



AARON HARRIS/SPECIAL TO THE STAR

There are five model homes at the Residences at LochNess, situated along the picturesque Welland Canal in the fertile Niagara wine region.

**BALLANTRY HOMES**

**PAST PROJECTS**

- Upper Glen Abbey Greens, Oakville
- Joshua Creek, Oakville
- Heritage Meadows, Markham
- Upper Canada Meadows, Newmarket
- Cornell, Markham
- Rouge River Estates, Markham

**CURRENT PROJECTS**

- Residences of LochNess Links, Welland: Singles and villa towns starting at \$270,900, from 1,140 square feet to 2,573 square feet
- Credit Ridge, Brampton: 47-foot singles at \$510,000, from 2,550 square feet to 3,927 square feet. Ravine lots with walk outs.
- Southlake, Minden: An exclusive collection of executive homes.

**COMING UP**

- Heritage Meadows, Markham: Due April 2010, townhomes and 35-foot detached homes
- Cornell, Markham: Fall/winter 2010, townhomes and 30-foot singles
- Blossom, Scarborough: Fall 2010, villa townhomes

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# Builder not content to rest on laurels

HILL from H1

But Hill was determined to make his new company a success and it's partly his legendary Irish stubbornness that has made Ballantry Homes one of the most respected home builders in the GTA.

We could say, at this point, that the rest is history, but Hill isn't standing on his well-earned laurels (including a J.D. Power and Associates award along with accolades from the Taron Warranty Corp.).

"I am always looking to improve the product, from the floor plans to the designs to the standards of finish. I want to build a home that can be lived in," Hill says in his quiet manner. "It's not enough that it looks good from the street — I build homes with families in mind."

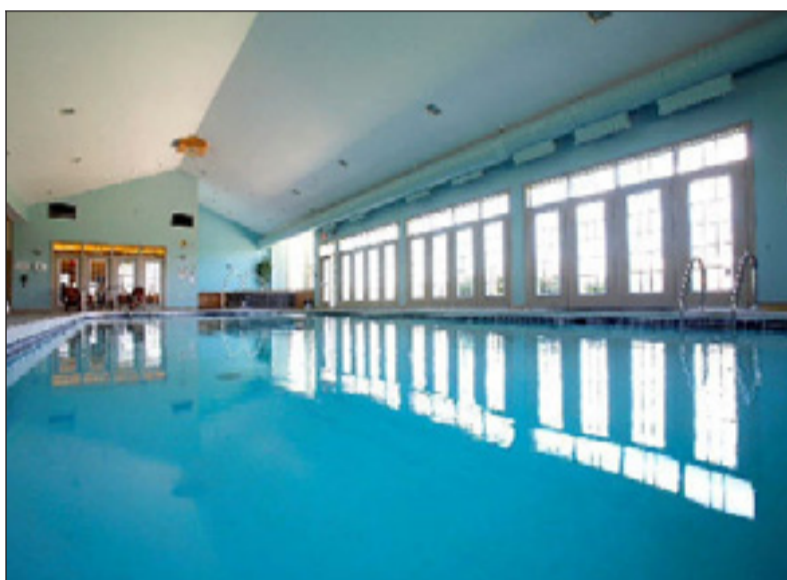
"Mostly, I want the customer to be happy," he says.

True to his word, Hill has hired some of the best people in the industry, including Ballantry's sales and marketing director Mark Lawrence, who has been on the Ballantry team for over a decade.

"Working with David Hill for the past 15 years has been great," Lawrence says. "David takes a great of pride in developing his team and the product he builds. He truly cares about people and inspires us all."

Lawrence is also impressed by his boss's scrupulous attention to detail, pointing out that Hill is "100 per cent involved in every detail, including approval of all the floor plans."

And as carefully as he plans his new communities, Hill treats his staff with the same respect. Ballantry's head office is a modern wonder that includes a state-of-the-art gym, where Hill can often be found working out with the vigour of a professional athlete. His other passion is golf, but he refused to share how well (or badly) he plays. However, his competitive nature makes us think he's probably darn good. (That and the fact he lives in the Angus Glen community, which has



The community centre at the Residences at LochNess includes a saltwater pool, fully-equipped gym, library and billiards room.

**SNAP TO IT!**

Snap a photo of the barcode below with your web-enabled smartphone to view some extra web content: A video on the Residences at LochNess Links by Ballantry Homes. Get the free app for your phone at <http://gettag.mobi> (**Note:** Data charges may apply. Consult your wireless provider.) More information at [www.thestar.com/tag](http://www.thestar.com/tag)



two stunning golf courses on site.) The healthy mind and body philosophy Hill employs in his personal life is a boon in his professional life.

For instance, Hill's strategy for a new development is to tour a potential site, then work out a clear vision before a shovel hits the ground. It's a formula that has worked very well for him.

"Look where I am now," he says

with a disarming charm.

He also loves to hear suggestions from the homeowners and enjoys all the feedback — good or bad.

The buyers in a Ballantry development are welcomed to their new homes with a gift basket that contains the essentials often forgotten in a busy move, including door mats, toilet paper, clothes hangers and light bulbs.

The Residences at LochNess — an active adult lifestyle community in the heart of the fertile Niagara wine region — is Hill's latest passion and it shows during our tour.

He talks excitedly about the beauty of the site, bordered on the east by the Welland Canal and on the south by the meticulously groomed grounds of the LochNess Links Golf Course, designed by Graham Cooke & Associates of Montreal.

"The Residences at LochNess Links offer the near-perfect solution," he says. "What buyers are telling us is that the bungalow villas and singles offer the superior quality, design and lifestyle they are looking for, in a location unmatched in the Niagara Region."

He becomes even more enthused as the tour takes us to the five fully decorated models on site.

The 600-unit development of the site began a few years ago under the guardianship of another developer, who turned it over to Ballantry. When Hill came on board, he found the community centre in disrepair and the development stalled.

"The roof was leaking, the pool was falling apart and the basement was unfinished," Lawrence says.

But now, the 14,000-square-foot community centre has a library, a saltwater pool, a finished basement with a full-service kitchen and a stage, a fully-equipped gym with lockers and steam baths, and an elevator for those who have mobility issues. There are also outdoor tennis courts.

A fulltime staff member operates the centre and works with the residents on creating programs, including movie nights, morning coffee clubs and activities like horseshoes, yoga, Tai Chi, table tennis, kayaking, aqua-fit, card night and a biking club.

The freehold bungalows and villa townhomes are typically Ballantry — made of brick and stone, or siding and stone, with peaked roofs and dormer details — and are Energy Star rated. Fences are not allowed, and the community is designed with streetscapes in mind, with all sightlines looking to the golf course or the canal.

An association fee of \$235 a month includes all grass cutting and snow removal and irrigation, as well as membership to the community centre and most of the activities. An association board — which includes Hill and Lawrence — oversees the operation of the community.

"It's the great activities and the location that draw most people here," says Lawrence. "But it's not just retired people. We're finding families are buying in to the concept as well."

"We're hoping to provide a multi-generational community," adds Hill, "and I want to do more communities like this one in the future." Hill is also introducing different

**RESIDENCES AT LOCHNESS LINKS**

**Location:** Welland (take the QEW to Welland, exit on Highway 406 south and turn left on to Daimler Parkway.)

**Builder:** Ballantry Homes  
**Homes:** Detached homes and villa townhouses starting at \$270,900, from 1,140 square feet to 2,573 square feet

**Sales office and model homes:** Open Saturday to Wednesday 1:00 to 4 p.m., by appointment only on Thursday and Friday.

**Contact:** Toll Free: 1-888-999-8990, local: 289-820-8600 or email [theresidences@ballantryhomes.com](mailto:theresidences@ballantryhomes.com)

**Features:** Nine-foot main floor ceilings, two-car garages, hardwood flooring, custom lifestyle kitchens, vaulted and cathedral ceilings, Energy Star rated, lawn sprinkler system.

**Local amenities:** The Welland Hospital; membership to the LochNess Community Centre; the wooded walking/biking trails of Merritt Island (immediately adjacent to our community); almost 1,000 kilometres of bicycle/walking trails; access to the Welland Recreational Canal; many area golf courses, including the LochNess Links right across the street; short drive to Niagara's award winning wineries; proximity to picturesque Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Shaw Festival; Fallsview Casino; and, of course, Niagara Falls.

More information at [www.theresidencesatlochnesslinks.com](http://www.theresidencesatlochnesslinks.com)

housing styles in future phases that allow people to "age in place" without leaving their community or their friends and family behind. As for the name, Hill says he took a map of Ireland and blindly pointed.

# Balconies presented sculptural possibilities

BLOOR from H1

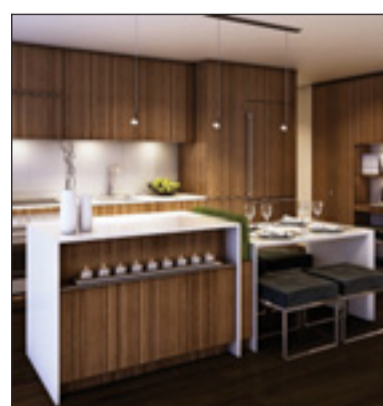
This time the tower has been shortened, the hotel eliminated.

The fact is the site calls out for densities of this sort. After all, it sits atop the major subway meeting point in Toronto and serves as an entrance to downtown. Bloor, Toronto's premier shopping street, also happens to be undergoing a major remake.

Pontarini's tower is a study in the sculptural possibilities of the balcony. What would otherwise be a straight-forward box becomes something quite different because of the changing rhythm of the balconies. No two floorplates are alike, Pontarini says. The differences are formed by balconies, which create the undulating vertical lines



One Bloor condo will feature great indoor and outdoor amenities as well as high-end kitchens designed by Cecconi Simone.



that rise from top to bottom. "Five years ago I would have said balconies are a pain in the butt," Pontarini admits. "Today, I see

them as an occasion to do something distinctive. And in this case, the client wanted something interesting."

The tower rests on a six-storey podium; it houses two floors of retail that faces onto Yonge and Bloor. A series of terraces cascade down to Yonge; but they are private space, not for shoppers. On Bloor, the facade is more geometric, though it slants back from the sidewalk at the east end.

Sadly, the complex includes no public space — no square, no piazza or plaza. On the other hand, the building has been set back from the property line which means that the Bloor sidewalk will be up to seven-metres wide, two more than the average.

But as Pontarini proudly points out, the design does include a public pathway into the subway from Yonge; this will save Toronto's pedestrians a few steps.

"This is transit-oriented development at its best," Pontarini. "You can't get much more sustainable than 690 units on one acre at the intersection of the most important subway lines."

He's right, of course. And although we have spent half a century trying to undo this sort of city condition, now we have done an about face and are encouraging it. The fact is a person could live at One Bloor, work downtown in a building on the underground Path system and never have to put on a winter coat. Fully integrated into the transit infrastructure, this will be one condo complex that revels in its own urbanity.

In a big city that often behaves like a small town, such enthusiasm is welcome.