



DEAL ESTATE

with Chicago's real-estate expert Dennis Rodkin



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Johnson's Stacks

BY DENNIS RODKIN

Over the past few months, as the new 47-story condo tower at Van Buren and Franklin Streets has taken shape, it's become clear that the city has another Ralph Johnson dazzler on its hands. Known as 235 Van Buren, the building impresses from all viewpoints, be it the seemingly crazy pattern of box balconies projecting off the south side; the ribbon of concrete running up the west side (before turning to create a folded cap for the building); or the series of white squares stepping up the east side. (The building's simplest face is its north side, which is the least visible given the proximity of its neighbors.)

Johnson, of Perkins + Will, is the architect of several downtown buildings, including the Boeing headquarters, Skybridge, the Clare at Water Tower, and Contemporaine. (Read last week's item about a Contemporaine penthouse that's for sale [here](#).) Johnson was also the architect behind the currently on-hold Peshtigo, the 57-story condo tower slated to go up near Grand Avenue and Lake Shore Drive.

Johnson's second design (after Contemporaine) for the developer CMK, 235 Van Buren will contain 714 condos. One-bedrooms start at \$199,900, and the per-square-foot price in the building averages a reasonable \$324, according to CMK sales executive Scott Hoskins. Last week Hoskins and Colin Kihnke, CMK's chief, walked me through the almost-completed building to demonstrate how the interior "reflects that Ralph Johnson vision," as Kihnke put it. Most of their observations are best made with visuals, so please take the photo tour ([click here](#)).

