

Nature preserve named for condo

A downtown Toronto condo is the unlikely inspiration for the new name for a nature preserve on Pelee Island.

The 169-hectare Florian Diamante Nature Preserve, a portion of the Brown's Road Alvar on the Lake Erie island, takes its name from The Florian, a 87-suite luxury condo to be built on Davenport Rd. in Upper Yorkville, and its developer, the Diamante Development Corp.

Diamante has pledged \$500,000 to the Nature Conservancy of Canada to help purchase the ecologically sensitive lands from a Pelee Island quarry operator. The NCC, a non-profit land conservation agency, was able to match the Diamante donation with funds from two government programs at the federal and provincial levels.

The donation from Diamante and The Florian will help preserve the Brown's Road Alvar, a unique ecosystem that occurs on flat limestone, thinly covered with soil and marked by holes and fissures. It is home to rare species of animals, such as the blue racer snake. It is one of two known occurrences in the world of chinquapin oak-nodding wild onion alvar savannah, an exotic grassland, and is also important for monarch butterfly and songbird migration.

Diamante co-president Julie Di Lorenzo says the company chose to make the donation to the Nature Conservancy of Canada because it knows the land will be protected in perpetuity.

The 21-storey Florian, consisting of a four-storey podium and a tower, is a high-end "green" condominium, with state-of-the-art systems and eco-friendly finishes.

Features include condensing boilers with heat exchangers, which are 97 per cent fuel-efficient and do not emit carbon dioxide; low-wattage LED lighting in most common areas and switches in suites that will turn off all lights when residents leave; energy-efficient appliances;



The Florian will combine high-end finishes with eco-friendly features.

curtain wall construction using extra thick insulated glass units usually found in commercial buildings to reduce heat loss and gain; rain water retention system; bicycle storage; and garbage sorting/recycling facilities.

There is a 2,709-square-foot model suite in the sales centre, designed by Brian Gluckstein, which combines traditional and contemporary materials such as dark herringbone hardwood floors, and textured wall coverings with marble, granite, stainless steel and glass.

Di Lorenzo says the suite is one of the largest in the project, and that some purchasers are buying two units to create units of more than 4,000 square feet.

Suites will have 10-foot ceilings, spacious rooms, floor-to-ceiling windows and double balconies, gourmet kitchens with seven top-of-the-line appliances, spa-style bathrooms with multi-headed shower systems and soaker tubs.

Suites range from 743 square feet to 2,800 square feet in the podium, and 1,476 square feet to 2,700 square feet in the tower. Prices range from \$700,000 to more than \$2.4 million.

The architect for The Florian is Toronto-based Hariri Pontarini Architects, with Young + Wright Architects Inc. The same team designed Diamante's One City Hall condominium at 111 Elizabeth St. and co-operated on other projects, including York University's Schulich School of Business.

Exterior features such as the premium, elongated Norman brick, to be incorporated in the modern glass design, and a sample of the curtain wall system are showcased in the sales office. Di Lorenzo describes the brick as "museum quality" found on public buildings such as the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts.

Amenities include 24-hour concierge and valet service, state-of-the-art exercise facilities, a rooftop garden and indoor swimming pool.

Maintenance fees are estimated at 69 cents per square foot per month; hydro will be individually metered. Occupancy is scheduled for spring 2010.

The builder is purchasing green electricity from Bullfrog Power for the presentation centre. The sales office is at 100 Davenport Rd., 416-599-7667. Visit TheFlorian.com.