

# Singles and mingles new trends in condominiums

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The worry-free lifestyle of condominiums is attracting a wide variety of homebuyers and is changing the traditional concept of

homeownership in the process, say members of the Toronto Home Builders' Association (THBA).

Affordability and low maintenance are just two of the many reasons a growing number of people are now calling condominiums home. For many people who would not normally have entered into homeownership, condos offer an appealing alternative.

Recently, unmarried persons and pairs of unrelated singles — both male and female — have taken advantage of this type of lifestyle and are experiencing the benefits of homeownership.

Times and attitudes have changed. Now numbers of women, who want a home but not a husband, are purchasing condos. Many believe there's plenty of time in the future for a spouse and family.

"Society is changing and with it the concept that one would grow up, go to school, get married and eventually buy a house," said John Amardeil, marketing director to Stolp Homes.

"Because of the changes occurring, the market has to keep up. We're seeing single women who've opted for a career instead of a marriage, but who still want to own a home. For these people, condos are just the answer."

Attractively priced, condos provide a good level of security, have worry-free maintenance, and allow people to socialize with others within the complex, Amardeil said.

"For many years, single women were an untapped market," Amardeil said. "But now

we're seeing more developments which are suited to them. With smaller units, recreational facilities and the association of their peers, this lifestyle fits these women."

Bob Forrest, president of Forrest Consultants and L'image Design is currently designing a club concept geared for single women. In his plan, he said, women will have an entire lifestyle built into the purchase of their condo.

Forrest, winner of the 1990 THBA Sales and Marketing award for designing the Big Little Suite, said his condos will feature secure parking lots, entrance codes or cards, concierges, fitness centres, swimming pools, saunas, tuck shops and even dining rooms.

## Women's club

"We're hoping to design these condos to resemble an exclusive women's club," he said. "So they can come home at the end of a busy day, have dinner and enjoy the company of women of similar interests."

"I'm even thinking of having home-cooked microwavable dinners available in the complex convenience stores so the women just have to push a few buttons to have a nutritious meal. It's a lifestyle geared to their needs."

Ursula Mautner bought her condominium earlier this year. Owner of a deli in Brampton, Mautner said she prefers the convenient, friendly and secure lifestyle of condominiums. She said the pros heavily outweighed the cons in the purchase of her condo unit.

"Everything about owning a condo was right for me," she said. "The reasonable price, unmatched security, and wide range of special features were exactly what I was looking for. And both the staff and neighbours have been simply fantastic."

Single, unrelated men and women who are jointly purchasing condominiums are surfacing as another phenomenon in the condo market. These people, known as "mingles" are usually friends or siblings who wish to enter the market on a limited budget.

"Mingles condo units are ideally suited because they can be geared to two or more people," Amardeil said. "The units are usually smaller — an average 800 square feet — and have two bathrooms, two bedrooms and a shared kitchen. They aren't too big or too cramped."

Peter Gabor, president of Gabor and Popper Architects Inc. said the beauty of condominium living is its flexibility in size, price and amenities.

He said first-time buyers can enter the market then move up to larger, more luxurious units. Families and seniors can also take advantage of the worry-free lifestyle condos provide.

"They're a great investment that will soon represent half the market share," he said.

"The single women and mingles phenomenon are just two of a full range of possibilities for condo owners. They can be defined for anybody and can offer as many or as few features as the homeowners wish. They're really a great investment."

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