

# CONDO LIVING



ON SITE



The new Picasso presentation centre on Queen St. W. is reminiscent of a gallery of modern art.

DUNCAN MCALLISTER

## A work of modern art

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Special to QMI Agency

The condominium presentation centre is a developer's most powerful marketing tool and they've come a long way in recent years.

From impromptu concert venues, to farmer's markets, to art galleries, savvy promoters in a competitive market have used a variety of events to connect with the community and attract customers to their showrooms.

True to its name, Monarch's Picasso condominium presentation centre on Queen St. West is reminiscent of a gallery of modern art.

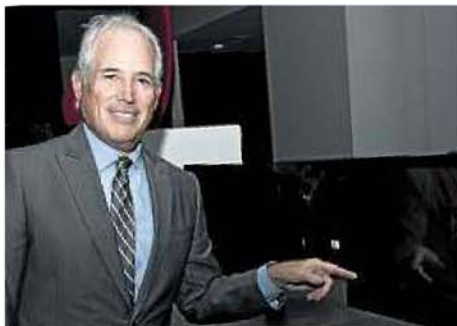
The ultra-modern, crimson-red motif of the sales floor complements Stephen Teeple's three-dimensional cubist architecture. Surrealist, life-sized figures and red, Möbius-like sculptures adorn the sales area.

Consultant Michael Budovitch was instrumental in the design and marketing of the development, a joint project between the Goldman and Monarch groups. He says Picasso is a radical departure from the simplified glass towers where all the units are the same, hopefully a welcome new trend for Toronto condos.

A model of the tower is prominently displayed as you walk into the showroom. "When you look at the scale model, you see that it's very intricate and it's got a lot of details," says Budovitch. Picasso has terraces jutting out on many different levels throughout the building.

Normally terraces are either on the top or the lower levels of a condo. "We're looking at all these terraces and we see a lot of greenery so it's integrated with the building."

The elegant model suite is a working example of the clever designs that Budovitch and



Michael Budovitch demonstrates one of the many large, flat-panel workstations at the Picasso condominium presentation centre.

his team have put together. The Alex Chapman-designed kitchen features a deep, commercial-style sink and the appliances are hidden behind the cabinetry. "Kitchens today are furniture-finished and they're integrated."

Says Budovitch. "We

wanted it to be open space. We wanted to have very efficient planning and we went with our microwave and wall oven." The integrated refrigerator was custom-designed to be hidden away, becoming part of the living space.

The model bathroom is

appointed with rich slate floors and a soaker tub. There's been no compromise to the details of these units. "It was great working with Monarch and Goldman because there was pretty well no budget. Mr. Goldman wanted to create a legacy of a building that would stand the test of time, a landmark. Having done buildings over the years, they change from periods. This will be very current at any time," says Budovitch.

He demonstrates one of the many large, flat-panel displays on the showroom floor, where prospective buyers may be self-served with a plethora of information. A powerful selling tool, the workstations have software that displays a virtual tour of the suites, as well as realistic panoramas from the various balconies showing sight lines.

"It comes down to preference. Someone may prefer the 20th floor because you have more of the city and you have

the lake also, or they want more of the lake," says Budovitch.

At the Picasso sales centre, buyers may examine the many unique floor plans of the building. "When you're working on a building like this, you have to get your head around it because you have 70 different floor plans. All the units are happening with view in mind and for appropriate location," says Budovitch.

"We have an iconic landmark building that we're offering to Toronto in the best location in the entertainment district," Budovitch says. "When you look at our building — it's not a traditional glass tower — we have buildings within buildings."

Also a welcome trend in Toronto, are roomier units, which Picasso has managed to address with their combination suites. This is a condo for life. "We married a studio with a two bedroom," explains Budovitch.