

Condo-dwellers in the driver's seat

New condo provides on-site car rentals

Verdict is still out on latest marketing tool

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TORONTO STAR

Residents at MOZO are the first condo dwellers in Canada to test drive a new amenity: on-site hourly car rental.

The service is offered by AutoShare, in collaboration with Context Development Ltd., which developed MOZO and plans to include the service at other upcoming projects, including Radio City.

A 2004 Toyota Matrix has been parked at MOZO, at the corner of King and Sherbourne Sts., for about two weeks, which residents can rent for about \$5 an hour, including gas and insurance. First, they must pay a \$250 one-time membership, which is half AutoShare's usual fee.

MOZO's first residents started moving in earlier this month. Residents also have full access to the entire AutoShare fleet, stationed at 40 Toronto locations. They can rent cars for as little as an hour or for several days.

"People in our industry having been talking about this concept for about five years," says Kevin McLaughlin, president of AutoShare. "It's been something we've been trying to convince developers about for some time."

McLaughlin was involved with the group that initiated the concept at Vancouver's Electric Avenue condos earlier this year, but that project won't be completed until 2005. He says Context Development Ltd. approached him about providing the service at MOZO.

The amenity will be used as a marketing tool for the condo, which still has some suites for sale. Depending on demand, more cars will likely be available on-site at MOZO, says McLaughlin.

"It is a new frontier, we're just getting it in place and we don't know yet what percentage of people will use the ser-



TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO

MOZO, above, offers condo residents access to a rental car for \$5 an hour.

vice," says McLaughlin. "But there are a lot of people who don't require a full car life, or even a half car life, and this offers a great alternative for them. Or there may be couples who have one car and need to use a second one on occasion. It's the ultimate condo amenity."

McLaughlin says renting a car as needed can be much more economical than owning for many people. Owning and operating a typical car in Toronto costs more than \$9,000 a year, according to the Canadian Automobile Association. And parking spaces can cost \$20,000 or more.

AutoShare started in Toronto five years ago and offers residents an alternative to car ownership. It has more than 1,100 members.

MOZO residents will be able to use the service 24 hours a day to make reservations by phone or Internet.

Another condo developer, Pinnacle International, also plans to promote AutoShare at its project at Yonge and Lakeshore, Pinnacle Centre, where construction has yet to begin.