

CONDO OF THE YEAR – 4th Quarter Finalist

Quantum 2 North (Q2N) - TSCC #1965

BY MICHELLE RAMSAY-BORG AND JAMES RUSSELL

CCI Toronto is thrilled to announce that Quantum 2 North (TSCC #1965) has been selected as the fourth quarter finalist of the annual Condo of the Year Award. Congratulations are extended to TSCC #1965!

Further details on this contest may be found on the CCI-T website at www.ccitoronto.org. The 2010-2011 annual grand prize winner will be selected from amongst the four quarter finalists in the late summer of 2011 and will be announced at the CCI Toronto Annual General Meeting in the Fall of 2011.

Blue Beacon for Green Living



When you fly over Toronto at night you're sure to notice Quantum 2 North (Q2N), Fourth Quarter Finalist for the CCI-Toronto Condo of the Year award.

The tallest building at Yonge and Eglinton is capped by a band of blue lights that shines like a beacon. TSCC 1965 Director Karen Quong says "I love that I can see my home from so far away." She also loves that her home made the CCI finals.

"At first we were really surprised to hear we made quarter finalist," says Karen, "because we're so new. But it really makes sense. Q2N, with its LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification and green initiatives is leading the way for other condos."

Off to a fast start

The 54-storey landmark Q2N set a lofty standard for other condominium corporations from day one.

In September 2008 residents started moving in and, in an efficiency that has saved owners thousands of dollars, the building was registered the next month and turned over to the board a short two months later on December 9th. According to Q2N General Manager Frank Puchiele of Minto Management Limited, “quickly turning over a condominium to a board, is a huge benefit to residents.”

Another huge financial benefit: Q2N’s green initiatives. After its first year of operation through efficient design and resident participation, MintoMidtown—which includes Q2N and its sister tower, Quantum 2 South—saw exceptional savings in energy consumption. Homeowner costs for energy and water were reduced on average \$90/month. Collectively, these savings amount to over \$1million.¹

Also as a result of its green initiatives, in May 2009 MintoMidtown became only the second high-rise condo community in Toronto to be certified LEED and the first at the Gold level². Now, two years later, only three more high-rise condos have been certified, a testament to MintoMidtown’s accomplishment.

“The envy of midtown Toronto”

“Our complex is the envy of midtown Toronto” – a sweeping statement but take one look at Q2N and it’s not hard to believe Board Member Karen Quong’s words.

MintoMidtown was conceived by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill of Chicago, the firm responsible for the Sears Tower and John Hancock Building in Chicago and Pearson International Airport’s new Terminal 1. Toronto firm Zeidler Architects, the creative powerhouse behind numerous

city landmarks including the Eaton Centre, designed the stunning buildings.

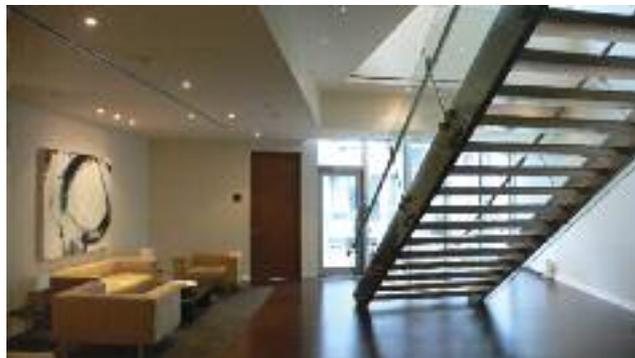


Sculpture in the courtyard

At the base of Q2N’s soaring tower is a lobby panelled floor to ceiling in solid walnut slats. It brings to mind the fabulous Galleria Italia at the Art Gallery of Ontario. A two-way fireplace and stylish seating area make it as inviting as it is beautiful.



Lounges at Q2N



The rest of the building is just as spectacular, with finely-crafted facilities such as a movie screening room, lap pool and saunas, extensive fitness facilities, fully equipped business centre, and a massage therapy room. Out on the wrap-around common area terraces you will find a meditation patio, an outdoor kitchen with professional-grade barbecues and several cozy seating areas, including one with a two-way fireplace.

In this fast-paced midtown section of the city, an area that reflects Toronto’s diverse demographics, the complex’s neighbours especially love the very welcoming street-level Ann Johnston Courtyard which is perfect for eating lunch with co-workers or writing the next chapter of that Great Canadian Novel you’ve been working on. The courtyard, which features a sculpture and chairs designed by Q2N resident and artist Lilly Otasevic, was named after one of Toronto’s longest-serving City councillors whose support was instrumental in gaining City approval for the development.

Something for everyone

Residents' needs and demographics are constantly changing. In 2008 when residents started moving in, quite a few were first-time buyers. Others were people who moved in as renters but liked Q2N so much they have since purchased a condo there. Many of the young couples are now having babies and, lately, several resale condos have been purchased by empty-nesters transitioning from homes.

As with any effective board, Q2N has done a wonderful job of anticipating change and keeping ahead of the curve



A Monopoly Tournament and Summer BBQ are just a few of the many events organized by the Social Committee.

Trail. It's a trail that runs across midtown, and connects to other trails in the city – You can walk south to the lake if you wanted to! I walk the trail every weekend.”



From the very outset they have focused on communication, diversity and accountability.

by fostering resident-organized events like the Mix-and-Mingles, Summer BBQ and their Winter Gala which was attended by more than 200 residents. The social committee has also organized off-site events such as pub nights and outings to the Absolute Comedy Club, Toronto Blue Jay games as well as a Monopoly Tournament. All the events are well-attended as are the completely spontaneous condo-hopping nights when residents have two or three gatherings—all within the complex—to choose from. It's a home of neighbours who quickly become friends.

But it wasn't the pub nights or the Winter Gala that convinced prospective buyers, “the area sold the place”, Karen says.

Q2N Assistant Property Manager Mirella Kovach points out that “One of the advantages of living at Yonge and Eglinton is that it doesn't have the urban jungle feel of downtown.” Karen adds, “Within steps, we have shops, boutiques, tons of restaurants, clubs and all the services you could ask for. Not only that, but Quantum2North is so close to the Kay Gardner Beltline

A big welcome mat

The Yonge and Eglinton business community has been especially welcoming to the residents of Q2N. At their first Summer BBQ, attended by approximately 500 residents from both towers, The Keg Steakhouse provided their restaurant-quality burgers at a subsidized cost, and pre-cooked hundreds of burgers to speed up service to residents. Starbucks joined in by serving complimentary summer-perfect iced tea. While The Keg and Starbucks occupy Quantum2North's store front retail space, the corporation opted to further support local businesses by having the salads catered by the Pickle Barrel, and purchasing ice cream treats at the local Metro grocery store.

“Support from local merchants was phenomenal,” enthuses Mirella, who points out that in addition to the flood of local busi-

nesses offering discounts. Bicycles were purchased to start the residents' bicycle sharing program. As well, after successful lobbying the City installed a traffic light at the entrance to the property, which means the subway station is only 35 steps away from the lobby.

Exceptional management and oversight

It's no wonder that Q2N and its sister tower were recently featured in the



L-R: Mirella Kovach, Frank Puchiele and Karen Quong.

National Post Homes section. The City praised it too: “The southeast quadrant (of the Yonge-Eglinton Centre) has been transformed with the construction of the ‘Minto Midtown’ project... This has improved the public realm along this stretch of Yonge Street.”³

Much of the credit for Q2N’s celebrity goes to the Board which firmly believes, in Frank’s words, that, “Success here is the collaboration of management and Board and transparency”.

The members of the Board are Ken Sloan (Chair), Bernard Ornstein, Diana White, Jennifer O'Brien and Karen Quong. The composition of the board reflects the building’s population, a mosaic of young urban professionals and people transitioning from houses. The job of managing the 556-suite tower is deftly handled by Frank, Mirella, six office staff, and four concierges. Repairs and cleaning are contracted out.

“We are much more than a condo complex, we are very much a community,” says Mirella. The Board and management place community spirit as a high priority because they recognize that only a strong sense of community can ensure the health and happiness of the residents.

From the very outset they have focused on communication, diversity and accountability. Of course, because many of the residents are first-time condo owners, they didn’t know many of the protocols surrounding condo living. “That’s the importance of great property management, they give homeowners great direction,” says Karen.

The Building Resident Advisory Group (BRAG) helps to maintain two-way communication between management and residents, as does Q2N’s Facebook page and its website (www.quantum2north.com), where residents can keep track of what’s going on and even place an online service request that goes directly to property management. The online system, which



Courtyard chairs designed by resident Lilly Otasevic.



Two-way fireplace on the Terrace.

is monitored by a board member, fosters accountability and gives management an overview of building issues.

Three of management’s current projects are: 1) developing a “Did you know” list; 2) creating a resident’s package; and, 3) reviewing regulations and security to create improvements. Frank points out, “We’re going through a learning curve concerning the corporation rules and regulations. Some of them are far too general, but it’s the same with any new condo.”

Leading in LEED

Q2N received its LEED Gold certification on the strength of its green-focused design, features such as: roughed-in wet-waste chutes on every floor; the courtyard fountain and the complex’s grass irrigation, which run on recovered rain water; in-suite dual flush toilets; master off-on switch and heat recovery unit in every suite; and motion-activated corridor and stairwell lights. These are all initiatives that not only work to save our planet but have the added benefit of lowering the building’s common element fees.

“We have good participation in our organic waste program”, says Frank, who points out that Q2N’s hazardous and e-waste program was successful from the very beginning. Each suite is billed separately for water and hydro, fostering conservation and accountability for those two difficult-to-control budget line items.

The future

Q2N’s success at incorporating green building systems and sustainability while fostering community spirit and effective management has set a standard for all condos—new and existing—to strive for. The residents’ strong sense of neighbourhood will ensure that Q2N remains a beacon, shining brightly to guide and inspire Canada’s condominium industry.

1 Minto press release ‘Minto Midtown - Largest LEED® Gold Certified Condominium in North America’, dated December 17, 2009.

2 ‘LEED Certified Projects in Canada’, published by Canada Green Building Council, April 14, 2011.

3 ‘City-Initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments, Yonge-Eglinton Centre Focused Review – Final Report’ published January 5, 2009. ■