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Condo-minis just right size

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By [CAROL HAZARD](#)

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Roy Dasya wanted to live in downtown Richmond, where he hangs out with his friends after work.

"I needed a small place because I work all these long hours," said Dasya, 25, who is a waiter at a restaurant.

He bought in the Jackson Ward area of downtown Richmond, spending the same on his mortgage payment that he paid for a two-bedroom apartment off Parham Road in Henrico County.

His living quarters are new. And they total 450 square feet: a condo-mini. Some people might call them efficiencies or studios.

"Most of my time is in the restaurant," Dasya said. "I don't have time to use the kitchen and living room."

Nor does he have much time to clean, he said.

The fit was right -- not too big.

"It's not how big it is, but how you use it," said Ron Stallings, the developer of Studio 516, the condo-mini project at 516 N. Second St.

The condos can be configured in 26 ways by the placement of moveable walls and wardrobes. Bam Architects, the designer, came up with the floor plans.

Four of the 12 units have sold, two are under contract, three are leased. A sign out front says "For sale or lease, \$530 a month."

The units are on the market for \$87,550.

Galley-style kitchens in the condo-minis come with full-size appliances and cabinets from Swedish home furnishings retailer IKEA that come in white or red glass polymers.

Each condo has 12-foot sliding glass doors, adding natural light and the feeling of more space.

A brick facade facing Second Street was retained, while the rest of the building was torn down for the condo-minis.

Stallings, president of Walker Row Partnership Inc., has developed nearly 54 projects in Jackson Ward, helping transform the section north of Broad Street.

His projects range from the condo-minis to a larger condo project under construction in a Georgian Revival building at 212 E. Clay Street.

"212 Clay is our homage to 'Desperate Housewives,'" Stallings said. The units there come with parquet hardwood flooring and granite countertops, and sell for as much as \$269,000.

Studio 516 is designed for work force housing, he said.

"It's one building and one philosophy, where all people should have the opportunity to participate in homeownership," Stallings said.

"I'm trying to appeal to people who don't have a lot of stuff. It's not for people who want to raise a family."

The median home price in Jackson Ward, with half selling for more and half for less, is about \$200,000, he said.

At Studio 516, "we're after janitors, waitresses, clerks who work in law firms," Stallings said. "It's work force housing. People who make \$24,000 a year could qualify."

A college student occupies one unit, an emergency medical technician is in another and an office worker has the fourth.

The association fees are \$100 a month and include water, sewer, security, trash pick up and use of a laundry room.

An Asian bistro will go in at the street level off Second Street.

The condos were finished in October. Work is progressing on the restaurant space, which will be ready in January.

"I think it's a pretty good concept," said Bill White, president of Joyner Fine Properties. "Obviously, it's not for families, but for individuals or someone who spends three nights a week in Richmond."

The market wouldn't be able to absorb 50 condo-minis, White said. But 12 units should do fine.

"It's a niche market, a real niche," he said. Contact Carol Hazard at (804) 775-8023 or chazard@timesdispatch.com .