

## HOT DIGS

# \$10-million baby

Developer Robert Quigg built himself a luxury pad. Now he's ready to sell it



**Y**ou can do a lot with \$9.8 million. Buy computers for a few African villages. Set up a trust fund for your future great-great-great-grandchildren. Or you could buy Robert Quigg's condo, which he claims is the most expensive listed condo for sale in the history of Vancouver real estate.

Quigg, the 39-year-old CEO of the Quigg Group – a high-end luxury homebuilder – acquired the top two floors of Barclay Street's Presidio building on the edge of Stanley Park in 2005, and spent two years renovating the space. Now he's looking to move on to a more spacious project in West Vancouver.

So what does a \$10-million 4,200-square-foot condo have – apart from the space and views – that a \$500,000 one doesn't? For starters, custom-built furnishings that include a lacquered goatskin table (don't ask why); a double-king-size bed that's twice as wide as it is long; a plush sofa that's exactly two inches deeper than a regular couch; and intricately woven carpets from India that took 18 months to create.

You also get an outdoor hot tub with views of the North Shore mountains; a \$360,000 audio-video security system; heated limestone flooring – and two of everything: two fireplaces, two fridges, two ovens, two wine cellars; two media rooms, two bedrooms and two living rooms (well, one's called a library). Colours in the minimalist space range from beige to brown. If it's not limestone, it's limed oak. And if it's not limed oak, it's leather. It's an astounding level of luxury, but don't assume Quigg, who was raised in Powell River by Irish immigrant parents, was always surrounded by riches.

"My father was a crane operator in a paper mill and my mom was a stay-at-home mom," he says, adding that he's a journeyman carpenter and surveyor by trade. "I started the company in 1986 [at age 19] with \$500 and a pickup truck. I built the business up from there." Obviously, the boy done good.

A walk-through of the property, though, is tough to come by. "We've probably brought eight or ten qualified buyers through," says Quigg. "We are fairly selective on who comes. Otherwise we would just have people coming in to have a look." □

## FORWARD PLANNING

# Back to the future

**D**avid Baxter's phone is ringing off the hook. The economic and demographic forecaster and executive director of Urban Futures, a research and consulting firm, says everybody – from the Ontario Egg Producers' Marketing Board to the City of North Vancouver – wants a glimpse of the future.

"We're turning down two or three jobs a day," he says. "We're swamped." Ask him why there's so much demand for his services and he's got a ready answer. "People are beginning to realize that their intuition may

not be right. When we had relatively large and relatively homogeneous consumer markets, you could go with 'I know what I like, and I know what my friends like.' Now, suddenly people are looking at the markets and saying, 'How do I sell this product or service when I'm sitting in the middle of what's become a Punjabi community?'"

Baxter provides "futures" work: forward-thinking analyses and projections about where things are headed, be it from a global, federal, industrial or corporate perspective. Traditionally more associated with governments, futures planning or scenario analysis is finding new power in the world of business. Rob McDiarmid, president of the B.C. Law Society, heads an active futures committee for members. "Lawyers have a great deal of difficulty thinking outside the box,"

he explains. The committee has been examining the repercussions of global warming on the legal industry and the new sectors that might spin out because of it.

Lynn Burton, chair of humanities at SFU and futures studies expert, says the practice of forecasting got a bad rap back in the '80s when "it was tainted by consultants who weren't very credible and were predicting wild, way-out things that were not very practical." Today, she says, it's "retrenching," with the main difference being a focus on the multiple possible scenarios that lie ahead rather than a single vision of the future.

Those who choose to conduct business on a day-to-day, week-to-week or year-to-year perspective, Burton says, run the risk of not having a future at all. So what is *your* crystal ball telling you? □