



**THE NEW**

**VERTICAL**

**JO**



Toronto's towers are bustling high-rise communities with tennis clubs, elevator romances, kids' playgroups, rooftop yoga studios and dog squads.

A look inside the city's vertical neighbourhoods

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## FOR MOST OF ITS HISTORY, TORONTO GREW OUTWARD. NOW IT'S GROWING UP.

As the city's population swells and downtown space grows scarce, more of us are living in condos than ever before—the last census showed a 17 per cent spike in the number of Canadian condo dwellers since 2011, with almost half a million units in the city, each housing an average of 1.9 people. Condos also continue to be the single largest source of new housing supply in the city: between 1998 and 2018, they accounted for 77 per cent of all residential builds. And as condo living becomes more common, condos themselves are becoming vertical neighbourhoods unto themselves, with their own subcultures and demographics. Party rooms, spas and green spaces now more often resemble bustling clubhouses, pubs and parkettes. They're home to regular trivia nights, tennis and gardening clubs, toddler playgroups, even small businesses. As individual units get smaller—you can now find micro-condos as tiny as 289 square feet—the common spaces that the residents share, their main streets and public squares, become more vital. It's these places that allow residents to indulge their offbeat hobbies, meet like-minded neighbours, find romance. It's these places that provide the lifeblood of every new tower and townhouse being built. It's these places that make every condo feel exactly like it should—like home. Here, a peek inside the chummy, surprisingly intimate world of condoland.



### THE COUPLE

Jamie Hunte, 38, a sales manager at Scotiabank, and Myra Fahim, 31, a clinic manager at CAMH

### THE BUILDING

DNA at King and Shaw

**MYRA:** I moved into the building in October 2011. Before that, I had been living at my parents' place in Mississauga.

**JAMIE:** I had moved in a couple of months before. Our units weren't close together at all. She was on the ninth floor and I was on the third floor.

**MYRA:** On opposite ends of the building.

**JAMIE:** We definitely wouldn't have met in the elevator. At the time, I was driving back and forth to Pickering fairly often to be with family, because my mother had cancer. For the longest time, the parking space beside mine was vacant. One day, I was sitting in my car checking messages on my phone when I saw Myra's car pull in. I waited for a little bit and she got out.

**MYRA:** That sounds really creepy, by the way.

**JAMIE:** She was taking some boxes out of her car, so I asked her if she needed a hand.

**MYRA:** It was nice to have some help. But I was just moving in, and I wasn't ready to be social, so I didn't let him stay with me past the elevator. I told my friends I had a cute parking neighbour.

**JAMIE:** I called her "hot parking lot girl."

**MYRA:** Every time I went to the parking lot I would always look to see if he was there. A few months later, we ran into each other at Metro. I was buying tampons. I tried to hide them behind my back.

**JAMIE:** I asked for her number. We were both really busy at work, so we didn't actually go on a date until a few weeks later.

**MYRA:** After that, we saw each other pretty regularly. It was easy, because we lived in the same building. We were able to see each other as much as we wanted but still be independent and have our own space.

**JAMIE:** One night, in her unit, I surprised her with a ring. In 2016, we sold both our condos, bought a house in Mississauga and got married.

# THE ROMANTICS

IN CONDOLAND, ELEVATORS ARE THE NEW DATING APPS. HERE, FOUR COUPLES WHO FOUND LOVE IN THEIR BUILDINGS



### THE COUPLE

Mark Medeiros, 39, a carpenter, and Christina Medeiros, 42, a behavioural therapist

### THE BUILDING

Nero Condos at Dundas and Manning

**MARK:** I worked on the construction of the building. I liked what I saw, so I bought a unit. In August 2016, the building was done and everyone moved in.

**CHRISTINA:** I was nervous, but I was determined to get to

know my neighbours. I saw Mark at the elevator and I thought he was really cute.

**MARK:** I was renovating my unit, so I invited Christina in to see. I wasn't trying to hit on her.

**CHRISTINA:** I was very taken by him right away.

**MARK:** I ran into her at a Portuguese chicken place across the street. I had a soup that I had made at home,



## THE COUPLE

Alyson Burns, 32, a marketing professional, and Jon Burns, 31, a software engineer

## THE BUILDING

Neptune Condos near Bathurst and Fort York

**ALYSON:** Jon and I met at a mutual friend's housewarming party in 2012. At the end of the night, when we were all figuring out how to split cabs, Jon mentioned that he lived by the lake. It turned out we lived in the same building complex.

**JON:** I was pretty interested in Alyson the moment I saw her. There were sparks.

**ALYSON:** I was about to go travelling for two months. I was like, "I'm not going to start something right now."

**JON:** The next morning, back at the building, I was walking my dog, Mika. I ran into Alyson's roommate, Kelly, who I'd also met at the party. I was like, "Is Alyson single?"

**ALYSON:** Kelly was like, "Aly. The guy from the party. He has the most beautiful black Lab. You have to go out with him, even it's just to hang out with the dog."

**JON:** I messaged her on Face-

book with an inside joke from the party and asked her out.

**ALYSON:** I joined Jon for a dog walk, and I realized that he was an incredible human being. We had a few more dog walks between my many trips. The commute to see each other was 30 seconds, so it was easy to spend time with Jon and Mika even when I was getting ready to leave.

**JON:** Two years later, Kelly moved in with her boyfriend, so I moved in with Aly.

**ALYSON:** I packed up my stuff so we could jointly decide where to put everything.

**JON:** I proposed on a canoe trip in 2017.

and I brought her a bowl to go with the chicken.

**CHRISTINA:** And he still didn't ask me out. I was going out of my way to run into him. I thought he must've had a girlfriend.

**MARK:** And then she tried one last time. She knocked on my door at like eight in the evening.

**CHRISTINA:** I said, "Do you have a tape measure I can use?"

**MARK:** I said, "I don't have one, but I can get one from my truck for you if you want."

**CHRISTINA:** I told him not to worry about it.

**MARK:** I didn't sleep well that night. I woke up around 5:30 in the morning. I got a coffee and a croissant and a tape measure, and I left them in front of her suite in the morning, with a note that had my phone number on it.

**CHRISTINA:** I didn't need a tape measure. We moved into his unit in November 2017 and we got married this past July.



## THE COUPLE

Jade Murphy, 30, a farmhand, and Cody McCaig, 32, a visual effects supervisor

## THE BUILDING

Plaza Royale Condos near Sheppard and Dufferin

**JADE:** I moved into the building in 2012. I wanted to be close to York University, where I was studying geography.

**CODY:** I was starting a digital media arts program at Seneca. I rented the apartment across from hers.

**JADE:** I first saw him one day when I was doing my laundry.

He was waiting for the elevator. When the doors opened, I picked up my basket and the handle broke off. All my laundry fell on the floor. He held the door open while I collected all my dirty clothes off the ground. And then he just left.

**CODY:** I didn't want to leave, but it was an embarrassing moment and I thought she would want some space.

**JADE:** After I finished doing my laundry, I messaged my sister and told her I'd met a cute guy who lived in my building. She told me to write a note and put it on his door. So I did. It said, "Hey, 1604, this is 1602. (Laundry problem.)" And I gave him my number.

**CODY:** I was like, "This is kinda awesome." But I didn't want to seem desperate, so I texted her two days later. I was trying to play it cool.

**JADE:** We went out that night.

**CODY:** We knew right away that we were going to be together for a while.

**JADE:** Four years later, he proposed by the elevator, in the same spot where we met. We're getting married in 2020.

# THE MEETING SPOT

The sunny atrium at this west-end condo is like an indoor park for residents



**THREE DECADES AFTER FLEEING** Toronto for the suburbs, Ieva Fraser and her husband, Malcolm, decided to buy a downtown condo and enjoy their retirement in the city.

From the outside, High Park Lofts, a midrise building at the crook of Roncesvalles and Dundas, is grey and ordinary. Inside is a different story. The cheerful atrium stretches seven storeys toward a pitched glass roof that floods the lobby with light year round. The ground floor is filled with lush greenery and café tables, giving the space a vibe somewhere between a cathedral and a greenhouse.

If a condo is a neighbourhood, then High Park Lofts' atrium is its local park. The place fills up daily with readers, loungers, snoozers and residents meeting up. There's a library, as well as

regular concerts. And for extreme caffeine freaks, there's a coffee chat group that congregates once a week.

Many condo residents also get an indoor balcony overlooking the atrium. They use these spaces as reading nooks or home offices, so they can work from home in quiet communion with their neighbours. One woman even uses her balcony as an artist's loft, taking advantage of the natural light from the roof. The building's clever use of space allows residents to interact regularly, sparking a cozy neighbourhood collective that meets often for dinner parties: every year, there's a buck-a-shuck oyster fest, a Mexican fiesta, a winter wonderland dance and a harvest feast made with produce from the condo's community garden.

# THE TENNIS CLUB

At this tennis-crazed condo, residents play every weekend, host celebrity guests and share a limo to the Rogers Cup



**WHEN NORM MERKOSKY** first moved to Palace Pier 14 years ago, the tennis court was always empty. Then just a casual player, Merkosky would tack his name to the building's bulletin board, looking for game partners. Nobody ever answered. So, two years later, when he retired, he started a tennis club. In the first year, the club had only 15 members. Now it has nearly 90, plus 20 kids who they sponsor. Players of all skill levels compete across 13 ladders in both singles and doubles, playing a grand total of 200 matches every summer. Not only do they challenge other clubs to tournaments, they host one for former professional and NCAA players. "I used to call it an exhibition match," Merkosky says. "Every year we've gotten a little more ambitious, though. Now we call it the Palace Pier Invitational Tournament."

Members don't only gather to play tennis. One committee member, Carol Mitchell, says it's her whole event calendar. Tennis

club members have travelled together to Wimbledon, the U.S. Open and the French Open—each writing about their trip in a section of the group's newsletter dubbed "Palace Pier Tennis Goes International." Others share their travel photos in a WhatsApp group. Back home, members who can't make it to Wimbledon gather to watch the finals on a big screen and eat a posh British snack of tea and scones with strawberries and cream.

Even swankier: about 20 club members travel to the Rogers Cup every year in a stretch limo. "This year, I saw Serena," says Jackie Burns, who also runs the club's junior program (she, her husband and their two children all play tennis at the Pier). "Age doesn't matter," she adds, reflecting on all the friends she's made though the club. At a wedding she attended recently, both bride and groom were tennis club members. So, too, she realized, were half the guests. When others asked how she knew the couple, she responded that they play tennis together, and then gestured to everyone around her. "We *all* play tennis together."



# THE DOG SQUAD

These pooches—and their owners—have formed a tight-knit condo community for dog walks and pet-sitting

**WHEN CAROLYN JOHNSON** and her husband, Joe, retired a few years ago, they decided it was time get a dog. Their chocolate Lab, Biscuit, is now seven and has lived with them at their waterfront condo on Queens Quay West his whole life. Over the years, Biscuit has helped Johnson make many friends in her building. All the dog owners see each other in the elevator in the mornings and in the nearby park. “It’s a bit like a moms’ group,” says Carolyn.

In 2015, Johnson befriended Anna Korovina, another dog mom in the building. They banded together to (unsuccessfully) lobby for a dog park in the area, but along the way they met even more dogs and owners. Biscuit’s friends have come and gone over the years, says Johnson, but the one thing that’s stayed the same is the building’s dog-friendly nature. “We often message each other on a Facebook group to get together and go on walks,” Korovina says. “I’ve created a valuable social network through dogs.”

In fact, there are so many dogs in her condo and the neighbouring one that several tenants have started their own dog-walking businesses. One of them, Ann Linton, even adopted a client’s dog when they could no longer care for him. “Mylo’s had many homes,” she says, “but he’s been in his forever home for three years now”—in good company with all his friends.



## STUBBS

**AGE:** Five  
**BREED:** Pug  
**FUN FACT:** Stubbs’s favourite toy is a red lobster stuffy from Newfoundland.

## OSO

**AGE:** Three and a half  
**BREED:** Chow chow  
**FUN FACT:** Oso is a very clean pup. He took only a week to housetrain and walks around puddles and avoids mud.

## MOBY

**AGE:** Nine  
**BREED:** Yorkie-poo  
**FUN FACT:** Moby is a sweet and sensitive little guy who is often the peacemaker in the midst of a ruckus at the park.



## ALFIE

**AGE:** Nine  
**BREED:** Dachshund  
**FUN FACT:** Alfie was born in England and has travelled to five countries.

## SKY

**AGE:** 10  
**BREED:** Toy Australian shepherd  
**FUN FACT:** He was named for his sky-blue eyes.

## MURPHY

**AGE:** Five  
**BREED:** Maltese  
**FUN FACT:** An avid soccer and ball hockey fan, Murphy loves to play goalie and can stop almost any shot.

## SHADY

**AGE:** Seven  
**BREED:** Blue heeler-German shepherd mix  
**FUN FACT:** He sings for his supper every day at 7 p.m. on the dot.

## BISCUIT

**AGE:** Seven  
**BREED:** Chocolate Lab  
**FUN FACT:** Biscuit lives to eat—especially the leftover hot dogs he finds in flower pots around the city.

## TEDDY

**AGE:** Eight  
**BREED:** Poodle mix  
**FUN FACT:** He's a little shy with new people, but never with small children. He loves being petted by local kids.



## TUCK

**AGE:** Six  
**BREED:** Shih-poo  
**FUN FACT:** Tuck loves to dance.

## RITZ & SMUDGE

**AGES:** Eight and five  
**BREED:** Pembroke Welsh corgis  
**FUN FACT:** Ritz responds to commands in both English and Korean. Smudge loves to sleep on her back under the covers.



## SHADOW

**AGE:** 10  
**BREED:** Miniature Australian shepherd  
**FUN FACT:** Shadow is the alpha. He's always scanning to make sure things are in order.

## PUZZLE

**AGE:** Eight  
**BREED:** Puggle  
**FUN FACT:** Puzzle is American, originally from Ohio. His favourite pastime is stealthily jumping up on the counter to steal human food.



# THE PARTYGOER

I WAS A RELUCTANT CONDO CONVERT. I NEVER EXPECTED MY BUILDING WOULD BECOME THE CENTRE OF MY SOCIAL LIFE  
BY ROBERT HOWLEY

**IN 2008, I RETIRED** from my job as a department head at a North York Catholic school. My wife, Debra, and I began thinking about what to do about our five-bedroom home in Newmarket. Our sons, Paul-Alexandre and Jonathan, were still living with us while they were in school, but they'd be moving out on their own soon enough. It was obvious that we needed a smaller home, and ideally one closer to the city centre. But I was 55, and it was hard for me to imagine living in a condo tower like a 30-something. "You'll never catch me living in a box in the sky," I said.

My brother was living in the Candy Factory Lofts, near Queen and Shaw. "Let me show you my neighbourhood," he said. We walked south of the train tracks, and that was when I saw Liberty Village for the first time. It wasn't much at that point—just some townhouses, a Metro, a few other busi-

nesses and some construction sites. Even then, I could see the neighbourhood's potential. It was a short walk to the lake. It had access to rail and bus lines. At the time, Debra was receiving follow-up treatment for breast cancer, and we wanted to be closer to the hospitals downtown. Grudgingly, I agreed that a condo was the best option.

We put down a deposit on a 1,000-square-foot, two-bedroom unit at 59 East Liberty, a pre-construction 24-storey tower near the east end of the village. We moved in four years later. A few weeks after that, we went to our first floor party. A resident with a large unit invited me and about 30 other neighbours to bring food and wine and socialize. There was lots of excitement, because everyone had moved in and we were all on this journey together. I was the oldest person in the room.

One young fellow gave me a

strange look. He said, "What are you doing at this party?"

And I said, "Well... what are you doing here?"

"You're like my dad's age."

"Oh!" I said. "Is your dad here? I'd love to meet him."

We laughed. I'd made a friend.

These parties became a tradition. Several times a year—but especially near holidays—residents would open their doors to neighbours and host get-togethers. I kept showing up and was quickly welcomed into the fold—although I never joined my new friends when, at 11 p.m. or so, they'd all decamp to a nightclub.

A year after we moved in I ran for the condo board and became active in the community. I was a founding director of the Liberty Village Residents' Association and started approaching local businesses to partner on events.

Before long, I noticed that my circle of acquaintances was

starting to expand in interesting ways. The building was packed with artists and businesspeople. At one floor party in our building, one of the attendees was an actress I recognized from TV. Debra and I became good friends with her and her husband. When Debra threw me a surprise 60th birthday party a few years ago, she invited everyone from the building. For a while, Nick Nurse, the Raptors coach, lived in the building with his family, and I occasionally chatted with him in the elevator. After the team won the championship, and before Nick moved out into a house, the residents bought him a bottle of Dom Pérignon.

It has now been seven years since we first moved into the area, and my retirement has evolved beyond my expectations. Liberty Village is a vertical neighbourhood now, and moving here was the best decision we've ever made.

# THE CONCIERGES

No one knows more about what goes on inside a condo than the person behind the front desk. Here, five stories from the front lines



**GINA PAGAYPAY, 47**

*Luxe Condos*

"I love the difference just saying 'Good morning' can make in residents' lives. My favourite time of year is Christmas. The packages start rolling in at 11 a.m. and don't stop all day. The building becomes festive and friendly. And I get dozens of Christmas cards and chocolates from residents. It's so thoughtful—even though I don't like chocolate very much."



**ABDI HUSSEIN, 29**

*Scenic on Eglinton III Condos*

"When I immigrated from Somalia to Canada in 2016, I left my whole family behind. Now I see my condo's residents as my Canadian family. Only a few months into my job, a resident passed out in the lobby. I administered first aid and called an ambulance. A few days later, she thanked me for saving her life. I felt a surge of pride. This is how I want to thank my new country."



**RUPINDER KAUR, 25**

*The Yorkville Condos*

"I decided to become a concierge when I visited a friend's lobby. The concierge was juggling phone calls, residents' requests and deliveries—she was the calm in the eye of the storm. I found my own inner calm when a claustrophobic resident got stuck in an unstable elevator. I talked her down for half an hour until emergency services came. The next day, she wrote me a heartfelt letter of thanks."



**CARLTON PETERS, 44**

*180 University Ave.*

"Being a concierge at one of the highest-profile condos in the city means I'm never really off the clock. The relationships are worth the effort: this past spring, I attended the wedding of the daughter of a resident at my previous condo job. I was really touched that she invited me. We still talk to catch up every now and then."



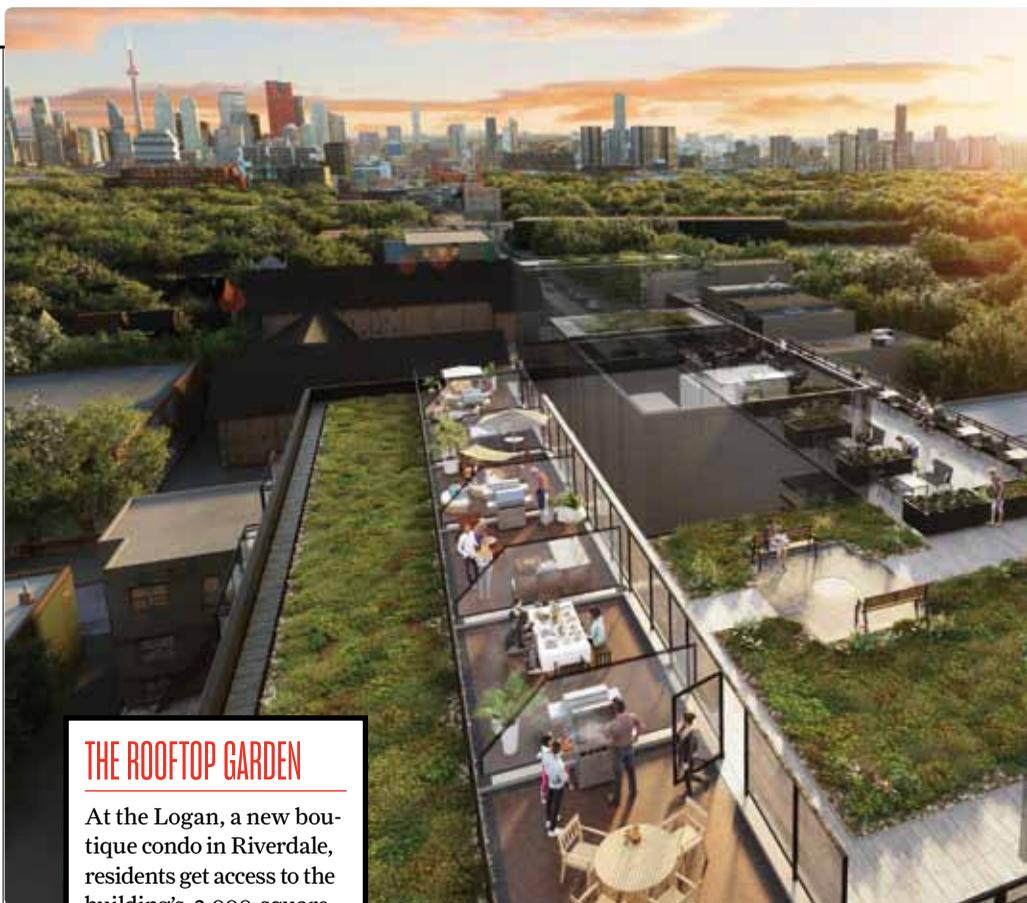
**JOEL TRAIN, 54**

*Yorkville Plaza Condos*

"I see a lobby as an extension of residents' homes. It's my responsibility to help them feel comfortable and safe. I knew I'd found my calling when a screaming toddler who'd gotten separated from his parents in the busy lobby ran into my arms as soon as he caught sight of my familiar face. He immediately calmed down. He felt safe with me."

The city's new condos are maximizing their rooftops, courtyards and decks with dazzling new amenities

# THE DECKS



## THE ROOFTOP GARDEN

At the Logan, a new boutique condo in Riverdale, residents get access to the building's, 2,000-square-foot green roof, which features community garden plots, and patio space for outdoor dining and sunset rosé. A team of urban gardening consultants will help residents transform a bare patch into a blooming floral fantasy.



## THE YOGA STUDIO

The trans-seasonal Zen zone at Markham's the Vanguard offers an indoor yoga studio that flows out to a tranquil open-air space in the summer.



## THE OUTDOOR CINEMA

Cineplex VIP may have recliners, but you still have to leave the house to get there. Line 5, a plush new development at Yonge and Eglinton, has its own rooftop movie theatre—surrounded by fire pits for autumnal screenings—along with an outdoor games area to distract the kids while you watch *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*.



## THE INDOOR/OUTDOOR GYM

The most picturesque running track in the city is on the fifth floor of the 159SW condo at Sherbourne and Wellesley, overlooking downtown and the lake. For warm-ups and cool-downs, there's also an outdoor fitness circuit.

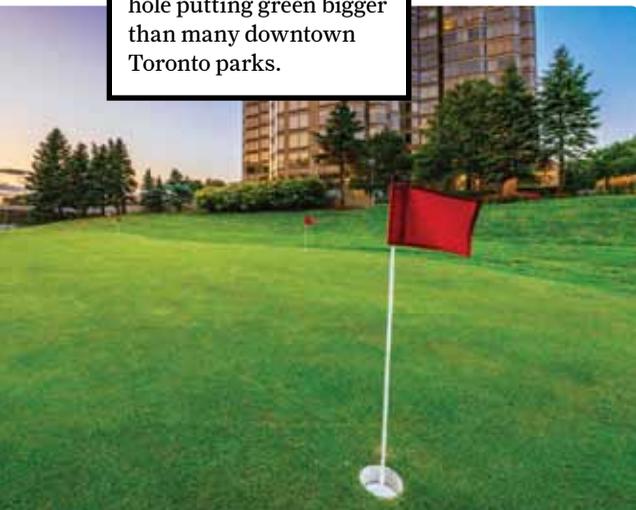
## THE SKATING RINK

The pretty courtyard in front of the Scarborough condo Me2 features a reflecting pool topped with a romantic foot-bridge. But this is one outdoor amenity that gets even better in the winter, when the bridge is dismantled and the pond transforms into a skating area for residents.



## THE PUTTING GREEN

The residents at Palace Place in Etobicoke are serious about their golf: inside, there's a private driving range, and outside, condo dwellers can avail themselves of a six-hole putting green bigger than many downtown Toronto parks.



## THE BOCCO COURT

Lawn games like shuffleboard and bocce ball, once the domain of cruise ships, have migrated to hipster bars and luxury condos. The shady court at Vaughan's SXS Condos holds its own against Royal Caribbean (there are also outdoor ping-pong stations and chess tables if you're feeling really wild).

# THE ENTREPRENEURS

These clever condo dwellers started small businesses to serve their neighbours



## THE CHEF

**Gabe Mensah, 50**  
*900 Mount Pleasant Condos*  
Gabe Mensah cooked in restaurants and hotels across the GTA before breaking out on his own as a personal chef. Now he caters everything from candlelit anniversary dinners to raucous bachelor parties. His neighbours have capitalized on having a classically trained chef in their midst: Mensah has hosted baby showers, birthday parties and even a sushi class in his condo's party room.



## THE PERSONAL TRAINER

**Ivana Kronic, 33**  
*The Gooderham*  
Five years ago, Ivana Kronic, an ex-GoodLife trainer, began working as a supply teacher. She started training clients in her condo gym to make extra cash: there's no commute, so she can schedule back-to-back sessions when she's not teaching. She specializes in high-intensity interval training, which helps clients stay in shape while pushing their limits. Most of them live in condos nearby.



## THE DOG WALKER

**Kelsey Edwards, 29**  
*Liberty on the Park*  
Kelsey Edwards didn't know dog-walking was a job until she ran into a walker shortly after moving to Toronto in 2013. Edwards, who has two dogs of her own—Sadie and Frankie—started helping out with her neighbours' pooches. Her hobby soon blossomed into a full-time business, fuelled by word-of-mouth recommendations and advertising on the Liberty Village Facebook group.



## THE YOGA TEACHER

**Heather Gardner, 39**  
*CityPlace Condos*  
In 2013, Heather Gardner launched Tribe Fitness in an effort to bring her neighbours together. She led 500 free workouts in her first two years, mostly populated by CityPlacers who had heard of her through social media and word of mouth. She's since opened her own studio, but she still hosts free yoga sessions at the Bentway. More than 100 people usually attend.

# THE PLAYGROUP

The kids frolic on the rooftop while the parents sip wine



**IN 2011, WHEN YASHY MURPHY** went on maternity leave with her first child, Akira, she didn't anticipate how bored she'd be. It was winter, and she didn't want to navigate the streets with a stroller, so she posted flyers in her Bay and Dundas condo inviting parents to join a playdate group. A few days later, three moms showed up with their kids. Thus began a tradition. Six families gather each week for rooftop barbecues in the summer and rotating condo dinners in the winter, bringing over whatever they have in the fridge or a bottle of wine to share. "My kids and I have formed long-lasting friendships," says Murphy; the neighbours bail each other out when they need last-minute sitters and help with middle-of-the-night emergencies. "You hear about old-fashioned communities with white-picket fences, and we rely on our neighbours the same way," says Murphy. "We just happen to live in a condo."

# THE PURVEYOR

FOR 41 YEARS, I'VE SUPPLIED CONDO RESIDENTS WITH SNACKS AND CHIT-CHAT AT MY GROUND-FLOOR TUCK SHOP

BY MOHAMEDALI BANDALI



**ON MARCH 15, 1978**, I opened the But-ler's Pantry Tuck Shop on the ground floor of Applewood Place in Mississauga. It was the same year the building opened. At that point, only about 100 units had been sold. So there was no grand opening. No balloons. Just me selling everything from pasta to paper clips.

Today, there are more than 300 units in the building. I still sell everything. My shop is 625 square feet and stocks over 1,200 items. If a customer is old or sick and needs something from my shop but can't leave their place, I'll get it for them. I'll deliver it to their door. And if it's something I don't have in stock that day, like a certain fresh fruit, I'll still go get it for them. I've braved minus-40 weather, snowstorms, you name it, to find items I don't have. But I'll do it. I'll say, "No problem. I'll get it for you." And I mean it. I love helping people out.

I'm 82 years old now. Other people volunteer at the hospital to stay young, but I work here. That's how I stay active. I still stock the shelves. I haven't gained a pound since I opened over 40 years ago. I still wear the same vest to work. Even if I've stayed the same, though, the grocery business has changed.

When I opened my shop, I was the only store around that had late hours and didn't close on Sundays. Now there are 24-hour supermarkets. People get organic food delivered directly to their door. I can't compete with that. So I don't stay open late anymore. I close Sundays and holidays. My busiest day now is Thursday when I put out coupon flyers for nearby stores; everyone loves to come look for deals.

Many of my friends who had stores in condos or apartments have now closed down. They can't turn a profit. But I'll never retire. I don't need luxury. Give me the basics and some people to help, and I'm happy.

I believe that when we die nobody will care what religion we were—whether we were Muslim, Hindu, Christian or any other one. They'll only care that we helped people in our community. That's what I do every day. So as long as I can run this store I will. I'll keep going. I want to die with my shoes on.

# THE SOFTBALL TEAM



A group of CityPlace sports fans have found a league of their own



**WHEN NADIR CHAUDHRY** first moved to CityPlace in 2012, a big part of the attraction was the view from his rental condo. It overlooked the Rogers Centre, and he wanted to be able to watch Jays games from the window of his 42nd-storey apartment. By 2017, Chaudhry had started his own e-commerce business, and he'd made friends in the neighbourhood by organizing a Terry Fox Run. Even so, something was missing: he wanted to play ball. Chaudhry visited the CityPlace Facebook group, where thousands of residents trade jokes, gripes and information, and posted a call-out for people interested in playing softball. He easily rounded up a crew of 23 people and named the team "the Horns," in honour of the keening of the Billy Bishop airport ferries. For the past three years, they've played 16 games per season as part of the Toronto Sport and Social Club, an adult recreational league that operates throughout the city. The team is sponsored by the Morning After, a local bar, where they often go for drinks after games. In the off-season, they play flag football and meet up for barbecues. "Toronto is a big city, but there are still people out there who want to make friends and play a game they love," Chaudhry says.

# THE TRIVIA NIGHT

These residents have made a tradition of outsmarting their neighbours



**GLORIA ELSTON** watches a lot of *Coronation Street*. Every so often, the Corrie Street gang play trivia at the local pub. A year ago, Elston was inspired. A trivia night was a perfect fit for her ongoing mission to bring community to Helliwell Place, her condo building near Broadview and Danforth. In the seven years since moving in, Elston had started a morning coffee club and a nighttime happy hour. Now, thanks to one soap opera and a bit of googling, she had a new idea: Let's

Get Quizzical. The monthly event takes place in the building's rec room, usually with six teams of four players. One diehard group plays in team T-shirts reading, "The Beautiful Minds." Popular categories include "double take" (Which word for a long pillow can also mean to reinforce? Bolster) and "factual oddities" (what is the main ingredient in Bombay duck? Fish). "I love the drama and theatre of people disagreeing over answers," Elston says. "It's my favourite part."

