

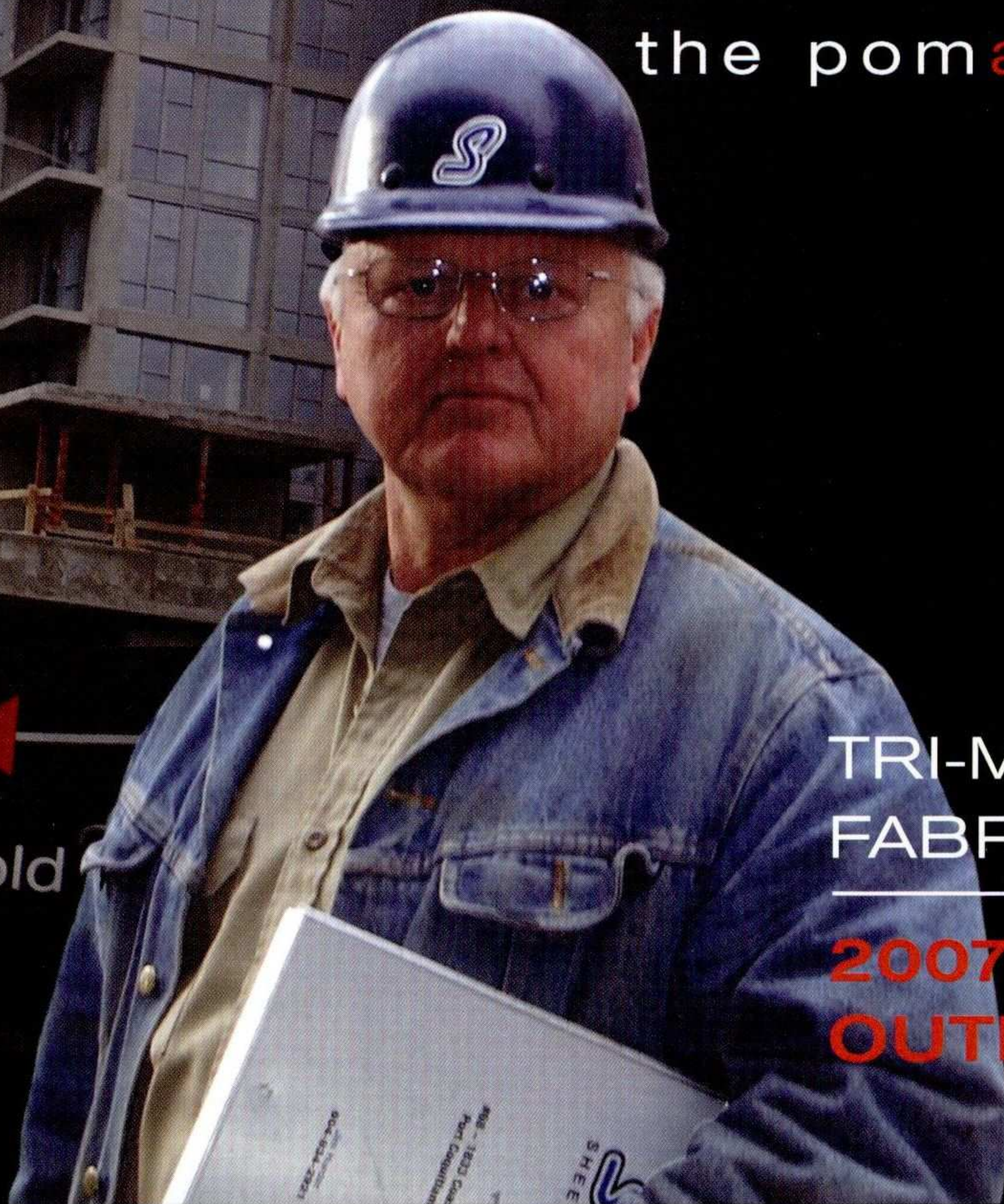
SHEET METAL

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Urban Eden

the pomaria project



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SUMMIT SHEET METAL IS THE HVAC CONTRACTOR BEHIND THE GARDEN-LIKE POMARIA RESIDENTIAL HIGHRISE IN VANCOUVER.

Urban Eden

the pomaria project

by Margaret Jetelina

Vancouverites looking for a bit of sanctuary in the city have quickly bought up the now-sold-out Pomaria residential highrise still being built on Howe Street between the Burrard and Granville bridges. Designed by Rarii Architects, it's an inspiring 30-storey tower of large, open homes and lush sky gardens—it takes its name and “apple-ish” branding from an old city in Roman Africa named Pomaria, which bordered fruit orchards (“pom-” means “fruit” in Latin; “pomme” is “apple” in French).

Steps from the restaurants, shops and urban life of False Creek and English Bay, this Qualex-Landmark project brings together a mix of urban life and natural haven, with the gardens jutting out near the 16th to 19th floors. Starting at \$339,000 (one bedroom) to \$730,000 for suites with access to the gardens and going up to \$2.9 million for penthouse suites, Pomaria offers overheight ceilings and wall-to-ceiling glass to enjoy the views.

Pomaria will be one of the first residential towers to pursue the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification—the environmental program that sets standards for things like energy efficiency, water management and sustainable architecture.



It's a "green" building, not just because of the gardens, but because it's a LEEDS project. Pomaria will be one of the first residential towers to pursue the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification—the environmental program that sets standards for things like energy efficiency, water management and sustainable architecture.

What are the benefits of being a LEED-certified building? Not only does it ensure that the construction of the building has a reduced impact on the environment, it also improves the quality of living at Pomaria, with features like improved ventilation for more frequently circulated fresh air and opportunities for natural cross-ventilation. In terms of energy efficiency, Pomaria has an improved envelope efficiency to decrease heat loss and gain, and has a geothermal ground-source heat pump system that provides energy for heating, cooling and hot water.

Port Coquitlam-based Summit Sheet Metal is happy to be involved as the HVAC contractor for the highrise.



Top Picture: Jim Harder, Foreman on site.

Clockwise: Slab duct being lifted onto the deck. Workers at the Pomaria site. Photos courtesy of Summit Sheet Metal.

Summit Sheet Metal is responsible for not only the ventilation in the bathrooms, kitchens, dryers, central systems and three levels of parking; it is also installing air conditioning in every unit ...something that doesn't come standard in many Vancouver residential highrises.



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Jim Kapitza, Summit's owner, should know—his family business (with 18 employees including his wife/office manager Margaret) specializes in HVAC services for residential buildings. “Eighty-five percent of our work is high-rise and low-rise residential,” he says. “Each suite in Pomaria is also fully air-conditioned, which means quite a bit of ductwork.”

He says that because the buildings downtown feature so much glass, it can make them really hot. “I can't imagine living in a highrise like that [without air conditioning],” he says. “When I walk around a near-complete building on a hot day, I wonder how the people are going to live there ... I don't care what kind of window coverings you have, it will be hot.”

What's further notable about the construction of this 300-foot tower is the fact that the ductwork for ventilation is embedded in the concrete—slab duct construction. “It was unique for Western Canada for many years. Now it's



kind of spread out into Alberta and down into the States, but it's a standard in Vancouver," Kapitza says.

He explains that the contractors form the slabs of concrete, put the rebar in and then Summit puts the ductwork in. "It's so they don't have to put the ductwork in ceilings and then put bulkheads over them to cover the work; it creates more space in the apartments."

Summit is using a product called the ECCODUCT™ system—an extensively tested, rectangular spiral seamed duct that has a three-hour fire rating on all encased components.

It's generally manufactured in 10-foot lengths, which makes it easier to install. It also allows for flexibility in design and layout, yet it is strong enough to resist deformation under the direct impact of the heavy concrete.

But what if something does happen to the ductwork once embedded in the concrete?

"Theoretically, there should never be a problem with it," says Kapitza. "Sometimes cement can seep into duct,

Opposite page: Mark Tinling carrying slab duct. Photo courtesy of Summit Sheet Metal.

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“On a typical tower, 75 percent is a purchased product, not custom ductwork. All the elbows and vents are all prefabricated. We use that and cut it up and make it fit.”

or maybe the concrete or rebar workers step on it, but that’s pretty rare. We’ve had a few cases where we had to reroute the duct, but not often.”

In addition to ECCODUCT™, Summit purchases its other materials from various suppliers, depending on the project and the quotes offered. Not a fabrication shop, Summit depends mostly on non-custom, purchased

products. “On a typical tower, 75 percent is a purchased product, not custom ductwork. All the elbows and vents are all prefabricated. We use that and cut it up and make it fit.”

And while sheet metal companies often just supply the sheet metal, Summit is also providing all the fans, equipment and controls on this project. “But on this particular job, we’re not providing the air-conditioning units.”



A former tradesperson, Kapitza says he prefers high-rise work to most other jobs. “Lots of sheet metal workers don’t want to do high-rise work, but I’ve always maintained there is more diversity in a tower than an office building or hospital. I find it more interesting. There is such a wide range of things that have to be installed; it makes it more interesting for the installer.”

And the fact that it’s a LEEDS project makes the work even more interesting. Working foreman Jim Harder says that LEEDS is all about good working practices. “For one, when we put in the sheet metal, we have to close off all the vents after we finish working on them so dust doesn’t get in,” he says. “And when we’re working, we have to make sure they’re not sweeping the floor so that dust is in the air.” The ducts also must be covered in plastic before using.

Recycling their sheet metal is also essential for LEEDS practices. “We recycle all our sheet metal, except the insulated duct, because the insulation is glued onto the sheet metal.”


Working on the non-union Pomeria project reminds Harder of the many union commercial projects he’s worked. “It has good union practices. On all union jobs, they’re very strict. But non-union jobs in residential building have been more lax. This building is more in line with union commercial projects.”

So, for Harder, the work is not as tough as he had initially thought a LEEDS job might be. “It’s really about regular working practices that we do everyday anyway.”

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“Coming up over the next couple of years, we have enough tower and low-rise work that will see us using well over 60 miles of slab duct,” says Kapitza.

“We’ve been very happy with Summit’s work,” says George Steeves, a partner with the engineering firm Sterling, Cooper & Associates and the mechanical consultants on the project.

Now that Summit has taken a bite out of the Pomaria, which is slated for completion in 2007, what else is Summit Sheet Metal working on?

“There is no company in B.C. that has installed more slab duct than we have over the past seven years. In fact, we have just completed three towers in one development called Yaletown Park which had over 12 miles of slab duct in it,” says Kapitza. “Coming up over the next couple of years, we have enough tower and low-rise work that will see us using well over 60 miles of slab duct.” ■



*Opposite page & this page:
Workers at the Pomaria site. Photos courtesy of Summit Sheet Metal.*

