

Inside Vara & NeMa: New apartment complexes offer sleek design, tech amenities

By Carolyn Said



Located at the corner of 10th and Market Streets, NeMa will have four linked towers ranging from 10 to 37 stories with facades of glass and metal.

NEMA

After several years of living with roommates, Bonnie Dong is planning to move in with her boyfriend. While she's enjoyed her current location in a Victorian at Alamo Square, she's ready for something new.

That brought Dong, 30, an architect, to NeMa, the big new apartment complex still under construction at 10th and Market, the outer edge of the rapidly revitalizing Mid-Market area.

"This is a very up-and-coming neighborhood," she said. "This area was dead and dangerous for years, but a lot of change is happening. In a year or two, it could be really hot."

NeMa eventually will have 754 units in four linked high-rise and mid-rise towers. First to open is the 24-story South Tower, coming in October.

"It would be great to get in before everyone else does," Dong said.

That's the kind of attitude the folks behind NeMa will help fill up their spanking new glass-and-steel towers even before building is completed.

About 400 folks have gone through the industrial-chic leasing office and almost 100 have signed leases, said Roman Speron, regional operations manager for Crescent Heights, NeMa's developer.

With no model unit, NeMa reps uses touch screens to show prospective tenants slick 3-D renderings of what the spaces eventually will look like, and bring out trays filled with samples of the fabric, wallpaper, tile and other materials to be used.



The leasing office itself showcases the complex's planned aesthetic: sleek, high-tech, modern, minimalist.

Just in case you didn't get the point, the marketing materials hammer it home: "tech-savvy and design-driven, NeMa is a next generation luxury residential community at the forefront of San Francisco's dynamic Mid-Market neighborhood renaissance," says the (printed! tabloid size!) brochure.

NeMa leasing agent Kelly Lombardi (right) shows Bonnie Dong floor plans for a one-bedroom unit.

There's no word yet on which restaurants and stores will occupy the 13,500 square feet of retail to run along both Market and 10th Streets.

NeMa is among the first wave of hundreds of new apartments that will be opening in coming months and years — the fruit of all that construction one sees everywhere in San Francisco.

None of it comes cheap.

"We're one of the more affordable options on the market, you can get a one-bedroom for \$3,200," said Speron with a straight face and nary a hint of irony.

For a look at what's happening with rents in San Francisco, San Jose and Oakland, as well as how the upcoming crop of new rentals may change the landscape, [click here](#).

Over in the Mission, Vara also exudes that coveted contemporary feel, with a slightly more hipster twist befitting its location (sound-proof music practice room, anyone?). It too found plenty of people willing to sign a lease during construction.



Public Art Plaza at 10th and Market Streets.



North Lobby – 8 10th Street.



South Lobby – 18 10th Street



7,000 sq. ft. fitness center.



Urban terrace with pool, fire pit, outdoor TV's, heaters and lounging areas.



Kitchen/living room.



A light-filled solarium with finishes and furnishings done in leather and linen, various types of wood and natural stone.



Bathroom



Bedroom.

