

REAL ESTATE

Your weekly guide to Washington-area homes

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SOPHISTICATED AND SEXY

By **Katie Wilmeth**
Special to The Examiner

Can an address be sexy?

If you buy one of the condos at 22 West, the answer is definitely "Oh yes."

The brand new building — from Austrian-born architect Shalom Baranes and luxury developers East-Banc — is a study in chic sleekness with a zinc and glass exterior "skin" that gives the 11-story building a unique look. Its dramatic floor-to-ceiling glass walls let you experience the city even when you're inside, and its minimalist yet inviting interiors just beg to be the backdrop for a cocktail party.

"It's a very sleek, sexy design," said Mei-Mei Watts Venners, director of sales for 22 West. "We've been dubbed the uber-luxury condos."

Located in Washington's West End across the street from that other uber-luxury location, the Ritz-Carlton, the building recently opened its doors and will deliver its 92 condo units in the coming months. Ranging from 950 square feet to 3,500 square feet with price tags that start under \$800,000 and run to nearly \$3.9 million, you can opt for a little luxury — or a lot.

All the units (which include 73 floor plans in all, so nearly all the residences have their own look and feel) come with what you'd expect in luxu-

ry living: high-end finishes throughout (check out the cast iron bathtubs that ensure the water stays hot for extra long bubble baths), a state-of-the-art kitchen that looks more like your living room (go ahead try to figure out where the dishwasher is), hardwood floors, a rooftop pool and, of course, a 24-hour concierge.

But it's perhaps what you don't see, said Watts Venners, that puts 22 West over the top.

"There are no extras and options," she said. "Because everything has already been done."

For example, the ceiling heights stand at 9 feet 6 inches, but 6 of those inches are between the ceiling that you see and the actual ceiling. The gap between your ceiling and the next floor allows you to rewire the residence for the lighting, sound system or anything else a would-be owner might want — a feature not typically seen in a standard condo.

"The developer wants people to be able to customize their residence," said Watts Venners.

But, for those that just want to move in, much of the customizing has already been done. Each unit is pre-wired for high-speed Internet, four telephone lines, satellite and cable television. Phantom screens (meaning they're completely hidden when not in use) are already installed on those aforementioned floor-to-ceiling windows and all of the unit's electronic features — including an iPod docking station — can be organized

on a one-touch screen panel.

"We cater to the techno-addict," Watts Venners said. "It will be like 'Welcome to the World of James Bond.'"

And for the presumably busy residents, all utilities are included in the condo fee.

"We believe in writing one check," said Watts Venners. "It's the perfect lock-and-leave luxury building."

Another standout feature of 22 West is its greenness. Saving the environment is considered sexy these days and 22 West has it in spades. The building boasts a 6,000-square-foot green roof canopy, as well as trees and shrubs on many of the occupant balconies. The building also uses a central plant for heating, ventilation, air conditioning and hot water — a system that uses less energy to heat and cool the building. The floor-to-ceiling glass windows call for less artificial light and the quality of air circulating throughout the building measures above standard building codes.

From the green to the serene, 22 West's developers aim to give residents everything they could want in luxury living.

"(Residents) want the elegance, the sophistication, the luxury. They don't want the hassle," said Watts Venners. "Every single design element, everything's been thought of."

Sophistication without stress? Now that's sexy.

CONDO CORNER



At a glance

- **Property:** A brand new condo building in the District's West End that's sleek, sexy and stress-free.
- **Price:** Units range from \$783,500 to \$3.89 million.
- **Description:** Designed as the ultimate in luxury urban living, the 92 condos come with everything from top-of-the-line finishes and the latest in in-home technology to a 24-hour concierge desk and a rooftop pool with sweeping city views.
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