

# LUXURY LIVING



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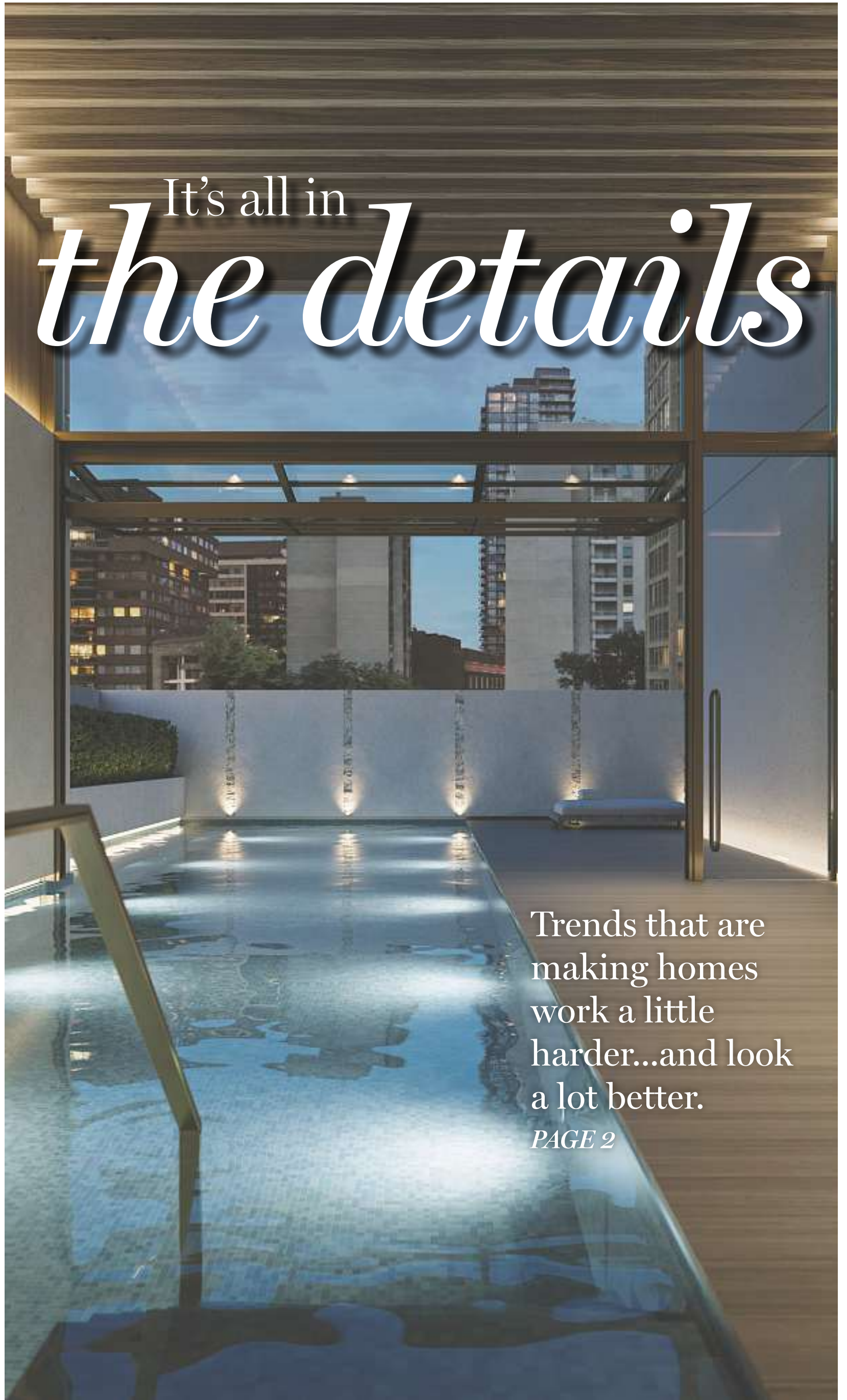
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Canadians are expecting much more from the collection of rooms that make up our homes.

LINDA WHITE,  
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## It's all in *the details*



Trends that are making homes work a little harder...and look a lot better.

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## LUXURY LIVING

# Creating memorable moments

# in your home

A variety of textures and comfy armchairs make this bedroom into a sanctuary that wraps you in comfort.  
JENNIFER BACKSTEIN INTERIORS

LINDA WHITE  
Special to Postmedia Network

As the world changes around us, Canadians are expecting much more from the collection of rooms that make up our homes. After all, spaces that allow us to create unforgettable moments and cherished experiences with our favourite people have become the silver linings in the pandemic cloud.

This means creating kitchens that aren't just for cooking but also hosting games nights. A quiet nook that was once a catchall may now invite you to escape without ever leaving home. As such, designers are busy helping homeowners reimagine rooms so they function in new — and numerous — ways.

### BEDROOMS ARE SANCTUARIES

People may be forging vacations and weekend getaways, but they still want to recharge their batteries and their relationships. How? By drawing inspiration from luxury hotels and transforming their master bedrooms into self-care sanctuaries.

"After a long day in the office or home office, they want their bedroom to serve as more than a place to sleep, but also a retreat that offers a sense

of calmness," says Jennifer Backstein, creative director and principal designer at Jennifer Backstein Interiors in Toronto. "We're doing things like incorporating seating areas where they can snuggle by the fire, read a book and relax with a glass of wine."

Designer Eugenia Triandos, co-founder of Hibou Design & Co. in Montreal, recommends layering textures, including linens, throws, pillows and rugs for an über-relaxing vibe. Add texture, depth and softness with wallpaper. Bid adieu to the treadmill that's become a clothing rack and incorporate some comfy armchairs or a banquette to create a reading nook where you get lost in the pages of the latest bestseller.

Try wall sconces, table lamps and bedside lamps to create the ambience an overhead fixture alone can't muster. Custom storage helps you keep your bedroom clutter-free, protecting the hotel vibe you've carefully curated, says Linda Mazur of Linda Mazur Design Group in Toronto. "We're also seeing a lot more colour — still restful tones but not so neutral." Think navy blues, earthy greens and muted earthy tones like ochre.

### BATHROOMS ARE SPAS

When creating a spa-like bathroom, the bathtub is a

"showstopper" so "take the plunge and go bold," advises Triandos. A deep soaker tub with a high overflow that allows you to fully immerse yourself in water when taking a bath typically tops her clients' must-have lists.

"It's important to have a separate shower when space allows and to consider your views when decorating. A bathtub next to an awesome view is always relaxing," she says. Flooring is often overlooked but has a huge visual impact and should also be functional to prevent slips.

Touchless faucets and soap dispensers, once the domain of commercial spaces, are now equally at home in the house. Bump up the luxury quotient with a makeup vanity, Backstein suggests. While she hasn't had any requests yet for mirror TVs, she appreciates their appeal to those who want to catch up on their must-watch shows while soaking away life's stressors.

### OFFICES ARE MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

With many companies contemplating a future in which employees work remotely at least part of the time, professionals have been turning makeshift offices into permanent spaces. But especially when square footage is at a premium, homeowners

don't want to dedicate an entire room to an office, Triandos reports.

The solution? A Murphy bed complete with storage for a home printer and filing cabinets, and open shelves to display pictures and mementos of life's precious moments. "Now that people are being invited into your home on a whim through FaceTime or video calls, my clients appreciate having a finished space," she says.

Some want their office to serve as a library featuring bookcases thoughtfully decorated with books and other treasured collections, along with a reading corner to relax without the distraction of a TV. Backstein created a custom 10-foot desk for two people both working at home. "We didn't want any wires to be visible, so we made sure all the wires run inside the desk and down the leg."

### KITCHENS ARE SOCIAL CENTRES

Working and learning at home may have forced family members to retreat to the privacy of their own rooms by day, but the kitchen remains a gathering place for meals, shared cups of coffee, schoolwork, games nights, arts and crafts, and more. "Details set a kitchen apart and make it unique and personalized," Backstein says.

The popularity of



HIBOU DESIGN & CO.

A Murphy bed with storage transforms this home office into a multifunctional space, helping professionals remain on task while also making overnight guests feel right at home.

stainless-steel appliances continues but many homeowners are embracing matte black appliances. They're modern and minimalist, but dramatic enough to command attention. If you're among those who've discovered a passion for baking bread amid the pandemic, an oversized sink and double oven are worth the investment.

Homeowners are carving out a space between their kitchen and dining room for a butler's pantry with a built-in bar, or creating a beverage or coffee zone for small-scale entertaining. "If I suggested a refrigerated drawer in a coffee station a year ago, many people would have said they didn't need it but today, they're looking for all the bells and whistles," Mazur says.

An upholstered banquette with drawers or cubbyholes



HIBOU DESIGN & CO.

Transform your bathroom into a spa with an inviting deep soaker tub that will be calling your name after a hard day.

in its base doubles as seating and storage. "Now that people are working from home, they can just fold up their laptop and tuck it into one of the drawers, and all of a sudden, your space is clean and neat and ready to accommodate a meal," Triandos says.

# Tracking luxury real estate

We found the most expensive condos ever sold or listed in Canada.

PAUL BARKER  
Special to Postmedia Network

Vancouver owns bragging rights when it comes to the location of Canada's most expensive condominium unit at a mind-blowing \$58 million, but Toronto could one day catch up, says the author of a new survey that tracks the nation's 10 most expensive condos ever sold or listed.

The findings by Jordan Scrinko, founder of Mississauga-based PreCondo, a condominium real estate platform that connects both buyers and sellers at the pre-build stage, reveal that the number one unit on the list is an 8,000 sq. ft. penthouse located in Vancouver's Coal Harbour district.

Built in 2012, the penthouse's first owners moved in two years later after shelling out \$16.6 million for a property that contains four bedrooms, five bathrooms, two rooftop terraces, a balcony totalling 4,840 sq. ft. and tucked away somewhere in the basement, a private seven-car parking garage.

Number two on the list is located nearby. According to the report, the \$38.8 million Coal Harbour residence "takes up the entire 26th floor of the tower it's

situated in and is the only apartment in the building with this feature.

"Views from the property span across; the ocean, the mountains, and Lions Gate bridge. The condo also boasts three terraces, two fireplaces, an indoor pool, and a six-car garage space."

Spots three and four are also in Vancouver — a 48th floor penthouse at the Private Residences at Hotel Georgia which sold for \$35.8 million and a penthouse in the Hotel Pacific Rim valued at \$29.9 million.

A Toronto condo — Four Seasons West Penthouse — sold for \$28 million and secured the number five spot. From there, condos six through 10 are either in Vancouver or Montreal and valued at between \$16.5 million and \$10.89 million.

Scrinko said the list was created because "first and foremost, one of my least productive past times has been fantasizing about real estate that I will never be able to afford. I think a lot of us share that one in common."

"I like to track luxury real estate in other major world cities now that Toronto is getting noticed as a place of economic and social stability and becoming this world city that we maybe once were not. I look at penthouses that are selling in places

like Miami and New York in order to get an idea of where our price ceilings fit compared to there.

"I noticed recently a 9,000 sq. ft. condo in Manhattan sold for \$109 million during the COVID-19 pandemic. I was amazed and wanted to cross-reference and figure out where our ceiling exists in comparison to that."

As for how and why Vancouver ended up with seven of the 10 most expensive condominiums, Scrinko said it is the result of several factors including a temperate climate and a larger influx of extremely wealthy immigrants.

In addition, developers in Vancouver have a history of "trying to appeal to that luxury segment whereas affordability has always been the primary concern for developers in Toronto."

"We are starting to see a shift take place where developers are stepping out of that monotonous glass box template to create some luxury product."

"Give it a few years and you will see Toronto end up the one with the bragging rights. Canada is the fastest growing G7 country by population, and Toronto is the fastest growing affluent city in the world, so it's no surprise that we're starting to see developers creating this type of condo product."



SUPPLIED

Coal Harbour, 8,000 sq. ft. penthouse — \$58 million.

In the Toronto market, he added, "we are just finally now seeing some pre-construction inventory to actually match up with what luxury clientele are looking for."

An example of that is the 95-storey SkyTower at Pinnacle One Yonge.

Pricing for North America's 16th highest condo tower will start at \$800,000 for a one-bedroom unit and rise as high as \$5 million for a deluxe three-bedroom 2,300 sq. ft. unit.

There will also be one special unit for someone who can afford to pay the estimated \$30 million price tag and earn the right to live atop the nation's highest skyscraper.

According to Anson Kwok, Pinnacle's vice president of sales and marketing, the full-floor penthouse with a

360-degree view of Lake Ontario and the downtown core will contain 7,600 sq. ft. of living space.

"We are just now seeing builders nail that market," says Scrinko. "It is nice that the luxury market is starting to pick up in Toronto and hopefully it will continue to bring more and more unique inventory that I can fantasize about."

The list was created via internal data, "as well as an array of publicly available data from the last 30 years."

"These types of properties aren't often available to buy, and make up a reasonably niche section of the market — however we've seen prices rise substantially over recent years, and I don't believe this is a trend which is going to slow down going forward," Scrinko said.

The 10 most expensive condos ever listed/sold in Canada, and how much they are worth, are:

- 1 Coal Harbour 8,000-square-foot Penthouse — \$58m
- 2 Coal Harbour 26th floor 6,670-square-foot Condo — \$38.88m
- 3 Hotel Georgia Residence 48th floor Penthouse — \$35.8m
- 4 Fairmont Pacific Rim Penthouse — \$29.9m
- 5 Four Seasons West Penthouse Toronto — \$28m
- 6 3101-717 Jervis St., Vancouver — \$16.5m
- 7 PH1801-1430 Rue de la Montagne, Ville Marie, Montreal — \$15.4m
- 8 PH1802-1430 Rue de la Montagne, Ville Marie, Montreal — \$13.43m
- 9 2001-1835 Morton Ave., Ocean Towers, Vancouver — \$12.95m
- 10 1480 Howe St., Vancouver — \$10.89m

Source: PreCondo.ca



SUPPLIED

Coal Harbour, 26th floor 6,670-sq. ft. condo — \$38.88 million.