

Resort lifestyle at 500 Lake Shore Drive

A Lake Shore Drive address has a certain cachet in Chicago, and the new 500 Lake Shore Drive apartment tower aims to live up to that reputation.

The doorman wears white gloves. The spacious, two-story glass, wood and stone lobby soars in the manner of an upscale hotel, unlike some peers with more perfunctory entrances. The impressive array of amenities and services includes on-site pet care.

"Everything in this building is meant to make a renter's life easier," said Curt Bailey, president of Related Midwest, developer of the property.

Pets, for example, are welcome throughout the 500-unit building, and the open policy has lured some of the early residents who began moving into the studio to two-bedroom units on floors 3 to 29 in mid-May. Leasing for the remainder of the 47 floors begins in the fall.

Pet care is the primary concern, "by a mile," of apartment dwellers, Bailey said.

The solution is the addition of a full-service pet-care center as part of the 2,500 square feet of first-floor retail space. Dog City Chicago offers residents dog walking, grooming, training, overnight care and veterinary services as well as cat-sitting.

In addition to pet lovers and young urban professionals, Bailey expects "empty nesters and suburban homeowners wanting a second home downtown to be tenants.

"We think it is a big untapped market," he said.

The building, across from the busy Grand Avenue offramp from Lake Shore Drive, is part of a high-profile neighborhood. Lake Point Tower, Olive Park and Lake Michigan are across the street. Navy Pier, one of the city's top tourist attractions, is a short walk away.

The apartments range from convertible units from 550 square feet to three-bedroom penthouses of up to 2,800 square feet on the top four floors. Model apartments are sleekly contemporary, with floor-to-ceiling windows, wide-plank flooring and 9-foot ceilings. Most of the units have some water view, and those with east- and south-facing windows enjoy a bird's-eye view of the Navy Pier fireworks.

A 1,200-square-foot, two-bedroom, two-bath model on the northeast corner of the building shows off lake views than can be enjoyed from the kitchen that opens to the main living area.

The kitchen, equipped with Italian cabinetry, quartz countertops, white marble mosaic backsplash and built-in stainless steel appliances, is separated from the living area by an island with a countertop gas range. The stainless steel hood functions as a vent and design element.

The microwave is discreetly tucked inside kitchen cabinetry, and installation of the in-unit washer and dryer — they are standard in all apartments — is similarly unobtrusive.

One of the few plans without any glimpse of the lake is a convertible apartment that has its own charms. It faces west to the city's lights and has little wasted space, packing the available square footage into a side-by-side living area and sleeping/home office area. The plan has a natural division of public and private spaces while managing the feeling of elbow room.

There has been no stinting on the amenities in the 12th-floor 500 Club, anchored by a fitness center overlooking Olive Park and Lake Michigan. Residents can play in a game room with walls of reclaimed wood or avail themselves of the movie screening room, tech center, lounge and coffee bar, outdoor pool and deck with cabanas, fire pit and grills. A charming library is tucked between more active, screen-oriented spaces.

Among the services available in the smoke-free building is a 24-hour concierge, an on-site personal assistant to help with move-in, and an on-call technology service to hook up and set up home entertainment and electronics. The building is equipped with a high-tech elevator system designed to whisk tenants efficiently during those busy morning and evening hours.

The site has a distributed antenna system for enhanced in-building cellphone reception.

Transportation is no problem, as the 11-story garage includes private and public parking, a bike share program and an on-site Zip Car station with a Toyota Prius, Audi and BMW available, Bailey said.

500 Lake Shore Drive

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500 studio, convertible and one- to three-bedroom residences in the Streeterville neighborhood.

Apartments: Prices based upon availability and subject to change: studios, 600 sq. ft., from \$1,795; convertible, one-bath, 550 to 750 sq. ft., from \$1,995; one-bedroom, one-bath, 775 to 800 sq. ft., from \$2,215; two-bedroom, two-bath, 1,150 to 1,550 sq. ft., from \$3,695; three-bedroom, three-bath, 2,000 to 2,800 sq. ft., from \$8,995.

Lease terms: 1-year lease. One-time application fee, \$50 per applicant, and one-time administration fee, \$450.

Renter's insurance: Recommended

Utilities: Tenant is responsible for utility and service amenity fee, \$85 to \$195, depending on size of apartment, includes heat, air conditioning, water, gas, Internet and cable. Electricity is individually metered.

Parking: Indoor reserved parking, \$375 per month; unreserved parking, \$275.

Pets: One-time dog fee, limit two dogs, \$695, includes one-year Dog City membership. Breed restrictions, 75-pound weight limit. One-time cat fee, \$200, limit two cats, includes one-year Dog City membership.

Smoking policy: Smoke-free

Amenities: Snaidero cabinetry, quartz countertops, built-in stainless steel kitchen appliances and hood. Natural stone flooring, walnut vanities in baths. Nine-foot ceilings, wide-plank flooring, fitness center, game room, library, screening room, coffee bar, tech center, and rooftop terrace with pool, hot tub, cabanas, fire pit and grill. Around-the-clock doorman and concierge services. Distributed antenna system to enhance cellphone service. Parking garage with reserved and public parking, and bike share and car share station. Building has applied for silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification.