

Terra Verde 16 condos at 1020 Richard Street by Abstract Development Inc.

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Sun

Saturday, June, 18, 2011



The front elevation of Mike Miller's Terra Verde townhouse development in Fairfield.

TERRA VERDE Project location: 1020 Richardson Street, Victoria
Project size: 16 units consisting of four blocks of four
Residence size: 1,552 - 1,654 sq. ft. 3-beds or 2-beds plus media room/den (flex room);
4 bathrooms, front/rear patios and private secured two-car garage
Developers: Terra Verde Developments Ltd./Abstract Developments Inc.
Builder: Abstract Developments Inc. Architect: Vic Davies
Architecture Interior design: Robyn Bryson Price: \$749,900 - \$799,900
Monthly fees: The strata fees estimated at approximately \$200 per month
Contact: Sales team's Mark Lawless Telephone: 250-744-3301
Email: info@terraverdeliving.com Website: www.terraverdeliving.com



The display suite kitchen

Occupancy: Immediate How does an auto body painter become an award-winning builder of high-end single-family homes and condominiums? For Mike Miller of Victoria, it's the classic story that began with a single house. He added a suite to it, lived in it and rented out the main part of the house. When he had enough equity, he purchased another house and repeated the process. Again and again. Eventually, according to his marketing director, Todd MacKenzie, Miller accumulated about 50 rental properties, along with strong residual income and good relationships with lenders. When he couldn't hold on to any more properties, he started buying old character homes in Fairfield, one of Victoria's oldest neighbourhoods, and divided them into two or more units and sold them individually. "He was really successful at that," MacKenzie says, "he just had a great eye for it, and then he started buying up pieces of land where he also did land development." Soon Miller was building custom homes for clients and working his way around Victoria's waterfront, from Fairfield to Oak Bay, to the Uplands and most recently, to Gordon Head. It wasn't until Miller started doing the character home redevelopments in Fairfield that he gave up his auto bodywork. Today, says MacKenzie, Miller "knows as much or more than any one of his journeyman carpenters" at Abstract Development, where he employs about 50 people. Over the years, Abstract has won 32 "gold" home-building awards, including a gold Georgie Award in 2006 for best townhouse development in B.C. That project - Terra Rose - is just two blocks from Miller's latest townhouse project - Terra Verde. Both are in the heart of Fairfield and close to Cook Street Village, Beacon Hill Park, Dallas Road waterfront and even downtown. In fact, Terra Verde scores 93 out of 100 in its "walkability", according to the website Walkscore.com. That means it's a "walker's paradise", where daily errands do not require a car. While you might think it would be hard to top Terra Rose, MacKenzie says the company is always trying to improve on its last project. In this case, for instance, Terra Verde offers buyers more secure parking. Instead of having one large underground lot for all owners, each with designated spots, Miller went one step further and built self-contained twocar garages within the common underground parking area, each with its own door. "It is a pretty unique feature, you don't see this very often," MacKenzie says. "When prospective buyers have come through, they're 'wow'; they're very impressed by the fact they've got their own garage." Owners can access the lower floor of their three-storey homes from the garage without running into any of their neighbours in a shared hallway or unattractive cement staircase. The 16 homes at Terra Verde are clustered in groups of four and also boast other features you don't commonly see in multi-family homes, such as hot water radiant floor heating throughout, individual electric boilers to provide hot water on demand, and efficient gas fireplaces. Because gas fireplaces need to be vented, most developers don't put them into townhouses. Mike Miller and his team neatly solved the problem of venting by building two separate walls between units with a dead air space in-between. "So the walls don't actually touch," explains MacKenzie, providing the additional bonus of soundproofing. Terra Verde has a West Coast style, with a flat roof, brick and cedar siding exteriors, engineered rainscreen protection, entertainment-sized patios both front and back, and a professionally landscaped courtyard. Inside, the two-or threebedroom units have four bathrooms, hardwood floors and gourmet kitchens. They're open concept, with bright, south-facing exposures. Terra Verde is almost completely sold (four units left as of June 8), with four units selling before the company even broke ground. MacKenzie says that has a lot to do with the company's reputation of building "exceptional homes with unquestioned craftsmanship" (the company's motto). "Reputation builds confidence in buyers, that they can trust what they've been promised," he says. That's true for William Street and his wife Anna, who have purchased a property before from Abstract Developments. "We were perfectly satisfied with the first home, but wanted something a bit larger and a bit more independent -so the townhouse was perfect for us," writes Street by email from Edmonton, where they live most of the year. "We are still working," adds Street, a music professor at the University of Alberta, "but look forward to moving to Victoria within a few years. We still come frequently and love the town house's proximity to the sea, the harbour and restaurants and amenities." Mike Miller has also earned accolades from business associates. He was recently named Business Person of the Year by the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce. That, says Bruce Carter, the chamber's chief executive officer, was "due to [his] commitment to excellence as a builder and his dedication to improving his community." © Copyright (c) The Vancouver Sun

