

DOLCE VITA

**SOARING
INTEREST IN
AMANDA
LANG**

**A RIDE WITH
FORMULA
ONE'S
YOUNGEST
WORLD CHAMP**

**FEDERICO FELLINI:
THE FATHER OF
*LA DOLCE
VITA***

**THE SPECTACLE OF
IRIS APFEL**

**PLUS BEHIND THE SEAMS AND THE STOVE
WITH LARRY ROSEN AND MARK McEWAN**

FALL 2011 U.S. / CAN \$5.95
Display in Fashion / Lifestyle
until Dec 12



A WALK IN THE PARK: Sam Mizrahi

Luxury design builder Sam Mizrahi's valuable insights, on the house.

WRITTEN BY MADELINE STEPHENSON

When the founder of Mizrahi Design Build conceived a plan to place a new multi-million dollar development at the gateway of an affluent Toronto neighbourhood, he knew it would have to resonate. "People are wary of change," he says, an observation he's gained from years of breaking ground in the historic roads of Forest Hill, Yorkville, and Richmond Hill. "Every single design and building that I do, I look at how it would come in concert with the entire community, and how it would blend in as if it always belonged there."

Sam Mizrahi is standing at the portico of his latest *pièce de résistance*: Lytton Park Townhomes. His sleek black Porsche 911 Turbo is parked out front, further boosting the curb appeal of a six-suite structure embedded in 19th century culture and the classical elegance of colonial architecture. Bronzed from a recent jaunt to southern France, the revered real estate CEO is a pinstriped paradigm of the new age developer, a walking 24-hour billboard that takes the brand beyond 9 – 5. He adheres to the mentality of the generation-why not era: those that break from tradition and challenge past ideologies.

As he swings open the solid oak door of the 3,500 sq. ft. luxury model suite and treads across a natural hardwood foyer towards the dining room, a sense of belonging is palpable. Mizrahi's voice echoes through the halls of one of two remaining unoccupied residences as he proceeds to reflect on his adolescence, the days when his family exposed him to grand environments from around the globe. "What I really took note of was how beautiful these small little details really were that at the glance of an eye would go by." The early introduction to European elements and ancient traditions left Mizrahi with old-world reveries that would linger. Today, his peripheral design awareness continues to be ignited by a deepened infatuation with international architecture; weaving the amorous elements of Paris, Prague and Florence into Toronto's polychromatic fabric. "You have to breathe soul into the home," says the 40-year-old, who exhaled his initial fervor for design more than two decades ago.

Mizrahi was in the midst of developing his first real subdivision in the summer of '89, when Canada's housing market was anxiously resting on the edge of an eroding economy. To boot the anticipation of an impending pop, he had the added pressure of competing with a neighbour who was simultaneously working on a similar project. "That was where it really sparked, it was the catalyst in terms of the passion," he says. Under the sweltering sun of those summer months, he also received a valuable business lesson, one that would amortize over the next 20-plus years.

A rendition of Sam Mizrahi's next development with partner Khalili, the 133 Hazelton Residences in Yorkville, Toronto.



“What I found was to create product so that even in recessionary times, you can still monetize it, you can still sell it because it’s superior to everything else.”

Three recessions later and Mizrahi has become known as a leader in sustainability through Energy Star Green House Certified practices and adhering to the internationally recognized standards of ISO 9001, a demanding quality management system that’s scarcely seen in the housing industry. As for his opinion on the current state of the market, no news is razor-edged enough to burst his bubble. “I think you create your own market,” he says, adding that Canada’s real estate industry is insulated by a superior banking system and large immigration rates that he believes will continue to carry the economy. In good times and bad, the design builder whose become known for having an obsessive-compulsive dedication to documenting every project detail, is faithfully married to his craft.

Admittedly not immune to life’s challenges, Mizrahi says that when turbulence strikes, he simply puts his pilot cap on to soar above the clouds for some aerial insight. “When I’m up there, I feel like I’m a bird, and it gives me a different perspective on everything. I look at the city in a different way.” This foreshadows his ambition to aim even higher for his next endeavour: 133 Hazelton Residences, a 38-suite luxury condominium in the heart of Yorkville.

The imminent upscale project is the talking-point of his next meeting, one he’s suddenly rushing off to. Standing back on the portico to bid adieu, Mizrahi willfully leaves the keys behind. With the roles reversed, he somehow manages to say, ‘My house is your house,’ without a single utterance. www.mizrahicorp.com

“EVERY SINGLE DESIGN AND BUILDING THAT I DO, I LOOK AT HOW IT WOULD COME IN CONCERT WITH THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.”

– Sam Mizrahi



Sam Mizrahi makes himself the centrepiece in Lytton Park Townhomes’ model suite dining room.