

LAKE-SIDE LOGISTICS

Which palette works best with a water view?

BY LINDSAY FORSEY

On the phone from his mid-town Toronto office, Fardid Biglar's voice is calm and steady; his pronunciation soft and articulate, like a guided meditation audio recording. Listening to him speak, it's hard to imagine Mr. Biglar has a demanding career and resides in the city's restless downtown core. But the thirty-something partner at BiglarKinyan Design Partnership says both he and his wife have stressful jobs and lead busy lifestyles. That's precisely why they adore their waterfront condominium.

"Living by the lake, there's a sense of detachment from the hectic pace of the city," Mr. Biglar says. "When you can see and hear the water, it feels like you're further from the chaos. It's a great way for us to create balance in our lives."

In 2009, the Biglars made their 33 Harbour Square investment property their home. The 900-square-foot space (plus a generous balcony), located at Queen's Quay and Bay Street, is a significant shift from the house they previously lived in. For starters, it's smaller. But anticipating fewer nooks and crannies, they incorporated built-in storage into their renovation, which included removing several walls.

On the plus side, condo living means less property maintenance and more free time. And, of course, there's that view. "We wanted the space to be serene, minimalist and clear, so that it doesn't compete with the view or the sunlight pouring in," Mr. Biglar says. "The view is the focal point."

A warm, off-white colour runs throughout the home on the walls and upper cabinetry; the lower cabinets are finished in chocolate cherry wood. "We didn't want to place emphasis on the perimeter. We wanted the walls to disappear," Mr. Biglar says. The blank canvas is an ideal backdrop for their more-practical-than-paintings art forms, such as a curvaceous Eames La Chaise, an Isamu Noguchi coffee table and polished chrome Bertoia chairs in the dining area.

"Whether we're eating, lounging or entertaining, everything faces the outdoors," says the designer, who has worked with several clients in waterfront spaces. Mr. Biglar and his wife also like to spend time in their "backyard," checking out the Tall Ships and other events in the Harbourfront area. "Living by the water is a different, better lifestyle. We're surrounded by happy people," he says.

It's true — Toronto's waterfront is brimming with smiling shore-dwellers. Tobi Brockway, principal of Tobi Brockway Interiors in the King Street East design district, says it's typical for people who live lakeside to have an affinity for the water.

"Many people tell me that the water calms them and brings a sense of serenity into their homes," says Ms. Brockway, who's discovered that simply working on waterfront projects enhances her mood.

Ms. Brockway is designing a space in the 364-unit Monarch Homes development Quay West at Tip Top, currently under construction on Stadium Road near Lake Shore Boulevard West and Bathurst Street. Quay West includes a nine-storey podium as well as a 23-storey tower. Her client, a professional single woman in her 40s, wants to bring the outside into her 21st floor, one-bedroom-plus-den suite.

The nature-inspired plan includes flowing ivory-coloured sheers, white

marble and grey granite kitchen surfaces, wide-plank maple floors and plenty of track lighting near the windows. (Remember, a lake view turns sable after sunset.)

"The view from up high is vast sky and water so you see a lot of blue. I like to bring that in on the walls, especially a feature wall for art. Benjamin Moore Wedgwood Grey is a beautiful colour, similar to Lake Ontario," Ms. Brockway says. She'll mix in sand shades as well and use light fabrics like linen in upholstery. "Every space has its own vibe and people have different preferences, but bringing loud colours into a place with a water view almost defeats the purpose," she says.

Running-water features, like wall-mounted fountains, are another way Ms. Brockway brings the outside in. She also stresses the importance of having a UV barrier film professionally applied to any large windows to prevent sun damage to fabrics and other surfaces in the home.

Quay West at Tip Top is just one of several new waterfront developments. Melandro Quilatan and Tania Richardson, principal partners at Tomas Pearce Interior Design Consulting are leading the design at Ocean Club Waterfront Condominiums in Etobicoke. The project by Graywood Developments will consist of 460 units in two buildings, starting from the low \$200,000s.

"Ocean Club will combine sophistication, glamour and fun. For the lobby and model suites, we're working with a palette of warm mocha, nude and blush, and keeping things light and airy," Ms. Richardson says. "The views are absolutely spectacular," Mr. Quilatan adds.

At Park Lawn Road and Lake Shore, Art Deco-inspired South Beach Condos and Lofts are under construction. Amexon Development Corp.'s twin 27-storey towers topped by lighted blue and green glass will house 750 units in a themed, resort-style neighbourhood.

Dan Menchions, principal at II by IV Design, is at the helm of South Beach design. "We've incorporated all of those South Beach hues into the development — white with pale shades of pink, yellow and blue," Mr. Menchions says. "In the model suites we positioned the interiors so that you're always taking advantage of the views. What's wonderful about South Beach is that every resident will have a walkout terrace." South Beach units start from the mid \$200,000s.

South Beachers will have private outdoor space, but not everyone on the waterfront has the same luxury. Nikka Design principal decorator, Barbara Nyke, recently worked with a retired couple living in a condo without a balcony near the Humber River. "They love nature and still wanted to feel that connection," Ms. Nikka says.

Repositioning the sofa to face the outdoors was an instant improvement. Ms. Nyke also brought in two swivelling cream-coloured leather recliners that can face inward for entertaining and outward for relaxing.

Ms. Nyke took inspiration from the lake and sky, choosing a warm robin's egg blue for the sofa, and a large area rug in shades of blue, tan and pale persimmon also beckons the outdoors in. "The space has a quiet and peaceful ambience that totally suits their personalities," Ms. Nyke says. And that means two more Torontonians are making the most of their lakeside lifestyle.

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Ocean Club's pale palette doesn't distract from the lake vista.