



# Spy before you buy that condo

**SECURITY**

## Private Eye offers tips on assessing properties



**CONDO TRENDS**

**Duncan McAllister**

It may be every condo owner's worst nightmare: To purchase a suite in a party building.

In a tragic incident in June, two men were shot dead in a west-end Toronto condo following a raucous party that lasted for days.

While most buildings are well run and safe, the anonymity of a big city makes it difficult to determine if your future home is a frat house, or worse. Buyers often make snap decisions on what is likely the largest purchase of their lives.

**DIY detective work**

To empower Canadian homebuyers to do their own detective work, real-estate brokerage TheRedPin recruited private investigator Dave Perry, a former Toronto homicide detective and co-

founder of Investigative Solutions Network. He is regularly consulted to investigate investment neighbourhoods for a confidential roster of clients — and most recently, for his own daughter.

Perry offers some useful tips on how you can scope out your potential condo and surrounding neighbourhood. Communication plays a large part in your intelligence-gathering mission.

**Doggie duty**

Perry recommends taking your cute puppy for a walk around the neighbourhood.

"If I don't have my dog with me, people are far more reluctant to even say hello. But if you've got a dog, everybody wants to pet your dog. Then you can easily start a normal, healthy conversation about the health of the neighbourhood."

A lot of detective work can be done without ever leaving your home.

Try Googling the street address and search for media coverage of incidents in the area. You can avoid nightmare scenarios from nefarious activity lurking beneath

the surface of an otherwise respectable condo.

"I like going to the news outlets because if there's a meth lab or prostitution or gang activity that can seep their way into some of the nicest condominiums in Toronto, it's usually going to end up in the newspaper," says Perry.

**Night shift**

During the day, people are on their best behaviour, and most parties happen at night.

"A lot of people make the mistake of going (to a property) midday, during the business day, when things tend to look a little brighter," says Perry.

Part of your reconnaissance mission will entail some nocturnal black ops.

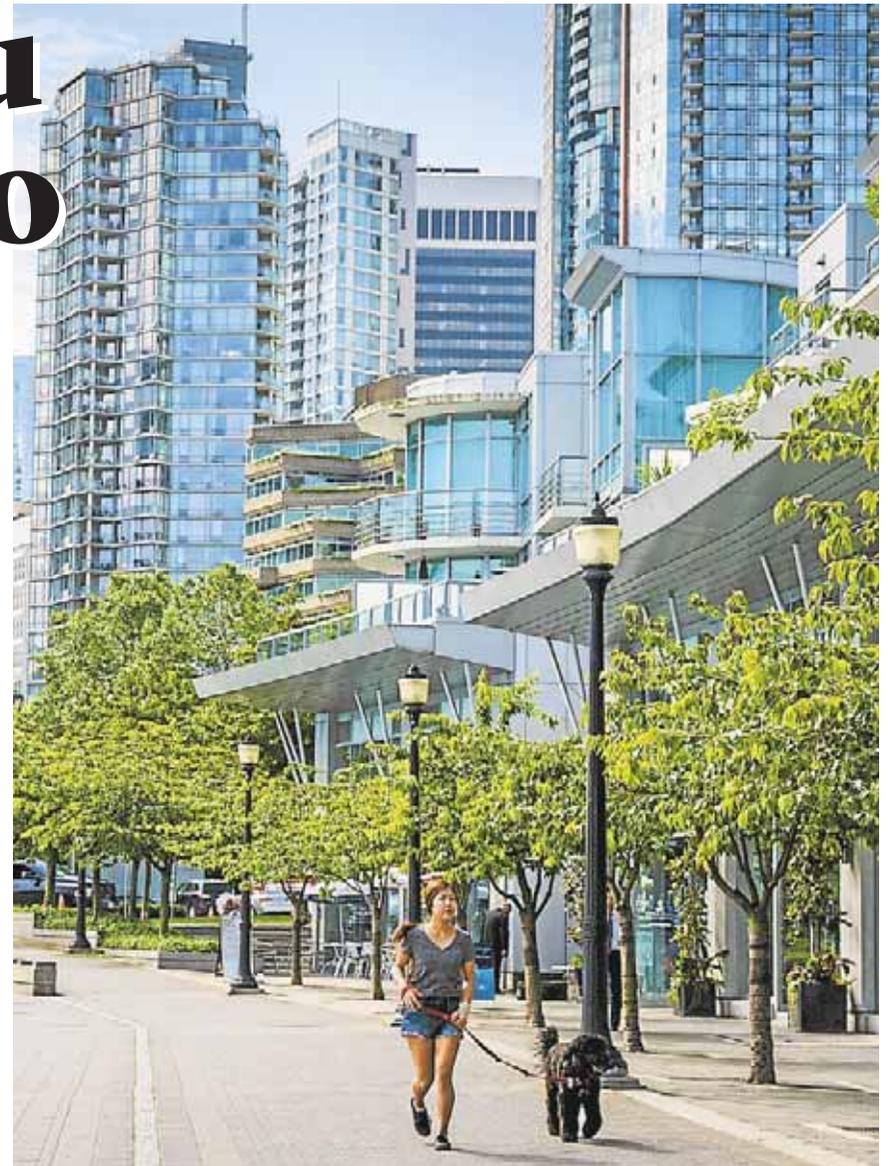
"As a perspective buyer, you've got to get into your building and you've got to spend some time. I'd want to see the place

in the evening, at 11 or 12 o'clock at night, even if you just got a realtor to let you in and to inspect the building and get the vibe of what it's like at night."



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**Dave Perry, private investigator**



Taking a dog for a walk in a neighbourhood can yield information about the health of the area, says private investigator Dave Perry. ISTOCK