



Masterminding master-planned communities

LARRY BLANKENSTEIN, PRESIDENT

of Lash Group of Companies, gives us the scoop on building homes, the communities that surround them, and what lies ahead for this development company.

Q: Lash Group of Companies has a well-earned reputation for choosing neighbourhoods that are poised to take off. You were at the vanguard of the King West renaissance, for example. What's your secret?

A: My family has been building in the GTA since the late '50s, and we pay attention. When we see a neighbourhood that has good foundations in place — especially transit, amenities and an abundance of green space nearby — but where the existing homes and businesses may be dated, we start to consider that it may be due for revival. In a way, it's a push/pull scenario — we are drawn to the neighbourhood because of the potential we see, and at the same time, once we start to develop there, we can also guide and help realize that potential. Our



ME Living at Markham and Ellesmere

Markham and Ellesmere community, ME Living, is a great example; we could see that the area had so much to offer that was underutilized, and we also thought that if we built a spectacular new community there, new businesses and amenities would be drawn there too.

Q: Speaking of ME Living, it's also a great example of master-planning

at work. Building a true community from scratch, though, has to be a daunting prospect. What is your motivation?

A: The quality of life of our residents is our priority, and as much as the surrounding neighbourhood helps contribute to that, there's so much we can offer right in the community. Let's face it, urban life is busy and often stressful. Being able to go to the



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and complement what already exists in the local neighbourhood.

Q: You're obviously passionate about what you do. What about being a developer really keeps that passion ignited?

A: There are few careers that let you influence people's lives in such a profound way. To think that individuals and families have chosen a Lash home as the most valuable purchase they'll ever make is both a privilege and a responsibility, one that we all take seriously and are passionate about. We're building legacy communities for many generations to come. We owe it to our buyers. From the perspective of city-building, too, it's just as important. When I look at the neighbourhoods we've completed, I couldn't sleep at night if I couldn't take pride in the work we've done and the homes we've built. Staying passionate is probably the easiest part of the job!

Q: What's up next for Lash?

A: ME Living Condos is under construction and ME2 is the second of multiple buildings that will be part of the community. We're also commencing construction on Distinction at Yonge and Eglinton, so that's keeping us pretty busy. We're back at building at Bathurst and St. Clair, where we've had such success in the past, with The Barrington Condominiums, which is now under construction with a few suites still remaining.

gym, walk in the park or just relax in the sun within a short elevator ride of home has an enormous positive impact on quality of life. We don't want our residents to simply love their suites — we want them to love their lives.

Q: How, then, does a master-planned community benefit the future residents?

A: In a master-planned community the architecture and landscaping are planned so carefully with a look and feel that is cohesive and lasting. This helps the community hold its value as well as surrounding homes to hold theirs. The scale of a master-planned community enables the builder/developer to provide a variety of amenities and services to suit the different life stages of condo residents