

# The New York Times

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## Real Estate

POSTINGS

### 13-Unit Condo Conversion in SoHo

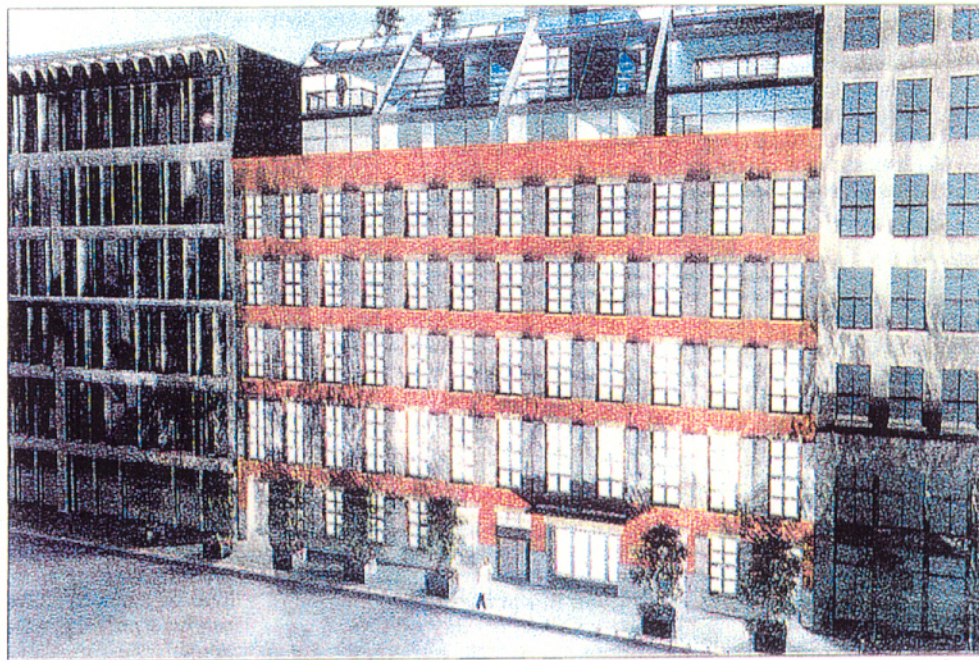
## Titanium Outside, Wine Inside

On a trip to Spain last August, Edward J. Baquero was fascinated by the titanium exterior of Frank O. Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. So he decided that the metal, often used in aircraft, would make up part of the exteriors of two penthouses atop the Loft, a 13-unit condo conversion at 30 Crosby Street, between Broome and Grand Streets, in the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District.

"I liked the material and the energy it gave off," said Mr. Baquero, a managing partner, along with Stephen Touhey, of Landmark Development, which is responsible for the \$25 million project. Its architect is Joseph Pell Lombardi & Associates, and the interior designer is Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz. The conversion is set to be completed this summer.

Azurelite, a rich blue glass, will also bedeck the exterior of the 6,200-square-foot duplex penthouses, each priced at \$6.5 million.

The duplexes, with ceilings rising to 30 feet, will sit atop a five-story 1878 brick building, originally occupied by Levy Brothers, a gar-



Bart Javier

Condo at 30 Crosby Street is to have a wine cellar for 20,000 bottles.

ment maker, and most recently by A. Flesig Sons, a paper-box company. The lofts on the floors below, ranging from 3,600 to 4,300 square feet, will cost from \$2 million to \$3 million.

An 1,100-square-foot, two-level wine cellar and vault able to store up to 20,000 bottles will also have a fireplace and a tasting room.

Penthouse owners will be able to store about 2,500 bottles each; the other owners will have space for 1,200 to 2,000 bottles.

An elevator, big enough to fit a baby grand piano, will open directly into the upper-floor lofts; private entrances will lead into three duplex maisonette lofts featuring gardens with French blue walls and black bamboo.



# Luxury's Expanding Frontiers

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calls "the concourse."

"I felt the Mercantile building was destined to be the Dakota of Chelsea," said Mr. Hyland, who has dubbed the neighborhood High Chelsea.

The Dakota, along with the Osborne and the Ansonia, were prototypes of how to live well. In the 1880's in Manhattan, the first luxury apartments were built to lure the affluent middle class. (The upper class had town houses). "Amenities considered dinky today were considered a big deal then," said Christopher Gray, an architectural historian in Manhattan, citing elevators and letter chutes. "No brownstone had mail pickup in the lobby."

By 1883, the Gramercy, at 34 Gramercy Park East, had a dining room run by Louis Sherry, the celebrated restaurateur. In 1884, the Dakota, at 72nd Street and Central Park West, had two dining rooms on the ground floor and a wine cellar. And just as the Whole Foods Market prides itself on getting its fish from Gloucester, Mass., to East Coast stores within 24 hours, in 1904, the Ansonia, at Broadway and 73rd Street "had

## The low down: basement storage and a 10,000-square-foot wine cellar.

a mini-farm on the roof so residents could have the freshest eggs available," said Andrew Alpern, the author of "Luxury Apartment Houses of Manhattan" (Dover, 1992). (Alas, the Health Department closed it down in 1907.)

The penthouses at 285 Lafayette Street, near Prince Street, have wood-burning fireplaces, 26-foot-high ceilings and double banks of 10-foot-high windows. Downstairs, the lofts have 12-foot-high ceilings and gas fireplaces. Eric Hadar, the president of Allied Partners in Manhattan, renovated the 1886 building, the former Hawley & Hoops chocolate factory, where prices started at \$1.4 million for 1,800 square feet. The 31 units sold out last year.

On a recent day, there were no uniforms in sight, not an inch of gold braid, in the limestone lobby. Norma Labrador, the concierge, was bundled up against the cold in sweater, jeans and a parka.

"I don't ask her to do anything, but she'll call me and say, 'I have this delivery for you, and I have that delivery for you,'" Larry Everston said in a state of wonderment. "Tiles, grout, paint, lumber, I was getting 10 deliveries a day. I had a leak from my air-conditioner, and she had someone up within 10 minutes. I never had anybody to take dry cleaning. It's a new, wonderful feeling."

Mr. Everston, 52, and his wife, Annette, 47, paid nearly \$3.5 million for two lofts, which combined added up to 7,000 square feet. The Everstons do not wander alone, but are accompanied by the pitter-patter of 64 feet (14 cats and 2 dogs).

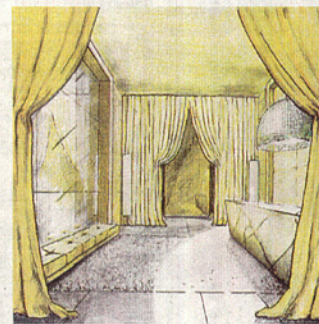
For the last 13 years, the pair, who own the Tootsi Plootind shoe shops, lived in a self-service co-op at 20 North Moore Street, where Carolyn Bessette Kennedy and John F. Kennedy Jr. had their apartment. The Everstons, to amuse themselves on a Sunday, went to an open house at 285 Lafayette, asked about one loft and bought two. They like the location, poised between SoHo and Nolita. "Big stores, small stores, mom-and-pop stores, like SoHo was when I moved there in 1980," Mr. Everston said.

They were not consciously looking for the amenities. But they will be making the requisite uptown improvements. Xavier Longueras, a mosaic artist, is designing the Mediterranean-flavor interior with hand-set mosaic counter tops and floors and wenge



Don Hogan Charles/The New York Times

**285 LAFAYETTE** The old Hawley & Hoops chocolate factory, built in 1886, has penthouses with ceilings 26 feet high, wood-burning fireplaces and high-speed Internet access. The cost of quality? Prices started at \$1.4 million.



Bart M. Javner



Don Hogan Charles/The New York Times

**THE LOFT** Not to be outdone, this former paper-box company at 30 Crosby Street will have an aromatherapy-scented lobby and a wine-tasting room.

cabintery. Mr. Everston pointed to the gleaming stainless-steel Viking stove in the kitchen. "I've never had this kind of stove," he said. "Fantasy has come true."

Noah Silverman, 30, the president of an Internet company, Webclipping.com, which collects news online from 14,000 newspapers and magazines, is just as enthusiastic about what he hopes will become his new home, at 30 Crosby Street. Down the block, south of Grand Street, garment workers pour out of the tenements at 6 o'clock, rushing to buy Chinese vegetables on their way home. But the graffiti that once scarred many buildings is disappearing. Rats are rarely seen. Taxis are plentiful.

"Last year, I wasn't in a position to buy," Mr. Silverman said. But as the year ended, his life changed. Now, he is on the list of prospective buyers for lofts at 30 Crosby, where the 13 apartments will be offered for sale at the end of the month. Prices will begin at \$1.3 million for 3,130 square feet. The building will have 10-foot-high windows with built-in counterweights, so that they rise and close at the touch of a finger, and a high-speed elevator that will whisk residents to the 10,000-square-foot communal wine cellar in a former fallout shelter.

It has been revamped to the tune of \$750,000. There is a tasting room with stone walls, cherry armoires for the wine, waxed concrete floors, electrified candelabra and a fireplace. Penthouse owners will have room for up to 1,800 bottles each; other owners will have space for 900 each.

This is not SoHo of the 60's, when parties centered around a bottle of Chianti, which, when emptied, was recycled into a candlestick.

If penthouses at 285 Lafayette have 26-foot ceilings, those at 30 Crosby are 30 feet high. "They're upping the ante," said Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz, a Manhattan interior designer, who is designing the building's lobby and the interiors of the lofts. Originally owned by A. Flesig Sons, a paper-box company that began in 1879, the building is being renovated by Edward Baquero and Stephen Touhey, the managing partners in Landmark Development.

The 800-square-foot lobby, painted in a shade called vanilla, will have latex curtains and a 10-foot-long white onyx counter. "Marble is so pretentious," Mr. Noriega-Ortiz said. "I want people to walk through the lobby and be enveloped by the materials, like walking through a Louise Nevelson sculpture." Illuminated cylinders will change color according to the season. Custom-made scents will make walking into the lobby an aromatherapeutic event.

Steven Weber, 32, a private investor, is on the prospective buyer's list to purchase a penthouse for around \$6 million. As for the aromatherapy, "it's not in and of itself a reason to buy an apartment," he said, "but it demonstrates an attention to detail and style."

The Textile Building at 66 Leonard Street, at Church Street, will not be outdone. Residents can reserve a media room with huge screen for teleconferences and a library and bar for parties. They can work out in an in-house fitness center and book a massage, who will pummel them in a private massage room. And their children can play on the roof. Chessed, a commercial real estate developer in Manhattan, converted the building at a cost of \$40 million. The 47 units are all sold.

The building is a sanctuary for frequent fliers like Jerome Griffith, 42, an executive vice president at Tommy Hilfiger, and his wife, Elke, 38, a retail consultant, who paid \$980,000 for a 2,100-square-foot loft and the promise of comfort when they come down to earth.

"I want to be able to work out in the building," Mr. Griffith said. "I want to be able to have my kids, who are 10 and 8, come and have outdoor space." And should the peripatetic Griffiths be too jet-lagged to cook, they can rely on the building's catering service, the modern-day answer to the ubiquitous dining rooms of turn-of-the-century apartment houses.

The art of coddling is hardly dead.