THE VANCOUVER SUN

Patina 256 condos in an 42-storey tower by Concert

A commanding presence in downtown Vancouver, Patina will rise 42 floors from the preserved façade of the 60-year old YMCA building.

Michael Sasges

Sun

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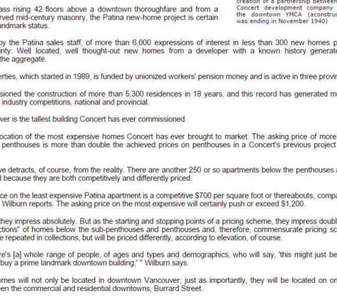
New Patina homes will be situated on one of the divides between the city's downtown residential and commercial districts



The principal living space at Patina will have a contemporary open feel and acknowledge one of the chief environmental considerations the interior designer took to assignment: "views, views and views."

PATINA

Project location: Barclay at Burrard, downtown Vancouver

Project size: 256 apartments, 42-storey building

Residence size: 550 sq. ft. -- 3,200 sq. ft.

Prices: $375,000 -- $6 million +

Sales centre: Burrard and Alberni, above the Tiffany's store

Hours: 11 a.m. -- 6 p.m., Sat -- Thu

Telephone: 604-675-9600

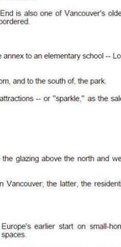
Web: discoverpatina.com

Developer: Concert

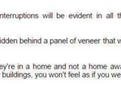
Architecture: Endall Elliot Associates, Stantec

Interiors: Scott Trepp Interior Design

Occupancy: Early 2011



The kitchens will be at once efficient and welcoming.



The Patina new-home project is the creation of a partnership between the Concert development company and the downtown YMCA (construction was ending in November 1940)

A tower of glass rising 42 floors above a downtown thoroughfare and from a base of preserved mid-century masonry, the Patina new-home project is certain to ascend to landmark status.

Registration, by the Patina sales staff, of more than 6,000 expressions of interest in less than 300 new homes proclaims another certainty: Well located, well thought-out new homes from a developer with a known history generate robust responses, in the aggregate.

Concert Properties, which started in 1989, is funded by unionized workers' pension money and is active in three provinces.

It has commissioned the construction of more than 5,300 residences in 18 years, and this record has generated more than 110 awards in industry competitions, national and provincial.

The Patina tower is the tallest building Concert has ever commissioned.

It is also the location of the most expensive homes Concert has ever brought to market. The asking price of more than $6 million for the penthouses is more than double the achieved prices on penthouses in a Concert's previous project in West Vancouver.

That superlative detracts, of course, from the reality. There are another 250 or so apartments below the penthouses and they are well priced because they are both competitively and differently priced.

The asking price on the least expensive Patina apartment is a competitive $700 per square foot or thereabouts, company vice-president Rod Wilburn reports. The asking price on the most expensive will certainly push or exceed $1,200.

As extremes, they impress absolutely. But as the starting and stopping points of a pricing scheme, they impress doubly. There are five "collections" of homes below the sub-penthouses and penthouses and, therefore, commensurate pricing schedules. Homes may be repeated in collections, but will be priced differently, according to elevation, of course.

"We think there's [a] whole range of people, of ages and types and demographics, who will say, 'this might just be the last opportunity to buy a prime landmark downtown building,' " Wilburn says.

The Patina homes will not only be located in downtown Vancouver, just as importantly, they will be located on one of the borders between the commercial and residential downtowns, Burrard Street.

The eventual Patina lobby will be located on Barclay, between Burrard and Thurlow.

To turn west on leaving the lobby and the building will be to head towards the traditional West End.

The pioneering neighbourhood of densification in the downtown peninsula, the West End is also one of Vancouver's oldest neighbourhoods. Its streets are -- accordingly and gorgeously -- tree-lined and garden-bordered.

The neighbourhood's traffic has been calmed over the years.

Nelson Park, currently undergoing reconstruction, is a block away from Patina, as is the annex to an elementary school -- Lord Roberts - which opened its doors in 1901.

The preserved Victorian and Edwardian residences of Mole Hill are across the street from, and to the south of, the park.

To turn east on leaving the Patina lobby will be to head downtown and toward all its attractions -- or "sparkle," as the sales literature reports.

" . . . the location gives you the best of both worlds," Wilburn comments.

Indeed, Patina will face its "worlds" with two styles of window arrangements.

The glazing of the south and east elevations of the tower will be "commercial," while the glazing above the north and west elevations will be "residential."

The former will acknowledge the commercial, or working-day, proximities of downtown Vancouver; the latter, the residential proximities of the West End.

Behind all that glass, of course, will be the product that has interested so many.

Two histories will announce themselves in the Patina apartments, Concert's, and Europe's earlier start on small-home residency. Tile from Italy will be underfoot, for example, in all entries and principal living spaces.

A German company will supply the sliding glass doors through which dens and offices will be accessed. Other German companies will supply most of the kitchen appliances.

More germanely, maximization of architectural features and minimization of their interruptions will be evident in all the apartments.

Doors, for example, will be overheight, at seven feet. The Liebherr refrigerator will be hidden behind a panel of veneer that will match the veneers Patina buyers select for their cabinetry.

Concert has a way of doing apartments that ensures occupants and visitors know they're in a home and not a home away from home, vice-president Wilburn says. "When you're in our suites, when you're in our buildings, you won't feel as if you were in a commercial hotel."

Flat-finished ceilings, rather than textured ceilings, are one example. It may seem a small difference, but any homeowner who has asked a drywaller to tape and mud a ceiling by hand, rather than spray it, will know it isn't.

Patina's interior designer, Scott Trepp, reports that two environmental considerations guided his approach to the assignment - "views, views and views" and "the flexibility of the floor plans."

"One of many benefits of Patina residency will be the flexibility of the floor plans," he told The Vancouver Sun.

"They will allow for very open spaces and, in some of the plans, provide for more intimate alcoves through the use of the Raumplus sliding-interior partitions from Germany."

The prospects beyond the exterior walls of glass "are another visual element to be emphasized.

"The views, this backdrop, definitely set a tone and cannot be ignored. In fact, the choice of open-weave rollerblinds allows visual access to the landscape day and night. Further, varying levels of sheen have been incorporated to reflect, and play on, the twinkle of the city lights."

In commenting about the furnishing and accessorizing that occupants of the Patina homes will eventual undertake, he said: "The furnishing of a home of any kind is a direct response to the location, the bones of the space and the household's needs and desires.

"As such, there isn't one answer for every person or one answer for one person."

The Patina open plans mean each piece of furniture will be "part of the overall composition and can therefore work with other pieces as easily as stand on its own.

"This also enhances the flexibility of the spaces and how they are used.

"After all, one of the draws to living in the heart of the city is the flexibility that it offers the owner. The home, therefore, is a reflection of this flexibility."

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NEW YMCA FACILITY PART OF PATINA PROJECT

The Patina new-home project is the creation of a partnership between the Concert development company and the downtown YMCA (right, as construction was ending in November, 1940).

In return for the development rights to the property, Concert will build a new YMCA facility on the site.

Concert expects the replacement facility, a six-storey glazed atrium, will be ready in late 2009.

Concert has incorporated some of the brick cladding from the original Burrard Street facility into the Patina design.

"The downtown YMCA building, constructed in 1940 by the prominent local firm of McCarter and Nairne, is a 'B' category building on the Vancouver Heritage Register," city staff said to city council in a report that endorsed the rezoning of the property for residential development.

"The building's historic value comes from the 'late moderne' style of the facade.

"It is also a good example of the urban context at that time, being highly visible in a prominent heritage precinct comprised of the St. Andrew's - Wesley United Church, the Dal Grauer substation, The Electra, the former BC Hydro Building, and First Baptist Church . . . ."

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PATINA DETAILS

Not all the Patina master bathrooms will separate tub and shower, but the plan to which the show home was built will.

Tile floors to be heated

The square shower head will be standard in both master and second bathrooms.

Floors of porcelain tile will be heated, again in both bathrooms.

Marble will top the counters. Sinks will be undermounted and filled from a single-lever faucet of polished chrome.

Towel bars and the toilet-paper holder, too, fill be finished in polished chrome.

Toilets will be dual flush.

Cabinetry will be faced in one of three finishes, as in the Patina kitchens.

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PEEKING INSIDE PATINA

The households that will reside in the two Patina plans shown here will be party-wall neighbours on 22 floors, from the 15th to the 36th.

Both apartments are south-elevation apartments, and have a glass-tower location that makes air conditioning an imperative. Patina's developer, Concert Properties, will install air conditioning in every Patina home.

Households that will reside in the apartment on the left will reside in two-bed, two-bath homes of almost 1,300 square feet, with den and office.

The show home in the Patina sales centre was built to this plan.

Households that will reside in the apartment on the right will reside in a two-bed, two-bath apartment of almost 1,060 square feet.

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