

Brizo 19 19 condos in an 4-storey building by Mike Geric

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An artist's rendering shows the Brizo 19 townhouse and condo project in Victoria by developer Mike Geric Construction

BRIZO 19

Location: Mayfair area of Victoria

Project size/ scope: A 19-unit, four-storey residential low-rise of wood construction. Three townhomes and 16 condominiums ranging from studios to two bedroom + den.

Price: from \$200,000 to mid \$300,000s.

Monthly Strata fees: estimated at \$175 per month depending on size of unit.

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Developers: Mike Geric Construction Ltd.

General Contractor: Mike Geric Construction Ltd.

Architect: Eric Barker Architect Inc. Occupancy: April 30, 2013

The company that's best known for developing the upscale Broadmead and family-oriented Royal Oak neighbourhoods in B.C.'s capital region has launched its first project in the city of Victoria itself.

Mike Geric Construction demolished three houses last week across from Mayfair Mall to make way for a 19-unit condo and townhouse complex on Speed Avenue.

Brizo 19 is also aimed at a different market than the relatively well-heeled residents of Broadmead and the middle class families of Royal Oak. It's targeting young, first-time homebuyers who want to be close to downtown, but not necessarily in it.

Speed Avenue is a short dead-end street, not much longer than a cul-de-sac, and surrounded by busy streets with industrial and commercial properties.

Ed Geric, the president of Mike Geric Construction, says the area was a little neglected just a couple of years ago, but is now an up-and-coming neighbourhood. "Starbucks really cleaned up a lot of stuff there. When the brand-new Starbucks went in right next door and there was an office building there that just got redone and a condominium a couple years ago - and now with the rezoning and everything else, it's changing quite a bit in that area."

The rezoning to multi-family allows Geric and other developers to increase density. And for the first time, Geric will be building units smaller than 1,000 square feet; the 16 condos will range in size from roughly 500 square feet to 1,000 square feet, while the three townhomes will be well over 1,000 square feet.

It's a big change from the days when his father Mike, a builder from Winnipeg, moved to Victoria and slowly started buying lots and constructing single-family homes.

Broadmead Farm, once owned by the Guinness family - the same family that developed much of West Vancouver and built the Lion's Gate Bridge under the name British Pacific Properties - was ready for development in the 1970s and Mike Geric was the first developer to buy tracts of land there and develop multiple houses at the same time.

"He loved the Broadmead area," Ed Geric says.

"We were the No. 1 singlefamily home builder in the Broadmead area." When Ed joined the family business about 20 years ago, he started looking at multi-family developments and now has 10 or 15 under his belt. "I did Broadmead Terrace and that's about 100 units, Heatherdale is 90 units, The Duval is 50 units, a new one coming up in Royal Oak called Travino Lane is 250 units -"

Brizo 19 is small by comparison, so small Geric says he doesn't need to pre-sell any of the units and won't begin marketing them until framing is well underway, probably in November.

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