



# Dream home designer

**Eric Lee** designed his first home at 18. Now, he's building **\$12-million** fantasy residences

**MAGGIE CALLOWAY** 

Few people know from a very early age where their passions lie, or know with absolute certainty what they want to pursue as a career.

Vancouver-based designer Eric Lee is one of the lucky ones.

Born with an innate talent for design, Lee started designing homes for clients at the tender age of 18.

That experience, coupled with exposure to the actual building side of the business through his family's development business, formed much of the knowledge he felt he needed to follow his talent.

Lee rounded out his talent and experience with technological expertise, which he

learned through the Building Technology program at Burnaby's B.C. Institute of Technology; he graduated with honours.

His formal and informal education complete – although Lee will be the first to note that 'every day is a learning experience' – Lee established his company, VictorEric Design Group, which specializes in luxury design.

Taking a holistic approach to luxury home design, the company manages everything

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## B.C. home sales set to rise in 2011

#### TRICIA LESLIE

The B.C. Real Estate Association is predicting stronger spring residential sales in Metro Vancouver.

Although the BCREA predicts home sales will decline by seven per cent this year – 85,028 units in 2009 compared to 79,500 units this year – it is forecasting that sales will increase by five per cent to 83,400 units in 2011.

"The volatility in consumer demand characteristic of the past 24 months is expected to give way to more gradual im-

provement through 2011," says BCREA chief economist Cameron Muir.



Cameron Muir

"Housing demand has fallen back to earth from its breakneck pace at the end of 2009 and is expected to more closely match overall economic performance over the next 18 months."

The local housing market has changed dramatically over the past few months, due to historically low mortgage interest rates, the perceived threat of rate hikes, local reaction to the global economy and the introduction of the HST.

In late 2009, near-record residential sales were posted in B.C.

It was the best December for home sales since 1989, and the average residential price for a home in B.C. increased in October, November and December, the BCREA reported at that time.

Despite recent reports that last month was the quietest July in a decade for residential sales in B.C., home prices are still set to rise

The BCREA says the average MLS residential price of a home is forecast to climb by six per cent to \$492,800 this year

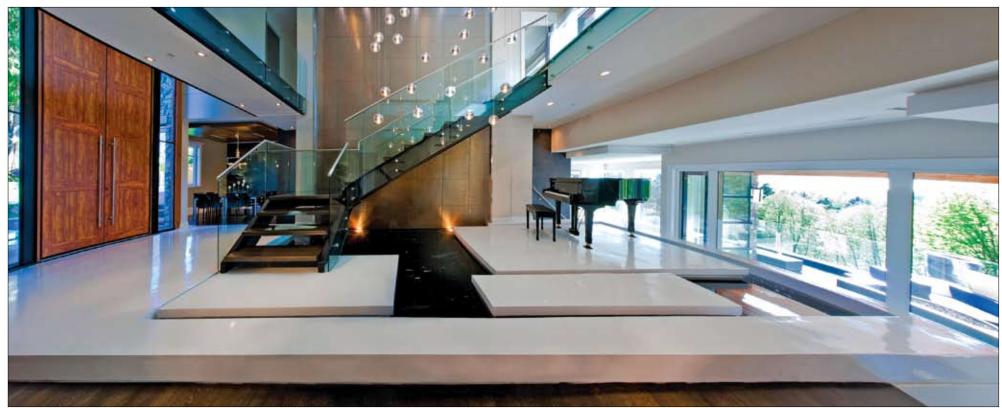
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## 'Most favourable conditions for buyers in more than a year'

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and remain relatively unchanged in 2011, "albeit declining by one per cent to \$489,500."

More homes for sale means more choice for homebuyers – conditions Metro Vancouver has not experienced Last summer, Vancouver 'condo king'

Bob Rennie, a well-known real estate marketer, was predicting a shortage of residential inventory and urging local developers to pick up construction of

"A larger inventory of homes for sale has created the most favourable conditions for buyers in more than a year," Muir says, but notes that likely won't last

long.
"The buyer's market is expected to be short-lived as total active listings peaked in May and are beginning to wane, with more balanced conditions set to emerge

Both the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board note that, despite more moderate sales in July, it's a great time for homebuyers to look at purchasing a

"With the pace of home sales and listings easing off in our market, we've begun to see a levelling of home prices from the record-highs seen in the spring, creating greater affordability,"

says REBGV president Jake Moldowan. It currently takes, on average, about 45 days to sell a home, he adds, "which is a historically healthy timeframe for people on both sides of a transaction."

# "This is the work factor



**Off the front:** "Every bedrooom has an ensuite and a walk-in closet, but nothing is oversize." – Eric Lee

**CONTINUED FROM P.1** 

from architectural design to interior design to the construction of the home.

This approach allows VictorEric Design Group and its clientele to make all the thousands of decisions necessary in large-magnitude builds, with the confidence that each decision is made with the entire project

Lee, who is principal and creative director at VictorEric Design Group, recently completed a brand-new Vancouver home that is 11,000 square feet of real estate extravagance.

Valued at \$12 million, the project – entitled Cliffside Residence – is a 28-room home that includes 11 bedrooms, 12 bathrooms, three kitchens, a poker room, a karaoke room, a full spa, a commercial bar, elevator, waterfalls and oversized decks.

Reminiscent of the sleek design and mega-size mansions common in California's Beverly Hills, the residence has not only been built sparing no expense, but is loaded with practically every amenity any homeowner could dream up.

The homeowners are a young family who wanted a home with all the bells and whistles that money allows, but without the overly ornate, palatial, fussy style often found in homes of a generous size, Lee says.

They wanted – and got – a contemporary home with clean lines that works for the family's lifestyle and taste, but also works for entertaining friends and extended family, something they enjoy.





Designer Eric Lee created a clean, contemporary feel in this 11,000-square-foot Van-

Concrete stepping stones above a water feature lead to the home's main entry: 13-foot crafted front doors that open into a doublevolume interior space with a bridge high in the air, Lee says, in describing the home's

Behind the bridge is a large, 20-foot water



wall that cascades behind the stairs to the reflecting pool, which is studded with white high-gloss platforms. One platform holds a glossy black grand piano, which is stunningly reflected on the white platform, Lee notes.

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## Home built with owner, lifestyle in mind

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"The high gloss on the platforms is both for serenity and the reflection of the water," Lee says. "This is the 'wow' factor."

Because the house is built so it is level on the entrance floor and cascades down at the rear, it allows the people entering the home to have a continuing view through to the back of the home, says Lee.

The level below the main entrance is the entertainment level that is home to a large theatre room, recreation room, poker room, billiard room, home gym, yoga room and a separate massage room.

The homeowner is young and likes to entertain a lot, "so everything has been designed, on this floor, with this in mind," Lee says.

On the lower floor, there is an indoor hot tub that offers a view through floating doors so that, when sitting in the tub, the homeowner and guests can look down onto a cascading waterfall out of rockscape, says Lee.
"The waterfall flows down into the outdoor

hot tub, which then overflows into the pool," Lee says.

"The whole idea is when you first approach the house, then step onto the stones over the water at the front entrance, then into the entrance with the water wall and the reflecting pool, you follow the water through the home then out into the (backyard) pool."
Two teenagers and a tween live in the new

home and like to spend a lot of time outdoors. So VictorEric Design Group designed and built a gazebo for the kids that is an independent structure with a barbecue, Lee says.

peen contracted to build four more homes on the same street. Bruce Edward/Martin Knowles photo The swimming pool, hot tub and a sports court lay beyond the gazebo. room and kitchen are a good size but not

"The sons are really into basketball, so they love the court, plus there are multi-sports facilities out there," Lee says of the West Side home and neighbourhood. Where the family spends their private time

Since designing and building this \$12-million Vancouver home, VictorEric Design Group has

is thoughtfully laid out and designed. "The contemporary modern design is also dominant in the family's private living area,"

"Every bedroom has an ensuite and a walkin closet but nothing is oversize. The living

enormous?

The front of the home, which faces the street, is low-key with little to hint at what is beyond the front doors; this is deliberate, Lee says. It is only when standing below the house, at the rear – a private view – that the full impact of the home is felt.

Just finished earlier this year, the family is enjoying both the new home and the outdoor recreation area every day.

Cliffside was the first home on South West Marine Drive that VictorEric Design Group







designed and built - but not for long. Since completing the Cliffside home, Lee and his company have been contracted to build four more homes; all are on South West Marine



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## Sunshine Hills living



## Luxor: new, affordable homes

A new lowrise is taking shape in the well-established Sunshine Hills neighbourhood on the Delta-Surrey border. Built by Luxor Home Collection Group, Luxor is a four-storey condominium project that offers 95 new, stylish homes to Metro Vancouver residents.

And it could not be more conveniently situated. Vancouver, Richmond and Vancouver International Airport are each only a half-hour drive away. White Rock, Crescent Beach and the U.S. border are an amazing 15-minute drive away.

Luxor residents can walk to shopping at both Sunshine Hills Centre and Scottsdale Mall; access to the amazing 370-acre Watershed Park – always popular with locals for outdoor recreation - is only a five-minute walk.

Watershed Park is a stunningly beautiful patch of heaven where Luxor residents can bike, jog, or walk more than 11 kilometers of gravel-lined trails and, on soft summer evenings, it is easy to enjoy a picnic dinner in "The Meadow" at the heart of the park.

Luxor sales and marketing representative Gerry Cahill says the surrounding community is a fantastic place, and notes the homes are built to superior

"You get a higher quality product for an amazing price point," he says, and adds that Luxor is attracting homebuyers of all types, including two groups at either end of the homebuying spec-

"These homes are perfect for empty nesters who want to stay in this great neighbourhood and for young people just starting out who are looking for a superior quality of life."

Luxor residences are offered in onebedroom, one-plus-den, two-bedroom and three-bedroom floorplans ranging in size from 583 square feet to 1,044

sq. ft.
All have been designed to be a distinct expression of architectural legance and sophisticated style. Ove sized windows let light in and make a bold design statement. Generous roof overhangs provide protection from rain and sun.

Open outdoor spaces with stone walkways, attractive waterscaping, and native plantings provide a refined setting for the homes. And on the inside, thoughtful space planning results in layouts that make sense for everyday





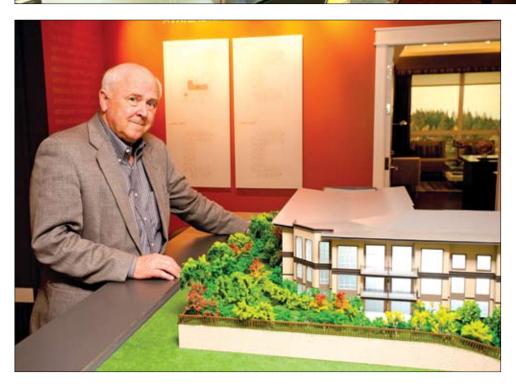
**Homes at Luxor Home** Collection Group's Luxor start from \$234,900. The new lowrise will be situated in the well-established Sunshine Hills neighbourhood on the Delta-Surrey border. Luxor sales and marketing representative **Gerry Cahill (pictured)** says the homes are perfect for everyone from first-time buyers and young families to empty nesters. "You get a higher quality product for an amazing price point," he says. Home sizes range from 583 square feet to 1,044 sq. ft. and come

in floorplans that range

from one to three bed-

rooms.

Martin Knowles photos





## Walk to parks, trails and shopping

## Elegant, chic style at Luxor

**CONTINUED FROM P.4** 

At Luxor, there's nothing to upgrade – luxury features come standard with every home. Nine-foot ceilings add to a sense of spaciousness; homes come with a full suite of seven appliances, including in-suite washers and dryers, quartz countertops, frameless glass shower enclosures, custom roller-style shades, and undermounted bathroom and kitchen sinks.

Gourmet kitchens are the name of the game at Luxor. Every home comes with a full complement of deluxe GE stainless steel appliances, while full-height glass backsplashes provide a tasteful accent to the 1.5-inch edged, polished quartz slab countertops.

The sizeable kitchen island is a great place for a casual meal. Luxor's European-style soft-close cabinetry includes halogen in-cabinet and below



CONTINUED ON P.6 Luxury features come standard with every home at Luxor, such as polished quartz slab countertops and full-height glass backsplashes. Martin Knowles photo



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## A Luxor lifestyle



## Condos are central, close to everything

#### CONTINUED FROM P.5

cabinet lighting, a lazy Susan, a glass corner cabinet, a cupboard organizer and a raised corner counter cabinet.

These are all examples of the luxurious extras that come standard at Luxor.

And the luxury just doesn't stop. Spacious, spa-style bathrooms give Luxor residents a sense of hotel luxury in their own homes.

Oversized porcelain floor tiles establish the elegant look, and ensuites are furnished with a glassenclosed, grand-sized shower stall, while in the main bath, a deep, soaker-style bathtub provides a private place to get away from it all.

Homes are priced from \$234,900 (including net HST).

Visit www.luxor-living.com for more information.



Gourmet kitchens come with stainless steel appliances at Luxor, as well as spa-style bathrooms. Some plans offer flex space, above. Martin Knowles photo



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