

DAILY NEWS

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Best Places to live in NY

JASON SHEFTELL



THE MARK

Kelly Ripa

WIREIMAGE

Russell Crowe

PHOTOGRAPH BY L. ROTHENBERG

Oprah Winfrey

SPLASH NEWS

THE MARK

Katie Holmes

SPLASH NEWS

Woody Allen

WIREIMAGE

Marc Jacobs

Anna Wintour

GETTY

ON THE MARK

NYC's hottest uptown celeb lair

Psy of "Gangnam Style" fame stayed there for nearly week early in the month. Vogue editor Anna Wintour checked in when Sandy shut out the lights. So did Katie Holmes with Suri, Russell Crowe, Marc Jacobs and Kelly Ripa. Woody Allen dines monthly at the Jean-Georges-helmed restaurant which anchors the

hotel ground floor along with a bar that mixes subtle bling with dark lights and high style. At any given moment, weeknight or weekday, the people, clothes and jewelry at the Mark hotel are as beautiful as the furnishings. Within minutes, I spied a Russian supermodel, an oilgarch with long hair walking in with a former Miss Universe contender and

one of the city's top brokers in pearls. Not many spaces in the city, any city, are better designed than the Mark, located on the northwest corner of 77th St. on the upper East Side. France's Jacques Grange designed every inch of it. Known globally as one of the world's top interior decorators, Grange

Continued on next page

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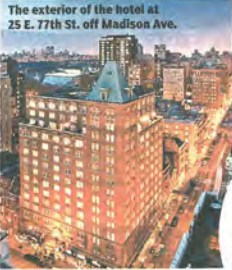
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The 26-foot cupola in the living room of the \$60 million penthouse



The exterior of the hotel at 25 E. 77th St. off Madison Ave.



Continued from previous page has designed homes for Princess Caroline of Monaco and the designer Valentino.

The lobby sparkles with custom-designed black and white marble in a geometric pattern. Custom-made furniture just for the hotel gives it more exclusivity. The bar is where the hotel separates itself from anywhere else. Imagine if Austin Powers had better taste, or James Bond needed a quiet moment for a drink or was on the prowl for a woman with an upper East Side drawl. Everyone looks good. The lighting by Hervé Descottes, who lit the Standard Hotels and works on projects by world-class architects Frank Gehry and Steven Holl, even makes the plastic surgery look less severe.

The ceiling is wild with twinkle-type lights. The carpet a deep dark red with black accents. The backlit and mirrored bar reflects the cowhide chairs custom-made by Vladimir Kagan, a legendary mid-century furniture maker going strong in his 90s. Even on a Monday night, this place has verve.



A corner of the lobby with custom-designed furniture



The bar at the Mark uses design to attract an international crowd



Izak Senbahar, an owner of The Mark



A kitchen in the model unit has a tile backdrop



Black and white marble in the lobby is a design theme.



A stairway in the \$60 million penthouse leads to a private terrace

Open now for more than two years, the Mark has hit its stride and become one of modern-day New York's top places to see or be seen, and certainly stay the night (which will run \$475 or more).

"The business plan from the get-go was to make the Mark an uptown mecca," said developer Izak Senbahar, whose company, Alexico Group, owns hotels in New York, built 165 Charles St. by Richard Meier, the Laurel on E. 67th St., and will soon begin construction on a Herzog & de Meuron condo at 56 Leonard in

Tribeca. "It was always meant to be the place where fashion, art, film and business come together. The design was a big part of that execution."

Seven global furniture makers including Ron Arad, Eric Schmitt, and Kagan contributed pieces to the hotel's signature collection, all of which are in the

lobby and common areas. Grange designed pieces specifically for the rooms, which were and still are for sale. The recession and heavy hotel occupancy curtailed the original plan to sell most of the units as condominiums, which started at \$2 million for a one-bedroom.

"The market changed so dramatically

in the middle of our initial sales period," said Senbahar. "People stopped making luxury or discretionary purchases. The Mark was never someone's first or even second home. This was meant to be their third or fourth house. No one really needs it, but if they can afford it, who wouldn't want it?"

Senbahar does report several homes have recently sold with several still on the market, including a \$60 million, 10,000-square-foot penthouse with a copper cupola in the living room that rises 26 feet into the air. A three-bedroom furnished model is on the market for \$7 million.

"We have two contracts out and one

closing a few weeks ago," said Senbahar, whose wife designed the three-bedroom model unit. "The hotel is over-booked. The storm brought all kinds of celebrities. The place has a fantastic energy all the time. You can't really ask for more."

According to general manager Olivier Lordonnois, a Paris-trained hotel executive who worked at Hotel de la Tremoille on the Right Bank, one of the toughest parts of his job is ensuring guests have total privacy. Lordonnois wouldn't divulge any hotel secrets.

The press constantly covers who stay here," he says. "We don't tell them. The bar and restaurant is full of well-known people all the time. That's the kind of place it is. It is our job to deliver the quality of service they require. It's as simple as that."

The \$60 million penthouse has had prospective buyers and recent foot traffic. The original list price has never been reduced. Despite lowball offers, Senbahar won't consider decreasing the ask price. "Look, you have a 10,000-square-foot home designed by Jacques Grange with a 2,500-square-foot terrace overlooking Central Park," he said. "It's one of the most desirable addresses in the world. Plus, I'm very stubborn. I think we'll get our price. The good thing about our line of business is that good real estate will always eventually sell."

It doesn't hurt, though, that Olympic gymnastics gold medalist Gabby Douglas tweeted to her 700,000-plus followers that she saw Oprah at the hotel. That's never bad for business.

Go to themarkhotel.com for more.