SPECIAL LIFTOUT

Life & Leisure

PROPERTY

AUGUST 5-7, 2011 THE AUSTRALIAN FINANCIAL REVIEW

Vertical villages

Apartment blocks with a sense of community

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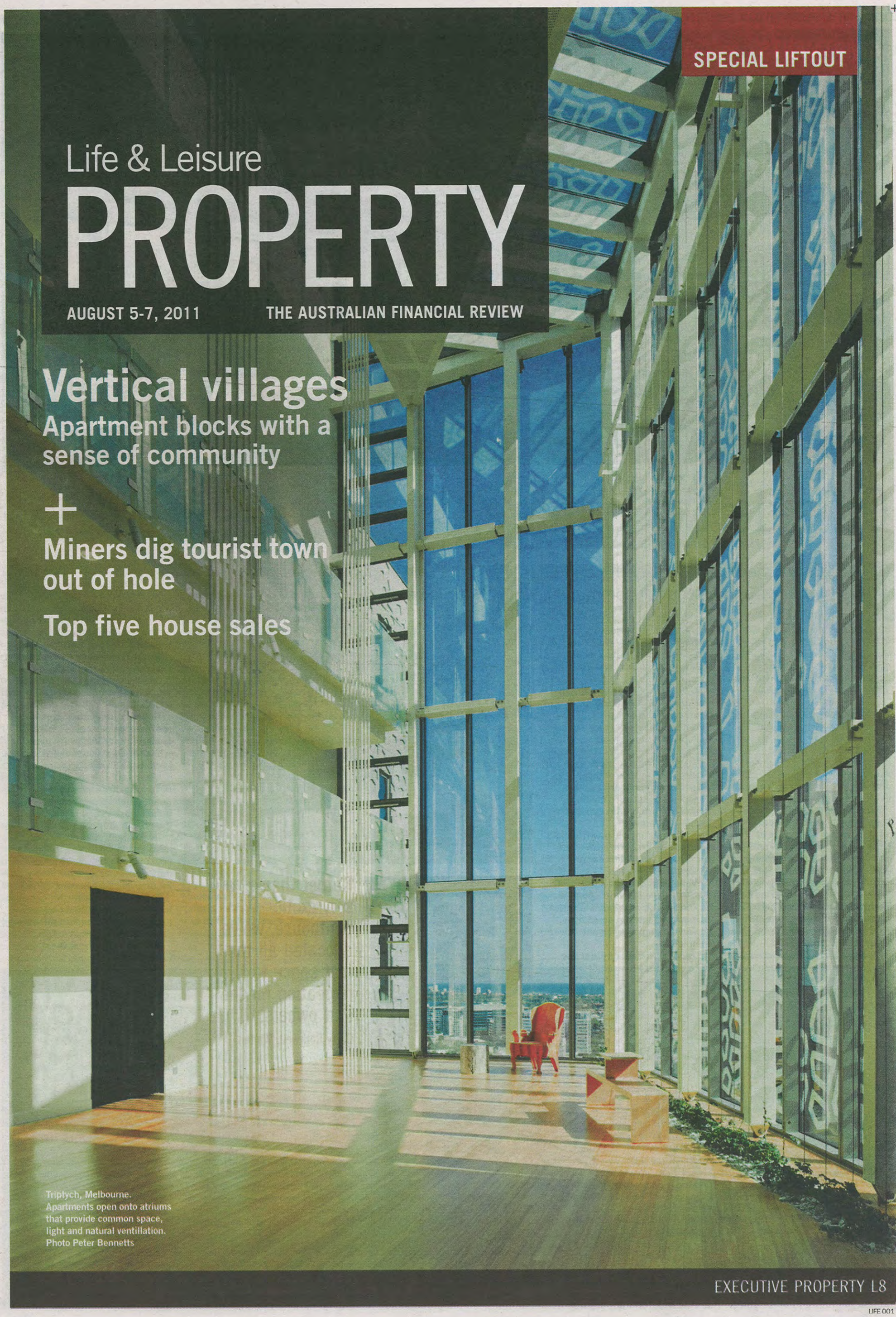
Miners dig tourist town out of hole

Top five house sales



Triptych, Melbourne. Apartments open onto atriums that provide common space, light and natural ventillation. Photo Peter Bennetts

LIFE 001

APARTMENTS VERTICAL VILLAGES

Lofty ambitions

The neighbourhood has been redefined at a chic Melbourne address, writes **Ben Hurley**.

Unusual features and size of the apartments, far left and below, are key to attracting owner-occupiers. Airy atriums, left, provide a neighbourhood space. **Photos** Peter Bennetts

Triptych is a 24-level building in Melbourne's Southbank. It is popular with owner-occupiers for its striking facade and "vertical village" layout where clusters of apartments open onto atriums to form a neighbourhood where residents can meet.

The best apartments in the tower are being sold: the cost of a large penthouse is between $1.2 million and $3 million.

Developed by RI Investment Trust and development managers Stable Group, the 18 apartments in the newly released Penthouse Collection range from two to four bedrooms with up to 330 square metres of floor space.

The penthouses mimic free-standing homes, with both a front and rear entry and a private front entrance lobby. They have double ovens, walk-in pantries, integrated fridges and wine fridges. Some outdoor entertainment areas have built-in barbecues and bench space.

One is showcased with interiors by Coco Republic and it contains Ralph Lauren furniture. Tours through the building at last month's Melbourne Open House events were booked out.

Construction was finished last year and Danny Flynn, managing director of Stable Group, says 90 per cent of the 157 apartments in the building have sold, mostly to owner-occupiers.

"The building has exceeded virtually everyone's expectations," he says. "When you walk in you say 'I could live here' and that's because of the attention to detail and the quality of the delivery."

Even though high-density living is becoming more popular, Flynn says the larger size and unusual features of the apartments are the key to attracting owner-occupiers.

The apartments have 2.9 metre-high ceilings, and even the one-bedroom apartments have ample floor space of about 90 square metres.

Lifts open onto "villages", large atriums with common areas, plants and open windows.

"Last Saturday night one village had its second village party," Flynn says. "You've got high-density living but we have broken down the scale to make it quite human."

We've broken down the scale of high-density living to make it human.

The building exterior was designed and sculpted by Australian artist Robert Owen, with his work *Digital Showers* forming a backdrop to the nearby National Gallery of Victoria.

Blue panels are fixed, while panels of various colours cause the facade to take on a different patina through the day as residents open and close windows, turn on lights and draw blinds.

"It's got a story about it, it's got a purpose about it and it's somewhat timeless," Flynn says.

Other features in the building include a roof garden with a yoga deck, and a 25 metre lap pool.

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