

**GOING MAD**  
VERSACE TOWER RAISES STAKES

# NYP Real Estate Guide Home

**NICE O'DAY**  
Danity Kane star moves to Midtown

24 perk-filled hours in the Financial District

# To FiDi for

**W**HEN we think of the Financial District, we think suits, tourists looking for Ground Zero and streets that are desolate at night. But with a slew of new condo and rental buildings, developers hope we'll start thinking "home sweet home."

By JENNIFER CEASER and KATHERINE DYKSTRA

These buildings aren't just targeting aspiring Gordon Gekkos who have big-screen TVs, black leather sofas and weekly reservations at Mark Joseph's. Developments (many at reasonable prices for Manhattan, with units selling around \$1,000 per square foot) are targeting women, families and people who

have the means to live in a more expensive, established neighborhood.

The pitch now includes a slick nickname (FiDi), as well as the stamps of developer and arbiter of cool Andre Balazs and nightlife queen Amy Sacco. (Never mind that her response to our request for a tour of FiDi nightlife was: "I have never gone out down there, so I wish!") The offerings feature amenities galore — screening rooms, bowling,

billiards, lounges, pools, roof decks, the works — should you miss the convenience of, say, the Upper West Side.

Sounds nice. But, we wondered, could we really live down there? Would two women feel safe roaming the empty streets at night? What were these amenity troves like? So, we hopped on the 4 train and headed downtown to spend 24 hours in FiDi.

See **FiDi** Page 46

This roof deck is one of 15 Broad's many amenities.

Christian Johnston

# Stock treatment



**HARRY SITUATION:**  
Jennifer Ceaser (right)  
and Katherine Dykstra  
blend in at Harry's Cafe.



Christian Johnson/Tony

**24 HOURS  
IN THE  
FINANCIAL  
DISTRICT**

**Wednesday 4:40 p.m.** We arrive at the 88 Greenwich condo building and are greeted by a doorman holding open massive carved-wood doors. The richly hued, rosewood-clad lobby has subdued lighting and odd sculptures. Piped over an invisible sound system are unidentifiable, vaguely European grooves. The vibe is more Bali luxury hotel than Manhattan residence.

**5 p.m.** We have to wait our turn to talk to Raul, who works with 88 Greenwich's Luxury Attache-provided concierge service and who, we find out, doubles as the building's salsa instructor. We ask — not having a concierge ourselves — what his most popular request is. "The residents' free DVD service," he says, as he files away a copy of "No Country for Old Men" (see ya', Netflix!). Oh, and could he score us a table at Ago for Thursday at 8 p.m.? (Yes, you still have to head to TriBeCa for a hot restaurant.)

**5:15 p.m.** It's too early for the live weeknight piano sessions in 88 Greenwich's library, but it's definitely time for a happy-hour drink. We shoulder our way through swarms of people to the heart of FID's after-work scene,

Stone Street, a cobblestone alley closed to traffic and buzzing with bars. There, we settle at a picnic table and order a couple pints at the Ulysses pub.

The crowd is mostly young Wall Streeters — women in sensible skirts with pantyhose and men with loosened neckties and money to burn. Other people's money, that is. We overhear one say to an inquiring hostess, "I'm waiting for my corporate card."

**5:30 p.m.** Phone message from Raul — we're in at Ago. (Here's hoping we don't get Frank Bruni's table.)

**6:45 p.m.** Tired of the financial frat party, we walk a few blocks to Harry's Cafe, at stately One Hanover Square. At the busy bar, Austin, 40, chats us up. He lives nearby, but not because of the bells and whistles of the new FiDi developments ("I care more about having space," he says, adding, "and isn't that Beaver building f---ing ugly?").

Austin clues us in to a tiny, hidden bar at the back of Harry's, where we settle on stools and order raw oysters (\$2.45 each), a bargain compared to the shrimp cocktail (\$6.95 per shrimp). Our bartender pushes the strip steak, but \$48 seems pricey; in fact, we can't imagine people eat

**FEELING PERKY:** At 88 Greenwich, residents often share wine over a game of pool in the billiards room (above); a sky-deck attendant helps owners beat the heat by providing towels and beverage service (right).

**88 GREENWICH**  
**\$899,000**

One-bedroom condo, 694 square feet, with Viking and Sub-Zero appliances, iPod port, individual climate control and terrace. Common charges: \$723.  
Contact: (212) 269-8888.



here on a regular basis — unless they have one of those corporate cards.

**8:45 p.m.** Since staying at Harry's would break the bank, we head to the more affordable Haru for dinner. Even though it's raining

sheets, the sleek sushi spot is packed. We assume some of the patrons must be residents of the rental building next door, Cocoa Exchange. The specialty drinks are deee-lish and the appetizers tantalizing, but we'd likely go

elsewhere in the future for our raw fish.

**10:20 p.m.** The rain has stopped and the streets, as we guessed, are empty — there's not a soul, not a cab. If we didn't have each other, we'd be completely

unnerved. But when we get back to 88 Greenwich, the billiards lounge is hopping.

Jason, a 23-year-old who, "in real estate," introduce himself and offers us some red wine he's brought down from his studio. We ask how



## 2 GOLD ST.

**VIEW FROM THE TOP:** Residents can catch some rays on the 52nd-floor roof deck, which includes a solarium with a fireplace and kitchen. Studio rentals start at \$2,512.

he likes living here. He acknowledges that plenty of the residents are in finance but that "the building has a really eclectic group of people from all over the world," noting that he's made a lot of friends since he moved in.

"Plus," he adds, "there are lots of hot models around."

**11:08 p.m.** Upstairs to our loaner one-bedroom, where we flip a coin over who gets the couch (Katie loses).

**Thursday 8:15 a.m.** We wake up blurry, but the breeze from our balcony (and lack of coffee) get us motivated to go to the lobby-level breakfast area. It seems nearly every resident stops by to take advantage of the complimentary coffee, juice, muffins and fruit. There's a mix of people (and languages being spoken): Wall Streeters, empty-nesters, moms with babies and (gasp!) even a hipster or two. If we lived here, we could definitely see ourselves making breakfast a habit.

**10 a.m.** The folks at 2 Gold St., a massive rental completed in 2005 and one of the tallest residential buildings in FiDi, agree to let us check out their views. On the rooftop, 52 floors up, we can see everything from Olafur Eliasson's New York City Waterfalls to Lady Liberty and even Connecticut. We hear that rooftop gatherings are a regular occurrence, but this morning there's only a lone sunbather. We wish for a pool; the complex will be getting one (and its own waterfall) in November.

**11:40 a.m.** We grab a booth at Gold Street, a glorified 24/7 diner one door down from 2 Gold St. It quickly fills



**BROAD APPEAL:** We take a dip and go bowling inside the Downtown by Philippe Starck condo at 15 Broad St.



## 15 BROAD ST. \$1,795,000

**Two-bedroom condo, 1,863 square feet, with 11-foot ceilings, Bosch washer/dryer and Philippe Starck-designed faucets. Common charges: \$1,200. Contact: Arlei Cohen, Prudential Douglas Elliman, (846) 235-0075.**

up with office workers on their lunch break. We hear that weekend brunches are packed (no surprise, given that there aren't many alternatives), and the 'round-the-clock hours ensure you can get a bite at 3 a.m. It's no Blue

Ribbon, but we'll take it. **12:45 p.m.** Back to 88 Greenwich for a post-lunch nap under a cabana on the 24th-floor sky deck. Cushy towels: free of charge; two bottles of water from the gracious attendant: \$5; views of



**RAW DEAL:** While destinations like sushi restaurant Haru (right) add appeal to the Financial District, many of the neighborhood's streets are still abandoned at night.



both rivers: priceless.

**1:45 p.m.** We've been invited to one of the more established FiDi condos, Downtown by Philippe Starck at 15 Broad St., which opened for sales in 2004. The design — from the spaceship-sized lobby chandelier, to the towering faucet-shaped water fountain, to the signature Ghost chairs — is flashy, but also a bit tired. And the lobby's cold white marble and glass doors hardly feel welcoming — more like a bank than a home.

But the lack of warmth is offset by the amenities. How many buildings boast their own bowling lane (shoes provided)? A group of 'twens cut short our game, so we opt for a swim in the two-lane lap pool and are quite taken with the crystal chandeliers above our heads. We're loving the gorgeous pool — until we get out and find there's no towel service.

**2:50 p.m.** From the bowels of the building (we're talking several floors below ground), we head up to the fifth-floor terrace known as Starck Park — the amenity that we assume gets the most use. Although no one is up there at this odd hour, we can see ourselves inviting friends over for cocktails and to see the amazing view of the Stock Exchange building. It's so close we feel like we could almost touch it.

**4:54 p.m.** Time to check out and take the train back to our amenity-free Brooklyn pads. But we must admit, we're looking forward to once again having a 24-hour bodega, a variety of cuisines and streets that are populated — even at night.

## FIDI KEEPS PERKING UP

**District:** With Amy Sacco as its "lifestyle consultant," the 163-unit District could have a pretty sweet scene. There's a 12,000-square-foot rooftop terrace with lighted reflecting pools, chaise lounges and cabanas, an indoor pool, a spa, a screening room and a lounge/library with billiards. And if the scene is sputtering, there's a concierge on duty 24/7. Opening September.

**Dwell on Wall:** Designed by Philippe Starck, this just-opened 507-unit rental has your typical amenities — 24-hour doorman and concierge, gym, penthouse lounge — and some atypical ones too, including on-site parking, free breakfast and automatic rent payments via your AMEX.

**Nobu Hotel and Residences:** Well, you can be assured that the restaurant here is going to be an upgrade for FiDi. The 62-story, all-glass condo-hotel (with 77 residences) will have a Nobu on the third floor, a six-floor-high atrium with retail space, a screening room, a 13,000-square-foot health club and spa with an indoor pool and the all-important private sake cellar. Occupancy: 2010.

**The Setai:** If it's anything like Miami's Setai, this 167-unit building could single-handedly make FiDi a cool place to live. With 44,000 square feet devoted to amenities, residents will have access to a members-only Setai club, restaurant, spa and rooftop terrace with hot tub.

Other perks: room and maid service, butler service and in-room spa service. Occupancy: Fall 2008.

**William Beaver House:** The 320-unit building's ad campaign has morphed from sexy cartoons to pillow fights among nubile young women, so we're pretty sure it's favoring single-guy buyers. Or voyeurs, because you will be able to use the Internet to see what's going on in your apartment from anywhere in the world. Other amenities: a restaurant, lounge with wet bar, lap pool, screening room, covered outdoor dog run, sundeck and "sky lounge." Occupancy: Fall 2008.

— Jennifer Ceaser