

POST HOMES



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From left, designer George Foutis with North Drive partners Robert Fidani and Jordan Morassutti
TYLER ANDERSON / NATIONAL POST

PARK LIFE

Blur the line between home and green space
By Iris Benaroya

In the model suite at Picnic in Bloor West Village, blouses dangle from hangers in a luxuriously roomy closet that's situated between the bedroom and the bathroom, and a stack of shirts sit on one of several shelves. There are also enough drawers for even the most committed clotheshorse.

The chic vibe continues in the five-piece ensuite bathroom with its black plumbing fixtures and herringbone marble tile. Not to be outdone, the kitchen is dark and dramatic kitted out in full-size appliances, including a chef-y

gas stove — make a meal on it before heading to the balcony because each of the 68 units in the eight-storey, Quadrangle-designed building (the firm also did the interiors) will come with one.

As you might have deduced, every inch of the suite conveys an aura of refinement, style and permanence. These are not temporary digs but a place to hunker down after you've decamped from a house, or outgrown that teeny condo in the city's more boisterous areas.

[See PARK on PH3](#)



YORKVILLE – TOWNHOMES

Join us this weekend for an exclusive preview of a Brian Gluckstein designed model townhome.

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RED FIRE MONKEY YEAR

AUSPICIOUS EVENT
AHEAD, IF YOU KNOW
THE TRADITIONS

Should you be fortunate enough to be invited to a Chinese person's home to celebrate their new year — which is Feb. 8, know that it's rude not to take your shoes off on entering. Chinese traditions can be tricky to get right, but here's what *not* to bring as a hostess gift: ■ Cut flowers (particularly white ones) ■ Sharp objects (symbolizes cutting off your friendship) ■ Four of anything (the word four sounds like the word for death) ■ Anything black and white (the colours for funerals). But red? Red symbolizes happiness, energy and good luck and is seen everywhere for the New Year, especially in paper lanterns inside and outside homes. Celebratory decor may include kumquat trees, peonies and red decorations with sayings and signs. A safe hostess gift will usually be something you wrap in red or gold. Gong Hey Fat Choy, or Gong Xi Fa Coi. *National Post*



PARK

Continued from PH1

"With all of our projects, we target mature, desirable neighbourhoods, geared towards the end user — the local downsizer or the condo upsizer who in the Entertainment District," says developer Jordan Morassutti of North Drive, a young firm whose partners include his brother, Taylor Morassutti, and long-time friend Robert Fidani.

Morassutti notes all of the units are well sized at Picnic ("80% of them are comprised of two-bedroom units"), making them particularly attractive to potential buyers. They range from 668 square feet to 1,250 sq. ft. and are priced from the \$400,000s to over \$1-million. Suites can be combined (picnichighpark.com).

Morassutti learnt firsthand just how coveted unit space was when he launched Picnic's first phase, High Park — now under construction — at 1990 Bloor St. W.

"When we brought High Park to market a couple of years ago, we had smaller units on the lower floors and as you moved up the building they got larger and more luxurious," Morassutti says. "However, we sold our larger units very quickly."

To the developer's chagrin that meant turning away business when people expressed interest "for the last year and a half, asking for a two-bedroom unit."

With Picnic, roomier suites are par for the course in a structure that's sensitive to the streetscape. Red brick, glass and a fibre cement panel called öko skin adds



PICNIC WINTER & SUMMER

texture to the exterior of the modest eight-storey building that won't lord it over the street. A total of 4,500 square feet of retail at grade will seamlessly connect to the foot traffic along Bloor Street, where shops and cafés encourage strolling.

Grab a coffee and amble over to perhaps Picnic's best

year-round amenity — the 400-acre High Park. Or admire the treetops from the comfort of the condo's rooftop terrace that also overlooks Kennedy Margdon Parkette and will be outfitted in lounge chairs, a double-sided fireplace and a barbecue.

Having grown up in the neighbourhood, the develop-

ers have always shared affection for the city's west end. So when they launched North Drive in 2011, they never wanted to lose focus of their goal: to build well-crafted modestly scaled residences in established neighbourhoods using top-notch talent. At the ultra-luxe 4 Kingsway in Etobicoke, for

example (where units start at \$1.2-million), they enlisted heavyweights Brian Gluckstein for the interiors and the architect Richard Wengle for the building design.

At Picnic, Quadrangle was tapped to bring a level of sophistication inside and out. George Fousias, the project's senior designer, has a savvy

design eye that comes from tripping around the international hospitality scene. He's worked throughout Europe including Italy, Greece, Belgium, England and Paris.

Fousias noticed that regardless of location, garages in condominiums were often overlooked from a design point of view. "They would have fluorescent lighting, minimal signage for exiting and they rarely related to the rest of the condo building," he says. "But at Picnic, part of our design approach was to create an all-encompassing story that visually connected the amenities, corridors and units," he says. "So the ... parking lot is thought out."

He continues, "The lighting, signage and colour have received similar attention from our design team as the lobby and amenities."

Meanwhile in the lobby, the design team created an art-like brass installation for the ceiling that looks like varying sizes of gold bricks. Similarly geometric are chunky pendants above a concierge desk that sports a blocky juted counter. Walls are warmly clad in wood. In its entirety, the entryway's scheme makes for a richly dynamic welcome.

Such warmth is carried through to the units, where Fousias gave special focus to those aforementioned closets. "They're very generous; as an upgrade, we can install a custom millwork unit, designed with the more luxury client in mind," he says (like one downsizer, who bought two units to combine into a single gracious, 2,780-sq.-ft. suite).

No need to pare down that wardrobe.

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