

New York Living Goes Global

By Steve Cutler





Opposite page: An upcoming project in L.A. by the Moinian Group

Above: The pool at Trump Plaza Jersey City

Urban centers all over the country — and the world -- are winning back suburbanites to the vibrant, culture-rich, and luxurious lifestyle only a city can provide. And they're looking to the world's capital city, New York, for the blueprint.

New York City's residential high-rises are no longer apartment buildings. They're designer showcases, country clubs, spas, five-star hotels, vertical communities containing everything the heart desires. "A form of assisted living, if you will," says Andre Balazs, referring to his latest condominium in Downtown Manhattan, the William Beaver.

"It's not about bricks and mortar," says Balazs. "It's about the ebb and flow of life, about building a stage that helps people become who they want to become — crafting the components that make up a lifestyle."

Calvin Tsao, whose architectural firm of Tsao & McKown designed the Beaver, as well as the five-star-lifestyle Cipriani Club Residences at 55 Wall Street, says of these new buildings, "Buyers and developers seem to be collaborating to create something unique. The way people want to live has evolved to a point where we as designers can explore new paradigms, participating proactively in this cultural revolution. And New York City is in the vanguard of this. It is the lab for the rest of the world."

And the rest of the world is catching on, building New York City-style residences where mere apartments buildings once might have stood. They're importing our

finest designers, welcoming New York-based developers and studying the way we live to create brilliant, vital new urban centers and fabulous amenity-rich residential high-rises.

So Near, Yet So Far

Jersey City will be home to the Tri-state area's latest Trump extravaganza, Trump Plaza Jersey City, offering five-star hotel-style service, 41,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor amenities, and a perk no building in New York City will ever have: a full-on view of the Manhattan skyline.

Featuring studio and one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments in the tallest residential buildings in New Jersey, one 55 stories and the other 50 stories, Trump Plaza will have a landscaped Great Lawn, heated outdoor swimming pool and plaza, private theater, 3,000-square-foot fitness center, golf simulator, and Roman-style spa with social steam, sauna, 26-foot heated thermal bath, and treatment rooms.

In Connecticut, Brooklyn-born and raised Seth Weinstein, principal of Hannah Real Estate, commissioned New York-based Eastman Perkins Architects to design a cutting-edge urban complex in Stamford, called the Metropolitan, which will include the conversion of a 66,000-square-foot office building into 44 luxury condominium lofts.

"I always wanted to do real urban downtown building in Stamford," says Weinstein, who began building in Fairfield, Connecticut, 20 years ago. "It's beginning to become a pedestrian-friendly environment, with outdoor cafes and



Top: The rooftop pool at Eastern Columbia, Los Angeles
 Above: The Eastern Columbia

quality boutique shopping.” Several thousand rental units have been built in the last few years in Stamford, and, says Weinstein, “this is the next step: bringing in Manhattan-flavored residential living.”

The lofts have ceilings over 10 feet, expansive windows, hardwood and tile floors, and ultramodern finishes of stone, metal, and glass. The penthouses have large private terraces overlooking the city center. The project will have a newly constructed component adjacent to the renovated building: 12 four-story townhouses.

Kendall Square, Cambridge

The New York-based Extell Development, which opened an extraordinary number of high-end luxury condos in Manhattan in the last few years, has enlisted Manhattan-based Cetra/Ruddy Architects to design Kendall Square, a sprawling eight-story residential community on three and a half acres in a commercial section of Cambridge, Massachusetts, near MIT.

According to architect John Cetra, “This is the re-urbanization of an old urban center that has seen a big



Kendall Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts

shift from manufacturing to a much more high-end office environment.” The project, as with those springing up in revitalized urban centers all across the country, is aimed at people who want to live close to where they work.

“We’re bringing in the level of finishes Extell likes to use in this type of market,” says Cetra, “including glass cabinetry, real stone countertops, glass backsplashes — things they hadn’t been doing much in Cambridge. And we’re bringing in the New York size,” which, he reports, is large by local standards, including 750-square-foot one-bedrooms and 1,200-square-foot two-bedrooms.

Kendall Square will have 292 rental apartments and 239 condominium units and much needed street-level retail. “The building has a Manhattan feel,” says Cetra. “It’s a block-long building, but we broke it up by creating a rhythm of bay windows projected out off the façade and a variation of materials running vertically, giving it an urbanistic expression, representing more of the way a city would actually develop, with buildings going up one next to the other.”

The exterior mixes brick, stucco, and metal siding. The building wraps around a one-acre landscaped park and has a fitness center, indoor swimming pool, library, business center, and screening room.

Strolling Los Angeles

A city that traded its legs for wheels at its very inception, Los Angeles is now building an urban village that will offer its residents the precious amenity that makes life in New York City endlessly fascinating: the stroll about town. Developers are

converting historic commercial buildings into condominiums and building new apartment high-rises, entertainment, and ground-floor retail complexes — not malls — that will offer street life to the city of cars for the first time.

For people in Los Angeles, says Kimberly Lucero, vice president of sales and marketing for Kor Development, “if a grocery store is a block away, we drive.” But, she says, with builders like Kor bringing full-service high-rise condominiums to the area, “in five or 10 years Downtown L.A. will be like New York, San Francisco, and Chicago.”

New York luxury property maven Adrienne Albert of The Marketing Directors, who lately has partnered with the Ryness Company, a California-based counterpart, observes, “There’s a sea change occurring in Los Angeles. The powers that be and the city fathers have blessed the development of Downtown L.A. and are supportive of a more urban environment than has existed there before.”

A variety of new developments are bringing together the disparate neighborhoods of Downtown L.A. to form an urban village that will look something like SoHo meets Times Square. The largest commercial project, in the South Park area, is L.A. Live, a four-million-square-foot sports, entertainment, shopping, and residential destination that so far includes the Staples Center sports and concert arena and the Los Angeles Convention Center. L.A. Live will ultimately feature a four-star 1,100-room hotel, ESPN broadcast, and restaurant facility, Regal Cinema Theaters, the Nokia Theater, Club Nokia, a 40,000-square-foot plaza, and more.

A living room at the Mandarin Oriental Tower in Chicago



The Olympic and the City House,
Los Angeles



Lofts Downtown

Meanwhile, a mile east of the Staples Center, in the Artist's District, Kor has been buying up properties and converting them into luxury loft condominiums. "I had a buyer in the Artist's District who told me," recalls Lucero, "I'm banking on this becoming the next SoHo." We want to turn it into a walkable neighborhood and connect the dots between this neighborhood and the rest of Downtown."

Kor's most impressive residence in the area is the Eastern Columbia, a conversion of an historic 1930 blue terra cotta and gold lace "Zig Zag Moderne" commercial building into a luxury condominium with 147 loft apartments. The landmark condominium will have a rooftop pool and landscaped terrace with spa, fireplace, and fitness center. Interiors are designed by Kelly Wearstler, a noted Los Angeles interior designer whose work in New York City includes the restaurant at Bergdorf Goodman.

The apartments sold quickly, but the Columbia is releasing eight lavish penthouse apartments, some with four levels — two full floors and two mezzanines — with balconies and patios with fireplaces, stainless-steel kitchens with Viking appliances, marble baths, and views of the city. Prices range from \$1.5 million to \$3 million.

New York developer Joe Moinian has big plans for Central L.A. Having just purchased four acres of prime Downtown property, Moinian will build two high-rise towers of 33 and 45 stories, with 860 condominium apartments, lofts, townhouses, and luxury penthouses, plus a gourmet food shop, luxury retail, restaurants, a fitness club, and entertainment venues.

"I think this is going to be the most exciting place to live in the country," says Moinian Group project manager Oskar Brucher about the neighborhood surrounding L.A. Live, where more than 3,000 new apartments are in various stages of development. "Our project is going to fuse the residential already developing there with a very large retail component that does not really exist yet."

The lobby at the Broadway Hollywood, California



Moinian will build the retail at street level. “This whole project is very pedestrian oriented,” says Brucher. “We’re going to cater to a group that lives Downtown, works Downtown, and gets its entertainment Downtown.”

The apartments will be streamlined and efficient to keep price points down, but offer a plethora of New York City-type lifestyle amenities, such as small wine refrigerators, finely detailed millwork, and spectacular bathrooms. The taller tower will contain a hotel offering room service to the apartments above and a 50,000-square-foot amenity space including a swimming pool, outdoor fireplace, tai chi garden, yoga/meditation area, and health club.

West Coast’s Tallest Residence

Nearby, on Grand Avenue, plans have been announced for the construction of two residential towers designed by noted architect Richardson Robertson. The 49-story Olympic will offer 150 condominium apartments, and the City House, at 60 stories the tallest residential building on the West Coast, will contain 180 units.

Robertson says the design of these New Beaux Arts-style buildings was inspired “by the monumentality of the Metropolitan Museum, the Brooklyn Art Museum, the Frick, and even the torn-down Pennsylvania Station.” Indeed, he adds, “The Olympic and the City House are two projects that could have been in Manhattan. New York is judged a cultural city in large part because of its vast classical/Beaux Arts architectural heritage.”

The buildings will be made of golden-hued limestone (unlike the gray Indiana limestone common to New York City) with profuse architectural detailing and sculptural

reliefs at the tops and bottoms, and they will have clay-tiled roofs with copper detailing. The penthouses will enjoy breathtaking views of mountains, the ocean, and the entire Los Angeles basin.

“The lifestyle amenities are the standard fare for high-end residential,” says Robertson, “with a theater, 24-hour concierge, library, business center, impressive lobby, valet, fitness center with pool, sauna, street-front retail, and restaurants. The only difference in comparison to New York is, because of the perpetual spring-like weather year round, the rooftop pool is outside rather than enclosed.”

“Candela’s Park Avenue apartments are an inspiration,” says Robertson, “because of the lifestyle created by the arrangement of the rooms and the sizes of the spaces. One major departure from that Candela spirit is that we made the ceilings significantly taller, according to the expectations of present-day buyers.”

Broadway and Vine

On the most famous corner in L.A., Hollywood and Vine, Kor Development has converted a 1927 Renaissance Revival landmark into a luxury condominium with 96 loft apartments, called the Broadway Hollywood after the Broadway department store that occupied the building in the 1930s. The project, along with a new W Hotel/condominium coming in next door, will help revitalize and gentrify the neighborhood.

Mostly sold out, “it’s a who’s who building,” says Lucero, “with a mix of celebrities, actors, writers, producers, and photographers,” though she won’t reveal who. “We’re putting in a restaurant on the ground floor that’s going to



be the new hip, chic place.” Rich in lifestyle amenities and five-star services, the Broadway is releasing seven penthouse lofts for sale with views of the Hollywood sign, mountains, and the ocean on a clear day.

Global Luxury Lifestyle

Mandarin Oriental, the standard brand for five-star hotel service, made its maiden voyage into the hotel/condominium market with The Residences at Mandarin Oriental at Time Warner Center. Now they’re taking the concept to cities around the world.

In Chicago, the birthplace of the skyscraper and home of the tallest building in the country (the Sears Tower), The Mandarin Oriental Tower will be a soaring, 74-story structure containing 250 furnished hotel condominiums, starting from \$600,000; 100 one- and two-bedroom condominium hotel residences from \$1.2 million; and 150 tower condominiums on the top floors, offering breathtaking views, from \$600,000 to \$21 million.

All residents will enjoy white-glove concierge service and access to the 32,000-square-foot 18th-floor Mandarin Oriental spa and ultra-luxury fitness club with pool, saunas, steam rooms, massage suites, juice bar, lounge, and exercise studios for cardio, strength training, yoga, aerobics, and Pilates.

Northern Exposure

Closer to New York City, but in another country, New York-based Time Equities is collaborating with Toronto

builder Freed Development to bring a new level of luxury living to the burgeoning Fashion District of Toronto. A combination 95-unit condominium hotel and 327-unit condo, the modern-design, glass-front 555 Wellington West will provide a smart contrast to the old brick commercial buildings common to the area, many of which are being converted to residential.

“The hotel component takes inspiration from hotels like the Hudson in New York,” says developer Peter Freed, “bringing that kind of vibrant energy and hotel-amenity lifestyle to the residential condominiums.” The building will feature a rooftop infinity pool with bar, 24-hour room service, lobby restaurant, screening room, business center, fitness center, in-home spa treatments, personal trainers, and pet care.

Ich lebe in einem Loft

The most widely traveled New York-grown housing concept is the loft. One European city particularly taken with the versatile industrial-chic loft apartment is Berlin, largely due to the prodigious amount of building restoration underway in the city, especially in East Berlin, and a healthy appetite for daring design.

An adventurous new luxury condominium project combining a restored factory building with new construction on the boundary of the Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg districts, the Fehrbilliner offers 190 lofts, townhouses, flats, and penthouses.

“The area is like SoHo and TriBeCa,” according to Patricia Cliff, director of European sales for Corcoran, and

A living room at the Berlin



marketing consultant for the project. “It’s close to the center, where a lot of hip people want to live.”

The project will be rich in amenities, such as a spacious fitness center, large swimming pool, spa, underground parking, and roof gardens, and will have interesting design flourishes, such as the preserved old firehouse that serves as the concierge station. The project is designed by Eike Becker Architects, one of the most successful young architectural firms in Germany, and one particularly conversant with converting older structures to loft living.

Priced between \$600 and \$1,000 a square foot, the apartments sell for half of those in comparable projects in New York City, but, says Cliff, “for Berlin, it’s 20 percent more than people are used to paying. It’s a great investment because it’s a growth city.”

Building Large

Dubai, on the Persian Gulf, is another city exploding with new construction and attracting top New York City designers and developers. According to Manhattan-based architect Frank Williams, designer of several important New York skyscrapers (Four Seasons, Trump Palace, 515 Park Avenue),

“Dubai has 25 percent of the world’s supply of cranes. You look across the landscape and all you see are these tower cranes,” which are essential for constructing tall buildings. Plans are in the works for a 160-story building in Dubai.

Williams has designed a residential complex consisting of two 45-story towers. “People in Dubai are starting to have great amenities,” says Williams, “like the buildings in New York, including health spas, swimming pools, and children’s facilities.” Most of the buildings are modern in design and use even more glass than those in New York. Because of the extreme heat, windows are set quite deep into the façade for extra shading. “And everyone has a balcony terrace,” adds Williams.

Williams also designed a 70-story office tower now under construction in Moscow, taller than the Chrysler Building, sheathed in a light, warm silver glass. “Because of their oil and natural gas,” observes Williams, “the city of Moscow has a great office market for the first time and has to build tall buildings. The local architects and engineers haven’t been through this process before, so sometimes they reach out to New York teams.” The building will tower over most of the buildings in Moscow, which commonly reach between eight and twelve stories.

An art gallery at a property in Moscow by architect Frank Williams



A project in Dubai by Frank Williams



Costa Rica Luxury

Now taking on international projects is Ismael Leyva, a prolific New York-based architect with extensive experience with interiors in ultra-luxury properties such as the Residences at Time Warner Center and Astor Place.

In Costa Rica, says Leyva, “we’re trying to introduce the amenities you usually see in New York: pools, spas, playrooms, party rooms.” He has two luxury condominiums in the works in San Jose, the 14-story Vista Del Parques and Torres Del Parque, consisting of two towers of 21 stories each.

Both projects have abundant balconies to capitalize on the gorgeous climate and spectacular mountain views. Leyva says buyers expect a level of quality and amenities on par with New York’s buildings, but “we have to adapt the apartments to the way of living in Costa Rica. In the center of the apartment is a big area like a den or TV room where the family gathers. From that central place you go to the living room, bedrooms, and other rooms.”

In Costa Rica, Leyva notes, “people are moving from the suburbs to the center of the city.”

The same could be said of all of the cities in the U.S. and much of the world.

Viva Tel Aviv

The migration of wealthy couples from suburban family estates to city apartment towers has helped make Tel Aviv a cosmopolitan Mideast oasis, attracting a culturally elite international clientele.

“It’s the greatest city in the world,” says Jeff Morr, whose Majestic Properties is the exclusive agent for several



luxury condominiums in Miami. Morr recently bought a second home in a condo tower in Tel Aviv.

“It’s New York in Miami with Los Angeles weather,” he adds. “It’s an active, alive city with the best nightlife and food, with people sitting in cafes until three, four and five in the morning.”

Tel Aviv has lately begun to attract world-class designers and developers.

Philippe Starck designed the interiors of YOO Tel Aviv, a luxury condominium with some 300 apartments in two high-rise towers of 37 and 41 floors. Located in the exclusive North Tel Aviv Park Heights neighborhood, the building includes a Starck-designed spa, lounge, health club and private cinema and offers apartments with four interior design styles: culture, minimal, class and nature. Each comes with a catalog of distinctive, artful furnishing suggestions. YOO Tel Aviv should begin occupancy in 2007.

This summer Donald Trump announced plans for Trump Tower Israel in Tel Aviv, a \$300 million, 70-story high-rise, the county’s tallest. “We are developing a signature landmark property so impressive that it will set a new standard for luxury condominium living in Israel,” Trump said. “It will redefine the city’s spectacular skyline and bring the level of sophistication that Israel deserves.” ■

Vista Del Parques

