

Builder/Architect



Canada Post International Publications Mail (Canadian Distribution) Agreement No. 40042043

Embassy Development Corporation

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By Susan M. Boyce

You could say it runs in the family. Or you could say it's a natural predisposition due to a serendipitous combination of genetics and environmental upbringing. Or then again, you could simply express it the way Ryan Bosa does: "Building is what I do. It's fun, and I can't picture myself doing anything else."

"I love finding a site and seeing potential that may not be obvious to anyone else," he says enthusiastically. "You see a vision and you work with it. It could be as straightforward as understanding how to maximize the views, or knowing that after the area is discovered, it will become a vibrant new town centre the way Newport Village did in Port Moody. What might initially look like problems usually become the fun part of a project — after a while, you crave them, because it feels

so great as you solve one after the other, after the other, until what you have left is a product everyone is excited about."

Ryan, president of Embassy Development Corporation, burst onto the sizzling Vancouver residential construction scene in 2003 after almost a decade in project management with Bosa Development's Lower Mainland and San Diego operations. "I come from a family of well-known builders, Ryan acknowledges. "And I learned so much from working in the United States. We were the first to build a high-rise condominium in San Diego in almost 12 years, so it was totally new to everyone, from the contractors, to the building inspectors and the people at City Hall. Technologically, they simply weren't up to speed, so we had to do a lot of industry



PHOTO BY DEREK LEPPER

education. But it was time to break away from my father's company and branch out on my own.

Ryan moved back to Vancouver in 2003, opened Embassy Development Corporation, and within a few months, was developing Renaissance, a two-phase high-rise near Lougheed and Willingdon in Burnaby. Now nearing completion and almost completely sold out, Ryan says Renaissance has proved especially appealing to buyers who want ample living space, but have been priced out of the Vancouver market. Units are large, averaging more than 1,100 square feet, and the quality of finishing rivals anything found in the most urban-chic neighbourhoods of Vancouver.

"Brentwood is an emerging area and a great example of the benefits of having a SkyTrain station in a good neighbourhood," he says. "You're got amenities like Save-On-Foods, Milestones, Earls, Staples and Brentwood Mall within walking distance, but when you do need to go downtown, it's only a 15-minute ride on the SkyTrain. I never drive into downtown Vancouver when I have a meeting, because it's so much more convenient, and I don't have to worry about finding — or paying for — parking.

Working in another evolving neighbourhood, construction

is well under way on Generations, an upscale 84-unit condominium in Uptown New Westminster. "These homes are extremely popular with empty nesters because of their size: an average of 1,300 square feet," Ryan says. "And here, too, you have all the conveniences of being uptown where you're close to all the shops and amenities."

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

"People tend to hear the Bosa name and think the companies are all related," Ryan admits. "In reality, each company is totally independent and quite different in our projects, marketing strategies, even the character of our office."

Ryan's smile is filled with a vibrant, almost boyish charm, but there is an underlying air of easy self-confidence that comes only after many years of tough experience. This is a man who clearly knows exactly where he's going, how to get there, and is meticulously gathering a team of people with a complementary vision.

"Since we opened our doors, we have had zero turnover in staff," he says with obvious pride in his people. "There is no attitude in



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our office. Everyone is a team player who knows how to handle their own department but won't hesitate to roll their sleeves up and pitch in whenever or wherever it's needed. For example, if someone is sick or on vacation, I absolutely do not want their voice mail to be sitting there unanswered for a week.

Ryan is a firm believer in giving people plenty of latitude to develop their skills. "You hire someone with an idea of what they are going to do, and then you discover they bring a whole range of other skills to the table. It's fun to see them grow as they realize they can really spread their wings at Embassy."

THE GREENING OF EMBASSY

Although Ryan notes high-rises, by their very nature, tend to be more energy-efficient than low-rise or single-family dwellings, he is actively planning to incorporate many LEED (Leadership in

Energy and Environmental Design) principles into future projects. "Not all sites lend themselves to full LEED certification, but you can always choose to do things like use products that don't emit VOCs or fixtures and toilets that conserve water. Legacy, Embassy's upcoming 332-unit tower located a half mile east of Renaissance at the corner of Holdem and Lougheed Highway, will be the first where the company is aggressively pursuing green technologies.

LOOKING AHEAD

Over the coming years, Ryan intends to diversify geographically and increase the company's unit output by a minimum of 50 percent. "Residential is definitely the 'golden boy' of construction right now, so that will remain our primary focus," he says. But he's quick to add, he isn't ruling out the possibility of retail or commercial development if the right opportunity appeared.





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His most immediate challenge, though, is Embassy's upcoming redevelopment of the Saint Mary's Hospital site in New Westminister — a land purchase that attracted a flurry of media and neighbourhood attention during the latter months of 2004, and into the beginning of the new year.

"A lot of people would have passed on this property, simply because it presented so many difficulties," he says. "The city of New Westminister is very intent on rejuvenating the downtown area, and sometimes, it's tough to see where a high-rise development would fit in.

But Embassy rose to the challenge, and design plans are now well under way for a three-tower condominium complex, plus street-front townhomes. "There will be a landscaped pedestrian walkway

connecting to Queens Park, and the presence of street-level town houses will make this development very visually appealing and pedestrian friendly," Ryan says.

Still, there's one goal Ryan says is the most important of all. "I want people to know with absolute certainty that we are approachable, that we stand behind our projects, and that we will do everything possible to make the entire process — from the first visit to our Sales Centre to the day they move in — as simple as possible. I want them to know they are buying a quality home that will not only retain, but increase its value relative to the market. If I can develop that reputation within the next few years, I will be happy.

Visit Embassy Development Corp. at: www.embassydev.com. ■