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NEW HEIGHTS

Award-winning architect Glenn Rescalvo puts his stamp on the San Francisco skyline with one of the city's most luxurious and innovative new high-rises.

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Glenn Rescalvo and Richard Baumert

On a recent winter day, after sunlight had evaporated the city's famous fog, architect Glenn Rescalvo looked out the window of the sumptuous suite at the Four Seasons Hotel. "This site has everything to offer," he proclaimed. His focus? The new star on the block: a gorgeous glass 45-story tower commanding center stage at the bustling construction site at 706 Mission Street, home to the new Four Seasons Private Residences. "This part of San Francisco is the center of everything."

Rescalvo, a native San Franciscan and principal of Handel Architects, is the visionary behind the luxury residential project situated in the heart of the city's vibrant Yerba Buena Arts District. He saw the potential of this once-bleak urban slice of the city and knew that someday it would shine.

Developer Richard Baumert of Millennium Partners shared his vision. The duo, who have worked together on projects around the world for nearly two decades, had a lightbulb moment 15 years ago and saw an opportunity in the Yerba Buena district for a



"neighborhood" of luxury residences. But this project would be much more than a cluster of high-rise condos. Their concept was a stand-alone luxury property whose architecture comfortably blended old and new and was equally beautiful on the outside as on the inside.

"This is not a condo building. This is a vertical collection of custom, grand homes," explains Baumert. "It's in a different league from other vertical residences in the city... This is something new and unique."

The two creatives reimagined the location, adjacent to Jessie Square Plaza, and found inspiration in the city's historical 10-story Aronson Building that has occupied the site since 1903 and impressively survived the 1906 fire and earthquake. They approached the design process with mutual excitement for the possibilities of modern materials and grand spaces while respecting and preserving San Francisco's rich architectural heritage. The tony residential property, scheduled to open this summer, successfully showcases the tension between the terracotta-colored masonry of the Aronson building, which will serve as the front of the new residences, and the new 510-foot tower's modern steel and glass elements. The carved stone facade on

the new tower, a nod to San Francisco's elegant architecture, also has the eco-friendly benefit of being more energy-efficient than an all-glass structure.

"When we combined the historical Aronson building with the new tower, it was important to preserve as much as we could," says Rescalvo. That approach included replicating wooden windows, refurbishing the terracotta, and preserving the Art Deco-inspired stone exterior. "When the sun hits it, it's amazing—the undulation comes out in the shades and shadows."

The two contrasting structures will together house 146 residences, ranging in size from 2,800 to more than 4,000 square feet, each with two-to-four bedrooms. Pricing for the homes will begin at \$2.5 million, with 11 premium penthouses starting at \$15 million. Whoever purchases the stunning two-story "grand" penthouse could be making a record-breaking real estate move. The 10,000-square-foot penthouse listed for \$49 million is expected to be the most expensive condo listing in San Francisco when it eventually sells. A buyer can customize to their liking the spacious interior and 4,000 square feet of outdoor terraces with fire pits, a plunge pool, an outdoor kitchen, and Jacuzzi.

The large windows in the residences'



generous living spaces offer sweeping views of the city's iconic landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz Island, the Transamerica Pyramid, and Twin Peaks. Its prime urban location in the center of the city's Yerba Buena Arts District is steps away from fashionable restaurants, shopping, and art hubs, including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Contemporary Jewish Museum, and the relocated Mexican Museum, housed on the ground floor of the Aronson building. When you add these distinctions to the world-class service and amenities the Four Seasons brand is famous for, Rescalvo and Baumert are not surprised that the property is attracting attention from international buyers as well as Bay Area celebrities.

Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry and his entrepreneur wife Ayesha

reportedly have purchased one of the luxury residences, conveniently located less than two miles from the new Chase Center, home to the Warriors. The price for the 2,800-square-foot condo the Currys bought was just under \$8 million, according to real estate sources familiar with the building.

Design elements of the interiors are reminiscent of the city's grand manses, including dramatic entryways juxtaposed with modern statements like walls of floor-to-ceiling glass in the living rooms and chef kitchens designed by famed high-end cabinet designer Christopher Peacock. For homeowners, what Rescalvo describes as the "transformative experience" starts when they exit the busy street, enter the property's quiet private drive, and perhaps most impressively, pull into the posh auto elevator, a convenience

high-end buyers have come to expect. But the auto elevator isn't just for the "wow" factor. In a transit-oriented city like San Francisco, where land is at a premium and sustainability top of mind, Rescalvo explains that they had to get creative with car storage and parking. Rather than build a traditional parking garage that requires a tremendous amount of space, their solution was installing two state-of-the-art auto elevators. The smaller footprint and the contained auto usage also restricts gas fumes circulating through the garage, he explains. An attendant takes residents' cars into the garage and stores or retrieves the autos as needed.

Baumert has emphasized the importance of premier amenities and 24/7 personal services to elite buyers. He describes the private amenity floor, staffed by a concierge and bartender,

that boasts a stylish bar and lounge, a state-of-the-art fitness center, a game room with a media wall, a private dining and tasting room, and a landscaped outdoor terrace with fire pits. Residents also will have access to a team of lifestyle experts, including a fitness guru, wine consultant, and art curator who will provide services customized for each owner's tastes.

A celebrated architect, also known for the city's Millennium Tower that ushered in a new era of high-rise design in 2009, Rescalvo's passion for San Francisco's history and diverse neighborhoods influences his projects and his ultimate goal to improve the City by the Bay.

"I grew up in San Francisco; this is my home," he says. "This project shows that we believe in San Francisco and its future. A building like this is a great testament to this town." ●