

new/real estate

BosaSPACE condo units are built to transform

The Alumni in Surrey's University District frees up space for entertaining

by CHARLIE SMITH on NOV 13, 2013 at 2:30 PM

STORY PHOTOS 11



The standard configuration looks like many one-bedroom units. Click photos tab above to see it change.

ONE OF THE more challenging aspects of Lower Mainland condo living is entertaining guests. That's because when units get below 600 square feet, it becomes difficult to find the space to hold a dinner party for several people.

PHOTOS



Sure, there might be an island in the kitchen where two people can eat their breakfast. There could be a table in the dining area seating four. But the thought of hosting eight people for a banquet isn't very practical in many one-bedroom suites in the city. The only option is using the shared space somewhere else in the building—if it even exists.

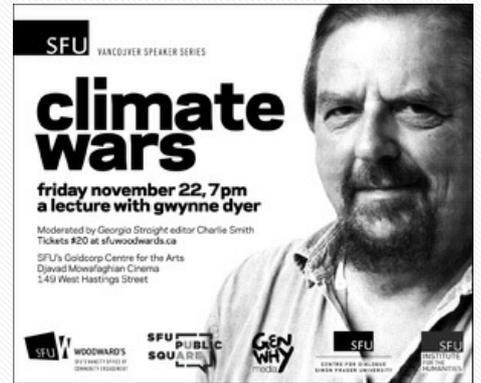
It's an issue that real-estate developer Bosa Properties has been grappling with for several years. Its senior vice president, Daryl Simpson, tells the *Georgia Straight* by phone that a growing number of people don't want to feel like they're being "shoehorned" into a place. They want affordability, he says, but they don't want to feel embarrassed to invite people over for a birthday party because of a lack of space.

"We thought, 'There's got to be a better way,'" Simpson tells the *Georgia Straight* by phone. "How do we make a floor plan perform better? How do we make it function higher?"

After extensive research at furniture and design exhibitions, the company has created a pioneering new concept called BosaSPACE. It will be introduced in all 310 units in its 35-storey Alumni building in the University District in Surrey Centre.

"It's the first tower anywhere in the world that has fully transformable condominiums throughout the tower," Simpson says.

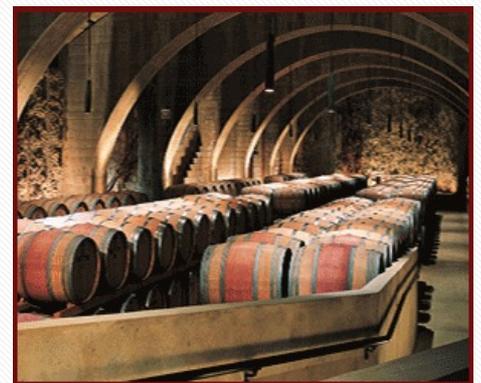
The normal floor plan for a one-bedroom condo features an island in the kitchen, a 12-feet-by-10-feet living room, and a bedroom behind a wall that bisects the unit lengthwise. In this configuration, it resembles many other condos across the region.



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But that's not the end of the story. A series of images reveal how the unit can be adjusted depending on the occupant's desires.

In the kitchen, there's a long dining-room table that can be pulled out from the island. There's also purpose-built storage space in the suite designed to hold eight chairs, which can be brought out for extra guests.

The living room is also transformable. The wall separating the bedroom can be rolled back into the wall beside the bathroom, increasing the size of the living room to 12-feet-by-20 feet. In this configuration, the bed disappears after it's folded back and converted into a sofa. This creates sufficient seating for eight people in a spacious environment—with nobody needing to sit on the kitchen chairs.

"There have been a couple of small condo projects that have tried to have a transformable furniture piece," Simpson says. "But they've all been a designer item or a customized feature. With this, everything is included."

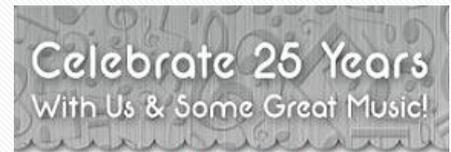
BosaSPACE is a furnished suite, complete with a big-screen television attached to the wall in the living room. Even the television is movable, sliding out of the way to allow an additional daybed, sofa, or home office to fold out of the wall.

He says that in Surrey, condo prices are generally about \$450 to \$460 per square foot. Units in the Alumni will average about \$475 per square foot, which means about a \$10,000 premium on a 500-square-foot unit.

Simpson estimates that if someone hired a craftsman to build the island, table, and kitchen chairs, it might cost \$5,000. To buy all the furniture separately—including a sofa, two chairs, the hide-a-bed, the TV, and the fold-out daybed—might cost a bit under \$20,000. He says Bosa can drive down the price because it's buying a large volume of furniture from an Italian manufacturer.

"You don't want to be too full of hubris," Simpson says, "but we think that architects, designers, and builders who've previously had their blinders on to this are going to go, 'You know what? This is awesome. This works.' More importantly, consumers will say, 'I don't want the same old thing anymore. I want something that changes and shifts, and something that...adapts to my everyday needs as they change.'"

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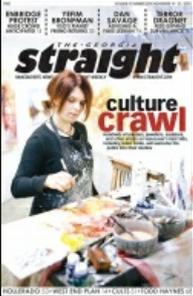
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