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## STYLE

**KITCHEN CINCH**  
Samantha Pynn's  
really fab,  
quiekie redo.  
*PH6*



## SAY

**HOTEL HO-HUM**  
Kelvin Browne  
checks out the  
check-in life.  
*PH9*

## SELL

**NEW HEIGHTS**  
The luxe life  
can be yours  
for \$2.4-million.  
*PH12*



## THE BEST CONDO COVERAGE IN THE GTA



A once-sketchy stretch and its environs welcome new condos *By Jennifer Febraro*

# OH, OSSINGTON!

Shane Fenton bounds into the showroom of Motif. The energy of springtime in Toronto buzzes around him. Mr. Fenton, however, is not your average condo developer. At 27, he's much younger than most builders, and embodies the zeitgeist of Ossington Avenue where Motif is located: He's arty yet entrepreneurial, rugged yet refined.

Rapid gentrification has transformed the street into a Toronto version of Brooklyn's eclectic Williamsburg. Mr. Fenton's building not only reflects this community, but touts the neighbourhood itself as the condo's greatest amenity.

"The kind of buyers we are seeing are as eclectic as the neighbourhood," enthuses Mr. Fenton, the developer of the nearly sold-out Motif Toronto Lofts and vice-president of Reserve Properties. "We have actors and Bay Street lawyers, so it's hard to generalize."

What the buyers have in common, however, is a craving for community. Not one manufactured by a condo developer showing rooftop walkways or 10,000-square-foot gyms, but a community that pre-exists the development itself.

Pekka Varvas, president of Drive Agency, had the neighbourhood at the forefront of his advertising campaign for Motif early on. "One of the biggest principles of real estate is location, location, location," Mr. Varvas says. "Being in the centre of the art and design district draws a sophisticated audience. [You can't] manufacture the vibrant fabric of this community — from restaurants to galleries to the individuals who live here."

Step into Motif's showroom and you feel like you're in a contemporary art gallery. Beautifully conceived by II by IV Design, Motif's space, and even its advertising, lures buyers with a dream. (Perhaps, through osmosis, purchasers can become artists themselves?) Inside what will soon be a charcoal brick façade and rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows, Motif's information package encourages buyers to "zig instead of zag ... This could be your most prolific work yet!" Prices start at \$315,900 for a 636 sq. ft. loft.

The nearby Drake is arguably responsible for Ossington's growth. Areas east and west of it have blossomed since the hotel-

cum-art hotspot opened in 2004. No other street has reaped the benefits as greatly as Ossington, an area that juggled the spillover crowds from full club and karaoke nights hosted in the establishments further west — including the Drake, the Gladstone and the Beaver.

Now Ossington's strip boasts its own attractions that draw crowds, not just the stragglers from Queen West. There are the restaurants with lineups (Pizzeria Libretto, Union, Foxley — to name just a few), the bars (The Ossington, Sweaty Betty's, Levack Block), the coffee roastery (Ideal) the fashion (I Miss You Vintage, Jonathan & Olivia, LAB Consignment), the fitness (Yoga.Space), the interior decorating (Vintage Antiques, Modern Interiors, Ministry of Interior Design) and the galleries (Angell, Xspace, 129 Ossington, MKG, Meta, Art Space, AWOL).

Anyone old enough to remember the landscape 10 years ago will attest that the change of this once-boring stretch between Dundas and Queen into a scene is dramatic. "I think a lot of developers were inspired by the revitalization at the Centre for Addiction and

Mental Health," says Prishram Jain, head of Tact Design and architect for numerous condo developments in the neighbourhood. "With roads able to pass through the institutions, the city just flows in a different way."

Mr. Jain has recently finished designing Q Loft Condos at 1205 Queen St. W. for Royal Queen Developments — a 10-minute walk from Ossington. Advertised as "the new wave on Queen West," the handsome condo will rise eight storeys. Renderings showcase a condo in conversation with its neighbourhood. "The brick exterior is echoing the materials of historic buildings around it," Mr. Jain says. "When designing this, we weren't aiming for it to be a landmark, but to be contextualized inside the neighbourhood itself, to fit in rather than stand out."

While Q will maintain a medium-sized fitness centre, Mr. Jain explains that purchasers who want big in-house amenities usually move to larger buildings. The architect, also responsible for Two Gladstone and Eight Gladstone (currently in development), explains:

**OSSINGTON continued on PH4**

Developer Shane Fenton of the nearly sold-out Motif Lofts on Ossington Avenue.

AARON LYNETT / NATIONAL POST