



CELEBRATING  
55 YEARS

# Clarke

## **Pioneering a new approach to selling upscale residences with the use of high end appliances**

March 03, 2010 - Owners Developers & Managers

Who would think specifying the right appliances could make the difference in closing sales of luxury residences in New England? At Clarke, New England's exclusive distributor of Sub-Zero, Wolf and Asko, we've always known that all "high end appliances" are not created equal, but we continuously work to prove it to developers, owners and real estate sales professionals.

In this economy, it is key to find something tangible to help close residential real estate sales. So Clarke reinvented the Commercial Design Experience so that architects, designers and developers no longer just specify appliances, they redefine the luxury residential experience with our help and innovation.

We believe this unique model provides access to something no one else is offering to discerning home buyers: a way to exemplify and enhance the VIP lifestyle with which the buyer identifies. Here are a few examples of how this worked in Bristol, R.I., Newport and Boston...

### **A New Paradigm Emerges**

Sometimes you brainstorm with a customer and a new paradigm emerges. That's what happened when our Clarke team sat down with Tim Fay of East Providence's StoneStreet Corp. to discuss his Stone Harbour project in Bristol, RI.

Fay's team was thoughtfully developing and restoring historic mill buildings to maintain their aesthetic quality while incorporating the latest construction and interior design technologies. We worked with Fay's team to design the right combination of appliances into a custom kitchen for every one of the 81 totally unique spaces. Our showroom team studied the specifications and potential for each space, so that when a new Stone Harbour owner visited our Milford, Mass. showroom to select their appliances, they were greeted with drawings for their exact unit. They were welcomed to a two-hour personal consultation to assure they were getting the right products for their lifestyle.

We worked with StoneStreet to create a marketing training program, so the real estate sales team could nuance the customization of the kitchens through this new service model.

Each owner was given a dedicated 800-number to call Clarke with any questions on the operation of their new appliances or any future repair concerns. They were greeted by phone at Clarke Customer Care, our exclusive appliance service company, as a member of the family. This seamless relationship will last for as long as they own Clarke appliances. This type of performance has won Clarke Customer Care "first in the nation" customer satisfaction ratings in the four short years it's been open.

When the project reached 60% sell-through, we continued to enhance to the homeowner's experience with a "use, care and cooking tour" that ferried owners to Clarke by motor coach for seminars, cooking classes and a night out to meet their new neighbors, which was a rousing success.

Following the successful collaboration in Bristol, we were invited to bring the concept to 16 kitchens at Brown & Howard Wharf in Newport. With living spaces that range from 2,300 to 3,200 s/f and views of Newport Harbor, the kitchens needed to literally shine.

We worked with StoneStreet's designers to blend contemporary kitchen technology with the traditional, elegant finishes necessary to attract a discerning clientele to Brown & Howard Wharf. Selecting the appropriate Sub-Zero refrigeration, Wolf gas cooktops, ovens, microwaves, ventilation hoods and Asko 4-cycle dishwashers was just the beginning. Once again, we offered Clarke's Commercial Design Experience by training real estate sales people on the special kitchen features. We provided new residents with special cooking classes and access to Clarke Customer Care for future repair and maintenance needs, adding additional value and panache to the properties.

#### Romancing Boston

We were privileged to offer our Commercial Design Experience to help romance The Residences at The Intercontinental in Boston. As the city's first new waterfront residence in 14 years, the finest kitchen equipment was essential as part of the offering to discerning buyers. We worked with Extell Development, Otis & Ahearn Real Estate, architects and designers to craft the high-performance package required to sell the kitchens in 32 different floor plans at this extraordinary address. We offered the now-signature on-site cooking events and appliance care classes to introduce the special features and amenities that might have otherwise been overlooked.

Right now it is imperative to find that unique "something extra" that will define your property as unparalleled for discerning homeowners. While appliance selection may not seem integral to that goal, a family-owned appliance distributor with proven marketing savvy and service innovation definitely can make a difference.

Sean Clarke is general manager of Clarke, Milford, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540