

New chapter begins for Novella

Grand opening for Springbank Properties' project set for this weekend

SHAWN CONNER
SPECIAL TO THE SUN



Left: The standard Novella kitchen package includes a Bertazzoni gas range along with a Fisher

The 77-unit Novella project houses 16 different layouts — named for literary figures or references — that feature spacious floor plans and clever storage solutions.



As first-time homebuyers, Shirley and Jerry Low figured out what they want — and what they don't.

"The condo we're living in is our first purchase," Shirley Low said. Both in their late twenties, she and her husband currently live in a two-bedroom in the Brentwood area.

"We've been here for two-and-a-half years now, and we know we want a bigger kitchen. We don't have an island. We knew what worked and what didn't."

Fortuitously, the couple found exactly the kind of home they want — in nearby Burnaby, at the presentation centre for boutique development Novella.

"We walked through, and we realized all the features would work with our lifestyle," said Low, who grew up in the area.

Upon Novella's completion — in 2016 — the Lows will move into a 828-square-foot two-bedroom suite. Theirs is one of 16 different floor plans in the building, all with wide, spacious layouts that bely a careful attention to storage and space — and all named after authors or literary references.

"The kitchen was the first thing that caught our eye," Low said. "The size reminds me of the one my mom has in terms of spaciousness and the storage. There's a lot of room for pots and pans. And with the layout, I don't feel like any square footage is wasted. Right now, we have a long hallway from the entrance. The rectangular floor layout at Novella just worked for us. Nothing's wasted at all."

Hidden kickplate drawers, pullout spice racks, banks of pot-drawers, garbage and recycling under the sink help maximize kitchen space. Customizable options — at no charge in pre-sales — include a pullout or microwave hood fan.

"Because of the way the building is built, we have wide and shallow plans, which allows us to be way more efficient,

bank Properties Architectural design: Rositch Hemphill Architects Interior design: Port + Quarter Marketing: TAC Marketing Website: novella.ca Sales centre: 170 - 3355 North Rd. Burnaby Hours: noon - 5 p.m., Sat - Thurs Sales contact: Vanessa Miller 778

558-6377 Novella contact: 604-563-5777 Occupancy: complete fall 2016

Novella

Project location: 711 Breslay St.,

Coquitlam Project size: 77 1-to-3-bedroom homes in a seven-storey building Residence size: 530 - 1,513 sq. ft Price: from \$274,900 Developer: Spring-

and let in way more natural light than in a typical highrise,” said John Ritchie, founder and principal of developer Springbank Properties.

As in the other 76 homes in the seven-storey condo, the Lows’ kitchen comes with an island and a full range of high-end kitchen appliances.

The standard package includes a Fisher & Paykel fridge, a Bertazzoni gas range, and a Blomberg dishwasher.

“We think it’s the best counter-depth fridge on the market,” Ritchie said of the Fisher & Paykel. And the Bertazzoni “was the coolest stove we could find,” he added.

“Every piece was picked on its merit. We didn’t want to go with a package.”

Elsewhere in the units, space is further maximized by deep closet space. Ritchie says no detail was spared in maximizing each home’s square footage.

“We spent hundreds of hours going over our plans, moving walls inches to make sure we had exactly what we wanted — to make sure you get that eight inches that you need, just so you have somewhere to put your detergents,” he said. “It makes a big difference in peoples’ lives. If you don’t have that, where are you going to put them?”

The laminate flooring in common areas is “some of the most durable you can get,” said Katelyn Hollenbeck, Springbank project manager. “You can drag things across the floor and it doesn’t scratch.”



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Novella's grand opening is from noon to 5 p.m. today and Sunday.



Pullout spice racks are among the storage solutions in the Novella kitchens.



Kitchen storage is maximized with the help of kickplate drawers, pot drawers and garbage and recycling under the sink.

Other features include brushed chrome ceiling light fixtures in each bedroom. For the tech-minded — which, these days, is just about everyone — USB outlets are set into the wall by the bed for charging electronics.

In the bathroom, soaker tubs and handset porcelain tiles (in homes with two or more bedrooms) are notable features. Here, too, space is utilized as much as possible.

"Each bathroom is looked at individually," Ritchie said. "If we can get a bank of drawers in, we'll put a bank of drawers in."

Options include a wine fridge, roller blinds, air conditioning, custom built-in shelving in the bedroom closets, and laminate throughout.

The developer calls the outdoor areas, patios and balconies, "oversized"

compared to other highrises.

"We wanted to make sure you had room to put a table and four chairs on your patio or balcony, so you can actually use it," Ritchie said.

The exterior will include concrete, glass and stone elements and a landscaped entrance. The building's amenities include a guest room on the first floor and a communal courtyard.

Novella's concrete construction "is very unusual," Ritchie said. "You don't see them. It's a very high-end form of construction, and not usually found in the suburbs."

In many ways, the Lows are the target buyer. Shirley works nearby on Burnaby Mountain at SFU; Jerry works at home, but his company has opened an office in Gastown. Once the Evergreen Line opens, in the summer of 2016, a quick five-to-six-minute walk will take him to Burquitlam Station and a short commute to the office.

The location is also near parks, trails, and shopping. Burquitlam Park is steps away, Vancouver Golf Club a 10-minute bike ride or four-minute drive. Lougheed Town Centre is within walking distance and Coquitlam City Centre is 20 minutes away by car.

Novella is Springbank's fourth development, after three townhome projects, in the West Coquitlam neighbourhood since 2007.

"We've seen this neighbourhood go through quite a big transition," Ritchie said. "Densities have increased throughout."

Ritchie calls the 602-square-foot one-bedroom Bradbury plan, which starts around \$300,000, Springbank's "bread-and-butter" plan for the development. The low-end Novella price, \$274,900, will get the buyer a 530-square-foot one-bedroom, the Atwood.

Some floor plans, like the Lawrence and Kipling, are one-offs and/or sold out. Larger floor plans include the Munros

(two bedrooms and den), Oates (three bedrooms and den), Potter (two bedrooms and den) and Quinn (three bedrooms and den).

With their bigger Novella plans, Springbank is pitching to downsizers already in the area.

"Everybody says there's a market for these big plans, but it's risky," Ritchie said. "We're selling them right up to the point we pour our suspended slab. After that, we're either going to continue to do them, or go back to our one- and two-bedroom (homes)." So far, they've sold four of these larger plans, including the 1,444-square-foot Newbery.

The Lows, who pre-bought their current home, are looking forward to their move.

"I think my husband is more excited that I am," Shirley Low said. "He's already going, 'Where are we going to put this, what are we going to buy to make it look nicer?' It seems like this purchase is even more exciting than our first home because we know what we want, and what we're going to get is what we've been hoping for."