

Village starts to shine



Controversial Olympic project will be thing of beauty. See story pg. 4

OLYMPIC VILLAGE

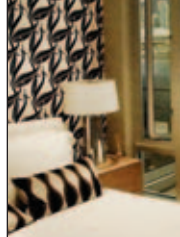
The Jewel of False Creek



Condo King Bob Rennie is between Millennium Developments partners Shahram Malekyazdi (left) and Peter Malek. The project will be turned over to VANOC on Nov. 2.



- BOB MACKIN PHOTOS



The billion-dollar baby had a chaotic conception. But it's racing to birth and it'll be beautiful.

The Southeast False Creek Olympic Village will be the most exclusive address in the world in 2010's first quarter when Olympians and Paralympians enjoy Vancouver's newest, most controversial neighbourhood.

During a late-July hard-hat tour, *24 hours* observed an army of workers strewn around the site.

Some were laying paving stones and granite slabs between buildings, while others finished concrete walkways in the central international zone.

The din of drills, saws, vehicles and hammers blended together. Workers were up scissor lifts installing windows. Others welded or sealed insulation to pipes. Many suites are finished, but some workers continue to finish floors and walls or install fixtures and appliances.

A sign on the face of an Athletes Way building proclaims "Own the Ultimate 2010 Souvenir." West Van-

couver personal trainer Mike Talic did just that.

"It is like a new city, in the middle of a city," said Talic, who was director of the Sarajevo 1984 Olympic Village. Talic and wife Jadranka, a Canada Line civil engineer, showed off the \$850,000 ninth-floor suite they bought in a Columbia Street building.

"Maybe some Olympic champion will live here."

From the Talic's balcony, one could see green roofs with designs of Olympic sport pictograms.

The non-market, affordable housing suites in the building next door don't have such stunning views, but they're similarly comfortable.

The penthouse of the Arthur Erickson-designed waterfront building on the northwest corner has a unique, unobstructed view of B.C. Place Stadium, where athletes will march six months from Wednesday. Below a park remains unfinished, but

the man-made island is already home to birds and marine life.

Bob Rennie, who is marketing the site for Millennium Developments, uses "magnitude" and "diversity" as buzzwords.

Magnitude because of the 25-month build in a "pressured construction climate." Diversity because of the proximity of pricey waterfront suites and the affordable ones near First Avenue.

"When you start to take apart the pieces and walk the streets and see it is a real community," Rennie said. "It is a community you can live in."

But not until next summer. The 265 buyers got a preview in late June.

They'll have to wait until July 1, 2010 to move in. Rennie is planning a public showing in mid-May with a street of dreams-style showcase of six homes.

- BOB MACKIN, 24 HOURS

Olympic Village key dates

Sept. 21, 1998: UBC proposed for athletes village when 2010 bid unveiled at B.C. Place Stadium.

Dec. 1, 1998: Vancouver chosen to bid for Canada over Calgary & Quebec City.

Jan. 14, 2003: "South shore of False Creek" Olympic Village to be complete by September 2009 for \$107.9 million, according to Vancouver bid book. IOC chooses Vancouver on July 2.

April 4, 2006: NPA-majority council approves \$193 million Millennium bid and signs lease Aug. 31. Concord Pacific, Concert Properties, Wall Financial and Windmill Developments were also bidding.

March 10, 2007: Groundbreaking ceremony.

June 26, 2007: Council agrees behind closed-doors to \$683 million Fortress Credit Corp. loan and guarantees project completion.

Oct. 14, 2008: Closed council meeting OKs \$100 million emergency bailout for Millennium after Fortress walks away.

Jan. 9, 2009: Mayor Gregor Robertson says taxpayers "on the hook" for \$1.1 billion project. Fortress bought out Feb. 18.

May 7, 2009: City council announces \$550 million loan from TD-led syndicate to finish project.

Nov. 1, 2009: VANOC exclusive use of Olympic Village.

Millennium Fact sheet

- Number of workers on-site: **1,500**
- Site area: **11 acres**
- Total gross building area: **1.575 million square feet**
- Glazing area: **800,000 square feet**
- Units: **1,100** (including **250** affordable and **100** rentals)
- Height of tallest buildings: **13 storeys**
- Habitat island vegetation: **246** trees, **20,828** shrubs, **3,469** grasses
- Post-games businesses: **London Drugs, Urban Fare, Mark James brewpub and liquor store**
- Population during Games: **2,800** athletes
- By 2020: Southeast False Creek to be home for **12,000** to **16,000** people.