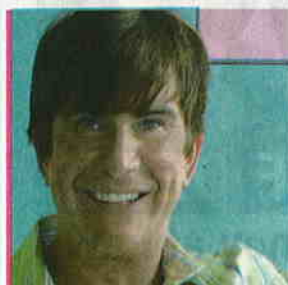


Spring Home and Garden

MINNESOTA'S GAY-LESBIAN-BISEXUAL-TRANSGENDER MAGAZINE

LAVENDER[®]



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COVER PHOTO AND PHOTO THIS PAGE OF BILLY BESON, WILLIAM BESON
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710 Lofts



710 Lofts



Printer's Row Lofts



Printer's Row Lofts

Lofty Ambitions

New Urban Housing Developments Think Inside the Box

BY E.B. BOATNER

Loft and condo living is booming in Minneapolis and the surrounding areas, with some buildings ready to inhabit, numerous projects under construction, and some grand plans still in the empyrean.

Nearly every existing loft/condo tower offers 10-foot-plus ceilings, granite counter tops, exposed ductwork (or not, according to your whim), stunning views, glass sheathing by the square yard, and hardwood floors by the acre.

Lavender undertook to examine a few of the local projects see what other aspects might appeal particularly to the potential GLBT buyer, specifically, a gay-friendly and gay-supportive ambience.

In compliance with the Federal Fair Housing Act (FFHA), a developer/owner may neither turn away nor directly specify a desired demographic, but may advertise, highlight, and otherwise make visible a project to appeal both to the general population and to the GLBT market.

The latter, it is clear, is a growing segment of affluent, generally childless, urban to semiurban dwellers, ideally suited to loft and condo living.

All the following respondents advertise in local GLBT publications, though they may not actively seek GLBT buyers per se.

Farthest afield is Reflections at Bloomington Central Station, by McGough Development, the firm that handled the St. Paul

Cathedral dome and is constructing the new Guthrie Theater.

Now under construction on a 45-acre site adjacent to the Light Rail Transit Bloomington Station, Reflections, according to Marketing Director Laurence Harmon, was priced "specifically to appeal to working people."

Reflections, Harmon notes, is a "green" building, the first in Minnesota to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified for its use of recycled building materials, waste-water disposal, and air filtration and circulation.

Harmon cites "numerous same-sex buyers," both for Reflections and McGough's American Trio Lofts in Downtown Minneapolis.

The 710 Lofts in Downtown Minneapolis already has 55 of its 60 units sold.

"Many of our buyers are gay," realtor Fritz Kroll says. "I think the City and Downtown especially attract many gay buyers, especially those moving here from other cities.

"They ask where the gay bars and restaurants are in Minneapolis, and realize that they are all Downtown or just across the river, and they want to be near them."

710's location (710 North Fourth Street), Kroll points out, is becoming a "trendy, hip, and truly diverse area."

Niles Schulz, former President of PFLAG, father of a gay son, and Chief Manager of Mill Trace Properties, LC,

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states unequivocally, "There is absolutely no question in my mind as to the need for housing that addresses the special and unique needs of aging GLBT persons."

The Southeast Minneapolis neighborhood encompassing Mill Trace (698 Eighth Street SE), is, Schulz observes, "diverse, politically liberal, University connected."

In the future, Schulz envisions up to four additional buildings on contiguous property, targeted to attract the senior GLBT population.

Mill Trace actively and substantively courts the GLBT market.

As Schulz explains, "Buyers who mention our ads in *Lavender* receive an additional \$500 discount. The discount climbs to \$1,000 if the buyer presents a Quorum card.

"All this information is available to the general public, but we assume that the offers will be noticed by the GLBT and allied communities."

Printer's Row, across the street from St. Paul's Wacouta Commons, offers eight Habitat for Humanity homes, the first that Habitat has done for urban multifamily housing.

Four of them, Tony Kriha, Sales Director for the Lander Group, reports, are

"Possibility Build"-outfitted to accommodate a disabled family member."

GLBT participation, Kriha relates, is "an expanding part of our demographic."

To that end, Lander advertises in GLBT publications.

Excelsior and Grand in St. Louis Park has several units constructed as handicapped units, with extrawide wheelchair-access doors on every unit, making units accessible to all.

Project General Manager Shawn McIntyre comments, "We do not necessarily target any individual group. We do definitely appeal to the hip, trendy, fun, and outgoing crowd. We have placed ads in *Lavender*, however, and welcome all to join our family."

As to estimates of GLBT occupants, McIntyre demurs: "All I can say is many."

Bary Berg, listing agent with Berg and Wanninger for The Lofts at International Market Square, emphasizes, "We are very gay-friendly."

The Lofts, Berg recounts, is "developing a cooperative marketing effort with The Firm, a gay-friendly organization, and on activities which will tie in with the



Walker Art Center."

GLBT Generations is not a developer, but rather, in the words of Cathy Croghan, President of the Board of Directors, "an intergenerational group founded in 1999 to identify and address the needs of old GLBT people in the Twin Cities. Our mission is to ensure that GLBT people achieve a satisfying quality of life in later years."

Currently, Generations is involved in a project being developed by Spirit of the Lakes United Church of Christ and the Powderhorn Neighborhood Association to build affordable senior GLBT housing in the lot at 13th Avenue and Lake Street in South Minneapolis.

This project, which stemmed from the difficulties a disabled transgender church member encountered in elder care, still is in the predevelopment stage. *LAVENDER*