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It's odd, but number inspired name

Eleven is where it all began for Jonathan Finkelstein, one of Canada's top producers of youth-oriented television shows, after he moved back to Montreal from the Maritimes

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It wasn't what he was looking for, but it would do.

When television producer Jonathan Finkelstein moved to Montreal from Halifax in 1997, he was looking for a ground-level Plateau apartment where his two cats, Barney and Gus, could roam freely. What he got was a spacious 5 1/2-room flat in Outremont, with creaky old wood floors and a bright yellow galley-style kitchen.

Apartment No. 11.

It wasn't what he was looking for, but it was quiet, surrounded by leafy green trees and kind neighbours.

He liked it.

And that was important, because a little over a year after moving in, Finkelstein decided to leave his job with one of Quebec's largest production companies to write freelance scripts at his dining-room table.

His company was registered as 90938887 Quebec Inc.

But in September 2001, a little more than a year after he started freelancing, Finkelstein was invited to produce a pilot episode for a mystery-based kids TV show.

The company needed a name - "something catchy."

"I remember asking friends and my cousin, a bunch of people (were) helping me come up with a name for the company," Finkelstein recalled. "I was coming home one day ... and I saw the number 11 staring at me in the face, because it was on the door to my apartment."

Finkelstein named the company Apartment 11 Productions, "because that's where it all started."

It was the start of something big.

Inside the current company headquarters on Ste. Catherine St. E., eight shiny Gemini trophies form a line atop a cubicle divider.

Thirty-four framed certificates bearing the same golden image and the word "nominee" line the long hallway leading to the company's conference room.

Finkelstein and his team of writers, technicians and managers produce some of the most popular children's television programming coming out of Canada.

Mystery Hunters, the show he wrote the pilot for in 2001, airs on Discovery Networks International and YTV.

Prank Patrol, a design-and-build series in which kids get professional help to pull off outrageous pranks, airs on YTV (A BBC version of the show was launched in 2006).

Surprise! It's Edible! Incredible! is a kid-oriented cooking challenge broadcast on CBC and Discovery.

While Finkelstein said he has no desire to move the company to Toronto or Los Angeles to be closer to the heart of the industry, he eventually outgrew his first apartment.

In 2005, Finkelstein moved out of No. 11 and into No. 1112, a condo he purchased on the 11th floor of a downtown highrise.

He swears the location of his new home was a coincidence.

"I promise you, I would not make my biggest investment ever in a condominium just because of the numbers," he said with a laugh.

"I'm not superstitious."

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