

Everyone  
on Strata is  
a jerk.

A new roof costs  
**How MUCH?!**

Should we lock in  
our mortgage?

Is Port Moody  
**WORTH** an hour  
commute?

**450**  
square feet!  
Could we?

Vancouver's condo market is the subject of endless debate and speculation. Some financial institutions warn of steep price corrections. Other researchers say the bubble won't burst anytime soon. Whatever the future may bring, relative value is a buyer's first concern. On the following pages, we compare a wide range of condos, in the city and beyond

# WHAT GOES UP...

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL GARLAND

# DENSE CITY

Vancouver has more strata units per capita than any other city in Canada—over a third of us live in a condo we own. Here's a detailed comparison of recent developments

## VANCOUVER



**The Erickson**

**Yaletown**

**1560 Homer Mews**

**Completed**  
2010  
18 levels, 61 homes

**\$3.5M**

**Avg size**  
2,300 sq ft

**Monthly fee**  
\$1,100

### Amenities

The Fendi baby grand in the lobby is one of five in the world, freestanding \$10,000 soaker tubs, all windows custom-made, 60-ft indoor pool, massage and spa facilities, personal hair salon, yoga studio, 24-hour concierge

### Parking

Private two-car garage included

**Owner occupied**  
50 to 60%

### Owners

A mix of locals and many offshore owners, including ongoing interest from Dubai, Europe, and mainland China, as well as from Mexico and the U.S.

[Concordpacific.com/erickson](http://Concordpacific.com/erickson)



**OnQue**

**South Main**

**2511 Quebec St.**

**Completed**  
2011  
4 levels, 48 homes

**\$370,000**

**Avg size**  
680 sq ft

**Monthly fee**  
\$230

### Amenities

Waterfall, local artists' and artisans' work highlighted, brick feature walls in some homes, flexible bookshelf converts space into various configurations, glazed jasper hexagonal mosaic floor tiles

### Parking

One included; \$20,000 for additional

**Owner occupied**  
Over 90%

### Owners

Engineers and lawyers straight out of school, habitués fond of nearby Main Street restaurants and pubs, keen cyclists

[Liveonque.com](http://Liveonque.com)



**21 Doors**

**Gastown**

**370 Carrall St.**

**Completed**  
2011 (built 1984)  
3 levels, 21 homes

**\$262,350**

**Avg size**  
477 sq ft

**Monthly fee**  
\$167

### Amenities

Just the basics; all units have front and back windows with common courtyard access

**Parking**  
None

**Owner occupied**  
80%

### Owners

Young singles hip to the new mantra, "400 square feet is the new 800"; those who don't remember when the sketchy section of the Downtown Eastside was actually large

[Liveat21doors.com](http://Liveat21doors.com)



**Sunrise Living**

**Hastings Sunrise**

**2745 E. Hastings St.**

**Completed**  
2011  
4 levels, 18 units

**\$329,000**

**Avg size**  
700 sq ft

**Monthly fee**  
\$126

### Amenities

Building has two bike rooms and a garbage room—that's it

**Parking**  
One included, no extras

**Owner occupied**  
80%

### Owners

Young to middle-aged couples, some with kids, up for a short transit commute but not a long drive; those who recognize that Sunrise Hastings will some day be the new Commercial Drive

[Sunriseliving.ca](http://Sunriseliving.ca)



**The Wesbrook**

**UBC**

**5838 Berton Ave.**

**Completed**  
2009  
17 levels, 58 suites

**\$2,030,000**

**Avg size**  
1,840 sq ft

**Monthly fee**  
\$847

### Amenities

Luxe high-rise near the South Campus's burgeoning Wesbrook Village (the development also includes seven townhomes); Pacific Spirit Park's 763 hectares are a block away; UBC Farm is down the street; Snaidero kitchens, Miele appliances, 24/7 concierge

**Parking**  
One included

**Owner occupied**  
80%

### Owners

UBC faculty, Shaughnessy empty-nesters, those looking to give their kids that little extra boost

[Thewesbrook.com](http://Thewesbrook.com)



**Kayak**

**False Creek**

**1633 Ontario St.**

**Completed**  
2010  
3 buildings, 185 homes

**\$865,000**

**Avg size**  
981 sq ft

**Monthly fee**  
\$442

### Amenities

Kayak, part of the Village on False Creek, is a complex of three buildings situated behind the Creekside Community Centre (the complex has its own fitness centre as well); rainwater is rooftop harvested for irrigation and sewer heat is captured and stored

**Parking**  
One included; some larger units have two

**Owner occupied**  
80%

### Owners

Early adopters, those who understand how the Canada Line has altered the axes of the city

[Thevillageonfalsecreek.com](http://Thevillageonfalsecreek.com)



**Crossroads**

**South Cambie**

**522 W. 8th Ave.**

**Completed**  
2009  
8 levels, 88 homes

**\$632,500**

**Avg size**  
820 sq ft

**Monthly fee**  
\$385

### Amenities

The mixed-use building includes anchor tenants London Drugs, Whole Foods, Lululemon Lab, Milestone's, and Blenz; kitty-corner from Canada Line's City Hall station; 4,000 square-foot-gym

**Parking**  
one included

**Owners**  
Devotees of urban big-box living (the area's full of them); policy wonks (city engineering's in the building); the loyal—resales are highly desirable and hard to come by

[Pci-group.com/works/crossroads](http://Pci-group.com/works/crossroads)



**Capitol Residences**

**Downtown**

**833 Seymour St.**

**Completed**  
2011  
43 levels, 372 homes

**\$633,286**

**Avg size**  
795 sq ft

**Monthly fee**  
\$214.81

### Amenities

Floors 31 and up feature overheight ceilings; buildings have requisite gym and TV lounge; members have access to car coop as well as underground parking

**Parking**  
one included

**Owner occupied**  
50%

### Owners

A deal with the city, to allow the impressive height, gave the adjacent Orpheum Theatre extra space—music to the ears of buyers who love the arts, downtown living, and (with Dunn's Famous downstairs) Montreal smoked meat sandwiches

[Capitolresidences.com](http://Capitolresidences.com)

Prices are based on  
MLS sales, initial developer  
offerings, and/or assessed values



**PH1-1011 W. Cordova St.**

One advantage of owning the top two floors of a five-star hotel is the luxury guest services: for returning owners, a phone call in advance of touchdown has the concierge loading the fridge. Favourite breakfasts are delivered in the morning, and maid service from the Fairmont Pacific Rim downstairs is constantly on hand. Panoramic views of ocean and mountains dominate the 6,400-square-foot space (the highest-priced listing in town), and there is access to a generous set of terraces from most rooms. An internal private elevator shuttles the owners between floors and up to the rooftop, 500 feet in the air.

**\$28,800,000**

**FROM THE  
PENTHOUSE TO  
THE GARDEN SUITE—  
VANCOUVER'S  
MARKET EXTREMES**

**#3-8851 Granville St.**

Are un-rich Vancouverites doomed to rent forever? We searched the MLS listings for strata title under \$200,000 and came up with several entry-level units, including this, the cheapest condo in town. A one bed, one bath built in 1989, this ground-floor corner suite at the south end of Granville (you've passed it a million times en route to the airport) has in-suite laundry, a gas fireplace, and one parking spot. At 430 square feet, it's no palace, but the tiny kitchen and tight bedroom are somewhat relieved by a 176-square-foot patio. Maintenance fees are a mere \$142.88, which leaves plenty in the pocket for lunches in the neighbourhood—French Press Coffee and Chicas Latin Heritage Foods are just up the road.



**\$165,000**

# WHAT THIS GUY KNOWS COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE (& YOUR WALLET)

**SEAN MOSS**  
HOME INSPECTOR

Moss, 41, is a director of the Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors of B.C. He got into the trade after a career in software sales. "I was always curious and analytical by nature. You have to look past the aesthetics. Sure, those countertops are great, but are they properly connected to the walls?" Here, five tips for a first walk-through:

**Exterior** Since the leaky condos of the '80s and '90s, we get that moisture is Condo Enemy #1. Look for cracking and stains on walls and around doors, balconies, and windows—clues of water intrusion, yes, but also calls for vigilance. "You look for clues that lead you to other clues."

**Underground** All garages leak—concrete is porous. But waterproofing membranes aren't always well installed. Look for efflorescence (a chalky residue indicating past moisture). By the way, those thin cracks by the pillars on the floor aren't defects—it's for controlled cracking. Similarly, a quarter-inch of caulking across a wall joint allows a building to move.

**Layout** Do closets block other doors? Are there obstacles? Is the floor even? A poor layout can indicate builder inexperience or haste. "And if you see carpets or other large objects that don't seem to fit the space, ask yourself, 'Why is that there?'" A lot of inspectors won't bother lifting a carpet up to see what's underneath."

**Bathroom/kitchen** Moss has seen fans unconnected to ductwork: the blades just draw air up through a filter and back out into the kitchen. Poor ventilation leads to moisture issues. Clues? Old mouldy caulking, loose tiles, grout cracks, chipped paint, discolouration (wavy light and dark lines) at the baseboards.

**Throughout** Are windows double-paned with vinyl surrounds? Are there water sensors under laundry machines and dishwashers? Evidence of suspicious isolated renovations, like a new bathroom in an otherwise untouched space? "You're digging through the history of everything that's happened in that space."

Commute times based on  
weekday arrival at  
Robson and Burrard, 9 a.m.

## LOWER MAINLAND



North Van

### The Drive

1330 Marine Dr.

Commute time

10 mins | 23 mins

Completed  
2012  
4 levels, 64 homes

\$259,900

Avg size  
695 sq ft

Monthly fee  
\$197

### Amenities

Dozens of shops and restaurants within walking distance, Bowser Trail Park is one block away; The Drive boasts a 1,300-square-foot amenity space with gym and meeting room; low-flow fixtures, EnergyStar front-loading washers and Energysave dryers, and recycling facilities all part of sustainability-focused design

Liveatthedrive.com



Richmond

### Wall Centre

3099 Corvette Way

Commute time

25 mins | 37 mins

Completed  
2010  
15 levels, 231 homes

\$425,000

Avg size  
750 sq ft

Monthly fee  
Approx \$200

### Amenities

Canada Line and shops of No. 3 Road nearby. River views and airport panorama accompany apartments with floor-to-ceiling windows, granite countertops and gas ranges, as well as access to the Westin Hotel's fitness facilities

Rennierealty.com

# THE OUTER LIMITS

Across the region last year, construction of condos and town-houses outstripped single-family homes four to one. Affordability is partly a function of distance from downtown. The key question: are lower costs and higher square footages worth the drive?



New West

### Quantum

39 Sixth St.

Commute time

32 mins | 38 mins

Completed  
2008  
18 levels, 120 homes

\$387,519

Avg size  
965 sq ft

Monthly fee  
\$300

### Amenities

Gym, sauna, media room, rooftop garden. Westminster Quay Public Market, the boutiques of the historic downtown district, Columbia SkyTrain, and Douglas College in walking distance; building designed to max out panoramic views from the Fraser River to the North Shore Mountains

Bosaproperties.com/  
quantum



Tsawwassen

### Tsawwassen Springs

5099 Springs Blvd.

Commute time

39 mins | 60 mins

Completed 2011  
4 levels, 55 homes &  
6 levels, 88 homes

\$639,900

Avg size  
1,202 sq ft

Monthly fee  
\$312

### Amenities

Public golf course with homeowner privileges (the course uses computer-controlled irrigation to reduce water usage; both phases of the development were constructed with attention to the environment, as with the use of geothermal heating and cooling)

Tswassensprings.ca



Surrey

### Park Place

9887 Whalley Blvd.

Commute time

40 mins | 44 mins

Completed  
2011  
36 levels, 698 homes

\$286,500

Avg size  
723 sq ft

Monthly fee  
\$217

### Amenities

Concierge service, bowling lanes, billiards and games rooms, steam room, fitness centre with yoga/Pilates studio; Park Place is at the southern edge of the Central City development, a \$5 million upgrade of library, City Hall, and performing arts centre (as well as an impressive retail collection)

Parkplaceliving.ca



Coquitlam

### Grand Central

2929 Atlantic Ave.

Commute time

41 mins | 53 mins

Completed  
2010 (phase 1)  
27 levels, 172 homes

\$367,500

Avg size  
848 sq ft

Monthly fee  
\$230

### Amenities

Membership in first-class fitness facility, rooftop garden; proximity to T&T supermarket and Coquitlam Town Centre; Phase 2 (27 levels, 172 homes) will be completed later this year; the recent announcement of the rapid-transit Evergreen Line folds Coquitlam more closely to downtown Vancouver

Grancentralnow.com



Maple Ridge

### Westbrooke

12020 207A St.

Commute time

49 mins | 72 mins

Completed  
2005  
4 levels, 59 homes

\$189,000

Avg size  
772 sq ft

Monthly fee  
\$309

### Amenities

Just off Lougheed Highway, within walking distance of the countless bars and big box stores of the Meadow Ridge/Westgate/Meadowtown complex, and only a few clicks to the Maple Meadows stop of the WestCoast Express train back into town



South Surrey

### Morgan Crossing

15850 26th Ave.

Commute time

50 mins | 92 mins

Completed  
2011  
4 levels, 99 homes

\$340,700

Avg size  
997 sq ft

Monthly fee  
\$310

### Amenities

Many Vancouver franchises—Blo, Everything Wine, a new concept from Vikram Vij—are moving out to South Surrey. Based on the concept of "new urbanism" with a strong emphasis on community, Morgan Crossing promotes a walking-friendly design (think Park Royal), in addition to many eco-friendly and sustainable initiatives

Morgancrossing.ca