

# Amenities in condos are on the rise

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Broccolini's River & Fifth features a Baja-style pool (with lounge-style seating in the shallow end) and sun tanning deck with South Beach-inspired cabanas.

The condominium amenity upgrade movement is heating up as both developer and designers realize the need to provide an assortment of unique features and services is as important as the quality of the units themselves.

Perspective condo buyers today don't want the gym that consists of three or four treadmills and an exercise bike or a patio and pool area that is sub-par at best, they want more, far more. Two multi-storey projects currently under construction that reflect what is possible and what could soon become mainstream in terms of amenities are Montreal-based developer Broccolini's River & Fifth and the Lake Suites, a Greenland Group (Canada) project, both of which are located in the city's Downtown East district. Dan Menchions, a partner at II by IV Design, the interior design firm at Lakeside, says he has seen a "considerable trend in the residential market that is giving more emphasis on incorporating features into condominium interiors.

"The East Bayfront neighbourhood where Lakeside is located, is poised to become a key live/work/play district in downtown Toronto. It will offer a mix of sustainable residential communities, state-of-the-art workplaces and renewed connections to the water and parklands, creating tranquility in a busy city. Everyone – people of all different ages and stages, including families will want to live here. The area is being planned to become a true extension of the downtown core."

While interior amenities include a party room with dining, kitchenette, lounge, fireplace and games area, theatre and lounge space, fitness room and yoga/personal training studio, it's the outdoor amenities that really reflect a changing trend.

Once built, there will be a rooftop swimming pool, putting green, outdoor dining and barbeque entertaining spaces and a fireside lounge.

“The rooftop putting green and pool are very different and unique in terms of amenities to complement downtown living,” says Menchions. “Being so close to the water provides an opportunity for residents to enjoy an outdoor recreational culture of the waterfront from the comfort of their own home.”

The importance of having unique amenities, he adds, can’t be overlooked. “In the current market, expectations are so much higher than what they used to be. People want authenticity and quality. For Lakeside, we focused on using materials with natural qualities, inspired by the cityscape and surrounding waterscape. Colours derived from nature, such as warm woods, cool blues and accents of grey throughout, evoking the reflection of clouds on water.

“We are not designing for a particular trend here but for quality and longevity of the finished space and product. The aesthetic feels modern, but with classic detailing, which will uphold their style and remain visually significant for many, many years.”

There is, says Menchions, “always innovation happening in the design industry, and our job is to identify the best option for a particular project and client.”

Meanwhile, the 580-unit River & Fifth project being built by Montreal-based Broccolini, will contain upwards 25,000 sq. ft. of indoor and outdoor amenity space, key among them being adjacent parkland on the southside of the development and a pedestrian connection to Bayview Ave. that leads to Corktown Commons and a co-working area. There will also be a children’s game room and lounge, large fitness area with ballet bar and boxing gym and Baja-style pool.

“River and Fifth is on a unique site,” says Enzo Corazza, principal at Graziani + Corazza Architects. “You are slightly removed from the downtown core, on a quiet street that backs on to the Don River and Trail. This sparked the idea to bring a sense of the outdoors inside the building and integrate a natural park feel into the amenity spaces.”

Anthony Broccolini, COO of a development firm that built Montreal’s two tallest residential towers, says having common areas is a “great way” to build a sense of community “You want people to be happy with their home and there is far more beyond the physical space of the condo unit itself. From a design point-of-view we want to give a community the opportunity to grow. There are certain ingredients that allow that to happen.

“When it comes to condo living, some units are big, some are small, but to have spaces throughout that you consider to be part of your home, you gain additional living space.”

An example of that is the co-working area, which he says, will be there to give residents an option. Instead of working at the kitchen table they can choose a more dynamic working environment that will also allow them to interact with others who live in the building.

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