


FAMILY-FRIENDLY CONDOS

Some developers are targeting more than just young professionals and older empty nesters

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SPECIAL TO THE MONTREAL GAZETTE

While the typical Montreal condo buyer may appear to fall into either the young professional, first-time-buyer category or that of a retired empty-nest baby boomer, more and more urban families are opting to buy a condo rather than a house in order to stay in the heart of the downtown area. It's close to schools, work, public transportation (alleviating the need

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JONATHAN SIGLER

for a second vehicle), and the city sights, and these downtown units also provide a fantastic home base that is safe and welcoming.

For some developers, having such buyers meant creating cohesive projects that were a good fit with families while still providing all of the city action — in other words, choosing building locales that were family-friendly in an urban centre.

The bustle of Griffintown is attracting a wide range of condo buyers, including families, because of the complete revamp of the area.

"We were the first developers in Griffintown and started with the conversion of the old Lowney chocolate factory," said Jonathan Sigler of Prével. "It's now into the 12th- to 14th-phase and we're seeing buyers who have bought in previous phases and now they're 20 to 30 years old, they've met somebody, and they like the area so they're buying larger two-bedroom apartments. Many of these buyers also want to start a family or already have a child on the way.

"So we started designing buildings with a mix of bedroom and unit sizes to accommodate this clientele who follow us."

At the third phase of Lowney Sur Ville, a more recent project than the original Lowney, the upper floors are mixed apartments with two bedrooms and 800 to 900 square feet to appeal to this demographic.


An important component to having what is considered a family-friendly condo are the amenities that are included, both in the building itself as well as in the surrounding area.

"Within the project we have Club Vue that has amenities we offer to co-owners," said Mike Colacone, sales director at Condos Vue. "In



Condos Vue includes a large lounge with free Wi-Fi that serves as a family-friendly environment, drawing kids who hang out there after school with their laptops, doing homework. COURTESY OF CONDOS VUE

this, amongst others, there's a big garden that is very safe. People who live there already have children who are playing there, and we also have a four-season pool with a garden where kids can play and

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go swimming. There's a big lounge with free Wi-Fi as well, so all the time I see young kids hanging out there after school with their laptops doing their homework. It's a very family-friendly environment."

Condos Vue has a prime locale in a very rooted suburban setting.

"It's so close to everything, and the area is amongst a very developed family-oriented neighbourhood (near N.D.G., Côte-des-Neiges, etc.)," Colacone said. "There are already tons of schools as well as daycares opening in the last few years, meaning that there's a demand because of the children in the



Bassins du Havre includes two-storey townhouse homes at ground level and mixed size apartments on the upper levels. ARTIST'S RENDERING COURTESY OF GROUPE PRÉVEL

area. And the city is revitalizing the area; for example, they are building a new park at the corner of Victoria and Buchan."

"We have a park going in as well," Sigler said, "which will be a huge addition to the neighbourhood, and rumour has it that they're looking for an area for a school.

That would be the ideal addition.

"You can build the condos for families, but you need the infrastructure there. You want to have your entire lifestyle within two to three kilometres."

Condos that have families in mind give them the opportunity to experience the excitement and

accessibility of city living in a comfortable setting.

Blending town and country, this new crop of condo buyers are seeking out projects in Montreal that are centrally-located and accommodate both young and old. Some might say this lifestyle is truly the best of both worlds.