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GOSSIP

THE CLOSER

Disclosures, appraisals, flips and splits of New York's real estate community



Shigeru Ban

In yet another indication that the high-end, high-design real estate market is stronger than ever, the **Corcoran Sunshine Group** sold eight of nine multimillion-dollar apartments at **Metal Shutter Houses**, by Japanese architect **Shigeru Ban**, in less than three months. Located on W. 19th St., the building's remaining unit is a 4,484-square-foot, double-width floor-through apartment priced at \$10.25 million. Developers decided to combine two units after four full-price offers came in on another penthouse.

What's the catch? Both ends of

the home open up to the outdoors with 20-foot window walls that can fold back into the house. If the light bothers you, perforated metal shutters can blanket your home at the touch of a button.

"Ban is a genuine iconoclast," says **James Lansill**, senior managing director with **Corcoran Sunshine**. "These homes allow you to completely open yourself to the elements. We sold most of the apartments in the first two weeks."

You have to respect a project where the age difference between the architect and the developer spans more than 60 years. But being 30 years old and working with 91-year-old architectural legend **I.M. Pei** doesn't raze builder **Robbie Antonio**. He's already built projects in the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia. Antonio Development's first New York



Robbie Antonio

project, **The Centurion**, on W. 56th St. off Fifth Ave., is a limestone treat, with outdoor balconies and geometric shapes that rise from the building's base. Pei and his team built, among other internationally known works, the **Pyramid at the Louvre** and the **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame** in Cleveland.

At **The Centurion**, each limestone brick will be hand-set into the facade. Such commitment to detail is typical of Antonio's approach. "I find every part of the development process exhilarating," says Antonio. "Our skill set is building one-of-a-kind projects. I want to make additions to the skyline."

According to Antonio, the building's 48 residences are 95% sold. Antonio says apartments are selling at \$3,000 per square foot, which translates into \$3 million for 1,000-square-foot apartments.



The lobby at The Mark

The upper East Side just got a jolt of world-class design that could send ripples of fresh style through the musty hallways of stodgy Park Ave. co-ops. Set to open in August on 77th St. between Fifth and Madison Ave., **The Mark Hotel** is more of a modern furniture snowplace than a combination hotel/residence. Everything you see and touch in the hotel will have been made specifically for it. Headed by interior designer **Jacques Grange**, the design team was chosen by **Pierre Passebon**, a Parisian furniture gallery known for spotting young talent and working with Europe's biggest designers.

Floors one through eight of **The Mark** will be a hotel. The apartments on floors nine through 12 are being sold as furnished units designed specifically for the project by Grange himself.

"You won't see these pieces anywhere else in the world but here," says **Louise Sunshine**, director

of development for the **Alexco Group**, the same outfit that brought us **155 Charles** by **Richard Meier**. "Not just anyone gets the chance to live in a Jacques Grange-designed environment. It just doesn't happen."

With lines of white marble accented by striking black granite, the lobby floor of **The Mark** may become the new signature of upper East Side elegance. The interior lobby is fresh, colorful, alive and eclectic — **The Mark** may threaten to draw the downtown set uptown. The plush bar's orange accents and metallic stools, complemented by cowhide seats, make the **Carlyle Hotel** across the street seem dowdy.

Sitting in the lobby, which will open to the public in early August, will be a treat. Living in one of the apartments will be a dream. Prices for a two-bedroom, 2½-bath, 1,643-square-foot Grange-designed unit start at \$6.6 million. Go to www.themarkhotel.com for more information.

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