

# URBAN CAPITAL MAGAZINE



**WHAT WE WERE  
UP TO IN 2011**

**THE MONTREAL PHENOMENON  
TRENDS IN DESIGN**

**+ INDUSTRIAL CROSSINGS  
A CITY DISTRICT REBORN  
SAVING THE METROPOLITAN BIBLE CHURCH**



**Cover** The illuminated lightbox enclosing Tableau's model suite, designed by Cecconi Simone.

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# Unlike anything else...

The first residential development on Toronto's new waterfront, River City is designed by Montreal-based Saucier+Perrotte to look unlike anything else. LEED Gold, carbon neutral, and surrounded by some of the city's most spectacular urban parks, it is Toronto's groundbreaker for the twenty-first century.

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**PHASE ONE:**

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river  city

In a world where everything is digital, and often fleeting, it's nice every so often to have something to hold on to and keep as a record. It's for this reason that we decided this year to start an Urban Capital annual. As much for ourselves as for people interested in us, we wanted a record of what we've been up to, what's been happening around us, and what kinds of things have influenced us.

In this, then, our inaugural issue, we look at some of the big events and occurrences that took place in our world over the last year. First and foremost, obviously, would be our project launches and completions, and we had a few of them: **Boutique**, **River City**, **Nicholas**, **Tableau** and **Trinity Towns** in Toronto, and **Central** Phases 1 and 2 and **Hideaway** in Ottawa were either completed, had sales launches, or saw construction get underway in the past twelve months. All of the above Toronto-based activity allowed us to hit the **Top 10** in GTA sales by volume in 2010, a big milestone for us (albeit, we were 10th).

But in the pages ahead we also look at some of the other things that we have been involved in in 2010 and 2011. Like our **Trends in Design** series, a set of five design-related evenings that we ran at our Central sales office in Ottawa from September 2010 to February 2011. Featuring some of this country's best-known designers, these evenings were fast paced, entertaining and informative, and we recount them starting on Page 15.

In a **City District Reborn**, starting on Page 32, we take you behind the hoarding at the West Don Lands, an area of Toronto that has been outside the city's consciousness for the past thirty years, but is today undergoing a massive revitalization (of which our River City project is a major component).

And on Page 36, in **The Montreal Phenomenon**, we look at a new trend that we in fact had a large hand in creating: the arrival of Montreal designers on the Toronto development scene.

Finally, we give you a little taste of what's involved in getting a condo project to market; introduce you to Shayne Dark, the artist behind "Nova", the 60 foot sculpture that pierces the "table" of our Tableau project; and explain how we spent upwards of \$1 million to preserve the façade of the Metropolitan Bible Church (and ask whether it was really worth it).

In every magazine, there are a couple of key contributors that help make it happen. In our case there are two: **Austin Macdonald**, a Montreal-based marketing professional but also part-time writer who wrote many of the pieces in here, and also has sold condos for us in his past life. And also the **Walsh Group**, one of our "go-to" marketing agencies, which designed this magazine for us. So if you like the look of what follows and need marketing help, you know where to go.

We hope that you enjoy the content that follows, and if you do, please get back to us at [info@urbancapital.ca](mailto:info@urbancapital.ca), or on our facebook page: [www.facebook.com/UrbanCapital](http://www.facebook.com/UrbanCapital).

See you next year.



David Wex  
Partner

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### URBAN CAPITAL PROPERTY GROUP

17 Nelson Street  
Toronto, ON M5V 0G2

(416) 304-0431  
[info@urbancapital.ca](mailto:info@urbancapital.ca)

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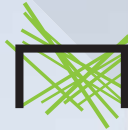
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DEVELOPMENTS

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# A YEAR IN OUR LIFE

September 2010

October 2010

## SEPTEMBER 2010

### THE big PICTURE

#### David Peterson and Stuart Lyon kick off River City's "the Big Picture"

David Peterson, former Ontario Premier and the Pan Am Games bid chair, and Stuart Lyon, lead designer of Vancouver's Olympic Village, kick off River City's "Big Picture" series with a look at the legacy of international sporting events on surrounding neighbourhoods, and the likely impact of the Pan Am Village going up just south of **River City**. View movie at [www.rivercitytoronto.com](http://www.rivercitytoronto.com)



#### "Trends in Design" launches with an evening of fashion

Our five-part "Trends in Design" series kicks off with Elle Canada's Lara Ceroni and a full house at Ottawa's Schad Boutique, followed by a private fashion show previewing Schad's winter offerings. See page 16.

2010/2011  
**trends  
in design**  
INTIMATE INTERACTIVE ENGAGING



## OCTOBER 2010

#### We launch Trinity Towns in Toronto's Little Italy

Comprised of forty-eight luxury townhouses with interiors designed by Cecconi-Simone, **Trinity Towns** offers that rare opportunity of modern design in one of Toronto's original downtown neighbourhoods. [www.trinitytowns.com](http://www.trinitytowns.com)



#### George Dark entertains at the second "Trends in Design"

Internationally respected planner and architect George Dark, principal at Urban Strategies, talks about the changing dynamic of Canadian cities, cities that have managed to get many more things right than wrong, and have become the vanguard of the future of urban living. See page 17.



## NOVEMBER 2010

### Huge response to launch of our “Tableau” project in Toronto

Tableau, our “condo-collaboration of art, fashion, design and good taste”, opened to the public in November, with over 300 of the available 410 units sold by the end of the launch weekend. Developed together with Malibu Investments and Alit Developments, Tableau is centred around a huge



structural table which divides the mixed-use development into three zones: Ceconi-Simone designed suites “above the table”; condo amenities “on the table”; and a huge Claude Cormier designed public square featuring a 90’ art piece by Canadian artist Shayne Dark “below the table”. See page 45.

November 2010

## DECEMBER 2010

### Urban Capital cracks the Top 10 in GTA condo sales in 2010

As reported by Urbanation, Urban Capital was one of the Top 10 GTA condominium developers by sales in 2010. With the launches of **River City**, **Nicholas** and **Tableau**, we sold over 800 units in Toronto that year, allowing us to crack the Top 10 and bring a little design savvy to the Big Boys Club!

December 2010

### Inside a park that’s outside the box

In the second Big Picture installment Vancouver-based landscape architect Greg Smallenberg and Toronto artist Paul Raff unveil their designs for Underpass Park, an innovative two and a half acre urban park being built under the Richmond-Adelaide ramps bordering **River City**. View web page and movie at [www.rivercitytoronto.com](http://www.rivercitytoronto.com)



## NOVEMBER 2010

### Andre Perrotte gives a peak behind the unique design of River City

Winner of BILD’s 2010 Best Design Award, **River City** is a project unlike any other. In the last of our “Big Picture” evenings, Andre Perrotte of Saucier + Perrotte Architects offers a glimpse inside the minds of the two designers behind this unique project. View movie at [www.rivercitytoronto.com](http://www.rivercitytoronto.com)



### “Trends in Design” No. 3 highlights OCAD’s Jules Goss

What exactly is industrial design, and how does it affect our lives? In our third “Trends in Design” night, Julian Goss of the Ontario College of Art and Design demystifies this design discipline in a fast-paced, amusing and quick-witted presentation. See page 18.

## JANUARY 2011

### Robert Claiborne explores architectural movements in "Trends in Design" No. 4

After taking listeners on a broad journey of architectural progression through the ages, design architect Robert Claiborne shared an insider's look on his upcoming Lansdowne Park stadium renewal project. *See page 19.*



### Central's heritage façade successfully lifted back into place!

In similarly snowy weather as the day it was taken down, our Ottawa contractor successfully hoisted the Metropolitan Bible Church's 1930s façade from Central's excavated basement (where it had been sitting securely since being detached from the Church building) and reattached it to the structure of our new Central condominium going up in the Church's place. Whether or not you agree that this façade should have been retained in the first place, the engineering feat in doing it is definitely something to write about. *For more on how we did this, see page 46.*



### Urban Capital moves into its new digs

In January we moved our offices to the ground floor of Boutique, our 640-unit development in the heart of Toronto's Entertainment District. Designed by Cecconi Simone, the offices reflect our willingness to take the heat with any purchasers who are unhappy with us!

January 2011

February 2011

March 2011

April 2011

May 2011

## MARCH 2011

### Elaine Cecconi wows the crowd

In the final installment of our Trends in Design series, Elaine Cecconi gives a private debrief from her 25+ years of experience in getting the most out of small spaces, and making condo amenity spaces places where you truly want to be. *See page 20.*



## APRIL 2011

### Nicholas 100% sold out, construction gets underway

With the project 100% sold out, Nicholas' sales centre is demolished and construction gets underway, but not before a huge industry party to celebrate.

[www.nicholasresidences.com](http://www.nicholasresidences.com)



## MAY 2011

### Like Us! We jump on board (a little late) and launch a Facebook page

Okay, we get it. Free media is good and having lots of friends is even better. Consider us converted! *Join us at [www.facebook.com/UrbanCapital](http://www.facebook.com/UrbanCapital)*



## JUNE 2011

### Trinity Bellwoods Townhomes is sold out and breaks ground in style

With demolition already underway on the abandoned 1960s school that our Trinity Towns project is replacing, we held an intimate cocktail party for purchasers and the design team to celebrate the start of construction. Beating even our most rosy expectations, this 48-unit townhouse development was sold out in fewer than 8 months.

### Construction gets underway at River City Phase 1

Days after Waterfront Toronto transferred us our River City lands, piling work started on River City Phase 1. River City sits on the huge berm that Waterfront Toronto is constructing as part of the West Don Lands redevelopment (see page 32), and as a result has no basement levels. Because of this, River City's structure will be up in a matter of months, not years. Expect Phase 1 completion in mid to late 2012.

[www.rivercitytoronto.com](http://www.rivercitytoronto.com)



June 2011

July 2011

August 2011



## JULY 2011

### Central – the hottest party in town

Even with temperatures in Ottawa topping 38 degrees (the hottest day on record), over 200 people came out to celebrate the upcoming completion at Central Phase 1, and the start of construction of Phase 2. No better way to beat the heat wave than with tapas, margaritas, freezies, hand-held fans and the sounds of DJ jojoflores. Check out the scene at [www.facebook.com/UrbanCapital](http://www.facebook.com/UrbanCapital)



## AUGUST 2011

### Reving up for Hideaway and River City Phase 2

We spent the summer getting ready for the launches of River City Phase 2 and Hideaway, the third phase of Central. See how we did in next year's magazine.

[www.hideawayatcentral.ca](http://www.hideawayatcentral.ca)  
[www.rivercitytoronto.com](http://www.rivercitytoronto.com)

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# 1 THE CORE GUYS

The Core guys were voted by Wallpaper Magazine as one of the world's "101 Most Exciting New Architects". Okay. But they were our first architects, and we their first client, all starting with a meeting at Starbucks at the corner of Queen and John back in 1995. Since then we have developed fifteen buildings together, including our **Nicholas** project currently underway in Toronto and our three phase **Central** project in Ottawa. So they still take our calls.



# 2 ELAINE CECCONI

Together with business partner Anna Simone, Elaine Cecconi has set the trend in condominium interior design since the condo boom started in the late 1990s. She's figured out how to do big things in small spaces (*See Night 5 in Trends in Design on page 20*), and how to make amenity spaces act like your living room. Elaine was the interior designer of our first development, **Camden Lofts**, whose layouts have endured in pretty well every Urban Capital project since. She also did the interior design for **Boutique, Tableau** and **Nicholas**, and most recently our corporate offices. So we live with Elaine every day.

# 4+ PEOPLE WE LIKE



# 3 JOJOFLORES

House Music's "Mixed Tape King", jojoflores has an international reputation for rocking the dance floor. Voted "Best International DJ" 4 year's running by New York's Undaground Archives, this Montreal based DJ has become the international ambassador for soulful dance music. Founder in 1999 of the infamous Therapy soirees - now enjoyed in 7 cities around the world, from Cape Town to San Francisco to Toronto - jojo is also CEO of gotsoul records. But the secret little reason why we like him so much: jojo is an owner at our **McGill Ouest** development in Montreal, and spins for us at many of our launch parties.



# 4 THE BROTHERS McCANN

What do Saddam Hussein, Bill Clinton and the Sheik of Dubai have in common? All have employed Mike or Peter McCann to do artistic impressions of their signature buildings - Mike with watercolour paint brushes; Peter with one million dollars of high-tech laser cutting machines from Austria. But while internationally renowned architectural renderer Michael McCann and equally renowned architectural model-maker Peter McCann have actually hardly ever worked together, they made an exception (as our personal friends) for our **Nicholas** development (*see page 29*), and for this they get the huge benefit of being on this page.

# TRINITY BELLWOODS

TOWN + HOMES



## MODERN + SPACE

Design is about to meet it's location in Toronto's Trinity Bellwoods district. A limited number of townhomes designed by Richard Wengle Architects and Cecconi Simone Interior Design are under construction after a very successful sales campaign.

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# 4 THINGS WE LIKE



Model Suite, Central Phase 1 and 2, OTTAWA

## 1 TOTAL FLEX SPACE

Our latest unit designs aspire to the highest degree of living flexibility. Floor-to-ceiling rolling doors, up to three in sequence, allow you to customize your living arrangement. One large space, or three distinct rooms, it's up to you. Concept now available in **Tableau**, **Central** and **River City**.

## 2 KITCHENS THAT DISAPPEAR

Open your kitchen up. Close it when you don't need it. The kitchens at **Tableau** allow you to work the options. Custom designed by Cecconi Simone exclusively for our latest Toronto project, these kitchens include retractable doors that allow you to "put your kitchen away". The easy way not to have to look at dirty dishes.



## 3 KILLING YOUR UNIT

Heading out of your hotel room, you pull your room card from its receptacle and kill all the lights in your suite. We're now bringing this concept to our own units with "kill switches" at your suite entry door. Switch it to off, and you automatically deactivate all of the lights in your suite, as well as set your ventilation system to its low mode. Part of our LEED energy saving strategy at **River City** and **Central**.

## 4 SUPER FAST INTERNET

Here's the fastest thing to hit Canadian cities in a very long time: super high speed 100 Mb internet access, brought to you by Beanfield Condoconnect. This ultra-broadband "fibre-to-the-home" network is being developed with Waterfront Toronto as part of its "intelligent communities" initiatives, and **River City** is the first condominium development to get it. Among the Top 10 most sophisticated networks in the world, there will be no more waiting for the latest Hollywood gossip.



**We live in a world of hyper-change**, and nowhere more than when it comes to design. Our cities are morphing into highly urban, pedestrian-oriented places to live. Technology is allowing our buildings to take new, more organic shapes. At the same time, we've realized that how we feel in these buildings is far more important than any architectural theory of how they should look.

Technology, together with a changing awareness of the environment, is also impacting the products we use, the things we wear, and the interior spaces we inhabit. All are causing big changes in our lives, and sending industrial, fashion and interior design in whole new directions.

Over five intimate and interactive evenings last fall, we got up to speed on what's going on in the design world around us, looking at design trends in city building, architecture, fashion, interior design and industrial design. Here's how it went.

# trends in design

INTIMATE INTERACTIVE ENGAGING



NIGHT 1  
FASHION TRENDS AND SHOW

NIGHT 2  
NEW THINKING IN DESIGNING CITIES

NIGHT 3  
WHERE INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IS TAKING US

NIGHT 4  
ARCHITECTURE IN OUR NEW CENTURY

NIGHT 5  
INTERIOR DESIGN THINKS SMALL



# N1

## Fashion trends and show

*Night One*

It was a dark and very rainy night last September 16th, but inside Schad's sexy, exposed-brick fashion boutique on Ottawa's Victorian Sussex Drive it was all abuzz as we launched our Trends in Design series with a night of fashion talk and show. With the open two-storey space packed full, and surrounded by Schad's latest offerings for the winter season, fashion-conscious and tech-savvy Lara Ceroni, Online Editor at Elle Canada, alighted. "Alighted — like a bird?" you ask. Yes.

"Part of the luxury of working at Elle Canada is that we have the opportunity to travel the world and study fashion," says the jet-setting fashion-maker, "We're always trying our best to stay on top of the trends and see what's happening next."

For her presentation Ceroni flew through Fall-Winter 2010's iconic looks for women, or "moods" as she prefers to call them, culled from the runways of Europe's fashion capitals. What's next? And what's next, next?

### **Mood 1: The silent treatment**

"In the age of modern technology, silence is going to be the new luxury," says Ceroni after having interviewed Roland Mouret, a French fashion designer. Today's over-stimulated environment leaves no mystery or allure, which can really affect us physically, emotionally, and romantically. "Every story is a mere mouse-click away."

The women of Mouret's collection were dower, wore black hoods and were enveloped in fabric. Mouret offered that in a busy and frenetic world people craved silence, wanting to be embraced and cocooned. At Elle, Ceroni calls it "monastic chic."

### **Mood 2: Mad women**

"Here, everything is about that polished, bourgeois dressing: cocktail dresses, tie-neck blouses, cat eye frames, and pointy pumps," says Ceroni. Some designers, like Dolce & Gabbana, modernized the look by, for example, making a necklace into an iPod holder. "The model's outfit may be very 50s inspired, conservative and quite lovely, but she's still a cool chick rocking her iPod."

### **Mood 3: Mood-less**

Calvin Klein is Ceroni's "King of Minimalism." This utilitarian approach isn't going anywhere. "Pared-down, simple sophistication resonates for so many women with its sculpted, clean lines. Any woman can wear this to look and feel confident and fashion-forward."

### **Mood 4: C'est animal**

Some women are into a conservative, clean look. Others want to rebel. Ceroni identifies with the latter and she often acts out wearing leather. "When you throw on that leather jacket and those tall boots, you feel like you own it and there's something very empowering."

### **Mood 5: Next, next?**

Looking further into the future, Ceroni cited the Berlin-based illustrator who worked with Elle for their October 2010 issue, which predicted far-flung trends. "People are going to be really into birds in the years to come. Birds are symbols of life and beauty. There is so much artifice in our world, we're seeing a re-focus on the importance of nature, which is being reflected in fashion trends and design. Birds will become a metaphor for freedom."

"It sounds a bit cooky, but it's true," says Ceroni before flying away.



### **Lara Ceroni**

On-line Editor, Elle Canada

Lara Ceroni is the senior editor for ElleCanada.com. She has been involved with the Elle Canada website since its launch in 2004 and oversees all editorial content that appears on the site, in addition to assuming the role of "host" for a multitude of ElleCanada.com videos which encompass exclusive industry events, as well as fashion and beauty launches.



# N2

## New thinking in designing cities

Night Two



### George Dark

Partner, Urban Strategies  
Head, Ottawa's Downtown Urban Design Strategy

George Dark began practice as a landscape architect in the late 1970s and is today one of Canada's most visible landscape architects and urban designers. He has worked throughout North America and the Caribbean, focusing over the past 15 years on the quality of urban environments. George is a fellow of both the Canadian and American Societies of Landscape Architects, one of only twenty people to have held joint fellowships since 1889.

George Dark, partner at Toronto-based urban design consultancy Urban Strategies and head of Ottawa's Downtown Urban Design Strategy, decodes how civilizations change over time and plans the future of cities for their future citizens.

"You have to get out front of creating your city, you can't simply stay behind it and do the criticism," he says. "We're currently doing a plan for Ottawa's Centretown and we're trying to figure out where it's going at all different kinds of layers: What's housing like? What's open space like?"

"What's really interesting, you don't have a clue what that person is going to want to do inside a city," the urban designer explains pointing at the youngest line at the bottom of a demographic chart on a slide during his presentation, the second of our Trends in Design speaker series. "You can bet that he or she is not going to walk to school uphill both ways in the snow."

"Is the city created in 1948 actually what you need for what you are doing today? Are we doing the same things?" the self-proclaimed Baby Boomer asks. "The post-war period's suburbs were highly formulaic. They involved a lot of speed and were very market driven. Uniformity was very important, like rolling out carpets, eradicating farm fields and forest for the most simplistic city one could imagine."

Dark loathes the era of suburbanization that occurred on the Greatest Generation's watch. In retrospect it was half-baked hubris and sheer folly and this fills him with a form of Boomer Guilt which in turn fueled his entertaining, hour-long screed in favour of reinvented, layered, mixed-use and historic

cities, and against unrecoverable, inefficient, sprawling, suburban communities.

Unbeknownst to the urban planners that preceded him, the post-war, middle-class, bedroom communities turned out to be municipal infrastructure time bombs. "The suburbs require massive amounts of public resources after they're built. When it comes time to replace the infrastructure, the cost is staggering," he says. "There isn't a prize at the end of the day for having created the largest suburban community. They're interlaced with pipes, gas, electricity and they're really never going to be recapitalized into anything."

The wheels of change are already in motion: "Never underestimate people riding bikes, not because they have to but because they want to," says Dark, talking about a new, emerging breed of urbanites who are disciples of the downtown, pedestrian lifestyle. In his 80-person office forty two of his colleagues don't own cars. "You could give any of these people the keys to a five-bedroom house in the suburbs. They would sell it, go for a vacation in Africa, come back, buy a condo and work out of it."

"Maybe mobility should mean closer proximity, as opposed to even trying to figure out how to move people over ever larger distances." Yet, he notes, "Intensification is still a dirty word in most cities, including Ottawa."

"Some cities are really good about discussing it in public, others a little bit less so. Here in Ottawa there has to be a lot more discussion." Dark says. "But there's an interesting and remarkable sense of place here. So I have lots of hope."



# N3

## Where industrial design is taking us

Night Three



**Julian Goss**

Program Chair,

Industrial Design Department, OCAD

Jules Goss is a designer, consultant, professor and program chair of the Industrial Design department at OCAD University. Jules has spent 20 years as a product designer and consultant, originally working for Ron Arad in the One Off Studios in London, UK and going on to design furniture, housewares and interior design. Today he is also a partner in HarrisonGoss, developing and integrating design solutions in the manufacturing and service sectors.

In perhaps the most erudite presentation of our five-part series, Julian Goss, Program Chair of the Industrial Design Department at the Ontario College of Art and Design, descended from his hovering, ivory, Alsup tabletop to lead audience members on a romp through 150 years of industrial design history.

Neither academic nor dull, Goss, a 10-year expat from Glasgow, now a naturalized and staunch Canadian who looks like Moby's bulkier brother and speaks like Sean Connery, disarmed audiences with a presentation sprinkled with banter, asides and self-effacing anecdotes, all delivered in his remaining Scottish brogue while flipping through a slideshow of his industrial-design "faves."

Half-in-jest warnings about this Glaswegian's dark, dangerous and scary edge proved unfounded. Instead, Goss teetered on the comedic. At one point, after admitting his fondness for Apple products from behind his heavy framed glasses, he paused to realize, "I'm a bit of a design cliché right now". Later, he asked the audience if they were bored. "No!" they cried. Goss went on to show a rare breadth of knowledge, connecting many design dots, from Bauhaus to Walmart.

"I find that product design is a very difficult field to encapsulate, it's huge, everything from tooth picks, to tables and chairs. Condos are an excellent example of bridging product and architecture," the designer turned educator said by way of opening to the full house at Central's presentation centre.

Although the number of students at OCAD's Industrial Design program far exceeds the number of opportunities in today's job market, many graduates will go

on to apply their industrial design training in other fields. "If you can walk away with an understanding that everything is worth thinking about and everything is worth criticizing — that's it," says Goss, "Essentially you're a designer at that point."

Somewhere between art and design, improvement and invention as well as product and experience, industrial design is applied anthropology that deals with lots of people, entire cultures in fact, through product generalization at one end, and singular products that nail the zeitgeist at the other (Think: the iPod).

In 1990, Goss started a three-year apprenticeship with industrial designer Ron Arad in London, which began when he volunteered himself for a two week stint of unpaid work. "I proved to him that I could weld and take barked commands," he recalled. "That's where I started learning about the joy of making a product instead of art: something that people engaged with, sat in, ate with, brushed their teeth with or slept on."

Over the course of the evening Goss dipped into industrial design's relatively short history, which began with the Industrial Revolution. He zoomed in on the profession's birth, the unbridled futurism of the 50s, the dubious 80s, Ikea, and the digitization revolution of the Internet age.

So what's the "x" factor for industrial or product designers, terms Goss uses interchangeably? "Ultimately you're trying to create an amazing experience, you're trying to make something beautiful, meaningful, effective, functional, planet-saving, girlfriend-getting and all of that stuff."

Pretty straightforward.



# N4

## Architecture in our new century

Night Four

Residents, visitors and dignitaries to Ottawa arrive downtown from the airport by way of the city's pastoral Rideau Canal, past stately homes, green lawns and manicured gardens. At Bank Street they take in the canal's large, graceful curve and are hit, broadside, by the gargantuan, brutal twenty storey frame of Frank Clair stadium, the city's 1970s football stadium located in the 40 acre Lansdowne Park.

An assault on one of the most beautiful places in the city, the stadium was approved for redevelopment in 2009. The commission went to Rob Claiborne, a design architect at Cannon Design. Born in California but today living in Montreal and working out of Toronto, this Porter-setting architect was in Ottawa last January 27th to talk about architecture at our fourth Trends in Design evening.



**Robert Claiborne**

Design Lead, Cannon Design  
Lead Architect, Lansdowne Park Stadium  
Rob Claiborne is a Design Architect at Cannon Design in Toronto, with a focus on urban, cultural and educational projects. Born and licensed in California and based today in Montreal and Toronto, Rob has worked on numerous large institutional, cultural and master planning projects throughout the world, including for many years at Studio Libeskind in Berlin. In addition to practicing architecture, Rob also teaches at McGill University in Montreal.

"Technology today can let us do really outrageous things," Claiborne says, but he only supports this process if it is used in the pursuit of architecture that is genuine, unique and different. "You have to be able to harness technology and understand that it is not the end in itself. It has to be there to support your architectural process."

That process starts with what Claiborne calls the "public side of architecture" – the gathering side, when you are meeting with others, sketching, reading. The next phase is the "esoteric side of architecture," the moments you share with yourself and where your ideas start to synthesize. "It's where you realize you've completely misunderstood something, but it doesn't matter, it's the way your mind is operating at that moment."

"I care about having the ingredients and finding the way to assemble them to provide some meaning in your project."

The ingredients for Claiborne's Lansdowne project: the way that water flows past Pig Island, the little protrusion of rocks and trees in the middle of the Rideau Canal just across from the stadium site. Berlin choreographer William Forsythe's dancing trees installation in the Netherlands. The undulating landscape of New York's Storm King Arts Centre. And West 8's wave decks on Toronto's waterfront (see page 17).

Curves, water, movement: it is these things that determined the form of Claiborne's proposal for Lansdowne Park, not the pursuit of the form itself. Technology does not change this process, it merely enables it.

And what it enables is the opportunity to really inspire people.

And so Claiborne's proposal for the new Frank Clair Stadium is to fully integrate the stadium in the larger park, to have the park creep into the stadium grounds on one hand, and have the stadium come out and engage the park on the other. Like Forsythe's dancing trees. In the end: to inspire people to be part of the stadium, whether they are there to watch an event or are just walking through the park itself.

"Architecture never solves problems, I mean the really big problems. If architecture could solve homelessness, don't you think it would have by now? Yeah, I can solve the problem of whether the stadium can have 24,000 seats. But one has to question whether that was ever a problem."

Solving the stadium's function for its stadium user was Claiborne's easy task – solving it for the park's user was the hard part, but was more genuine to what architecture is really about. "It's about human life."

# N5

## Interior design thinks small

Night Five



**Elaine Cecconi**

Partner,  
Cecconi Simone Interior Design  
Cecconi Simone is a multi-disciplinary interior design consulting firm which produces award winning designs for large scale condominium/loft developments and hotels, for clients in the restaurant and hospitality industry, for corporate clients ranging from major advertising agencies to insurance companies and for leading financial institutions and government agencies.

The crowd murmured with a eureka moment when Elaine Cecconi revealed the miniature scale she works in for Toronto's newest condominium projects: "The condo units are getting smaller and tighter – we're looking at cubic inches, not cubic feet."

As a result, the most forward-thinking high-rise condo developers now consult with interior designers like Cecconi very early in the design process rather than as an afterthought. "We get involved in suite design at the beginning before the architecture's set. It's really the interiors influencing the exteriors, designing projects from the inside out."

With its newfound knowledge, the crowd later laughed *with* Cecconi about a 950 sf one-bedroom layout, a relic from 1995. Condo humour. The truth though: a one bedroom of this size would be a white elephant in today's market of 400 square foot one bedrooms.

The architect is dead. Long live the interior designer.

Cecconi, a partner at Toronto-based interior design firm Cecconi Simone, spoke at the final installment of our Trends in Design series. Last but not least, she revealed the considerable amount of interior design thinking that goes into making new condo units efficient and compact yet also appealing.

"I guess the question is how small can we actually go and what do we really need to live in?" she asks.

High ceilings help small interiors: "The value of a small unit is in its cubic feet; square footage doesn't really have any importance anymore," she explains. To make a volume bright and spacious yet practical, Cecconi uses sliding glass or solid panels for

flexible divisions and borrowed light.

"You can have space that's totally compressed and closed or totally open," she says. "It's a really innovative approach to living. It makes spaces completely flexible because you're not fixed to any specific functional requirement."

In these small interiors, kitchen islands are a new focal point. "They're where everyone tends to gather. All of this is in your living room, so we're trying to make the kitchen less of a kitchen and an island that's more of a design element," she says.

The new scale of condo also requires a new scale of furniture. "Initially we found things weren't scaled appropriately. Furniture selections have to be a little more considered. You're not often going to be having a dinner party for eight or ten people in 425 sf."

Interesting thing, with units shrinking, developers are paying a lot more attention to a building's amenities. Lobbies, party rooms, fitness facilities or courtyards – they've become extensions of the suites people live in. "It doesn't seem to matter what the climate is, people have a longing to be outdoors," Cecconi explains about the premium placed on well-landscaped gardens or rooftops. "Outdoor fire pits are great for fall days and extending the seasons."

Boutique hotel lobbies have also become the model for condo projects' new lobbies/lounges, latter-day parlours, outfitted with libraries and comfortable lounge seating. "We've looked at these spaces differently, we wanted to look at them more as an extension of your living room," she says. "It's about having places for people to go and really meet their neighbours and hang out."

# CENTRAL

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CANADIAN PAVILION  
VENICE BIENNALE 2010  
**HYLOZOIC  
GROUND**  
PHILIP BEESLEY

All proceeds from our Trends In Design series went to support **Hylozoic Ground**, Philip Beesley's multidisciplinary creation that was Canada's submission to the 2010 Venice Biennale, the world's most prestigious international contemporary architecture event. The project transformed the Canada Pavilion into an artificial forest made of an intricate lattice of small transparent acrylic meshwork links, covered with a network of interactive mechanical fronds, filters, and whiskers.

Urban Capital is also a sponsor of Canada's 2012 Biennale submission, **Migrating Landscapes**. Sponsoring Canada's entries to the Venice Biennale is our way of supporting experimental architecture in Canada, and our country's presence on the international architectural scene.

For more information:  
[www.hylozoicground.com](http://www.hylozoicground.com)  
[www.labiennale.org/en/architecture](http://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture)  
[www.migratinglandscapes.ca](http://www.migratinglandscapes.ca)





**OUR PORTFOLIO**

2011

# BOUTIQUE





## BOUTIQUE

In 2011 we completed our two-phase, 637 unit Boutique development located at the nexus of Toronto's Entertainment and Financial Districts. Combining the best of condominium features and boutique hotel-style amenities, each phase of the development close to sold out shortly after being launched.

Boutique was developed jointly with Malibu Investments and Alit Developments.

### DETAILS

#### ADDRESS

21 Nelson Street and 126 Simcoe Street, Toronto

#### DESCRIPTION

Urban condominiums - two phases; 15 and 35 floors; total 637 units

#### DESIGNERS

ZAS Architects, CORE Architects, Ceconni Simone Interior Design

#### DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Malibu Investments and Alit Developments

#### WEBSITE

[boutiquecondos.ca](http://boutiquecondos.ca)

# MONDRIAN





See credit below



## MONDRIAN

Also completed in 2011 was our Mondrian project in Ottawa. A homage to Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, this 23 storey building in Ottawa's central business district is notable for its striking red panes of glass interspersed among strong linear elements. The building contains 245 contemporary condominiums and double-storey penthouses, retail at ground level, and a resort-inspired outdoor pool area. The condominium portion sits atop a five storey public parking podium, which is enclosed in a luminescent glass screen.

Mondrian was developed jointly with Ottawa-based Taggart Group.

### DETAILS

#### ADDRESS

318 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa

#### DESCRIPTION

Urban condominiums - 23 floors, 245 units

#### DESIGNERS

CORE Architects, Toronto

#### DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Taggart Group/Tamarack Homes

#### WEBSITE

[urbancapital.ca/mondrian](http://urbancapital.ca/mondrian)

Interior design by Frederic Carrier and Paul Kariouk.  
Photo courtesy of Photolux Studio/Christian Lalonde.

# UNDER CONSTRUCTION



## CENTRAL

Central is a 3-phase, 515 unit LEED Silver mixed use development, with retail stores and “loft houses” at the ground level, and residential units above. Located at the corner of Bank and Gladstone, the development is situated between Ottawa’s downtown core and the trendy Glebe neighbourhood.

Central’s LEED Silver features include green roofs and rain water storage systems, energy efficient windows and mechanical systems, water efficient fixtures, sustainable materials, and a car share program for use by all residents.

Central phase 1 was launched to the public in April 2008 and will be completed this fall. Central phase 2 was launched in 2010 and is now under construction. The project is being developed jointly with the Taggart Group. [www.centralcondominiums.com](http://www.centralcondominiums.com)



## RIVER CITY



As the first phase of Toronto’s new revitalized waterfront, River City is Toronto’s groundbreaker for the twenty first century. Designed by Montreal-based Saucier + Perrotte Architects, winners of seven Governor General Awards, and surrounded by some of Toronto’s most spectacular urban parks, this LEED Gold, carbon neutral development of over 1,000 loft-style condominiums, family-friendly townhouses, cafes, restaurants and boutiques will be like nothing else in Toronto.

Urban Capital won the right to develop River City in 2008 after an extensive public tender process in which 18 national and international developers participated.

Phase 1 of River City is now under construction. Phase 2 is launching this fall. [www.rivercitytoronto.com](http://www.rivercitytoronto.com)

# NICHOLAS



Nicholas Residences is set on charming 19th century cobblestoned St Nicholas Street. Immediately south of Bay, Bloor and Yorkville, it is steps from one of North America's premier retail neighbourhoods.

By carefully incorporating the Planing Mill Building as a design element in its base, and by adding a series of contemporary brick faced townhouses, Nicholas stays true to the street's beauty and heritage. The project, which is 100% sold out and now under construction, is being developed jointly with Alit Developments. [www.nicholasresidences.com](http://www.nicholasresidences.com)

# TRINITY BELLWOODS

## TOWN+HOMES



Perfectly located between Trinity Bellwoods Park and vibrant Little Italy, Trinity Bellwoods Townhomes consists of 48 contemporary-design freehold townhouses ranging in size from 1,900 to 2,650 sf. Trinity Towns, which we are developing jointly with Shram Homes, is Urban Capital's first foray into stand-alone townhome development. As with Nicholas it is 100% sold out and now under construction. [www.trinitytowns.com](http://www.trinitytowns.com)

# PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED



## EAST MARKET



The East Market is a three phase, 420-unit condominium development in Ottawa's trendy Byward Market district. Launched in 2000, the project was the first large-scale condominium to be developed in the city in over ten years.



The East Market introduced to Ottawa many of the "new-loft" features that we developed in Toronto, offering the city's purchasers a sophisticated urban housing choice not previously available to them. As a result, the project had the strongest sales launch in Ottawa's history. The project was completed in 2008.

We developed the East Market jointly with our partners, the Taggart Group.

## McGILL OUEST

McGill Ouest, our first development in Montreal, is a two-phase, 244 unit development in the now coveted district adjacent to McGill Street, between Old Montreal and the Cité du multimedia. Like East Market in Ottawa, it introduced high-design "new loft" condominiums to a market where they had not existed before.

Launched in late 2003, the first phase of McGill Ouest was completed in 2006, and the second phase in 2008.







# ST. ANDREW



St Andrew on the Green is a finely proportioned, nine storey terraced building located on a winding lane overlooking the Islington Golf Club in Toronto's Islington Village neighbourhood. Beautifully detailed in traditional masonry and accent precast, St Andrew includes a varied collection of 106 suites with bay windows, French balconies, terraces, patios and roof-top gardens. We developed it jointly with Malibu Investments and Alit Developments.



# CHARLOTTE

Completed in mid-2002, the 66 unit Charlotte Lofts was our third "new-loft" building in Toronto's King-Spadina district.

Designed by Core Architects, Charlotte Lofts features huge windows, brick on the lower floors, and lighter materials higher up. This division of materials allowed the building to relate to its early 20th century warehouse neighbours, while at the same time remaining true to its clean, modern design.



# LOFTS

Completed in 1999, this 48 unit loft-style building set a new trend in both design and location.

The first new residential building in the King-Spadina District, Camden Lofts led the way for other developers in this formerly industrial area.

Camden was also among the first in Toronto to introduce "new-loft" features, including exposed concrete ceilings and walls, huge warehouse style windows, and custom industrial lighting. The building's brick and glass exterior was designed to complement the warehouse aesthetic so prevalent in the area.

# CAMDEN LOFTS



# A CITY DISTRICT



Six thousand residences. Offices, schools and child care centres. Over 23 acres of parks. The 80 acre West Don Lands of the future is a far cry from what it is today.

First settled in the 1850s as a mix of light industrial buildings, laneways and workers cottages, the West Don Lands by the early 1900s was home to large factories and warehouses, including the William Davies Company, then the British Empire's largest pork processing operation (and also the origin of Toronto's "Hogtown" epithet). But by the 1970s the West Don Lands was done, a victim, like so many other factory districts, of rapid deindustrialization.

For the next thirty years the area lay vacant, with some redevelopment initiatives but no real progress. In the 1980s the province tried to kick-start the West Don Land's rejuvenation with the large scale "Ataratiri" housing development, but

after spending \$350 million on land purchases, it was caught flatfooted by the recession of the early 1990s, and the project was abandoned. From then until 2006 the area was pretty well forgotten, boarded up on King Street, and cut off from the rest of the city by the Don River to the east, the Gardiner Expressway to the south and the not-yet restored Distillery District to the west. The West Don Lands was a place totally outside the consciousness of Torontonians.

In 2006 things finally started to look up. Not knowing what to do with this huge asset, the province threw the West Don Lands into Waterfront Toronto's hands, and told it to figure it out. Waterfront Toronto developed a Precinct Plan and a more detailed Block Plan (see interview with the plan's Master Designer Melanie Hare on page 35), public funds were set aside, and five years later here we are.

# REBORN



Although it may not be apparent just yet, 2011 was the big year for the West Don Lands' coming out. With \$375 million in public funds already expended, the district is now poised to take off. Over the past five years, massive (although mostly unseen) redevelopment steps have been taken. First and foremost: a "flood protection landform" has been built, necessary to protect the area from what used to be frequent Don River flooding. The area's two principal parks, the 18 acre Don River Park and the highly innovative Underpass Park, are now nearing completion. Work on our own 1,000 unit **River City** development is now underway. And a developer for the Pan Am Games' Athletes Village has been announced.

On the next page, an update of the various elements that will make up the West Don Lands of the future, a city district reborn.

The West Don Lands began its life in the mid 1850s as a dockside working class neighbourhood.



## FLOOD PROTECTION LANDFORM

90% complete

The West Don Land's Flood Protection Landform (FPL) is the key first ingredient to the district's overall rejuvenation, providing the flood protection needed to remove the area's flood-plain designation and thereby allow development to proceed. Largely invisible to the public eye, the FPL is a highly engineered landform made up of 400,000 cubic metres of soil trucked in from around the Greater Toronto Area. When completed in early 2012, this massive earthen structure will protect not only the West Don Lands, but also a 99 hectare area, including Toronto's Financial District, from flooding.



**SIZE:** 20 acres  
40,000 dump-truck loads of fill  
**ENGINEER:** Aecon

**COST:** Not disclosed  
**COMPLETION:** Fall 2011

## DON RIVER PARK

75% complete

Intended as a destination park for the entire city, Don River Park will be one of the largest parks in Toronto and the centerpiece of the West Don Lands. The park sits on the FPL, and as a result will actually be two parks in one, depending on where on the FPL it sits. An urban "prairie", made up of grasslands and wet meadows, will define the eastern half of the park, on the "wet" side of the FPL, where wooded vegetation is prohibited. On the "dry" side of the FPL, making up the western half of the park, a denser urban retreat of rolling hills, water features, native woodlands and open lawns is being built.



**SIZE:** 18 acres  
**DESIGNER:** Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Boston

**COST:** \$15 million  
**COMPLETION:** Early 2012

## UNDERPASS PARK

40% complete

The most extensive park ever to be built under an overpass in Canada, and the first in Toronto, Underpass Park will transform the once derelict and underused space beneath the Richmond-Adelaide ramps into an innovative urban park. Defined by the imposing concrete supports of the overpass, Underpass Park innovatively re-engineers both the covered and open areas under the overpasses, creating an inviting urban space while at the same time connecting the north and south part of the West Don Lands.



**SIZE:** 2.5 acres  
**DESIGNER:** Phillips Farevaag Smallemberg

**COST:** \$4.7 million  
**COMPLETION:** Late 2011 (east portion)

## RIVER CITY

20% complete

Our River City project is the first residential development in the West Don Lands (and in fact the first residential development in all of the lands under Waterfront Toronto's management). Designed by Montreal-based Saucier + Perrotte Architects to look unlike anything else, this 1,200 unit 4-phase project will set the bar for residential development throughout the area. Urban Capital won the right to develop River City in 2008 after an extensive public tender process in which 18 national and international developers participated.



**SIZE:** 1,200 units  
**DESIGNER:** Saucier + Perrotte Architects and ZAS Architects

**VALUE:** \$500 million  
**COMPLETION:** Early 2013 (Phase 1)

## 2015 PAN AM ATHLETES VILLAGE

0% complete

A large part of the West Don Lands west of Don River Park has been chosen as the site for the 2015 Pan American/Parapan Games Athletes Village. The Village will be designed to fit within the already existing West Don Lands Precinct Plan, will comply with Waterfront Toronto's strict LEED and design requirements, and will significantly accelerate the build-out of the overall West Don Lands. After the Games are completed, the Village's residential buildings will be converted to a mix of principally market based and approximately 20% affordable housing.



**SIZE:** 35 acres  
**DESIGNER:** KPMB Architects, architectsAlliance and Daoust Lestage

**VALUE:** Not disclosed  
**COMPLETION:** July 2015

## An interview with Melanie Hare

**Master Planner of the West Don Lands  
Partner, Urban Strategies**

### Before we get into the West Don Lands in particular, what exactly is Master Planning and what do Master Planners do?

Master Planners translate the vision for a community into a physical plan that integrates key ingredients to successful place making — the scale and character of buildings, the types and network of streets, the range of public and community spaces — imbedding the history of place and the environmental aspirations.

### Turning to the West Don Lands itself, for many years this area has seemed to be outside the consciousness of Torontonians. What did you know about the West Don Lands, and what were your views of it, when you were first retained as part of the team to design its Master Plan?

Having lived much of my life in Toronto, the West Don Lands was always thought of as a noticeable void of former industrial land, a place to travel through to go downtown or into the Don Valley, and one that was physically close to the downtown yet a psychological gap in the city fabric.

### What were your principal design goals when you started out looking at the West Don Lands?

From the start, there were several key tenets to the West Don Lands community design: connecting and linking to, in many cases, the historic fabric of the surrounding communities of Corktown, St Lawrence and others; creating a liveable, complete mid-rise community; creating gathering points and public places that will be the focal point for this and neighbouring communities; and integrating the highest levels of sustainability and innovation in city building.

### What were the physical constraints that limited the Master Plan, and what, if any, were its physical attributes that you could build on?

In many ways, the site's constraints have become key attributes for the West Don Lands. The Flood Protection Landform, a critical piece of infrastructure that needed to be built to make the lands safely habitable, is the foundation for Don River Park. Front Street and Bayview, which once terminated abruptly at the southern edge of the site, were realigned to create an elegant framing of Don River Park and grand new Front Street Promenade, physically and visually connecting the West Don Lands and downtown. Finally, infrastructure barriers such as the Richmond/Adelaide ramps have been refreshed and opened up by new and active public spaces such as Underpass Park.

### Did you bring any particular design philosophy to your master planning work?

I prefer not to label the West Don Lands with a singular design philosophy but two main ideas were key: the West Don Lands needed to be a natural extension to its surroundings — a community that "fit" and complemented its neighbours, in design, scale and program; it also needed to be a highly liveable and vibrant urban neighbourhood, one that built on Toronto's legacy of great neighbourhoods but was also distinct in its own right.

### What were the other priorities for you in designing the West Don Lands' Master Plan?

Lots of them ... the West Don Lands needed to be a highly transit, pedestrian and cycling friendly place; have a robust set of community amenities, from recreation to built heritage and culture;

be inclusive — offering a range of housing options; and push the bar on sustainability, demonstrated by its LEED ND Gold certification.

### With the FPL, Don River Park and Underpass Park pretty well completed, River City underway and the development team for the Pan Am Village now chosen, it looks like the

**build-out plan for the West Don Lands is pretty well in place. Given that you only started master planning this district five years ago, did you expect your whole plan to be actualized so quickly? And has anything changed from your original plan?**

To be clear, the West Don Lands design really started in the 1990's with a community-based charrette that

provided much of the foundation for this chapter of master planning. The West Don Lands Master Plan started just after 2000 and has proceeded at a truly rapid pace. It is very exciting to see the parks, River City, and the new street network under construction. The Pan Am impetus will certainly ensure this momentum continues and the community has a vitality and feeling of place early in its development.

In my opinion, the community design has stayed true to its initial intent. While there have been refinements to components of the plan — street designs, property alignments and park design — if anything, the detailed design has advanced the application of innovation and sustainability to truly be a pilot of community design.





**MONTREAL ARCHITECTS ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE PREVALENT ON THE TORONTO DEVELOPMENT SCENE. WHAT DO THEY SEE IN THEIR CROSS BORDER TRAVELS, AND IS THE QUEEN CITY REALLY READY FOR THEM?**

# THE MONTREAL PHENOMENON



**“A** *llez vers l'ouest,*” Montrealers. “Montreal and Toronto’s film festivals have swapped places in terms of their significance,” Andre Perrotte observes of the Montreal World Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival, illustrating the opposite economic and cultural destinies of Canada’s two largest cities over the past three decades. “You could measure it in terms of the number of A-list celebrities that show up on the red carpets,” the partner at Montreal-based architecture firm Saucier + Perrotte offers wryly as a litmus test for the pulse and presence of each city on the world stage.

For Perrotte, Toronto’s initiative to build the TIFF Lightbox, a dedicated building for the film festival in the city’s downtown

Entertainment District, was a defining moment in plotting TIFF’s current status and success.

Lessons learned? “I think by now Montreal has realized you can’t do it all with tents and semi-permanent installations,” Perrotte says about Montreal’s often brick-a-brack festival infrastructure. Yet he remains optimistic about Montreal being able to achieve a similar boost to its live entertainment epicentre with its renewed commitment to *Place des Arts*, the city’s performing arts centre and downtown site for many of its major outdoor festivals.

Over the past decade, compared to Montreal, Toronto has experienced explosive growth. According to Statistics Canada’s census figures, Greater Montreal’s population grew by 5.3 percent between 2001 and 2006, to reach 3.1



## Canada Sugar Beach

**CLAUDE CORMIER**

Claude Cormier is the designer behind the hugely popular Canada Sugar Beach, on the Toronto waterfront. For us he is designing the public plaza below the “table” at our **Tableau** project, as well as the new public space we are building across the street on the north side of Richmond.



## Centre for Excellence Glendon Campus

**RENÉE DAOUST + RÉAL LESTAGE**

Renée Daoust is the designer behind Centre for Excellence in Bilingual Education at York University's Glendon Campus. Her firm Daoust Lestage is also a key member of the design consortium that won the Pan Am Athlete's Village competition.



million people, a rate almost identical to the Canadian average of 5.4 percent. During the same period, Toronto's population surged by nearly double, at a rate of 9.2 percent, for a total 2006 Greater Toronto Area population of 5.1 million.

The rapid growth has spawned a construction boom in Toronto. Many Montreal architects and designers have come to *la Ville reine* to crack the market of one of the fifty largest urban agglomerations in the world. They were drawn to the GTA by its pace, commitment to quality design, rigor in execution, openness to outside influences and the collegiality among diverse teams of colleagues — a heady mix of local and international talent.

“There's no sense of territory,” explains Claude Cormier, principal at Claude Cormier et Associés, one of Canada's most respected landscape architecture and urban design firms. “That's Toronto's reality of integration.”

This openness to talent and influences from away is evident not only in the public sector, such as with cultural buildings and universities, but also

among private developers, including us with our **River City** project. In putting together our team to compete in Waterfront Toronto's public tender for the site, we specifically sought a Montreal-based architectural firm, thinking that a little “foreign” *savoir faire* would be just what we needed to give us the design edge.

Renée Daoust, partner at Montreal's Daoust Lestage, also credits much of her success to Torontonians' openness and generosity. Bruce Kuwabara of KPMB Architects and Peter Clewes of architectsAlliance, who gave her her entrée to the Toronto market, top a long list of people who helped Daoust establish a practice in Toronto.

“It's a great opportunity to be able to work in the two contexts. For me it's really interesting to see what happens in Toronto and what happens in Montreal, the way we do things is quite different,” she says. “Toronto's mix of expertise from everywhere is what makes the experience of working in both cities such a win-win.”

Ten years after first arriving here, Saucier + Perrotte, Claude Cormier et





## River City

GILLES SAUCIER + ANDRÉ PERROTTE

Saucier + Perrotte Architectes are designing our **River City** development in the West Don Lands, as well as the Thompson Residences on King Street West and the latest residential tower in the Distillery District.



Associés and Daoust Lestage are among a select number of Montreal architecture and design firms that can claim to have successful, parallel practices in Toronto. They've quietly amassed impressive portfolios of completed projects as well as scrapbooks filled with ideas, sketches and future plans.

Despite the allure of the brighter lights and bigger city, the three Montreal designers are unanimous about one thing — none plan to open a Toronto office. Instead they all wish to preserve the critical distance that being Montrealers in Toronto affords them.

For now these Quebec Inc. designers are content to commute for one or two days a week several times a month, often bumping into each other on Porter flights in and out of Billy Bishop Toronto City Centre Airport. On these occasions they share stories and compare notes.

Indeed, Billy Bishop is increasingly a two-way airstrip. Toronto architects also fly to Montreal for business, a budding "Go East!" reverse phenomenon. Cormier points to some recent wins, like KPMB's vertical downtown campus, *Le Quartier Concordia*, completed in 2010. Or Jack

Diamond's *L'Adresse symphonique*, a new concert hall for conductor Kent Nagano and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, currently under construction, which is the latest addition to Montreal's *Place des Arts* complex. A future *Place des Arts* volume is already in the works to outfit Montreal's opera and ballet companies with a new stage, following closely in the footsteps of Toronto's success with the Four Seasons Centre.

Going forward, the two cities must continue this convergence between what Daoust calls "ephemeral" and "permanent" culture, investing in quality design for the buildings that house each city's visual, performing or multi-media arts, like *Place des Arts* and the TIFF Lightbox.

In September 2009, Montreal's mayor Gerald Tremblay inaugurated *Place des Festivals*, a pedestrian plaza designed by Daoust Lestage and the first phase of the city's *Place des Arts* makeover.

The plaza sometimes doubles as an amphitheatre to a temporary stage for outdoor performances. Other times it is an urban fountain with 235 jets

integrated at grade into the plaza's stonework.

The most innovative part of Daoust's design was her introduction of two long, transparent, glass cubes that are impossibly narrow and buzzing dining rooms, with their kitchens in the basement. Two of Montreal's top chefs, Carlos Ferreira and Normand Laprise of *Toqué* opened "F" and "T" as two restaurants in Daoust's cubes.

"We created these two little boxes, they were new architectural typologies in Montreal," says Daoust. "I'm trying to convince people in Toronto to do the same thing."

Convincing Toronto developers to recreate her glass-encased sidewalk cafes as a novel element in a master plan of a large-scale urban redevelopment project may be easier said than done. By Daoust's own admission, "In Montreal we are very concerned with the urban design and this is our European background: the public realm, the outside spaces and how the buildings intertwine," she says. "But I don't think that's part of Toronto's genes just yet."

# LANDING THE PERFECT SITE

Ok, there's really no perfect site. Every site we (or any developer) develops has its challenges. So in our last feature we look at the pluses and minuses of the four sites we are currently developing in Toronto, and what it took for us to get them in a market where getting your hands on a good development site is no easy task.

## TRINITY BELLWOODS TOWNS [Little Italy]

### LOCATION

Tucked away between two side streets of what was once an Italian and Portuguese working class district, but is today one of Toronto's hippest neighbourhoods, our Trinity Bellwoods Townhomes site was a top notch acquisition for us. Add in the huge Trinity Bellwoods Park just a couple of blocks to the west (from which we cribbed the project name), and we had all the makings of an excellent site location.



### GETTING IT APPROVED

Getting infill housing projects approved, especially ones located on residential streets in already established neighbourhoods, is never easy, even if only townhouse type housing is proposed. In our case each individual townhouse needed its own set of approvals, a very cumbersome process given that we had 48 of them. But in the end the neighbourhood was on-side, and the city planning department bit the bullet and processed the applications we needed.



### GETTING THE SITE

The site was owned by the Toronto District School Board, which sold it by way of a public tender. Our partner on the project offered the most and, after some negotiations, we got it. As easy as that.



## TABLEAU [Entertainment District]

### LOCATION

When we went after this site in 2008, its location was a bit risky. Its immediate neighbours were mostly nightclubs, and not many of the condo developments now being proposed for the area were yet on the books. But the site was a block south of Queen Street, was within walking distance of the Financial District, and sat on a corner that was skewed to the normal city grid, affording it with very interesting views. So we took the plunge.



### GETTING THE SITE

Securing this site involved negotiating with two separate property owners (one of whom was fighting a legal battle with his lenders), and five different tenants (most of whom had long-term leases, requiring us to secure early termination rights). Eight months of on-again-off-again back-and-forth negotiations. Lots of bluster.



### GETTING IT APPROVED

Securing development rights in the King-Spadina district requires negotiating detailed public benefits with the city. In our case this was a one-year process that resulted, among other things, in our agreeing to build a public square across the street.





## NICHOLAS [South of Bloor]

### LOCATION

Without a doubt the top location of our current Toronto developments: a charming cobble-stoned street just south of Bloor Street and Yorkville, one of the top shopping districts in the world.



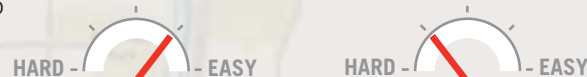
### GETTING THE SITE

This site was brought to us by one of our development partners, so obtaining it was not that difficult. But in one of those quirks that we face as developers, the property had a right-of-way running right through the middle of it, in favour of a neighbour, and we had to negotiate the acquisition of that. So even if it's easy, it's not easy.



### GETTING IT APPROVED

Just our luck – this site became a lightning rod against a condo development in the neighbourhood, with local ratepayers picking our project as their line in the sand. Their beef, as is always the case: the building's height, even though there are similarly tall buildings all around it. At the city council meeting to review our development application, our neighbours brought a cake made out to look like our building, and crushed it. In the end, all was settled, and today a collaborative relationship prevails.



## RIVER CITY [West Don Lands]



### LOCATION

When we went after it, River City's location was more bad than good. Bad, because the site was off the beaten track (particularly our first sales office, on Old Eastern Avenue, which was close to impossible to get to), and, at least at the time, was still in a derelict former industrial area surrounded by infrastructure. But a huge amount of public money was being invested in the West Don Lands (see page 32), and there was an idea that this could one day become one of the city's most sought-after neighbourhoods. So, in going for this site, we had to believe in the future vision, and hope that others believed in it as well.



### GETTING THE SITE

Securing this site involved us competing against 18 national and international developers in a competition run by Waterfront Toronto. Winning that process to become the preferred candidate wasn't that hard in the end, as huge points were awarded for design and sustainability, at which our team excelled. The hard part was negotiating the actual land purchase and development agreements with the many different government agencies involved. Result: huge budget for lawyers.



### GETTING IT APPROVED

River City's development rights were all put in place before we bid on the site, and there was a restriction on modifying them in any substantial way, so it was quite easy to price the site and then proceed to its development.

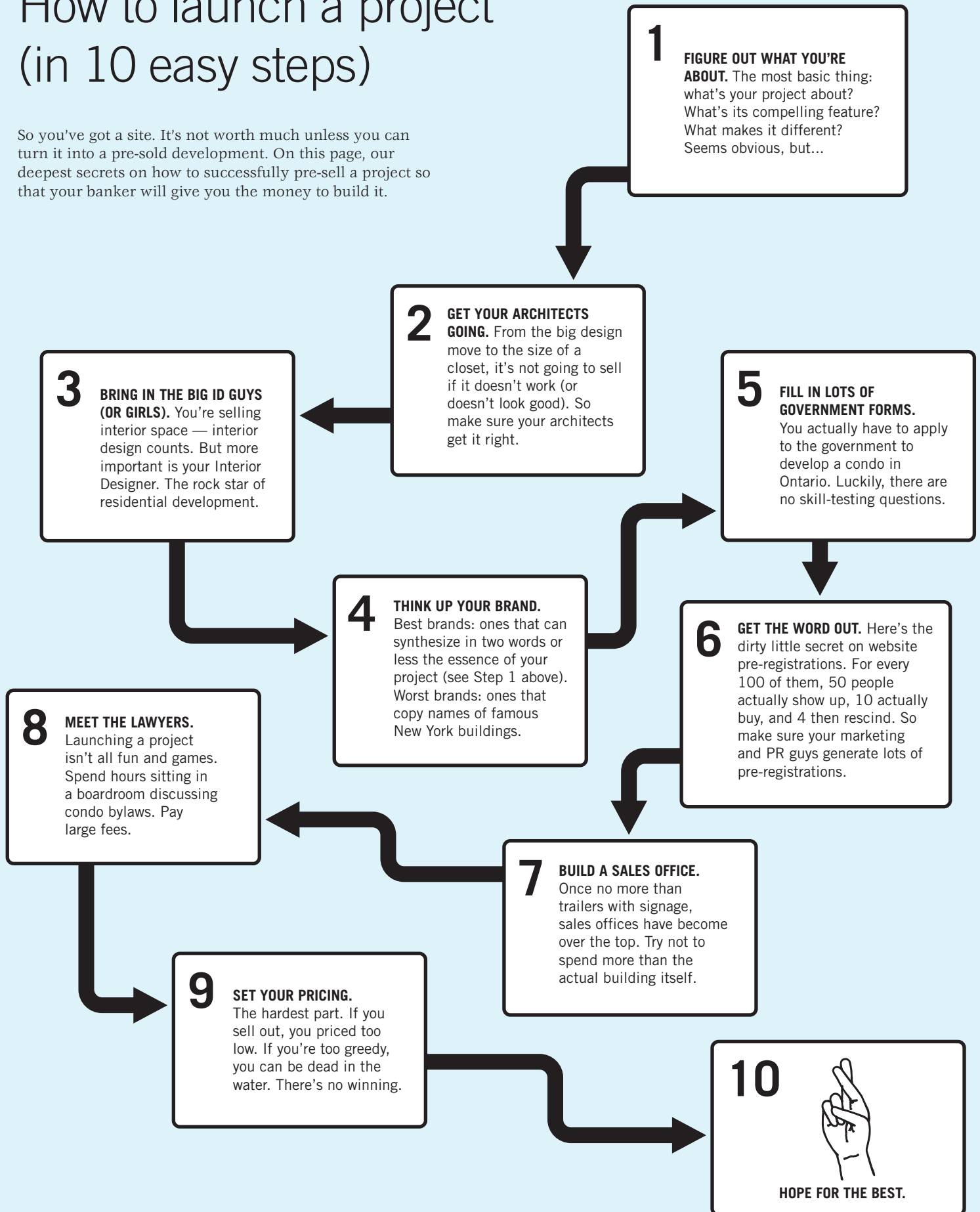


Lake Ontario

# CONDO DEVELOPMENT 101

## How to launch a project (in 10 easy steps)

So you've got a site. It's not worth much unless you can turn it into a pre-sold development. On this page, our deepest secrets on how to successfully pre-sell a project so that your banker will give you the money to build it.



# N NICHOLAS BLOOR BAY LIVING



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## UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

Set on the charming, cobblestoned St. Nicholas Street just steps from the Bloor-Yorkville neighbourhood, Nicholas Residences is rising. Soon the award winning design team of Core Architects and Cecconi Simone Interior Design will add their mark to this historic neighbourhood.

100% sold out, now under construction



# ARCHITECTURE

## Industrial Crossings



Manhattan Skybridge



St-Louis Industrial Building



Brooklyn Watchtower



St-Louis Industrial Building



Boston Skybridge



Chicago Wrigley Building

Warehouses are commercial buildings for storing goods. But this mundane necessity has produced some of our most grandiose buildings, with strong architectural elements repeating over large floorplates, and unique features such as cranes, forklifts, loading docks and bridges. While not influenced by warehouse architecture in particular, Saucier + Perrotte's design for the first phase of **River City** shares many of its attributes: a very long street presence over two streets, and a strong repetitive exterior design. So it was not surprising that we looked to warehouse precedents when we tried to explain what we were trying to achieve with the bridge connection between the King Street and River Street buildings that constitute River City Phase 1.

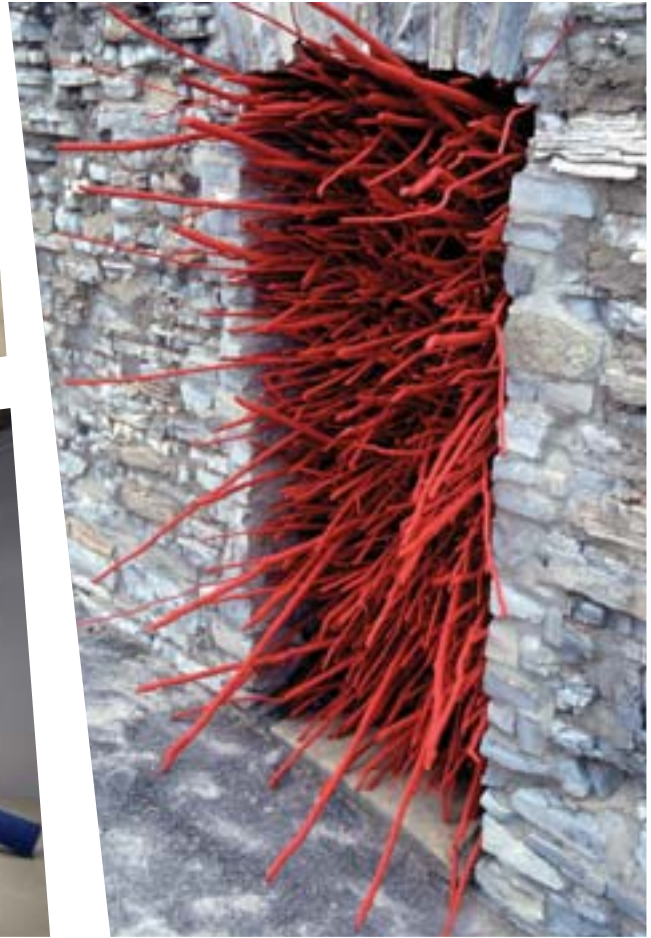
On this page, the examples of warehouse bridges we used to help convince the City of Toronto to allow us to construct our own three storey bridge over their "woonerf" street, something they're definitely not in the habit of doing. After much discussion, approval finally came last year. Expect this bridge to be hoisted in place mid 2012.



The three storey pedestrian bridge connecting the King and River buildings of River City Phase 1.

# ART

## Shayne Dark's Explosive Creations



Kingston based Shayne Dark's sculptures don't sit in the background. They are bold explosive things, typically clad in primary colours, that often evoke the contrasts between urban settings and the natural world. Since starting his artistic career in the mid 1980s, Shayne has exhibited his work across North America. For us Shayne is currently designing "Nova", a 90' high vibrant green art installation that pierces through the 5 storey high tabletop that defines our **Tableau** project, while sitting playfully in the public square that lies below it.



# HERITAGE

## Saving the Metropolitan Bible Church (and was it really worth it ?)



**B**uilt in 1933, smack in the middle of the Great Depression, Ottawa's Metropolitan Bible Church looks the part of a pious movie palace. It's no coincidence. The financiers demanded that the church be built as a venue for moving picture spectacles, complete with marquee and ticket window (now filled in). If the congregation ever defaulted on their mortgage, the bank could quickly repurpose the building as a cinema. But the Met's congregation kept up on their payments, and rows of wooden pews lined the orchestra and balcony seating until the last service on July 27, 2008.

Preserving the three-storey, 40-foot-wide, 136,000-kg facade of the Met was a purchase condition for our acquiring our

**Central Phase 1** site. The church was indeed the last building standing on the block, red-brick or otherwise, from that era. "This was a Category Two building, and our general approach is that we don't support their demolition," explains Sally Coutts, Heritage Planner with the City of Ottawa. Nevertheless, our development team reached a compromise with the city to preserve only the façade of the church, which we did, and that facade now encloses Central's two-storey interior amenity area.

Saving the façade of a heritage building is not particularly unique in the case of a property development today. What is unique in Central's case is how we did it. During the first part of construction, we





Watch time-lapse videos of detaching and reattaching the Met Bible Church façade at: [www.centralcondominiums.com](http://www.centralcondominiums.com)



Central Phase 1 nearing completion: September 2011

sandwiched the façade in a huge hot-dipped, galvanized steel frame, and then detached the frame (with the façade in it) from the church and lowered it – using Ottawa’s two largest cranes – into a part of the two level basement that we had already excavated on the site. There, according to our plan, it would safely sit until it was ready to be resurrected and reattached to the new building was once it was up.

Starting at 5 am, on a snowy Saturday in February 2010, we didn’t perform the first lift, detaching the façade from the remaining structure, until three hours later. Each subsequent lift lasted about an hour, each time moving the façade about 10 m. This process was repeated 12

to 15 times, including navigating a 90 degree turn at the corner of Bank and McLeod Streets, until we were finally able to lower the façade into the bottom of our excavation. About 14 hours after they began, crews stabilized the façade by bolting the frame into pile caps and welding it to the excavation’s steel shoring system.

A high risk (and, at close to \$1 million, a very costly) operation, but for project manager Geoff Boole, a “once in a lifetime opportunity”.

Almost one year later to the day, in similarly snowy conditions, we performed the same steps but in reverse, lifting the façade out of its safe hiding

place and reattaching it to exactly where it had stood before, but now supported by Central’s concrete skeleton of the freshly-poured first four floors. It may not be the most attractive looking structure, but preserving the Met’s façade was probably the most beautiful engineering move we’ve ever undertaken.

**WAS SAVING THE FAÇADE OF THE MET BIBLE CHURCH REALLY WORTH IT?**

Check out “A façade too far” at <http://spacingottawa.ca/2011/01/20/a-facade-too-far/> and decide yourself.

# REAR VIEW



One of our favourite things of the past year: the three small finishing rooms at the back of our **Tableau** sales office.

Victorian Gothic (installed to be seen straight on); Danish Modern (installed to be seen from above); and Pop (installed to be seen upside down). Who says finishing boards have to be two dimensional?

Check out these rooms before our Tableau sales office comes down on January 15, 2012.

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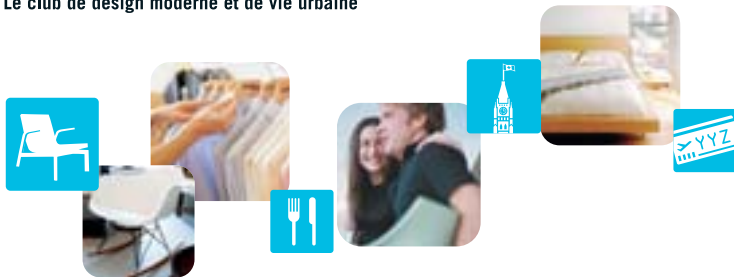
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