

# GREEN ROOMS (FOR LESS GREEN)

By KATHERINE DYKSTRA

**E**IGHT weeks on the market. Offers on five of eight units. Two contracts signed. Those are the numbers at the new Sterling Green condo building — pretty swift sales in this market.

Even more impressive, the building is in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, not exactly the sort of prime neighborhood that's supposed to be weathering the current economic storm. So what gives?

"We have some of the most reasonably priced green condos in the city," says Seth Brown, principal of Aspen Equities, which is developing the project at 580 Sterling Place.

The eco-friendly units, which range from 550 to 1,100 square feet, are priced between \$299,000 and \$499,000.

"There are a lot of projects that say, 'We're going to make a super high-end and ultra-luxury building,' and being green is part of that, but I started with how to make affordable green apartments," Brown says.

Brown isn't the only one who's realized that targeting first-time buyers — who are often young and eco-interested — works. In a market where the launch of *any*

new residential project is a big deal, there are actually a number of (relatively) inexpensive green buildings rising across the city.

"We're opening under \$1,000 a foot," says Mike Namer of Alfa Development, which is responsible for the 36-unit green building at 311 E. 11th St. in the East Village.

The development's one- and two-bedroom apartments start at about 785 square feet and go up to 2,000 square feet; prices start at \$730,000 and go up to \$1.5 million for the seven penthouses.

Developers are able to offer eco-friendly buildings for less because, fact is, it isn't as expensive to build green as you might think.

"The cost of green construction has come down," says Robert Roth, a partner at Green Envy Development, which is behind the Silhouette, a green condo building in Brooklyn's South Slope. "The cost of building green is more a function of learning how to implement these things."

Though the Silhouette's offering plan has yet to be approved, Roth says prices will be comparable to a building next door that closed on all its units in September 2007 at between \$750 and \$875 per square foot. Seems a touch pricey for the neighborhood, es-

pecially given that this isn't 2007, but Roth insists he'll get what he's asking for.

"I'm betting the farm that they will sell," says Roth. "As the market has changed, rather than scaling back the green features to make it cheaper, we increased them to become differentiated. . . If we would have scaled back, we would have been grouped in with our competitors who did the same thing."

And given the glut of new condos, being green can make all the difference.

"We're not getting high prices, but we're selling much more quickly than if [our building] weren't green," says Brown.



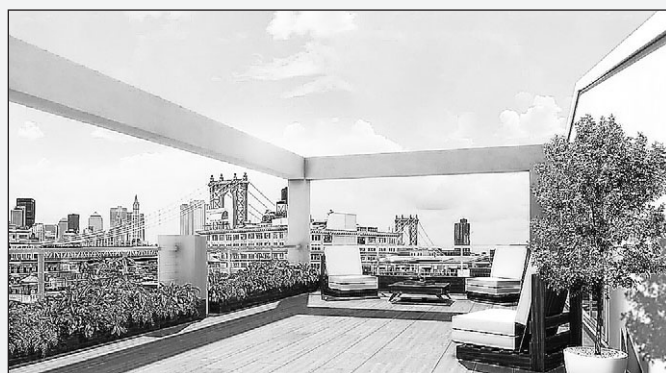
## ➔ Sterling Green | Prospect Heights, Brooklyn

The list of green features at Sterling Green reads like an ad for a car dealership: low, low, low. The building at 580 Sterling Place will include low-E glass windows (which prevent heat loss), low-VOC paints (fewer chemical emissions than standard paint) and low-voltage halogen lighting (30 percent less electricity use than regular lights). Beyond that, buyers will find dual-flush toilets, cabinets made from sustainable materials, bamboo flooring, wind-powered common areas, tank-less hot water heaters and energy-saving programmable thermostats. The eight units are slated for occupancy by mid-to-late summer. **Contact:** Aguayo & Huebener, 718-622-9300; sterlinggreencos.com



## ➔ 311 E. 11th St.: Village Green | East Village

The developers of 311 E. 11th St. started the greening of their project before they even started construction, recycling 96 percent of the original building they razed. The other elements only get greener. The eight-story building will have a 1,000-gallon cistern to capture rainwater for irrigating its gardens, both in the back yards of the four duplex garden apartments on the ground level and on the roof. Half the roof is occupied by succulent plants, which retain water and help reduce warming. Twenty-five feet underground, a geothermal loop of water will, when run through an air handler, cool the building in summer and heat it in winter. The sales center opened yesterday, natch, on Earth Day. **Contact:** 212-675-5311, 311e11.com



## ➔ 100 Gold | Vinegar Hill, Brooklyn

Talk about going the extra mile. The REDD Group, a real estate design and development team, has not only made 100 Gold green, but they've also purchased renewable energy credits and helped fund reforestation projects to offset the carbon emissions associated with the building's estimated energy use during the first year. Eco-friendly elements in the 10-unit condominium include radiant floor heating, energy-efficient central air and heating, water-conserving fixtures, Energy Star-rated appliances, rooftop gardens with pavers made of 100 percent recycled tires and bicycle storage. The units, starting at \$490,000, are slated for completion in August, with move-ins starting in September. **Contact:** Steven Gerber, The Corcoran Group, 718-923-8014; onehundredgold.com

## ➔ The Silhouette | South Slope, Brooklyn

Here's some black-and-white thinking that works. The north-facing façade of the Silhouette at 272 21st St. will be constructed out of high-luster black brick to absorb the weaker sun on overcast days, while the south-facing back will be high-luster white brick to reflect the harsh sun in the middle of summer. The project will also have five rooftop solar panels, triple-pane windows and a garden roof with loose soil. The four floor-through units will feature reclaimed barn-wood floors. They are slated to go on sale next month. **Contact:** 917-751-5174; thesilhouettecondos.com