

Taking advantage of a weekend of open houses

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SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Despite the snow storm last Saturday — not, it turned out, the last snow of the season — more than 2,500 people turned out to visit Part 1 of the 18th edition of Open House Weekends. The event is the largest annual promotional campaign in the city for new residential constructions such as condos and townhouses, and this year it's showcasing more than

75 residential projects in Montreal and surrounding areas. Part 2 takes place this weekend, so if you stayed home due to the storm last week, you've still got today and tomorrow to check it out.

"Despite the weather conditions, we were satisfied with how well last weekend went — and historically the second weekend is always busier, so we're really looking forward to it," said Jacques Beaulieu, whose firm started the event in collaboration

with GE Appliances. "It's a great opportunity for buyers to see what's out there, and for developers to showcase their projects."

The Montreal neighbourhoods that attracted the most visitors during the first weekend were the Sud-Ouest borough, Rosemont, and the Villeray—St-Michel—Parc-Extension borough, which seems to be a favourite among families.

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COURTESY OF OPEN HOUSE WEEKENDS

Cité Nature condos in Rosemont, which start at \$235,001, including taxes, are included in the Open House Weekends event.

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G4 SPECIAL FEATURE **NEW HOMES & CONDOS**



IMAGES (2): COURTESY OF OPEN HOUSE WEEKENDS

Quintessence Condominiums in Laval has one-, two- and three-bedroom condos and penthouses starting at \$325,001, including taxes. It is one of 75 residential properties featured during this year's Open House Weekends event.

OPEN HOUSE | A chance to visit various projects

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In the areas surrounding Montreal, Laval was the popular choice thus far, as well as the St-Bruno-sur-le-Lac project.

"Purchasing a condo is a big decision, and potential buyers need to be well informed to find the right fit based on their individual needs," said Deanne Cyr, sales and marketing director at Groupe Lobato. "The open-house event is a great opportunity for buyers to visit a number of projects in their price range and desired area over two weekends; they can see what's out there, ask questions, and prepare themselves to realize their dream of acquiring their new home."

This is the third year that Groupe Lobato has participated in the Open House Weekends.

"The event is extremely well organized and generates great visibility for the projects that participate," Cyr said. "Shoppers can drop by and visit our model units in a stress-free atmosphere; in fact, these weekends represent the greatest number of visitors of any weekend throughout the year."

Groupe Lobato is not alone in its positive experience showcasing developments at the Open House Weekends.

"This is an excellent initiative that creates positive synergy and is beneficial to all," said Paul Martin, vice-president, planification and commercialization of projects at Samcon. "Every year Samcon participates in the Open House Weekends, it's a unique event that allows clients to meet



Walter sur Atwater, a 104-unit condo project in the Sud-Ouest borough of Montreal, features one-, two- and three-bedroom condos and penthouses starting at \$200,001, including taxes.

builders while searching for a condo or a new house."

Developers and event organizers alike are encouraged by the timing of this year's event, as conditions are favourable for homebuyers due to a vast choice of real estate, and interest rates that are low for the moment.

"For those thinking about a new condominium, the time is

perfect," Cyr said. "Financing is key when acquiring a new property; with the anticipated increase in interest rates, shoppers can greatly benefit from today's lower rates."

Buyers appear to appreciate these circumstances; in addition to attending the event, they've also upped their visits to the Open House Weekends' website,

which Jacques Beaulieu said has received record traffic this year.

"The website has already recorded some 38,000 clicks, double the number for the entire 2013 campaign," Beaulieu said on Monday. "It means that not only is it a good tool, but it also measures the interest of the general public for the Open House Weekends and shows that the real-

estate market is picking up."

The second instalment of this year's Open House Weekends runs today and tomorrow (March 29 and 30) from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, and to find out which developers are showcasing projects, call 514-255-4066 or visit www.monhabitationneuve.com