

## Interviews

# Interview with Michael Broccolini, Vice-President of Business Development and Finance at Broccolini

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Known for developing notable industrial, retail and residential projects including [Victoria sur le parc](#) and [L'Avenue Condos](#), [Broccolini](#) has established itself as a highly respected developer in Quebec's real estate industry. The Montreal-based firm was founded in 1949 by Donato Broccolini as a single-family home builder and later shifted its focus to industrial and commercial construction in the late 70s. Donato later recruited his three sons and together they led the company into new markets across Quebec, building expansive retail outlets, manufacturing facilities and industrial complexes.



Joining the family business in 2011, Michael Broccolini, Vice-President of Business Development and Finance, represents the third generation of Broccolini within the company, together with COO Anthony Broccolini. Michael has played a key role in the company's business development initiatives and is responsible for directing its expansion and growth in the Toronto market, including the launch of its first high-rise residential project in the city, [River & Fifth](#).

Livabl recently sat down with Michael to learn more about the company, its expansion into Ontario and the vision for River & Fifth.



***Livabl: Tell us a bit about yourself — how you got into the development industry and when you joined the Broccolini team?***

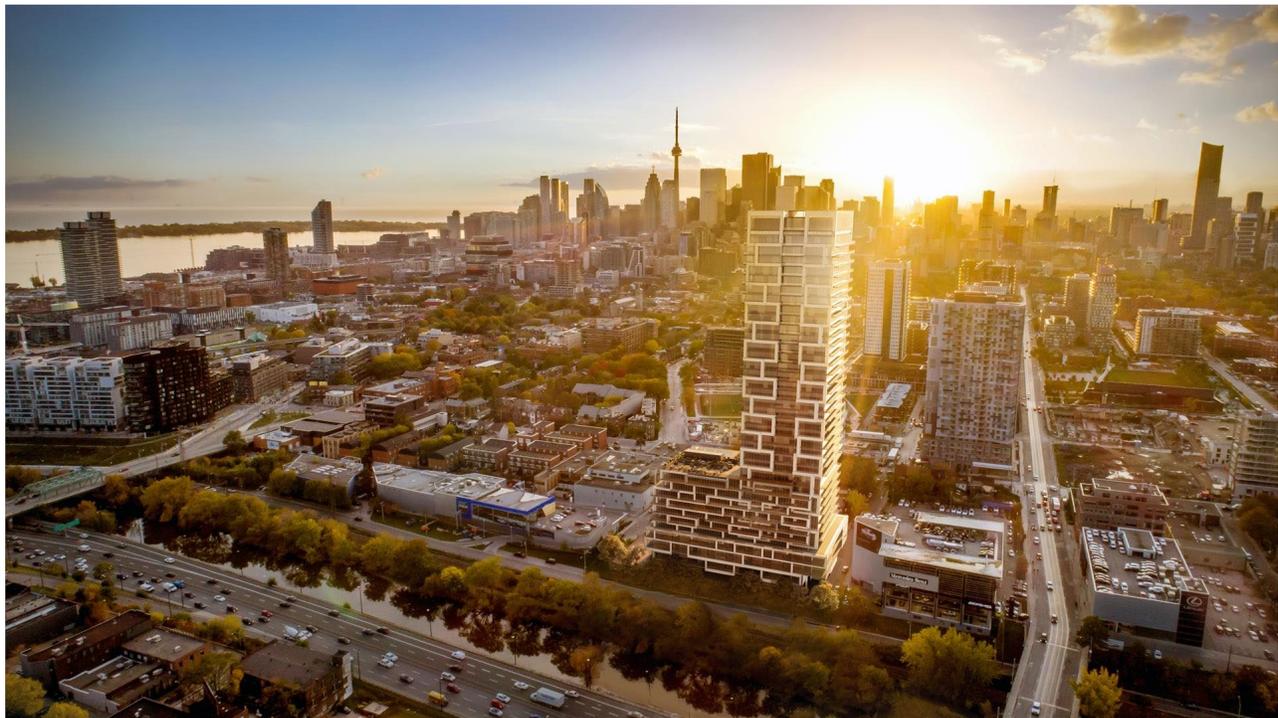
Michael Broccolini: Growing up in a family business environment meant that most, if not all social conversations revolved around projects we were building. For many years my own passion for the industry grew from working on job sites, primarily as a construction labourer. It's been almost a decade since I officially joined the company on the development side.

***L: Could you walk us through the genesis of the company from its roots as a family-owned and family-run business?***

MB: My grandfather founded the business in 1949 as a single-family home builder. In the late 70s, the company's focus shifted to industrial and commercial construction, and in the 90s we started purchasing our own sites for development.

Every project we embark on has our family name associated with it, which is why we take tremendous care and pride in all of the projects we undertake. Maintaining our reputation has always been a priority and has been a driver of our growth. Over 90 percent of our business comes from repeat business or word of mouth.

Today we work in three major markets, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, with 350 employees. Our annual volume of work is just over \$600 million in the industrial, commercial, office and residential sectors.



***L: Broccolini is now expanding its residential brand in the Toronto market with the launch of River & Fifth Condos. What was the driving force behind this move?***

MB: In 2004 we expanded to the Ontario market, building many WeWork offices as well as stores and fulfillment centres for major retailers such as Amazon, Mountain Equipment Co-Op, IKEA and Canadian Tire. We also led the construction on a number of high-profile projects in the GTA, including SAKS at Sherway Gardens, Erin Mills Town Centre renovation and 155 Redpath at Yonge and Eglinton.

Since many of our clients and relationships are based in Toronto, over the years we

experienced the city's rapidly changing urban culture and growth first hand. Torontonians' expectations are high, and the level of quality and craftsmanship we adhere to matches these expectations. We felt we had a lot to contribute.

***L: How does the Toronto real estate market compare to Ottawa and Montreal?***

MB: The Toronto real estate market is a lot more competitive — especially for homes in the downtown core. Units tend to be smaller, more focused on functionality and efficiency. There is also substantially more interest from both domestic and foreign investors.



***L: Located in the east end of downtown Toronto, River & Fifth is situated in a neighbourhood that has experienced major transformation in the past decade. What attracted Broccolini to the area and what do you typically look for in a neighbourhood when developing new properties?***

MB: We've been looking to develop a high-rise in Toronto for a number of years and the east side kept drawing us in – especially Corktown and Riverside. It's as if Toronto kept the east end of downtown a secret for years, but word is finally out. The area is so close to downtown, yet offers so much on its own. It provides an ideal combination of city and nature. On one hand, you have some of Toronto's best restaurants, cafes and boutique shopping — but you also have the Don Valley Trails, the Leslie Spit and Corktown Common, where you can temporarily retreat from the hustle and bustle.

It also has easy access to the entire city, from the DVP, Lakeshore and Gardiner Expressway to the extensive transit that includes the King Street streetcar and Danforth Subway line. River & Fifth will also be less than three kilometres and within walking distance from the future East Harbour development and transit hub that is expected to bring 50,000 new jobs to the area. Overall, the neighbourhood aligned with many of our community building values.



**L: The initial renderings show an L-shaped tower with an intricately patterned facade. Which architectural firm did you work with to develop the design and what was the inspiration behind it?**

MB: River & Fifth is very special for us. It is the first residential high-rise we're developing in Toronto. But more so, it's in an area where we have the opportunity to impact Toronto's skyline in a big way. The view of the city from the east side is breathtaking. You have a lot of really interesting new and old architecture mixed with open green spaces. In my opinion, if you enter the city from the DVP, Bayview or even Broadview you get a more breathtaking first impression than coming in from the west.

Working with [Graziani and Corazza Architects](#), we wanted the design for River & Fifth to contribute artfully to that skyline. We designed white stacked forms that can be seen clearly from a distance. Up-close the design helps give the building and individual units a unique personality. The tower is set back on an 11-storey podium, giving the project an L shape and an opportunity for us to create an expansive amenity on the rooftop that overlooks the city.



**L: When will sales for the residences start and what types of layouts will be available?**

MB: We are in the registration phase and managing a strong response. Suites include studios, one-bedroom, one-bedroom-plus-den, two-bedroom, two-bedroom-plus-den and three-bedroom units.



**L: What types of amenities can residents expect?**

MB: Working with commercial clients like Saks and WeWork allows us to work with forward-thinking and cutting-edge designs. That type of construction gets translated into our residential projects, where we go above and beyond industry standards with regards to design, finishes and experiences.

Amenities at River & Fifth are inviting spaces that are relevant to city living. There is a Baja-style pool on the 12th floor, creating a retreat high above the city. It's lined with cabanas and shade cover so that residents can cool off in the summertime. The entertaining room and lounge creates an opportunity for socializing, again in parallel to the neighbourhood's vibe.

A large gym accommodates niche exercise routines you might find at studios, such as ballet barres and boxing equipment. Of course, our co-working space also has a fun, functional design to accommodate different working styles.



**L: What's next for Broccolini? Are there any other areas of the GTA that you have your eyes on?**

MB: We are focused on River & Fifth at the moment. It's the first high-rise we are developing in Toronto and we want to do it right. But we'll be in the area for a while. We've acquired another parcel of land one street over on River. It's currently in pre-development. While we have a number of projects on the go in Montreal and Ottawa, we are very excited about our sites in Toronto's east end of downtown and introducing our brand to Toronto.

See article here:

<https://www.livabl.com/2019/05/interview-michael-broccolini-vice-president-business-development-finance-broccolini.html>