



Tip Top model suite, Toronto Burdifilek, Toronto

This 1,100-square-foot model suite was commissioned by Context Development to help market its upscale loft condominiums in the renovated former Tip Top Tailor building on Lakeshore Boulevard.

Burdifilek's design had to address several points. It embodies Context's "How do you want to live?" advertising campaign by emphasizing the view and spaciousness of the raw space and its potential to be customized for the end user.

The suite demonstrates that the open-concept layout associated with loft living can have separate living areas without sacrificing the free-flowing nature that makes loft spaces so appealing. The bedroom, living area, kitchen and washroom are all treated not as rooms but as compartments that are distinguished by distinctive colours and textures.

The design had the polemical goal of dispelling the myth that empty-nesters must buy new furnishings and change their lifestyle if they

want to move into a loft. To that end, the eclectic range of furnishings includes antique finds, custom-designed furniture and upholstery in luxe fabrics such as pony hair and boiled wool.

The model suite combines standard and upgrade finishes to show that downsizing on space doesn't imply downsizing on individuality and an upscale lifestyle. Finishes include custom-designed cabinetry and mill-work in washrooms and kitchens, charcoal-grey, matte-finished ashwood strip flooring, sandblasted-glass sliders, porcelain mosaics and statuario and Carrara marble.

The design team comprised Burdifilek partners Diego Burdi and Paul Filek and Mauro Lobo-Pires, Jeremy Mendonca, Tracy Morgulis, Indrajit Motala, Mariko Nakagawa, Michael Steele and Tom Yip.

Judges' comments:

Reuber: *This is a gutsy, courageous model suite. You market a lifestyle, you limit your market.*

Munge: *Tip Top is for cool urban professional designer types.*

Bortolotto: *The wood floor is cool. You either love it or hate it.*

Bartlett: *They have put in a lot for 1,100 square feet, which is tiny.*

Laughton: *This is a real step forward for contemporary design in a woefully inadequate market.*

Tip Top Sales Centre, Toronto Burdifilek, Toronto

When a door slams shut, a window opens. The bankruptcy of fashion retailer Dylex paved the way for a makeover of its former corporate headquarters. Even as we speak, the Art Deco-style Tip Top Tailor Building on Lakeshore Boulevard is being transformed into 240 premium loft condominiums.

Context Development hired Burdifilek to direct the design and construction of the 16,000-square-foot sales-and-marketing centre, processes that took a mere six weeks.

The fifth-floor space includes administrative areas, a water bar, open sales and lounge areas, closing offices and two model suites. The design concept was driven by characteristic elements of the building such as the 17-foot-high ceilings, columns with soaring capitals, full-height windows and unobstructed lake views.

The circulation path leads visitors through a gallery-like set of experiences. The registration lobby is lit solely by the glow of 50 flat-screen television monitors aimed up toward a lowered ceiling, which evokes the shimmer on a reflecting pool. This twilight, serene room creates a strong sense of visual anticipation to the spaces that lie ahead. An intentionally narrow opening funnels visitors into the brightly lit sales area.

"The closing offices in sales centres are often hidden away," says Burdifilek creative director Diego Burdi. "We wanted to give more allure to the buying of a loft by highlighting them."

The closing area measures 36 feet square and is enclosed by clear glass panes recessed into the raised hardwood floor. The minimalist décor has some contemporary design icons sure to appeal to style-maven visitors: the Tolomeo task lamp from Artemide and white upholstered Saarinen chairs from Knoll.

In keeping with the gallery concept, marketing elements are displayed as if they were art objects. Massing models sit atop clear acrylic slabs. Floor plans repose on custom-designed, frosted-acrylic boxes. Builder's finish selections and samples sit in open trays under suspended PAR lamps. The project's bold graphics and abstract photography play off against the sales centre's stark white walls.

The design team included managing partner Paul Filek and Mauro Lobo-Pires, Jeremy Mendonca, Tracy Morgulis, Indrajit Motala, Mariko Nakagawa, Michael Steele and Tom Yip.

Judges' comments:

Hellwig: *This acknowledges and keeps the building.*

Munge: *The recessed television monitors and the water-like reflections on the ceiling are really cool.*

Bortolotto: *It's gutsy. It's courageous. It isn't a typical sales centre for lofts.*

