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Smart Homes/ Green Homes

Smart and green features have become the latest status symbol for today's high-end buyers, who are lining up for well-planned, airtight homes pre-wired with sound and Internet and fed with freshly filtered air and water. Even homes built more than a century ago can be retrofitted to facilitate remotely controlled lighting and shades, and to control networks of home security cameras that can be monitored from around the world.

Coinciding with the legendary French crystal-maker's 250th anniversary, the world's first Baccarat Hotel & Residences is scheduled to open in Midtown Manhattan, across 53rd Street from the Museum of Modern Art, late next year. Each residence of the 50-story glass tower will employ the latest in technology, including state-of-the-art Miele and Sub-Zero appliances in the custom Tony Ingrao-designed SieMatic kitchens, and come equipped with Crestron-controlled touch screens that offer virtual control of the lighting, shades, climate and audio visual equipment. The system is accessible on tablets or mobile devices, allowing residents to set the temperature when they are away from home.

Residential owners will also have access to all luxury hotel amenities and services, including a grand salon, a full-service spa and a new French concept restaurant. "Being an international brand with 250 years of history, we understand how the international client lives his or her life," said Scott Rohm, president of SH Group, Starwood Capital's hotel brand management company. "Our vision is to innovate the full-service experience, and we have taken advantage of the latest technology to make it seamless, luxurious and discreet."

The latest technology is only one of the selling points of the triplex penthouse on the 19th, 20th and 21st floors of 11 Riverside Drive, a co-op apartment located between 73rd and 74th Streets and currently listing for \$13,995,000. The six-bedroom home, which took four years to complete and is just now coming onto the market for the first time, features a triple-story entry gallery, a grand sweeping staircase that leads to the entertainment floors, two terraces, a private elevator and a huge 1,000-square-foot roof deck with gas fireplace, powder room and to-die-for views. The apartment's Crestron system can control a host of systems — including dimming panels, motion sensors, ultra-quiet HVAC and a plant-watering system. The apartment even has sensors in the floors that can monitor any leaks to the energy-

efficient radiant heating. "The great thing about wiring it for Crestron is that you can add all sorts of options — from lighting and audio/video to security and shades — and anything else you can think of down the line," explained Ann Cutbill Lenane, associate broker with Douglas Elliman Real Estate. "Something simple, like a USB charging station in the entry hallway where you can plug in your phone or tablet, can be very exciting for potential buyers."

A 20-foot-wide five-story townhouse on West 90th Street, in the middle of the block just off Riverside Drive, is being gut-renovated as an 8,000-square-foot, six-bedroom, nine-bathroom garden home. The key technological innovations include an elaborate 11-zone HVAC system, and an elevator that services seven floors — from the basement to the planted roof terrace.

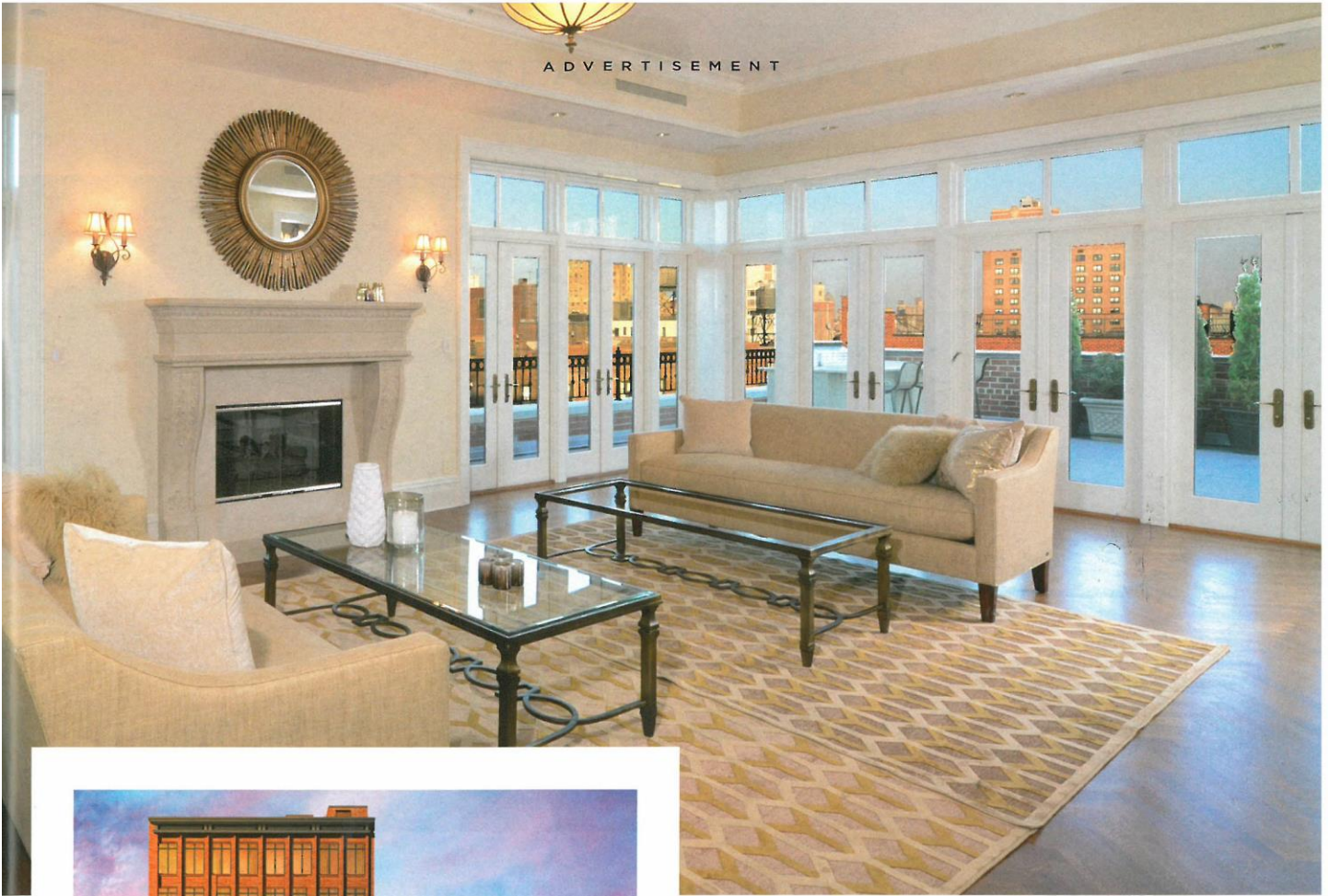
The renovations should be complete by the spring. "The house will be completely prewired for any kind of smart-home technology, and the owners will be able to customize it to the degree that they want," explained David Kornmeier, associate broker with Brown Harris Stevens. "It can be set up for total control of video security cameras, intercom for the doorbell — so you can

ABOVE: The Schwab House, at 11 Riverside Drive, is crowned by Unit PHWS, one of the most beautiful penthouses in the city.

RIGHT: Village Green West, at 245 West 14th Street, is slated for completion in the first quarter of 2015. Rendering: Urban Renders

FAR RIGHT: Kirkman Lofts, 43 Bridge Street in Dumbo, boast cutting-edge home automation systems. Photo: Halstead Property, LLC

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see the face of the delivery person at the front door to leave a package in the vestibule — and control it all through your smart phone while you are overseas, or through panels in the house. And since it is prewired, if there is anything else that comes onto the market, the system can accommodate it. Our goal is to accommodate anyone who is tech savvy as well as someone who is not. But just having the capability in a townhouse originally built in 1890 is a big plus.”

Located at 245 West 14th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues, Village Green West is a new 27-unit ground-up condominium that is targeting LEED Gold certification upon its completion in the first quarter of 2015. The project, which offers a mix of one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom condos priced from \$1.21 to \$11 million, is the third of Alfa Development’s Green Collection of sustainable buildings.

Green features include a common green roof with a rainwa-



ABOVE: This townhouse on West 90th Street is being gut-renovated and should be complete by spring. Rendering: Brown Harris Stevens

LEFT: 255 Columbia Street, a 13-residence boutique condo, will feature an innovative passive-house design. Photo: Andrew Malyshev



ter-recovery irrigation system, solar thermal heat tubes that use the sun to heat the building's water to 100 degrees year-round, fresh air ventilation, and a three-pipe HVAC system with a variable speed motor that optimizes energy loads, enabling users to heat or cool in any season. One of the most popular green features is the tight envelope for each apartment, which, aside from preventing smoke and odors from wafting from apartment to apartment, keeps noise from penetrating as well.

"Green features tell the buyers that the developer put a lot of thought into the building, and that leaves a positive impression," said Aaron Goed, director of sales for Village Green West, and associate broker with Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group. "We've found that the green elements that save money, or are comfort related, can be real deciding factors. Being sealed from environmental pollutants is a big deal for buyers, as is knowing that their AC system can save 60 percent of the energy used by a standard AC system."

Home automation is also helping to sell townhouse condos in Brooklyn. While the three three-bedroom townhomes at Kirkman Lofts on Bridge Street in Dumbo each have their own individual elevators and two private terraces, it is the ease of the Unique Spaces home automation system that turns heads. "The system controls the shades, turns on the heat and the lights and can play music at the touch of a button," said Shelley Wasserman, associate broker with Halstead Property. "When you hit the away button, the shades close, the lights go down and [the home] gets ready for you to leave — so you never have to worry, 'Did I turn off the lights?' You can push a button, and do it remotely from any remote device. It mimics a remote control and is very easy."

The system also has a welcome button that can turn on the heat, lights and music remotely. "This is the future," she added. "All of these features are very exciting — not just because they are cool, but because the energy consumption saves money."

In Brooklyn's Columbia Waterfront District, 255 Columbia Street, a seven-story, 13-residence boutique condo between Carroll and President Streets, is expected to close in March. The building is currently selling at \$1,100 per square foot, a level comparable to new properties in Brooklyn Heights, in part because of the building's innovative passive-house design.

Prices range from \$975,000 for an 890-square-foot two-bedroom with 500 square feet of exterior space and a garden to \$1,525,000 for a 1,306-square-foot three-bedroom with a 185-square-foot private balcony. "The building's construction is so airtight, you don't hear street noise at all with the windows closed," said Millie Perry, associate broker with Stribling & Associates. "Then there is a consistent air flow system that draws the dirty air out and brings fresh air in, and tempers it at the same time, so that the heating and air conditioning in each unit doesn't have to work hard. That creates indoor air quality that is healthy and comfortable at all times, with monthly costs for heating and cooling the individual spaces very low."

According to the Passive House Institute, the building technique can produce as much as a 90 percent reduction in heating and cooling system requirements, paring heating and cooling bills by 75 percent or more. "Potential buyers may not be familiar with passive house design at first, but after they study all the advantages, they see that it will not only enhance their lifestyle, but will also help them resell their apartments," concluded Perry. "And that gets their attention." ■