



Hollis Savin is a condominium buyer at 550 St. Clair, an ultra-modern 26-story condominium planned in the heart of Streeterville.

BUYER PROFILE:

Lifestyle by design: Architect, designer buy at 550 St. Clair

At the forefront of a residential renaissance just east of Chicago's "Magnificent Mile" shopping district is 550 St. Clair, an ultra-modern 26-story condominium planned in the heart of the re-burgeoning Streeterville neighborhood.

Leading the way for a new generation of architectural landmarks, the sleek, cutting-edge development was designed by Chicago-based architects Brininstool + Lynch. The firm is known for bringing a modern clarity to structures like the Racine Art Museum, Perimeter Gallery and a number of residential projects nationwide.

Of 112 condominiums, more than 65 percent of the residences have been purchased, including a mix of studios, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, 3-bedroom and penthouse residences, said Jerry Houlihan, director of marketing for Sutherland Pearsall Development Corp.

"The design was the first thing I noticed," said buyer John Chipman, principal at Chipman Adams, Ltd., a prestigious local architecture firm serving commercial clients including such heavyweights as Bally Total Fitness, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Courtyard by Marriott, Niketown and Saks Fifth Avenue.

John Chipman, 56, and his wife Debbie Chipman, 52, empty nesters from Lake Forest, were looking for a contemporary development in an active, urban location.

"We were seriously considering a neighboring building in the same area and then Debbie found 550 St. Clair. She said: 'Wait! You've got to see this!'" Chipman said.

In the architecture business for more than 25 years, the Chipmans were instantly drawn to the remarkable design of 550 St. Clair. The shimmering façade features a glass curtain wall with fine metallic mesh wrapping around the lower floors of the building, complementing the textural white con-

crete and creating a striking visual effect.

"The way the building's been designed, it creates light going in and view going out," John Chipman observed.

Dramatic private terraces and balconies flank the structure with translucent glass railings.

"When we walked into the sales center and saw the model unit we knew this was it. 550 St. Clair was exactly what we were looking for," Debbie Chipman said. "We bought the model floor plan that day."

The Chipmans will move from their North Shore townhome to a 3-bedroom, 3-bath residence with terrace at 550 St. Clair. "If I were to design something for myself, this is what I'd do," John Chipman noted.

Hollis Savin, owner of interior design firm City Living Design, Inc., and a 550 St. Clair condominium buyer noted: "The developers are so much on the forefront of what's new. They really have anticipated the urban purchasers' needs."

Savin, 52, was looking to move from her current condominium in Streeterville to a new-construction, modern building in her current neighborhood. An admirer of Brininstool's work, she initially was attracted to the striking all-glass façade of the project, but was soon sold on the distinctive floor plans.

"As a designer my space is important to me—my studio is in my home. The units are set up perfectly for that," Savin said. She will move into a 3-bedroom, 2-bath residence with terrace.

A member of the Streeterville Chamber of Commerce, Savin feels 550 St. Clair will help position the neighborhood as one of Chicago's focal points of modern architecture. "It's like a city unto itself," she said.

Residences at 550 St. Clair are planned to give purchasers the flexibility to plan their own space as they envision it, noted architects Brininstool + Lynch.

DESIGN FROM PAGE 8

"For example, 2- and 3-bedroom residences can be configured in multiple ways, according to the needs of the buyer," said David Brininstool, the design principal. "Pocket doors slide into the wall to open the rooms up in some units, or close to provide privacy."

As Debbie Chipman noted, often times units lack a full-visual experience from the inside. But with 550 St. Clair, "it was a non-issue because everything was glass," she said.

Residences at 550 St. Clair feature floor-to-ceiling windows with energy-efficient, low-emissivity thermal pane glass. Most units offer access to either a balcony or a terrace, and a number of units offer both.

An active architect, John Chipman consulted industry colleagues on the integrity of 550 St. Clair and found that the structure was superior.

"As it turns out, the structural engineer was a friend from college and the mechanical engineer does all my work. It was a no brainer," said Chipman.

The thickness of the concrete slabs and spacing of columns make for an optimal structural system, he said. And sound-proofing assures there will be no transfer of sound.

"My colleagues agreed that the developers tried to do things at the highest quality for a serviceable, maintenance-free building," he said. "These are things you want when you move into a new-construction condominium so you don't end up incurring additional maintenance costs."

Other details, such as eight-foot-tall solid core doors in-unit and a 4-pipe heating and cooling system, also are top notch, Chipman said.

Residences at 550 St. Clair are pre-wired with Category 5 telephone lines in living rooms and bedrooms, and are wired for satellite TV and ultra high-speed Internet over dual T-1 lines.

Units feature upscale kitchen amenities and finishes, including imported Alno cabinetry, a premium appliance package including Sub-Zero refrigerator with built-in icemaker, Bosch built-in oven, cooktop, microwave with exhaust hood, multi-cycle dishwasher and Grohe fixtures.

Residences also feature a choice of Brazilian cherry or maple hardwood flooring throughout, in-unit washer/dryer, 10- or 11-foot exposed concrete ceilings per plan, walk-in closets per plan and floor-to-ceiling windows with panoramic city views.

Baths include European designer vanities with full-width mirrors, separate glass door enclosed showers and Grohe fixtures. Master baths also feature marble or slate flooring, tub surround and shower walls.

Steps from Chicago's famed "Magnificent Mile," 550 St. Clair

puts residents in the center of the action. The neighborhood touts dozens of fine restaurants, upscale shopping, and nightlife. The development is steps from serene Lake Michigan and a few blocks from picturesque Millennium Park.

"We love the neighborhood, every facet of it," John Chipman said. "You have art, restaurants and entertainment, the lake-front. There's nothing like it in Chicago."

Whether it's shopping for groceries at Fox and Obel, a stroll through the Museum of Contemporary Art, dinner at the legendary Tru restaurant or a performance at celebrity David Schwimmer's Lookingglass

Theater, Streeterville is an epicenter of activity.

"We are pretty excited about moving in," Chipman added.

Studios at 550 St. Clair are priced in the \$200,000s, while 1-bedroom, 1-bath residences range from the low-\$400,000s to the low-\$500,000s. Two-bedroom, 2-bath residences are priced between the upper-\$400,000s and the mid-\$500,000s.

Three-bedroom homes featuring 2 or 3 baths are priced within the mid-\$700,000s to \$1 million-plus. Spectacular penthouse residences also are available for purchase.

"We've had a lot of sales in the architecture and design community and among Realtors pur-

chasing for themselves. Also, we're selling to Streeterville, Gold Coast, River North and Lincoln Park neighbors looking to move into a new, modern building nearby their existing home," Houlihan said.

Building amenities include a 24-hour doorman and security desk, two high-speed elevators, a lap pool, a fully equipped fitness room with men's and woman's saunas, and an urban garden terrace facing north, south and west will be located on the 8th-floor amenity level, providing views of Michigan Avenue.

Storage lockers are included with each residence, along with bike storage and a total of 129 heated, ventilated indoor park-

ing spaces are planned for floors 2 through 7.

The ground floor will offer 4,500 square feet of upscale retail space.

Construction on 550 St. Clair is projected to start in 2006, and first move-ins are planned for 2007, the developers said.

The sales gallery and model center for 550 St. Clair is located on the 4th floor at 201 E. Ohio. Sales gallery hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For information on 550 St. Clair, please call (312) 222-0550 or visit www.550StClair.com.