

Online resource helps condo shoppers

By Andrei Zaretski for Metro Dreamhomes

Buying a new condominium in the Toronto area is a new trend.

Condos have become the primary choice for homebuyers, and with the

vast selection available in the GTA, buyers need to be well-informed about their future purchases.

CondoFees.com allows visitors to compare maintenance/condo fees of condominiums in the Toronto area. The website

also provides information on what these fees include, as well as other amenities in the buildings.

Developed in 2004 by Winhan Wong, sales representative for Sutton Group Associates Realty, the site was designed to

help buyers compare fees when in search for a new condo. Sellers can also benefit from the website by comparing their fees to those in other condominiums.

"I wanted to get people more information on what is involved in terms of buying a condo and understanding what the condo fees are and how much they are actually paying per square footage," Wong said.

"I actually think it is the only site like this on

the Internet."

The site offers a user-friendly interface, where visitors can select a location in which they are interested to buy by clicking on a map. Once the desired area is selected, the user is taken to a list of condominiums available in that location.

The listed information about the properties includes the approximate cost per square foot, address, builder information, as well as a checklist of available amenities such

as a pool, exercise room, heat, hydro, cable, central air and security guard. A list of extras is also included and varies with every property.

Users can check off the properties they are interested in, and bookmark them by hitting the "add to favourites" button. The favourites list can be reviewed at any time.

The information on the website is acquired from the Multiple Listing Service and is updated three to four times per week.

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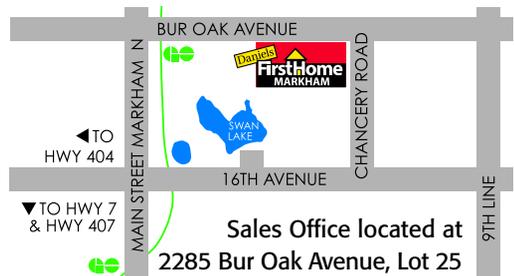
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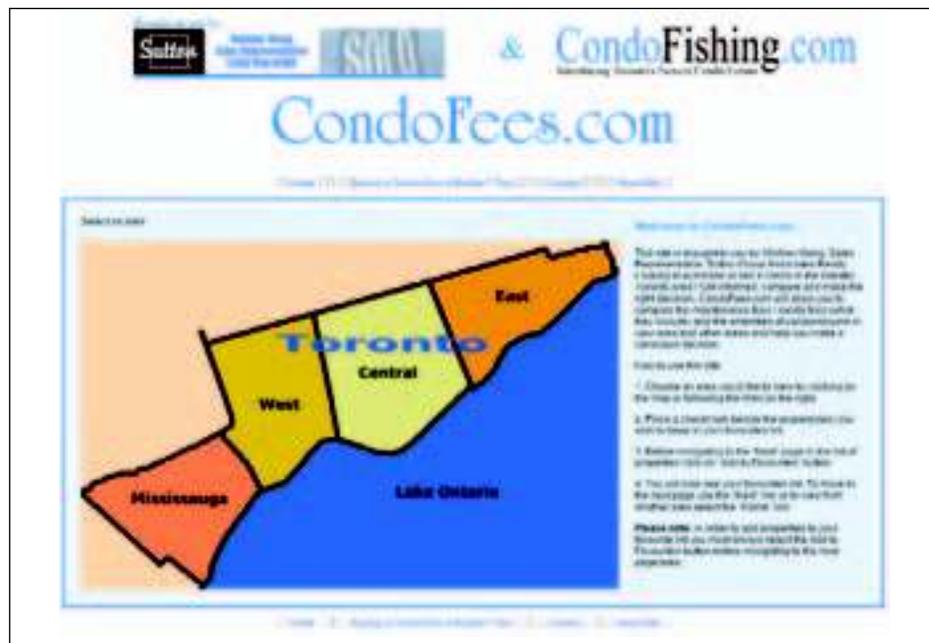
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Mosaic Masonry provides new approach to fireplaces

By Judy Hazan for Metro Dreamhomes

Innovation in the building industry usually means an opportunity to get something better for less cost. When it comes to getting an incredibly high quality, authentic brick fireplace, the latest technological advancements gives consumers a better product for less money.

New from DESA Hearth Products is Mosaic Masonry Technology, a process for lining a manufactured fireplace chassis with traditional masonry firebrick, giving buyers luxurious, true brick fireplaces at a fraction of the time and cost of site-built masonry.

According to the National Association of Home Builders (American counterpart of the Canadian Home Builder's Association), fireplaces are among the three most highly demanded household amenities and boost the value of a typical home by around \$12,000. The most sought after fireplaces are brick fireplaces – with their timeless elegance.



Fireplaces are among the high-demand household amenities.

But installing a brick fireplace on site is a tedious, labour-intensive, time-consuming and extremely expensive endeavour. With the new Mosaic Masonry technology, consumers can have the look of old-world craftsmanship at a fraction of the cost.

Mosaic Masonry fireplaces are factory built, zero-clearance fireplaces lined with stainless steel template panels on the inner walls and hearth. The Mosaic firebricks are pre-cut to securely snap into the corresponding templates. They are then grouted into place to create an elegant, masonry-finished fireplace. Installation can be done by a trained installer in a few hours, making them significantly cheaper to produce than a traditional site-built brick fireplace.

Mosaic built fireplaces can be wood-burning or plumbed for gas. They are ideal for any style of home or condominium because they are light weight and easy to install. Their versatility and ease of installation have made Mosaic fireplaces a hot trend for home remodelling projects as well. People have used them in trendy outdoor rooms, kitchens, ensuite bathrooms and even bedrooms as well as traditional living/dining rooms and dens.

With a dwindling pool of skilled masons available in the building industry, innovations like Mosaic Masonry fireplaces have become popular alternatives. This exciting technology allows consumers to have the aesthetic benefits of an authentic masonry fireplace at an affordable price.