

Building from the inside out

Sutherland's 550 St. Clair touts progressive look, high standards

by Dan Schuyler

Streeterville has waited a long time for a taste of progressive architecture, and Sutherland Pearsall Development Company is obliging with the introduction of 550 St. Clair, a 26-story, 112-unit condominium tower located just a half-block east of the Magnificent Mile.

"Not only is this building the first of its kind in Streeterville, but it's the first of its kind in the entire city," says Mark Sutherland, whose enthusiasm for the project is, to say the least, unfettered.

Sutherland is not alone. The glass and steel structure was designed by architects Brininstool & Lynch, and David Brininstool has been itching to create this type of building for quite a while.

"Urban projects today are so sensitive to such things as density, parking, and other factors that figure in the overall economics," laments Brininstool. "For a long time I have been trying to promote the idea of designing a building from the inside out. Let the lifestyle and the unit layouts dictate what we end up designing. This building gave me that opportunity, and I was able to create a fluid, flowing structure that engages the outside world but still provides intimacy and privacy."

And that in itself is perhaps sufficient to make 550 St. Clair the first of its kind in Streeterville, but Sutherland says there is more.

"You go into most sales offices and look at the models, and everything is really nice, but then you find out you're looking at a lot of upgrades. At 550 the level of finishes and the inclusions are so high that there is no need for upgrades. The only building whose standard finishes might exceed ours is Trump Tower, and you can imagine what you might pay for the Donald's

At a glance

Address: 550 St. Clair
Units: 112
Bedrooms: Studio-3
Bathrooms: 1-3
Prices: \$200s-\$1.6M
Phone: 312-222-0550
Sales center: 201 E. Ohio
More: HomePagesUSA.com/2FSH

handiwork."

Buyers, however, are the final judges, and Jerry Houlihan, director of marketing for Sutherland Pearsall, recently announced that more than 50 percent of the residences were sold within two weeks of the project's grand opening.

"We are certainly pleased with the sales progress," Houlihan says. "But there are a number of units of every type still remaining."

Progressive design and a high level of standards are playing a big role in the swift sales pace, Houlihan says, but he thinks there is more at work here.

"Five-fifty St. Clair is unique compared to much of our competition," he says. "The size of the building makes it more intimate than many larger highrises. The floor plans are just plain better, and no one has a better location."

The building begins with a ground-floor lobby whose glass and metallic design, coupled with water elements, conveys an air of simplicity and serenity. Two high-speed elevators service the building, and a 24-hour doorman is on duty.

"We are still in the process of finalizing the lobby décor," says Ron Ruby, managing broker at First Chicago Realty Corp., exclusive marketing agent for the development. "But

it will be in keeping with the tranquil atmosphere that the lobby is designed to create."

The first floor also contains 4,500 square feet of upscale retail space that will be leased with an eye toward accommodating the needs and tastes of the residents.

"The retail space faces Ohio and continues a look that is already there," says Brininstool. "And the carriage-like resident entryway on St. Clair likewise is contextually compatible. So even though we are bringing in a completely new design, it is still possible to pay attention to context from a historical perspective."

A ventilated, heated parking garage occupies floors two through seven, and parking spaces are available from \$40,000, depending on location.

The eighth floor houses amenities, including a two-lane indoor lap pool, a fully-equipped fitness center, his and hers saunas and locker rooms, an urban garden, storage lockers for each condo and a bicycle storeroom.

The residences are on floors nine through 26. The mix comprises studios, and units with one, two or three bedrooms, with penthouses on the top two floors.

Some of the many unit amenities include private balconies or oversized terraces; floor-to-ceiling windows; exposed concrete ceilings that are 10 to 11 feet high; Brazilian Cherry or Maple hardwood flooring; walk-in closets per plan; multimedia pre-wiring; stainless Bosch kitchen appliances; European designer kitchen cabinets; granite kitchen countertops; marble bath flooring in master baths; separate glass enclosed showers; Grohe bathroom appliances; and Bosch washers and dryers.



Prospective buyers were particularly impressed with the high-end Alno German kitchen cabinetry and the use of hardwood flooring in the bedrooms, according to Sutherland. "It's these added touches that give the building an edge," he says. "When you include more amenities and higher quality amenities as standard, it leaves fewer decisions for the buyers and they like that."

Studios are priced in the \$200s, and one-bedroom one-bath condos start in the mid-\$300s. Two-bedroom two-bath units begin in the upper \$400s, and the three-bed-

rooms, which have two or three baths, are priced from the mid-\$700s. Penthouses range from \$1.1 million to \$1.6 million.

Construction is scheduled to commence early in 2006 with delivery beginning in late 2007. "We are presently offering the residences at pre-construction prices," says Houlihan. "But we cannot guarantee that these prices will hold after construction is started."

The sales gallery for 550 St. Clair, www.550StClair.com, is located on the fourth floor of 201 E. Ohio St.