

INTELLIGENCE NEWS

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Once a seedy inner-city quarter, Zürich's Limmat West has reinvented itself as one of the city's most highly desirable corporate – and now residential – addresses

In the space of five years, the old Zürich quarter of Stadtkreis 5 – formerly home to disused industrial units, motorway intersections, drug traffickers and prostitutes – has managed to turn itself into an increasingly popular corporate address. Now named Zürich West, or Limmat West, after the river that runs through it, this has become the location of choice for the most modern of Swiss businesses. And now, at long last, the neighbourhood is also poised to become a sought-after residential location. New aluminium and glass-clad housing units tower next to the former soap factory, where the studios for the regional TV station, Tele Züri, are based, and much of the area's new building work is residential. The 'hood's housing stock is expected to increase fourfold over the next five years. Such is the demand that estate agents aren't even bothering to keep waiting lists. Prices in much of the neighbourhood are rising fast, but are still lower than the city centre, which is subject to its own residential pressures. Around CHF4,000 a month will rent a two-bedroom place, and CHF800,000 will buy one (about half peak Zürich rates). Martyn Hofer, of leading Zürich residential consultancy Wüest & Partner, believes the influx into Zürich West marks the first time that Swiss residents have been prepared to put up with noise, traffic and pollution for a crack at true urban living. MARK VAN HUISSELING



way out west: clockwise, from top, Toni Molkerei lounge bar; the former dairy factory in which the bar is now housed; the reworked Bluewin Tower, a Zürich West landmark; Dominic Short inside his bar; Bluewin's CEO, Christoph Brand



ZÜRICH WEST LIFE

DOMINIC SHORT (above) manager of lounge bar Toni Molkerei
'It's an interactive place and our motto is: "Meet, drink, shake, eat." Short is particularly proud of the bar's light-sound installation, computer-programmed by Leipzig University.

CHRISTOPH BRAND (above right) CEO of Switzerland's largest internet service provider, Bluewin
'When we moved into our reworked Bluewin Tower, the mayor of Zürich said we'd helped to redevelop this part of town as the Swiss Silicon Valley. That made me feel proud.'

MARKUS SCHMUTZ owner of art bookstore Kunstgriff
'This is one of the few locations where I can make a living out of selling really good books on art, architecture and design.'

