

Juliet is the latest reason to go downtown in Victoria

In the race to own a little bit of downtown Victoria, new-home shoppers last weekend bought all the homes in the inaugural release of a tower project in the province's capital.

Although some of the Juliet apartments in the first-phase release are tiny — at 453 square feet for about \$249,000 — the developer isn't intending for anyone to be confined indoors.

The 15-storey tower features a unique rooftop space from which residents can enjoy the views of the city while sharing a garden, a barbecue and cinema under the stars with their own outdoor movie theatre. The communal area also includes an outdoor kitchen space for dinner parties. It even includes a hot tub.

According to the Juliet team, young and old — seasoned and new, local and out of province — are among the first-release buyers.

Lured by the central location, some even bought with the intention of downsizing from single-family homes to forgo the daily commute.

That's part of Juliet's plan as well. Residents can leave their cars parked at home since the location is so central. Or they can get rid of them altogether. Buyers who don't have cars get a complimentary membership to the city's car share co-op while saving money on their homes since they don't need parking stalls. Instead they'll get a bicycle storage locker, access to a bike repair area and the car share membership.

The success of Juliet demonstrates the participation of Victoria residents in a continent-wide trend — the increase in downtown residency after a 30-year decline. The Downtown Residents' Association in the province's capital reports the number of downtown residents has rebounded to 1,800, roughly the number it was in 1971. In the intervening years that number had dropped to a low of 700.

Among the catalysts of Victoria's downtown rejuvenation, Casey Edge of the Canadian Home Builders' Association told the Times Colonist newspaper, is the discovery by the development industry of affordable, developable land in Victoria.

"What is attracting some of these companies is that land is more affordable here [than Vancouver] and it is available," Edge said. "Plus, with bigger projects, you need companies with deeper pockets that can accept more risks."

Downtown Victoria new-home projects being brought to market by Vancouver developers or companies with a Vancouver history include the Falls, Chelsea, Bayview and Juliet.

The Falls resurrects the troika that is redefining luxury-apartment residency in Vancouver, at the Estates Fairmont Pacific Rim project on Coal Harbour. Developer Ian Gillespie, architect James KC Cheng and sales-campaign organizer Bob Rennie are the leading men on the project.

Chelsea is a Concert Properties development, meaning it's a project financed by union pension funds. The Bayview sales campaign has been organized by Sotheby's Canada, which is headquartered here. Juliet is a project from a developer headquartered here.



When Juliet residents tire of the views from their own apartments, they can always go up on the roof, for 360-degree prospects. The downtown Victoria tower is scheduled for completion in spring, 2008

Juliet

Project size: 96 apartments, 15-floor building
Residence size: 452 sq. ft. – 1,400 sq. ft.
Prices: \$249,000 – \$849,000
Presentation centre address: 834 Johnson St., Victoria
Hours: Noon – 6 p.m. daily
Telephone: 1/250-382-6005
Web: julietliving.com
Development manager: Chard Development Ltd.
Architect: Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership
Tentative completion: spring, 2008

The Falls

Project size: 155 apartments under four penthouses, 18 storeys
Residence size: 1 - 3 bedrooms
Prices: From the \$400,000s
Presentation centre address: 101 – 645 Tyee Rd., Victoria
Hours: Noon - 5 p.m., Sat - Thurs
Telephone: Toll free 1/866-920-7272 or 1/250-920-7222
Web: thefallsvictoria.com
Developer: Westbank
Architect: James KM Cheng
Tentative completion: summer, 2008

Bayview

Project size: 134 apartments and townhouses in Bayview One
Residence size: 720 sq. ft. – 2,300 sq. ft.
Prices: One bedroom, from the \$400,000s; two bedrooms, from the \$700,000; penthouses, from \$2 million.
Presentation centre address: 80 Saghale Rd., Victoria
Hours: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily
Telephone: Toll free 1/888-360-1687
Web: bayviewvictoria.com
Developer: Kenneth Mariash, Bayview Properties
Architect: Merrick Architecture and Davidson Yuen Simpson Architects
Tentative completion: April, 2008



Turn and toss was the technique of the moment when Mayor Alan Lowe of Victoria (far right) joined Westbank managers in the traditional sod-turning earlier this month at The Falls construction site in downtown Victoria.