

Citywide

Real estate marketing trends offer an image of an entire lifestyle

BY VICTORIA SOLOMON

It's not just about buying a condo.

In today's market, when a buyer scans ads and Web pages for a new home, an entire lifestyle is in the offing. Advertisements for many new condo buildings, especially in re-emerging areas of the city like the Massachusetts Avenue, NW, corridor, offer pictures of a life accompanied by sharp suits, beautiful people and smooth cocktails, in addition to square footage and bathroom finishes.

According to many real estate experts, condominium market inventory is on the rise and competition is flush. Developers, therefore, may be marketing their

McWilliams/Ballard is currently marketing condominiums in several hot spots downtown. The Web site of the DuMont, being built by New York-based Broadway Real Estate Partners at 425 Massachusetts Ave., NW, promises these amenities: "Power, Influence & Style." The words one by one take their turn on the screen, with accompanying pictures of a bespectacled and gray-haired male, the U.S. Capitol and a suave, younger chap who might be posing for a suit shop. "Proximity is power," the Web site proclaims, alongside a picture of the Washington Monument. Studio prices start in the high \$200,000s.

Another building marketed by McWilliams/Ballard at 1010

the city at your doorstep. The ads are reflective of that."

PN Hoffman marketing manager Alanna Deal — who coined Hoffman's motto, "Style is not just what you wear, it's where you live" — said the slogan came about with the advent of some new glossy-style magazines focused on haute D.C. destinations and lifestyle.

"[The motto] translates to the readers of those magazines," Deal said. "It's very trendy." She said such marketing can be found "all over" the city, especially in emerging areas such as the U Street corridor.

Two of PN Hoffman's new condo buildings — the Flats at Union Row and the Warehouses at Union Row, both at 14th and V streets — feature pictures of young people saying, "I want to feel the downtown vibe" and "I crave the sounds of the city."

The Warehouses, Deal said, are in fact abandoned warehouses that have been converted into "town-home styles."

"People are really drawn to it because it's different," she said.

Studios at the Flats start in the \$200,000 range, and what is still unsold in the Warehouses starts in the high \$500,000s.

Another project in the same area, the T Street Flats at 14th and T streets, by Ellis Development Group and the West Group Development Co., offers itself as "a style of living that's all your own."

The advertisements offer this enticement:

"If you could create a home from your own visual inspirations, you'd probably find yourself at T Street Flats. That's because here, in the most sought-after part of the city, is a groundbreaking concept in urban living that's like nothing else in Washington. ... At T Street Flats, your home will be an homage to continental glamour and brilliant design."

One-bedroom condos at the T Street Flats are priced in the \$400,000 to \$499,000 range.

Another re-emerging area, 14th

Street, with its theater and art scene, is also swept up in condos and marketing geared toward a cosmopolitan life.

Metropolis Development Co. is tipping its hat to the emerging art district with an installation of 47 pieces by Los Angeles-based artist Colin Day at the company's Loft 14 building at 14th and Church streets. A reception for the work was held Saturday.

Metropolis founder and president Scott Pannick said Loft 14 is already sold out. The art will be used as a marketing tool for the company's newest venture, the Metropole building at 1515 15th St. NW. He said the details are what matter in competitive condo advertising.

"Those are the pieces that make it into a beautiful home," Pannick said.

Pannick said he noticed the new condo-marketing trends emerging a couple of years ago. Standard advertising at the time offered a floor plan and basic information about the building, which he said was all that was needed when there were fewer condos and the market was white-hot.

"In general I think there's more competition, and people have to think more about how to distinguish themselves," Pannick said. "Before that it was like shooting fish in a barrel."

VOICE



COURTESY MCWILLIAMS/BALLARD

An artist's conception of Ten Ten Mass, a condominium being marketed as a 'way of life' by the developer.

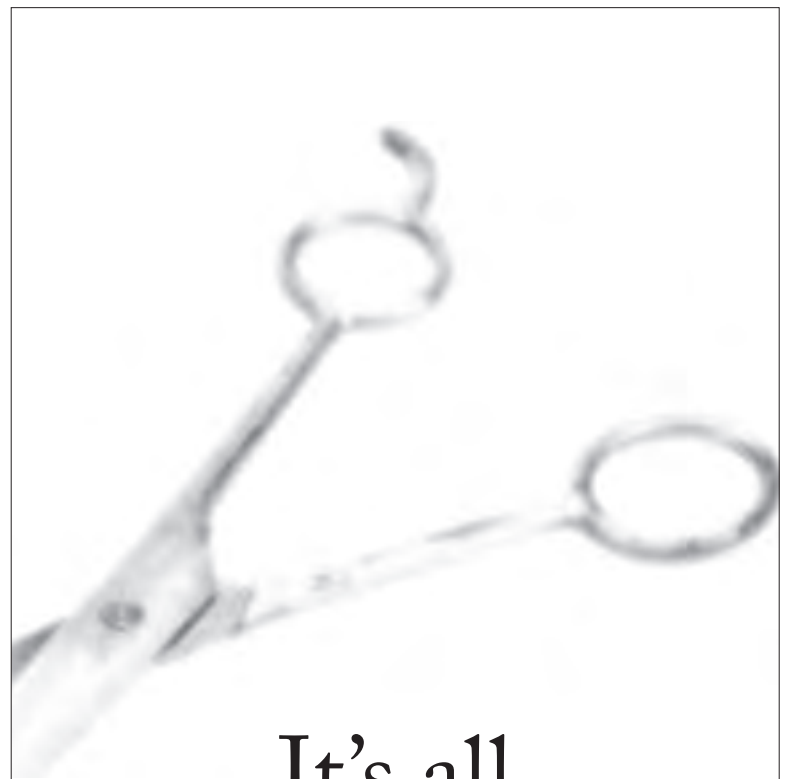
products in such a way as to give it that extra push, said Niki Piersall, vice president of marketing for Alexandria-based McWilliams/Ballard, one of the largest sales and marketing firms on the East Coast.

"Because there's so much competition in the marketplace ... I think you're going to see an interesting trend of more creative marketing," Piersall said. In terms of ads offering a lifestyle — "From a marketing standpoint, that's something that has evolved," she said.

Massachusetts Ave. NW says the condo building "is a way of life."

"... The center of power becomes the center of your life in the city, at Ten Ten Mass," the Web site offers. The condos are by D.C.-based RCP Development Co., North Carolina-based Faison Enterprises and the global Carlyle Group, and they start in the \$300,000s.

Piersall said the downtown condos are "a place for those who know what building they want and how to get it. It's all about having



It's all
about hair.

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