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## Centron Construction changing face of Calgary

**David Parker**

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The transformation of an old furniture store into the attractive red brick Vintage office block on 11th Avenue S.W. and a rather worn-looking small building at the corner of 5th Street and 12th Avenue S.W. into a new classy home for Worley Parsons MEG are wonderful examples of the kind of work we have come to expect from Centron Construction.

Heights of both buildings were increased by adding floors and the same formula was used in the company's latest venture, Homburg-Harris Centre, which has changed the landscape of 9th Avenue to the west of the Fairmont Palliser and across the street from the historic Grain Exchange building.

It's hard to imagine what the old post office building looked like now that it has soared six floors higher and Abugov Kaspar Architect's re-design gives the impression of it being a brand new structure.

The office floors will be the new home for Penn West Energy Trust, and so the complex will be renamed Penn West Plaza. During the first week in September the main floor space to the east of the tower lobby will open as Rush, Calgary's newest elegant restaurant.

It will be the jewel in the crown for Lance Hurtubise, who is one of this city's most successful restaurateurs at Vintage Chop House, three Redwater Grills and Rise Bakery. Another restaurant is in the planning stages for the under-construction Oslo condominium tower being built on the former Kai Mortensen store site along 11th Avenue S.W.

When I toured the 9,000-square-foot restaurant with Hurtubise, workers were still putting the finishing touches to what will be a stunning interior -- a creation of Hribar Design.

Entering either from 9th Avenue or in the building foyer, customers pass through a glass entrance into a huge island bar that will seat 30 or more, and on to an 18-seat communal table and a raised booth area. Or diners will walk past a wall of private wine lockers and a glass-fronted, art deco wine cellar with tasting table and displaying some 4,000 bottles that have been purchased over the past two years in preparation for the opening.

The main dining room will accommodate 78; the rich carpet and fabric tiled ceiling provide a comfortable, quiet experience. The Bollinger and Taittinger rooms offer private dining and the chef's table in the enormous kitchen will

give clients the opportunity to taste special creations of executive chef Justin Leboe amid the excitement and noise of the communications heart of the restaurant.

Hurtubise believes the way to attract the brightest and best is to provide the best kitchens. Rush can boast an island cooking area with stoves on both sides, a granite top pass area, separate kitchen for bar items and another dedicated area that serves as the bakery.

Leboe and his team of 18 have spent time in some of the best restaurant and hotel kitchens around the world. He was named best chef in Bermuda while at Waterloo House and other locations, including the Belvedere in Beverly Hills and The Inn at Little Washington in Washington, Va.

Sous chef Robert Fedosoff was an apprentice at Calgary's La Chaumiere before expanding his culinary knowledge in France and Great Britain, returning to Calgary in 2006 to the Calgary Golf and Country Club.

Rush general manger Ian Cowley has both front and back of house experience in senior chef roles at the coast as well as in Roanne and Marseilles in France and London. Marnie Harfield completes the management team as director of wine. She has 20 years in the industry including working in fine wine stores and as head sommelier at Mission Hill Winery.

Rush will be a great addition to Calgary's many first class dining establishments.

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Nova Photo has been in business in this city since 1956 and since 1979 prominently located on the corner of 11th Avenue and 10th Street S.W.

The building has been sold and Nova now operates exclusively out of its downtown location on the main level of Bow Valley Square.

Walter Weber who joined Nova in 1972 is managing the store, which has added cameras to its retail line as well as specializing in custom framing and offering prints up to 10 by 15 inches.

The 11th Avenue building has been purchased by Sunshine Village, which is in the process of reviewing how best to use its new space.

Meanwhile it continues to conduct its Calgary operations from the 4th floor of 550 11th Ave. S.W.

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Many of us may not know much about olefin metathesis catalysts, but we can be proud of the fact they were developed by the University of Calgary's Warren Piers.

It is significant in that University Technologies International, the university's technology transfer, commercialization and incubation centre, has signed an exclusive licence agreement for the catalysts with California-based Materia

Inc.

The licence is an expansion of the 2004 agreement between UTI and Materia in which the company provided research materials and support to Piers for further scientific studies.

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