

North End's Battery Wharf: Creating a 'destination'

Mary Moore
Special to the Journal

A few weeks away from putting the roof on the first building at Battery Wharf, the project promises to be more than just another of Boston's trendy hotels-with-condominiums.

Perched on the water's edge along Commercial Street in the North End, the 4.5-acre site has the walk-around feel of a campus.

Four separate and low-rise buildings feature high-end condominiums and hotel rooms spread throughout, along with several eateries, a spa, ballrooms, meeting rooms and a marina. The Regent Boston Hotel, expected to offer its 150 guest rooms next spring and also fully service the residential units, signed a 25-year management agreement. Star French chef Guy Martin will open the hotel restaurant and bar.



Of the 104 condominiums, ranging in price from \$1.15 million to upwards of \$3.2 million, 55 are under agreement, with the first of them delivered by the end of 2007. The units are approximately 900 square feet to 2,500 square feet, although at least one buyer has purchased two units, paying more than \$8 million for 4,500 square feet.

Battery Wharf is designed to be classy, not exclusive. Boston Harborwalk hugs the perimeter and the gardens will welcome the public for music and gathering, said Francois Nivaud, director of sales and marketing and project consultant. An onsite maritime museum will offer another visitor attraction.

"We've created a destination," said Nivaud, distinguishing Battery Wharf from Rowes and Long wharves, which he calls "thoroughfares" for pedestrians. "Battery Wharf is not a stop over. You will come here because it's where you want to be."

Battery Wharf, the former Bay State Lobster site, has been in the works for about a decade, the development

taken over in 2000 by Harold Theran, vice president of Development Management Corporation. Delayed by market downturns after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, construction began in earnest in 2005, with pre-selling of condominium units starting the previous year.

From Commercial Street, a landscaped driveway will cut between the 55-foot-high buildings toward the end of the wharf. Close to the street, Building 20 will offer 7,500 square feet of restaurant space on the ground floor, an 18,000-square-foot spa, and 24 condominium units.

All eight of the buildings' premium units are under agreement -- ones that wrap around the ends of the buildings, fully facing the water.

"The market has been very strong along waterfront in the North End," said Carmela Laurella, Realtor and senior vice president with Otis & Ahearn, who is handling the resale of one Battery Wharf unit. "My clients like these buildings because they're low and fit in well with the other wharves."