

A Lamb in every condo

The big city broker says Toronto should just grow up

Shinan Govani

National Post

Saturday, January 13, 2007

So, exactly how many condos do I have to sell to buy this car? This was on the ticker tape I could see rolling through Brad Lamb's mind as he drooled over the new Rolls-Royce 101 EX over at the Rolls showroom on Avenue Road. It was Wednesday night, during a small wine-and-car party, and the vehicle--black and long and just the sort of thing that the Perons of Argentina would have been comfortable in -- was in Toronto for one-night-only. It's on a world tour, as fine-car purveyor David Geneen confirmed about the winning wheels.



CREDIT: Brent Foster, National Post

"If anyone thinks that we're anywhere close to having too many condos," says Toronto real estate titan Brad Lamb, "we're nowhere near to that."

The extra-tall Lamb, who'd arrived without any livestock on his body (he wore a nice pink shirt), put a finger to his chin and looked longingly at the car, which, naturally, occupied a VIP area of its own. The real estate titan's stare? Like a coroner inspecting a corpse, or Mike Tyson being woken up in the middle of a nap. I thought about saying hi, but did I dare interrupt his reverie? I eventually thought better of it.

He, like the seriously wheeling- and-dealing crowd that had gathered--not the Brazilian Ball, Geneen noted cryptically -- were enchanted by the "direct- injection V12 engine," the leggy "bonnet," the broad shoulders and almost Deco- like door handles. And also by the fact that, human nature being what it is, this car ain't in production yet and doesn't have a suggested price. So, how many condos, Brad?

We're not sure, but at the rate he's going, he could buy a warehouse full of cars. When asked recently if there is such as thing as "too many condos" in Toronto, he insisted that we still have far to go.

"Toronto has no feeling of density; even our downtown core," Lamb said in an interesting interview with torontoist. com. "Chicago and New York and London and Paris feel denser. London and Paris don't have a lot of high rises, but they feel a lot darker and a lot denser than Toronto does, so there's a lot of room for Toronto to grow -- a lot of room. We're nowhere near where we need to be. If anybody thinks that we're anywhere close to having too many condos, we're nowhere near to that."

He continued: "We are gonna grow out -- there's no question that that's going to happen. The question is how do we limit the growth out, and the way we limit

the growth out is by growing up."

And up is also the direction that guy sees himself going. Besides Toronto, he's also got

action happening in Ottawa, Montreal, St. Kitts as well as Turks and Caicos. And, starting in February, on HGTV -- Lamb's own Trumpstyle reality series, called Big City Broker!

AND ANOTHER THING ...

Toronto's Shirley Douglas, the force-of-nature whom Kiefer Sutherland calls Mom, has reason to be extra-anxious this weekend. Her boy's show, 24, cranks up again on Sunday night, and it's another opportunity for her to not to get through another season.

Asked recently what his actress- activist mummy makes of his gripping hit, Kiefer had this to spill to Men's Vogue: "Every year she starts to watch it. But it's always the same. I get a call two or three episodes in: 'Honey, I tried, I really tried, honest, but I just got so goddamnervous I had to turn the f----- thing off.' "

I SEE, I HEAR ...

That what happens in Toronto doesn't stay in Toronto for Charles Khabouth! The impresario is Vegas-bound next week for the opening of the new bar-lounge he's got going in the City of Sin. Called Revolution and located in the Mirage hotel, it's inspired by Cirque du Soleil's latest show about the Beatles and marks a first-ever collaboration between Khabouth and that other great Canadian, circus- wiz, Guy Laliberte.

Back in the T-dot, Charles, of course, is the man behind the Government, Kool Haus, the Pantages Hotel, Ultra Supper Club, et cetera, whatevera.

AND ALSO ...

That foxy plastic surgeon Trevor Born actually lost weight during the Christmas break! At Omi on Church the other night, the 14-pounds-lighter doc gave me the low-down about the cleanse he just underwent, along with his wife, Lisa Airan, the always Vogue-ready celebrity dermatologist from New York.

It all went down during the holidays in Kerala, India, where the couple hunkered down for two weeks at one of those very serious, in-the-know, new-wave ashrams. In addition to lots of yoga and a very restricted diet, the trip even afforded them the opportunity to get to know some local elephants!

"It was another world!" Born said, telling me with some tenderness about the bananas they fed their new beast friends!

AND, OH YEAH ...

My own trip to Barbados was just great, thank you very much for asking.

Although I was on a very strict two-week cat-nap schedule, I couldn't help myself and did have some accidental celebrity sightings. One night, at the famous Sandy Lane Hotel, I happened across T-shirt enthusiast Simon Cowell at the next table. He smokes like a chimney, I'll have you know, and holds his cigarette like he's either about to star in a Noel Coward production or like he's used to smoking something a lot stronger.

Another time, on the absolutely primo beach near the Crane Hotel -- owned by a good Canadian! -- I had an even better sighting: Gary Dourdan! The "black guy" on CSI! Shirtless and oiled, he was on a chaise longue and reading-- the Robb Report!

Sgovani@nationalpost.com