGHTS

What do you think?

To prepare profiles of new home projects, we at Westcoast Homes frequently visit "master-planned" communities — but only rarely share with readers what we see and hear.

We want to change that record — and change it this month.

We can't do very much, however, without the expertise and experience of our readers.

So, if you are making your home in a "master-planned" community or have recently done so (and have since moved away), write us.

Questions include …

What is a "master-planned" community? What isn't a "master-planned" community? (How would the lost motorist, at dusk, know one when he or she is in the middle of one? Homes, maybe, that demonstrate the same architectural style? How? Why? A clubhouse surrounded by homes, perhaps, the fire in the lounge hearth as much testimonial to the vitality of the place as the youngsters playing broomball in the basement? Who stokes the fire? Who supplies the kindling and logs?)

Our e-mail address is homes@png.canwest.com

Put "master" in the subject line, please.

The Look? Metallic

From Paris, via Los Angeles, comes a bit of material news: Metallic will be a big finish in interior decor, *The Los Angeles Times* reports from the Parisian furnishings show, Maison & Objet.

"Silver, gold and bronze leather upholstery appeared on tabletops, lamp bases and pillows," the newspaper reports from the show, a showcase for more than 2,500 home-decor companies from around the world. A gold dog bowl, by German designer Kuhn Keramik, may be the ultimate illustration of metallic-finish veneration.

On the other hand, the report noted, minimalism is still big: "If a piece wasn't metallic or '80s slick, it probably was natural, stripped and unfinished."

Door correction

One of the pleasures of new-construction journalism is the recording of local expertise and ability. One of the disappointments, accordingly, is the missed opportunity.

David Bran of Advanced Glazing Systems Ltd., writes to say the Burnaby company is the manufacturer of the oversized doors that will connect interior and exterior living spaces in the Coast new-home project (Heavenly Stairway, Westcoast Homes, Jan. 27).

So much gain, so little pain

DOWNTOWN | Donovan developer adds a moral imperative to usual material incentives

A spare palette of material finishes and built-in storage (ABOVE) are the first-cause contributors to efficient, stylish residency in a smaller home.
The Cressey development company and the Donovan interior designer have introduced both into the Donovan tower-residences.

(LEFT) "A little bedroom" is the original, 17th century meaning in Spanish of the word, alcove. In their alcoves women with the requisite time and treasure could entertain visitors and hold salons.
In the Donovan alcoves residents will both store and snore – belay that, sleep. The "captain's bed" in the show home is not included in the purchase price, but can be ordered. (Donovan project profile, K2)

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Donovan tower-homes demonstrate design, business proficiencies

Cressey addition to downtown skyline generates expressions of interest from 1,800 potential customers

BY MICHAEL SASGES
WESTCOAST HOMES EDITOR

The Donovan new-home project is a well-priced demonstration of design and commercial proficiencies. The mastery of space by architect and interior designer and the transformation or translation of their skills into value-rich homes by developer-builder are exemplary.

Don't believe me? Then listen to what the new-home shopper is saying.

The Cressey development company has registered more than 1,800 expressions of interest in Donovan, reports Tracy Chong, Donovan's development manager. The company will begin selling the homes next month.

My conviction that Donovan is a special addition to the downtown skyline has three components.

One is price. With Cressey asking an average square-foot price of $699, a Donovan residence is expensive absolutely, but not relatively or comparatively.

The benchmark price right now for new-construction tower-residences downtown is $800, the average in the last two quarters of 2006, PricewaterhouseCoopers reported last month.

That average, of course, includes some

See PRICE IN LINE K5

NEW HOMES
PROJECT PROFILE

Donovan

Location: 1055 Richards, Vancouver
Project size: 10 townhouses, 142 apartments, 18-storey building
Residence size: Apartments, 573 sq. ft. – 998 sq. ft.; townhouses, 1,040 sq. ft. – 1,216 sq. ft.; penthouses, 1,008 sq. ft. – 1,777 sq. ft.
Prices: $396,000 – $2.1 million
Presentation centre: 1295 Seymour, at Drake
Telephone: 604-696-9030
'Preview' hours: noon – 5 p.m., Sat - Sun
Web: donovanlife.com
Developer: Cressey
Architect: Rafi'i Architects
Interior design: InSight Design Group Inc.
Tentative occupancy: Fall, 2008

Southern comfort

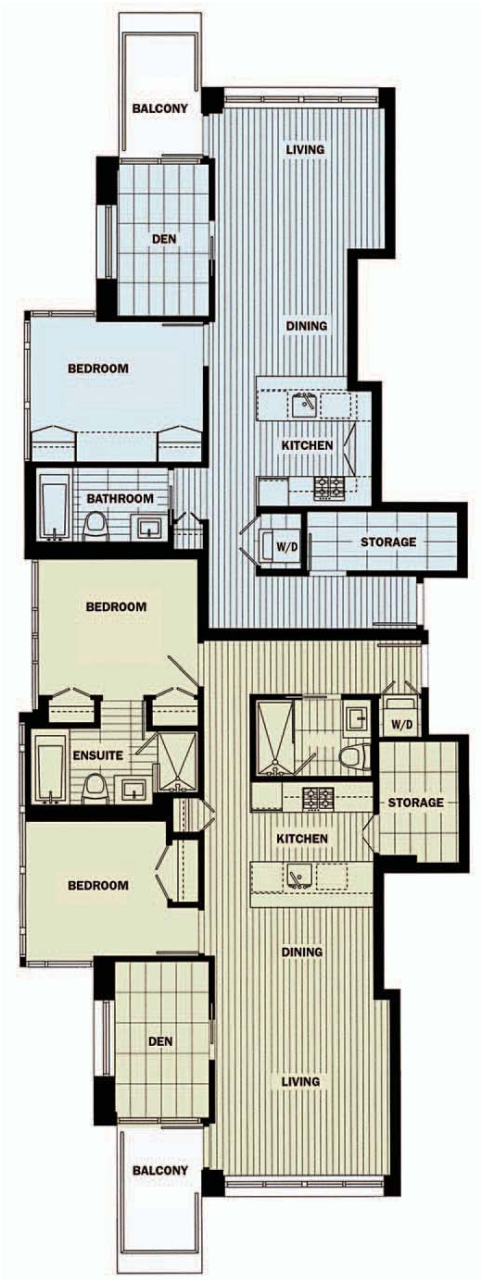
Eventual partywall neighbours from floors seven to 18 in the Donovan new-home project. The residents of the 22 apartments represented by the plans reproduced here will enjoy protected views to the south.

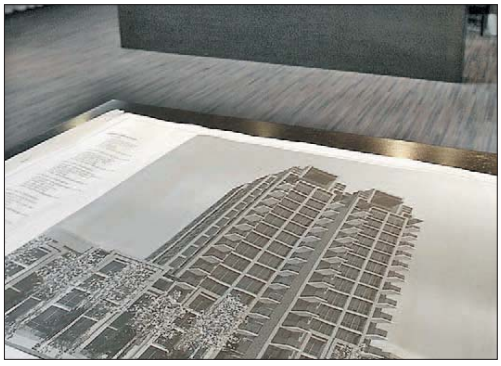
As a Vancouver city hall commentary on the Donovan property reports: "The remaining four 25-foot lots . . . to the south of this site will not meet the criteria for a tower development."

The larger B plan (GREEN) will face Richards Street and, to the south, Helmcken Street, and the smaller C plan (BLUE) will face the lane between Richards and Seymour streets and, to the south, Helmcken.

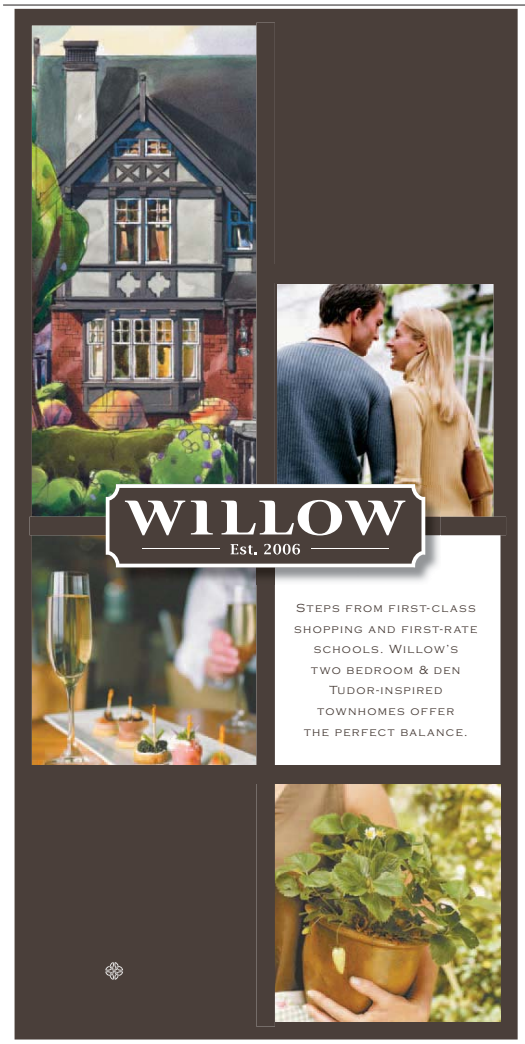
The B plan is a two-bedroom +den, two-bath home, with a total area of 880 square feet. B plan prices start at $579,900.

The C plan is a one-bedroom +den, one-bath home, with a total area of about 715 square feet. C plan prices start at $400,900.





PETER BATTISTONI/VANCOUVER SUN



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Price in line with other downtown projects

From K2

oFf the most expensive new-construction in Canada, on Vancouver's waterfronts. Cressey, in other words, isn't asking $100 less than everybody else; just $100 less than a widely circulated number. That $699, in the fullness of time, will prove probably very much in line with other downtown new-home projects that will go on sale this year.

Another reason to welcome Donovan is the efficiencies introduced into building and homes by architect Fo'ad Rafi'i and interior designer InSight Design Group.

When built, the Donovan homes will be *the* measure of a lifetime of the livable small home for all those who might reside in one or visit, by virtue of a sharply edited material palette and deft observance of the first principle of small-home residency.

Kitchen storage will be defined more by the millworker and less by the metal worker, whose contribution fulfills a cameo, or accent, function.

Refrigerators in luxury new-home projects are inevitably faced in stainless steel. The Donovan fridges, however, will be faced in the same "wood-grain" doors that will face all the other kitchen storage, only wider and higher.

That's an example of the editing of the homes by interior designer and developer, a decision that reduces material "verbiage" and, consequently, improves "narrative."

Bedroom storage will be defined by the millworker alone, and not the millworker and drywaller. In most homes, there will be no closet.

Donovan bedroom storage will be located on each side of and above the bed, a design that nestles the bed in an alcove.

That's an example of the observance of the principle that every item added to a small space or, put another way, every item that takes away from habitable space in a small space, must serve two functions.

Functioning firstly as storage, the millwork flanking and over the bed will function as an extra space, cozy and comfortable and all the more attractive for its improbable or unexpected presence.

The alcoves chapter in *The Elle Decor Home* (2005) and the introductory remarks in *Small Apartments* (2005) are the sources for my admiration of the Donovan bedroom-alcoves. (Those who will sleep in the Donovan bedrooms will sleep in good company, the *Elle Decor* book reports: Couturier Bill Blass passes his New York nights in a bed in an alcove, his guardian angel a big "equestrian bronze of Napoleon.")

The Donovan building is a neighbourly building. With a height of about 170 feet, the tower is about 130 feet under city hall's maximum permitted height. But, with a width of about 97 feet, it is seven feet over city's hall's ideal width.

Relief from the width recommendation was granted because the lower height will not interfere with the views from neighbouring high-rise homes, actual and anticipated, and will not impose shadowing on them.

The Donovan building is a smartly organized building. Rafi'i and Cressey put the interior amenity space at grade and at the back of the building and the outdoor amenity space four floors above, atop the building's podium.

A division of amenities that some members of city hall's Urban Design Panel thought might result in less use of the amenities, it has an admirable purpose, and that is "to keep the residential units off the lane" between Richards and Seymour streets.

The last reason for wanting to share my enthusiasm for Donovan was something Cressey's Tracy Chong said while she was taking me around the Donovan show home.

"Who doesn't want to do something about the environment these days?" she said in advancing the new-home project's geothermal

See **MATERIAL, MORAL** K8

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'Spa' content installed in Donovan ensuites

The Cressey development company has selected appliances from a German company, Miele, for the Donovan kitchens.

The gas cooktops, convection ovens and hood fans will be clad in stainless steel, but the refrigerators and dishwashers will be faced with the same pannelling as the doors that enclose most of the kitchen storage.

The doors of frosted glass framed by stainless steel also enclose storage, in some of the homes in the form of a walk-in pantry. Polished granite will top counters; the stainless steel sinks will be mounted under the counters; and the gooseneck design of the faucets will artfully prettify the prosaic (left).

Big showerheads serve the same purpose in the Donovan bathrooms (far left).

Cressey has elected to install "spa" content in the master bathrooms at Donovan.

Residents will shower in stalls of frameless glass and tiled walls and soak in deep tubs.

By contrast, some developers are eliminating tubs from "their" master suites. Others continue to restrict showering and soaking to the tried-and-true shower-tub combination included in the Donovan show home, a C plan home in which there is one but one bathroom (SEE FLOORPLANS, K2).

The treatment of tub skirting is a sweet example of the power of editing. The tub-skirt will be faced in the same porcelain tile that will cover the floors. The skirt is both a literal extension of a material finish and a figurative extension of the space.

The absence of two-bowl vanities in the main bathrooms is compensated for by the presence of vanities that seamlessly incorporate one wide bowl and of drawers underneath that add a storage purpose to all too often dead space.

Material, moral cross at Donovan

From K8

heating and cooling as the one Donovan feature she wants *Vancouver Sun* readers to know about.

An everyday observation, it is an extraordinary signal, broadcasting an escalation, from the material plane to the moral realm, in the reasons developers and builders give the new-home shopper for favouring one product over a competing product: Here, at Donovan, Cressey is saying, is

See **DO IT PAINLESSLY** K10

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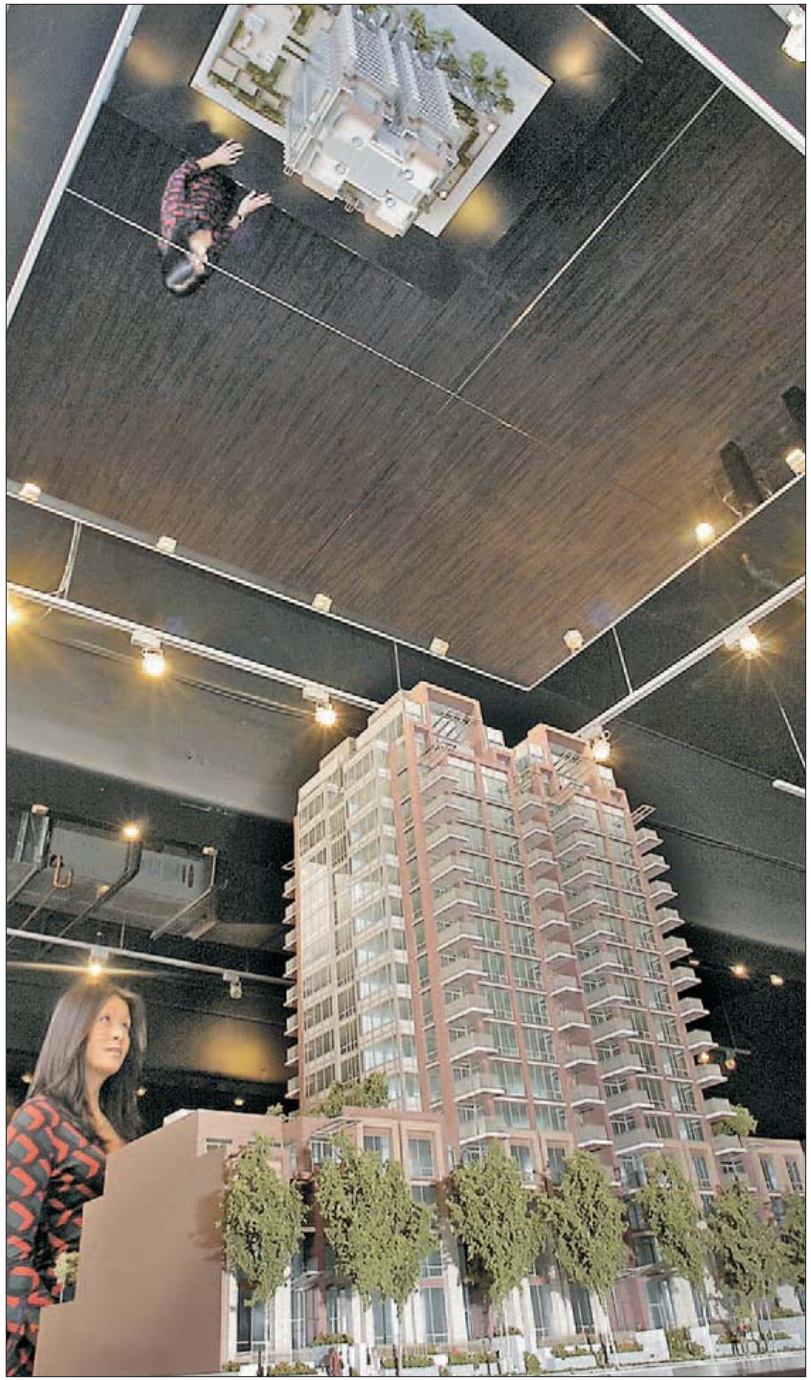
Do it painlessly at Donovan, Cressey invites



PETER BATTISTONI/VANCOUVER SUN

Donovan a thoroughfare addition

When built, the Donovan building will be an assertively symmetrical presence along one of metro Vancouver's important transportation arteries, Richards Street in downtown Vancouver.

Townhouses will face the street at grade, common-space terraces above.

The Cressey development company will install a children's play area on the south terrace.

The verdict at city hall? The building is a "well resolved" solution to "the challenges associated with achieving a handsome form with the lower building heights required by the view cone."

Mirror on ceiling

Resolute is probably a good word for the presentation-centre treatment of the building model dwarfing Cressey's Tracy Chong (RIGHT).

A ceiling mirror permits visitors to see what Cressey and architect Fo'ad Rafi'i have planned for the top of the Donovan building, rooftop terraces for the use of the penthouse-residents below.

The mirror, of course, also makes a big model bigger.

From K8

an opportunity for 152 households to lessen the consequences of their footfall on the environment; "Help save the world," Cressey urges visitors to the Donovan website.

For both Cressey and Rafi'i, geothermal is known territory. Rafi'i is the architect of the first geothermally heated and cooled residential tower downtown (until someone comes forward and says not so), Pomaria between the Granville and Burrard bridges. Cressey's latest tower homes in Richmond will be geothermally heated and cooled.

It is the creation of a sacrifice-free opportunity to embrace a moral choice and do the right thing that is particularly impressive.

Architect and developer are not asking any owner or resident to abandon the automobile. Parking will be secure and plentiful, on three underground levels. Other new-home projects downtown have been challenging sells because of the absence of secure and plentiful parking.

They are not asking any owner or resident to suffer the sleep-interrupted nights of a summer in the city because the apartment windows are all open to admit cooling breezes, but equally admitting street noise, vehicular and pedestrian. The Donovan homes will be air conditioned, hot air geothermally removed and planted in the ground under the building.

Additionally, Cressey is putting actual numbers to the reduction in household operating costs "off the grid" geothermal heating and cooling could generate at Donovan.

It expects a Donovan home will be 60-per-cent less expensive to heat and cool annually than homes in which heating and cooling are conventionally powered."

Donovan is a "green" opportunity made all the more germane, or richer, by its downtown location. Residents of compact neighbourhoods can walk everywhere, lowering their contribution to greenhouse-gas emissions and, potentially, their cost of living.

As *Westcoast Homes* columnist Bob Ransford commented last weekend:

"Research has shown that people who live in neighbourhoods in which they can walk from their homes to stores, schools, recreation and public transportation have a much lower cost of living — or more accurately cost of housing — thanks to their lower transportation costs."

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Mike Sasges and his wife, Marise, will make their next home in a Rafi'i Architects' building.

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The Province

HOUSE SMART: Renovate your kitchen at a fraction of the cost PAGE E5

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SECTION E

YALETOWN DONOVAN-STYLE

Stylish sanctuary in the most happening part of town is attracting young professionals who want to nest as well as enjoy the urban scene PAGE E3

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From above and going clockwise, compact work station has both style and utility; the dining area shows off trendy wide-plank hardwood flooring; high quality materials such as this granite countertop and designer stainless sink are standard; the living room offers cozy comfort, something the owners will want to come home to.

JASON PAYNE — THE PROVINCE

Quick facts

DONOVAN

What: 142 condos in an 18-storey tower plus 10 townhouses in downtown Vancouver
Where: Yaletown
Developer: Cressey
Sizes: Apartment homes, town homes, penthouses from 573 sq. ft. to 1,777 sq. ft.
Prices: $395,900 to $2.1 million
Open: By appointment daily, 1295 Seymour, between noon and 5 p.m. (except Fridays)
Contact: Register at www.donovanlife.com or call 604-696-9030

Yaletown a fine venue for Donovan

COOL VIRAL VIDEO: Idea is to want to come home here

BY JEANI READ
STAFF REPORTER

Donovan is Cressey's latest development in Yaletown, and you can tell Tracy Chong, Cressey development manager, is really proud of it. Yes, it is her job to be proud, but Chong clearly has a fondness for Donovan and for Yaletown that goes beyond the call of duty.

This is one of those cool, supermarketed projects that goes so far as to feature a five-chapter mini Internet lifestyle movie called a "viral video' that people can pass along.

Storyline? Cute girl breaks up with boyfriend, goes to the big city where gay friend lives in cool Donovan apartment, parties are held, wine is drunk, romantic confusion ensues in attractive square footage — how not to feel affection for something that smartypants?

"Donovan is a sexy project," says Chong. "And Yaletown has it all. You don't need to go anywhere else. There's a little bit of everything for everyone. There's Urban Fare, Choices, the seawall — everything. For me, it's the best part of downtown."

With Donovan they're trying to sell a lifestyle, says Chong, and for once, all of Yaletown's charms aside, they're trying to sell the idea of staying home as well as going out.

"The intention is to be warm, comfortable and intimate," says Chong. "We all work so hard that our home should be our haven."

With hi-tech geothermal heating and air conditioning that is energy efficient and eco-friendly, Donovan also goes high-end with appliances — Miele — and finishes, including gorgeous wide-plank hardwood flooring in all the living areas and many of the bedrooms. Bedrooms feature huge headboard built-ins for storage, and one upgrade is to a platform bed with more storage underneath. The bathrooms feature dramatic square rain-shower showerheads, drop-in tubs and custom sinks that are of a piece with the counters.

The amenities area, too, is part and parcel of what they wanted, in terms of lifestyle and of home being a haven, says Chong. There's a fireplace lounge, a full kitchen, pool table, TV and 3,000 square feet of fitness space, complete with steam room, sauna, yoga space, spa — "It's almost like living at a hotel," says Chong.

Financial management student and Bank of Montreal customer-service rep Darveen Sidhu says she's looking forward to using those amenities when she gets home to Donovan at night, from her busy life. She and her dad picked Donovan as being a good spot for her at a good moment.

When Donovan's completed and it's time to move in, it will also be time for 20-year-old Sidhu to transfer from B.C. Institute of Technology, where she is studying now, to the University of B.C.

Location was prime in her mind when it came to finding her first place on her own. From Surrey, where she lives with her family, UBC is "quite the commute: three hours," she says. "When I'm at UBC, Yaletown will be best for me."

Sidhu says she liked what she saw right away at Donovan's show home. "I'd heard so many good things about Cressey, and I loved the layout, the finishings, the dark-chocolate colour scheme — it was perfect for me," she says. "It's a one-bedroom, and for me being just a student it was very attractive. I was sold. I'm so fortunate to be able to get a nice place."

Yaletown is also a draw for her. "It's the most happening place in Vancouver, especially for younger people in their 20s and 30s. And there are lots of celebrity sightings."

And although she hadn't yet seen the viral video on donovanlife.com, her courses in marketing have made her totally appreciate the company's strategy. "I like the marketing scheme. I like the way it attracts a certain generation."

Which would be young professionals and soon-to-be young professionals, that is. Just like Sidhu.

jread@png.canwest.com

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MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release **Tuesday February 6, 2007**

"DONOVAN LIFE" A FIRST FOR REAL ESTATE MARKETING

Viral video series already headed for TV pilot

(Vancouver) – In what's believed to be a first for real estate marketing in North America, Cressey Development Group has sponsored and launched "Donovan Life," a viral video series directed by local rising star Roger Evan Larry, and in conjunction with the up-coming sales for their latest downtown luxury condo project, Donovan.

"We've seen realtors using viral videos to show properties, but this is the first time a developer has ever partnered with a filmmaker to produce a fictional series about a lifestyle," says Cameron McNeill of MAC Marketing Solutions, the sales agents for Donovan.

Video viral campaigns have become an increasingly important part of the entertainment and advertising world. A successful viral can reach hundreds of thousands of people in a very short amount of time through emails, blogs, and websites like YouTube – a kind of virtual word of mouth that many companies covet as part of their sales strategy.

"Collectively, we recognized the tremendous growth of the significance of on-line video for reaching people," says Cressey Vice President Hani Lammam. "We wanted to create a high quality series that would represent the lifestyle we envision at Donovan and that would, of course, entertain people. We're really happy with how it turned out, and we're excited to release it."

"Donovan Life" is a lifestyle comedy in the tradition of "Sex and the City", "Will & Grace," and "Friends". It tells the story of Anya, a 20-something professional woman who seeks exile from her commitment-phobic boyfriend in her best gay friend Dougal's luxurious new Yaletown apartment in the Donovan building. Over the course of the five webisodes, Anya tries to decide whether to go back to her boyfriend, or start her life anew by moving into Donovan.

""Donovan Life" is really a universal story about young urban professionals full of energy and ambition who are looking for a comfortable environment to enjoy the best the city has to offer," says series Director Roger Evan

Larry.

Produced by Larry's film and TV production company, Relevision, "Donovan Life" stars Crystal Bublé, Matty Finochio, and Sebastian Spence. Larry's first feature film, the award-winning "Crossing", will be released in theatres across Canada in March, and also stars Bublé and Spence.

"Though "Donovan Life" is a very different project from "Crossing", the sexual chemistry between Crystal and Sebastian is so steamy, I knew they would be perfect for this project," says Larry. "And Matty's comedic timing and energy makes him a must-see in the role of Dougal."

"As we were developing the concept, I got so excited about the script and the cast we're already in the process of turning "Donovan Life" the viral series into a TV pilot. We think it's a natural for a sitcom, " concludes Larry.

The first episode in the series will be released the morning of Wednesday February 7th on www.donovanlife.com. The remaining four episodes will be launched consecutively on Friday February 9th, Monday February 12th, Wednesday February 14th, with the finale on Friday February 16th.

---30—

For more information, contact Marcella Munro, Media & Communications Manager for Cressey, desk 604-895-0462 or cell 778-899-4999.

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MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday September 7th, 2006

CONCRETE JUNGLE MEETS CONCRETE CULTURE
Cressey-sponsored Contemporary Art Gallery exhibit "Concrete Language" opens in Vancouver's Yaletown tonight

(VANCOUVER) – Lower mainland developer Cressey has made a concrete commitment to not only their latest Yaletown project, but also to the cultural vitality of the city.

Donovan, Yaletown's upcoming contemporary homes by Cressey, is the title sponsor of the Contemporary Art Gallery's blockbuster fall show, *Concrete Language.*

Concrete Language brings together works by 15 local and international artists. In each of the works, language is central and used as both a formal and material element, suggesting a way to view words and language outside the way we commonly use or view language. (See attached example.)

When approached to support *Concrete Language*, Cressey Vice President Hani Lammam saw a perfect match between the show and the spirit behind Donovan.

"We build concrete structures, but we're building much more than that too. With Donovan we are designing around lifestyle for a very distinct clientele. Our focus is not just constructing a building, but creating and sustaining the cultural, social and environmental sustainability that makes Yaletown living so great."

Cressey's commitment to the urban environment can be found not only in their sponsorship of the CAG, but from the bottom up in the Donovan's building, including the 3R team hired to do the demolition, and the geothermal technology that will be used to heat the building.

Donovan's sponsorship of *Concrete Language* concretizes Cressey's desire to ensure the ongoing vitality of the downtown core in the face of rapid urbanization.

"The Donovan lifestyle is not about being a part of the concrete jungle, but about being a part of the community. *Concrete Language* is a really unique exhibit and breaks language down to a fundamental level and I think Donovan is doing something similar with downtown living," says Lammam.

Construction has begun at Donovan, which will offer 152 homes in a distinctive 18 storey tower located in the heart of vibrant Yaletown. Designed with a sense of 'home' in mind, Donovan residences are warm and welcoming with clean, contemporary lines.

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Slated to open its sales centre doors in February 2007, you can find out more about Donovan by registering on the website http://www.donovanlife.com/.

In the mean time *Concrete Language* runs September 8th through November 5th at the CAG (555 Nelson Street). The CAG is a non-profit gallery, and is open Wednesday to Sunday, from 12-6 pm. More information about the gallery can be had on-line at www.contemporaryartgallery.ca.

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Buildings becoming stars in Web stories

Trying to appeal to savvy, technology-oriented young consumers, real estate developers turning to edgy online films to create a buzz

By Mary Umberger
Chicago Tribune staff reporter
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When we last saw Anya, she was taking a break from her afraid-of-commitment boyfriend by chilling, for a few weeks, in her gay buddy Dougal's condo.

But it's not just any condo--it's, like, such a fabulous condo. Really.

"It's amazing, it's perfect," the twentysomething, wide-eyed blonde tells Dougal as she surveys the living room's decorated-to-perfection splendor.

Dougal and Anya are fictional characters. Their onscreen story is "Sex and the City" meets "Will & Grace." But there's another character in the mix, and it is the building.

The building is the Donovan, a soon-to-be-real high-rise in the hip Yaletown neighborhood in Vancouver. It's a major player in "Donovan Life," a professionally produced sitcom introduced online Wednesday.

The video story line, released in five brief Webisodes every few days and culminating Feb. 16, was created at the request of Cressey Developers, a major builder in Vancouver that was looking for a new way to generate buzz. The firm decided to gamble on "advertainment," an emerging medium that kicks product placement to another level.

The best-known example of advertainment is the BMW Hire series, nine online, award-winning videos produced by such established moviemakers as Ang Lee and John Frankenheimer several years ago at the behest of the car company. The constant in their plot lines was a BMW.

"We do a lot of elegant high-rise buildings, and [the marketing] becomes quite formulaic," said Cressey Vice President Hani Lammam. "How do you capture the audience's attention when it is constantly being bombarded by so much media?"

The episodic peek into the travails of young, single professionals is designed to entice potential buyers to the developer's Internet site at www.donovanlife.com. But its director-writer aims to reverse the traditional route and take his series from the Internet to television or the big screen.

"This is not a commercial. It is not an industrial-film sales pitch," said Roger Larry, a Vancouver moviemaker who wrote the "Donovan Life" script with his wife, Sandra Tomc.

The advertainment technique is starting to gain traction, said Ann Handley, chief content officer for MarketingProfs.com, a California-based online trade publication. She said that last year, for example, the Dove soap brand capitalized on the popularity of "Desperate Housewives" actress Felicity Huffman in creating three Webisodes in which Huffman, as directed by Penny Marshall, is transported back into classic sitcoms.

Handley said that after initial resistance the real estate industry is figuring out what to do on the Web.

"Today I spend as much [money] on my Web site as I do on my brochures," said Garry Benson, chief executive of Garrison Partners, a national real estate marketing company based in Chicago.

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"Historically, a third of our traffic is going to come from traditional media such as newspapers, a third from signage and a third is from other forms of outreach, such as the Internet.

"But that has started to shift. The Web-based marketing is starting to rival the print media."

Benson said a large-scale development usually budgets 2 percent to 3 percent of the gross sales price of the project for marketing.

Lammam declined to specify how much the firm invested in sponsoring the "Donovan Life" series, though he said its cost was lessened by piggybacking production with "Crossing," a movie Larry was working on in December, when most of "Donovan Life" was shot with the same actors.

The promotion has been noticed. Hits on "Donovan Life" site had been averaging 672 a day after a traditional post card and print ad campaign for the building began Jan. 8, said Cressey spokeswoman Marcella Munro.On Wednesday, when the video series began, they leapt to nearly 21,000.

"Those numbers don't surprise me," said Dominic Adducci, managing director of Mesirow Financial Real Estate in Chicago, which used its own online video series to promote R+D659, a West Loop high-rise.

The Mesirow videos, however, are less like TV programming and more like light-hearted commercials extolling the building and its neighborhood. They are premised on a character named Artie, a butcher, who emerges from a 99-year sleep in the freezer of his old shop (don't ask) and sets out to catch up with modern life. Visitors to the site, ArtiesAdventures.com, can register for free admission to the building's launch party Feb. 15.

Adducci presumes that most attendees will be of a demographic comparable with the one Cressey is seeking at "Donovan Life": ages 25 to 45, single or couples with above-average salaries.

"This group is very technology-oriented and very sophisticated in terms of the very hard direct sell," Adducci said. "The young professional responds more to image and lifestyle than to a traditional sale."

He said about 8,000 visitors have viewed the Artie videos since they premiered in late January.

Where Artie is a genial, aw-shucks character, Anya and Dougal and neighbor Jack, the object of their mutual interest, are more on the randy side. The Web site for the Donovan, whose marketing tagline is "Get Intimate," urges parental discretion for viewers of "Donovan Life" and warns that it may not be suitable for some.

Lammam doesn't expect that to be a problem.

"From our perspective, it needs to get a reaction. Whether it's good or bad, whether you love it or hate it, it causes you to sit up and take notice," he said.

Talk is key, agreed Charles Falls, president of Demi & Cooper advertising in Elgin, which develops marketing strategies for builders.

"This younger demographic is very heavy on buzz," he said. "If there's talk about it, people will check it out."

Handley, the marketing publisher, said there were unlikely to be negatives in such a campaign, even with sexual content.

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"As an approach for this particular product, the Donovan building, it's not bad. In fact, it's rather good," Handley said. "The show clearly defines the demographic--people who will want to live there--and the reasons for it. It's hip, it's cool, it's fun.

"Plus, a really cute guy might live next door. What isn't appealing about that?"

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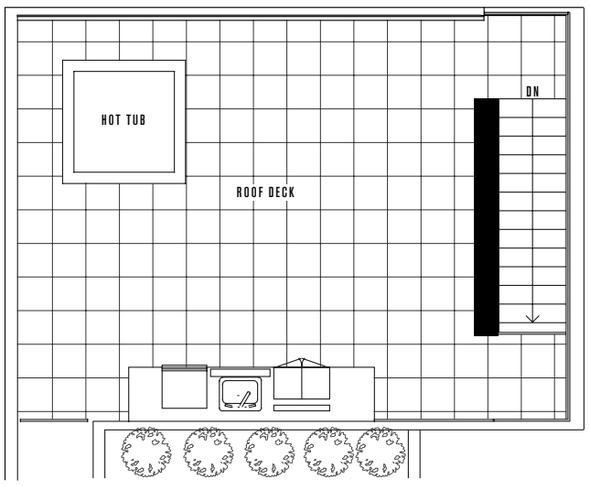
donovan

LOWER FLOOR

UPPER FLOOR



ROOF DECK

Plan PH-1 ~ Two bedroom & den

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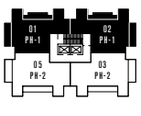

PENTHOUSE

The developer reserves the right to make modifications to floorplans, project design, materials and specifications to maintain the high standard of this development.

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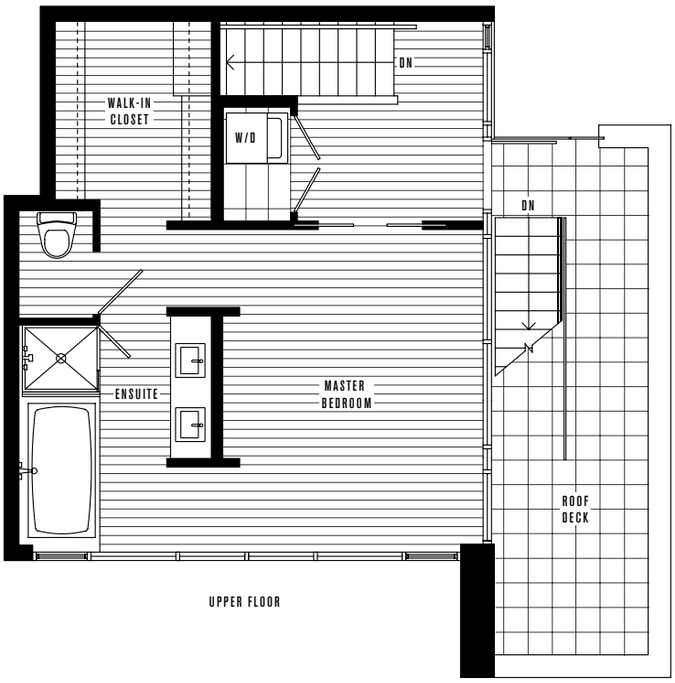
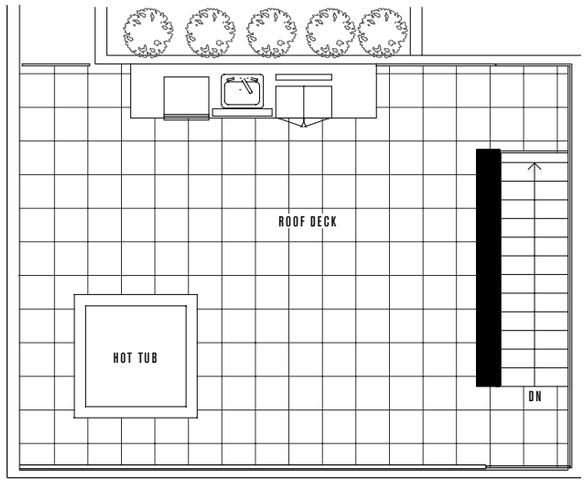
donovan

LOWER FLOOR



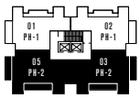
UPPER FLOOR



ROOF DECK

Plan PH-2 ~ Two bedroom & den

TOTAL AREA *1777 sq ft* LEVEL *20*



PENTHOUSE

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