

# THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC



Several new projects boast environmentally conscious features

Aura at Camelback, opening mid-2009, expects to be certified as residential "green."

## Eco-friendly condos

By Debra Gelbart

**I**f living well is the goal, the loftier goal may be living well in an eco-friendly environment. And there's plenty of opportunity for that in new condominium developments around the Valley.

"Density brings an opportunity for more people to experience the quality and appeal of sustainability or green design," said R. Nicholas "Ryc" Loope, the director of real estate programs within ASU's College of Design. "It's about people acting together in cohort for both a contribution to environment and the enhancement of their lifestyle."

Sustainability is a priority at several new local condominium projects where the units have just begun selling.

Take Aura at Camelback, for example. These 36 townhouses, set to welcome the first occupants by mid-2009, will be located at 25th Street and Campbell in Phoenix, in the heart of the Camelback Corridor. The units will range in price from the \$800s to \$1.2 million. Units go up for sale this month.

Each unit will have a four-kilowatt solar energy system to provide 75 to 100 percent of the energy needed every year. Around the exterior of the development, you'll find only pavers – no concrete or asphalt – to keep from adding to the heat-island effect.

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Each unit at Aura will have a four-kilowatt solar energy system to provide 75-100 percent of the energy needed.

All private garages are underground, so none of the residents' vehicles need be parked on the street or elsewhere above ground.

"All you see are beautiful plazas, courtyards and green space to enjoy," said Chad Gifford, founder and president of the project's developer, Catalyst Communities. "Residents will experience the beauty that Arizona has to offer in both the outdoor and indoor space, with a lot of water fountains and other features that push and pull your senses."

The grounds will be landscaped with low-water-use plants, and Gifford expects the project to become LEED-certified Silver for residential properties. LEED refers to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, which provides standards for environmentally sustainable construction. The highest certification is Platinum, preceded by Gold, Silver and, simply, "Certified."

#### Plenty of unique features

Gifford said the kilowatt solar system has never been used in residences in the Valley, and Phoenix is second in the world to Perth, Australia, in "solar collectivity" — or collectible solar energy.

Other features that will be part of each unit are dual-flush toilets, with a mechanism that allows for more water usage when needed; low-flow shower heads; high-efficiency, low-E windows; and air-conditioning units with a 14 SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) rating. The lowest SEER available for a typical air-conditioning unit is 10. The higher the SEER, the lower the operating cost.

Each condo at Aura will be either three or four stories high and each will be directly above its own two-car garage. Each unit will range in size from 2,469 square feet to 3,147

Aura's views will be framed by high-efficiency, low-E windows.

Phoenix is second in the world to Perth, Australia, for "solar collectivity."

Chad Gifford,  
Catalyst Communities

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square feet and all will have a private elevator. "You'll be able to take the elevator from your garage all the way to your private rooftop garden," Gifford said.

The philosophy behind Aura, he explained, is "living responsibly, giving back rather than only taking from Mother Earth and having a great time all at the same time. Sustainable luxury living is possible."

### Focusing on more than the environment

"Sustainability is more than consideration of environmental issues," Loope said. "It's about the environment, the economy and the community. Developers of planned communities now are committing themselves to the notion that people living within the community need to be working there as well, so significant employment opportunities are being created beyond traditional small office and convenience retail."

Another condominium project with an emphasis on sustainability is aquaterra (with the first "a" deliberately lower case), near Alma School and Southern in Mesa. Also LEED-certified, this courtyard community of two five-story buildings and a six-story building will contain about 337 studios, lofts, penthouses and live/work spaces. A fourth building will house a hotel.

The community will include a main-floor central plaza with 20,000 square feet of shopping, services and dining options. Also on the main level will be eight work/live units where professionals can maintain a storefront and live in the same unit.

The residential units have been designed to promote an active pedestrian neighborhood, conserve energy and resources, limit sprawl and reduce traffic congestion and pollution. "All of the pavement materials and landscaping used in the project are intended to reduce the heat-island effect," said Kimberlee Coleman, aquaterra sales manager.

Construction begins this summer, with completion set for late fall 2009. The sales office opened in November.

The units will range in size from 525 square feet for studios to 3,000 square feet for a penthouse unit and will be priced from the \$180s to the \$900s. More than 20 floor plans will be available. Environment-friendly features include low-flow shower heads and toilets and materials that minimize light trespass and glare.

A special feature is the glass-enclosed balcony that's part of each unit.

"While each unit's balcony enclosure appears to be colored glass, it's actually part of a glass-wall railing system that will include a horizontal louver that acts as a solar shade to the unit below the balcony," said Gretchen Goodwin, another aquaterra sales manager. "The assorted squares of multi-colored glass will be just beautiful."

Within the units, wood floors throughout and tile flooring in the bathrooms are standard, as are Stylestone countertops in the kitchen, upgraded kitchen cabinets and stainless-steel appliances. A washer and dryer is included with each unit.

The developer and architect of the project is Roszak/ADC of Evanston, Ill. Anna Simone of Toronto is the interior designer.

### Part of a vibrant new community

In northeast Phoenix, at 56th Street and Deer Valley Road, an eco-friendly, 99-unit condominium complex called the Residences on High Street will open its doors to residents this fall. The condos, part of the highly anticipated CityNorth mixed-use project, will be located in two four-story buildings with about 190,000 square feet of retail on the ground floors. Each condo will have one, two or three bedrooms. Sales are expected to begin this month.

CityNorth is working to achieve LEED certification throughout the community. "Specifically within the residential buildings, we have designed sunshades on the buildings' exteriors and specified low-E, insulated

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glass to reduce the solar heat gain within the residences," said Steve Eimer, executive vice president of Related Companies. Related Companies is a partner with the Thomas J. Klutznick Company in the development of the Residences on High Street.

"For the mechanical systems, high-efficiency water-source heat pumps will be installed with individual zones controlled by programmable thermostats," he added. "To improve indoor air quality, all of the carpets, paints and adhesives in the residential homes and common spaces will be low-volatile organic compound-emitting."

The condos range in size from approximately 750 square feet to more than 1,850 square feet and range in price from \$455,000 to \$1.17 million.

"Each residence has a private exterior space, such as a terrace or balcony with stacking, multi-panel sliding doors and generous oversized windows to open the interior of the home to the ambiance of CityNorth," Eimer said. "In addition to 10-foot high ceilings with 8-foot high solid core wood doors, luxury finishes include hardwood floors throughout the public spaces of each home and powder rooms with vessel sinks with European styled faucets. Kitchens will have European-styled cabinetry with composite quartz countertops and stainless-steel appliances."

Residents "will enjoy an urban-style community unlike any other in the Southwest," Eimer said. "As a resident of CityNorth, you will have the ability to make priority reservations or receive delivery from the extensive array of restaurants or have access to special sales dates or events from specialty retailers. Residents will have the convenience of having everything they need, right out their front door." ☺

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