

Small town charm in the city

Bloor West Village is a quintessential old Toronto neighbourhood. Quiet residential streets are populated with conscientious artist types who have outgrown the bohemian lifestyle or bypassed it altogether in favour of growing a family. Strollers and dogs may threaten to outnumber the people but this neighbourhood is anything but suburban. The cool factor still exists in the historic architecture of the large, well-tended houses, the hum of the streets and the citified culture of its residents.

But it's the shopping district that puts the "village" in Bloor West Village. More than 400 retail outlets include greengrocers, butchers, delis and bakeries interspersed with interesting boutiques, bookstores, pubs, cafes and restaurants. The village's European roots are felt in the quality of the wares: some say the city's finest cuts of meat, best selection of pastries and superior deals on fresh flowers are found here. Shops offer unique, higher-end merchandise not found at the mall. Weekends bring a festival-like vibe to the area, with sidewalks crammed with pedestrians strolling leisurely, running errands or catching up with friends.

In deference to its chief residents, the schools are reputed to be some of the best in the city. And High Park – Toronto's biggest and best known park – is downright legendary. With 398 acres of parkland, a small zoo, historic Colborne Lodge and Grenadier Pond, regulars are routinely joined by visitors across the city looking for green space in which to revel.

The village's Eastern European heritage is showcased at the wildly popular annual summer Ukranian Festival when Bloor St. is shut down for musicians, vendors, crafts and art shows. The constant thrum of activity coupled with a rich heritage means that this family-friendly neighbourhood is never a dull place to be.

Bloor West Village Lofts

Though houses typically rule the village, a new mid-rise condominium will join the neighbourhood this summer. Located at 592 Annette St. between Runnymede Rd. and Windermere Ave., this five-story brick building will feature 25 suites starting at 700 square feet. Amenities such as bicycle storage will be a must to cater to the residents who will no doubt want to take advantage of the small-town feel of the area.

Other transportation options include the TTC; residents can hop on at Jane, Runnymede or Old Mill subway stations. For drivers, all major highways are less than 10 km away.