Luxury on the horizon

By LYNN UNDERWOOD • lunderwood@startribune.com

Some of the toniest addresses in the Twin Cities aren't exurban mansions, they're high-style high rises. Up-and-comers such as the Westin Edina Galleria, the Penfield, the Ivy and Phoenix on the River (where the average price of a unit is a cool $1 million) boast luxe interior finishes, hotel-style perks and sky's-the-limit penthouse views.

"It's a new lifestyle not many Minnesotans have experienced before," said Barry Berg, a real estate agent for Coldwell Banker Burnet. "And we're seeing more of a demand for a sophisticated, finished look from empty nesters selling their suburban and urban homes."

Although the condo market remains soft, there still are buyers for many of the seven-figure homes. The Minneapolis Ivy, attached to an elegant hotel, has only a handful of units left for sale and two of the three largest Penfield penthouses have been snapped up.

The trend in luxury condo living is driven in part by buyers wanting convenience and proximity to theaters, restaurants and a lively downtown scene, said Peter Brown, project manager for Penfield developer Alatus Partners.

"It's about living in a great urban location, having everything you need close at hand and no lawn to mow," he said.

Here's a look at a few new high-living, high-rise condos:

DAN MARSHALL

A model of a Penfield corner unit with a view of St. Paul.

Condos on parade

Want to take a peek at some of the luxury condo developments in the works?

Models of some high-end condos and lofts will be open for the Parade of Homes Fall Showcase through Oct. 7.

Included in this year's Parade: the Loop Calhoun, across from Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis. Units top out at $1.2 million and boast Valcucine-designed kitchens and rooftop decks. In downtown St. Paul, the 33-story Penfield tower offers customized interiors and walls of windows with views of the Mississippi River and the State Capitol. At the upscale Westin Edina Galleria residences, which are above a swanky hotel, owners have access to the hotel's guest services.

"People have harried lifestyles," said Michael Noonan, president of Builders Association of the Twin Cities. "They want everything from a great location to a concierge at the front door."

Lynn Underwood • 612-673-7029

PARADE OF HOMES FALL SHOWCASE

What: More than 800 model homes — from a $109,900 townhouse to a $2.9 million lakeside estate — will be open for tours. New this year is a mini-tour of 16 extravagant owners' suites.
When: Noon to 6 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays through Oct. 7.
Where: 135 communities across the metro area.
Admission: Free with the exception of two Dream Homes, which require a $5 charitable donation. Guidebooks are available at Twin Cities Holiday Station stores and at the homes. Online listings at www.paradeofhomes.org.
Events: Free home-buying and building seminars Sept. 29 and Oct. 6. To register, call 651-697-1954.

THE PENFIELD

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What: The 33-story St. Paul condo tower (with flats and two-story city homes) will retain some of the structure of the historic Public Safety building on the site.
Wow factor: Bird's-eye views of the St. Paul cityscape include the State Capitol, St. Paul Cathedral and Mississippi River.
Price range: $170,000 to $1.4 million.
Square footage: 550 to 3,000.
What top dollar gets you: The biggest, best and highest penthouse with walls of glass and limitless choices in interior customization.
Most expensive unit sold? Yes.
Tony amenities: Fifth-floor dog-walking deck, club room, DVD screening room, fitness center/spa.
Status: Construction to begin at the end of the year.
Address: 100 E. 11th St., St. Paul, 651-768-9000, www.thepenfield.com.

WESTIN EDINA GALLERIA

WESTIN EDINA GALLERIA RESIDENCES

What: The Edina high-rise combines suburban condo and hotel living. The 82 units are above a seven-story Westin Hotel with a tunnel to Galleria shopping.
Wow factor: Like the Ivy, owners can be pampered like hotel guests with room service, concierge, on-site restaurant and fitness center/pool.
Price range: $300,000 to $1.9 million.
Square footage: 850 to 3,100.
What top dollar gets you: Floor-to-ceiling vistas of Centennial Lakes Park, spacious balconies and customized finishes and floor plans.
Most expensive unit sold? Yes.
Move-in date: October 2008.
Address: 69th St. and France Av. S., Edina, 952-915-9000, www.westinedinaresidences.com.

PHOENIX ON THE RIVER

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What: "Boutique-style" 17-story complex with 80 units (no more than six to a floor) in Minneapolis.
Wow factor: Located on a cobblestone street in the heart of St. Anthony Main (three blocks from the new Lunds), with postcard views of the downtown Minneapolis skyline, Mississippi River and St. Anthony Falls.
Price range: $389,900 to $3.7 million.
Square footage: 1,100 to more than 6,000.
What top dollar gets you: A lavish, two-level penthouse with private outdoor balcony, private elevator and a rushing river view.
Most expensive unit sold? Yes.
Tony amenities: Landscaped rooftop terrace, 24-hour staff, potting shed, community room, glass-walled fitness center.
Move-in date: May.
Address: 333 SE. Main St., Minneapolis, 612-333-1511, www.phoenixontheriver.com.

IVY HOTEL + RESIDENCES

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What: Saved from the wrecking ball, the 1930s historic Ivy tower is embedded inside a huge condo and hotel complex near the Minneapolis Convention Center. The 25-story residence tower has 92 units.
Wow factor: All the conveniences of the top-tier Ivy Hotel without checking in, such as a spa/fitness center, concierge, valet parking, dog-walking and other services.
Price range: $200,000 to $1.9 million.
Square footage: 800 to 3,800.
What top dollar gets you: Upper-floor penthouse with a three-sided view. Buyers have added customized media rooms, lighting systems and walk-in wine cellars.
Most expensive unit sold? Yes.
Move-in date: October.
Address: 1115 2nd Av. S., Minneapolis, 612-333-4489, www.ivympls.com.