

May 20, 2016

Strand Bookstore Owner Lists Elegant 1848 Gramercy Townhouse for \$7.5M



If you're a lover of timelessly elegant Manhattan living and you're lucky enough to live in Gramercy, you probably love your home just that much more. And if your Gramercy spot is anything like this classically lovely townhouse at 236 East 19th Street, on the market for \$7.5 million, we'd say that's a bit like hitting the jackpot. Built in 1848, the four-story Anglo-Italianate home was owned by the Baer family from the 1860s until the current owner, Nancy Bass Wyden, co-owner of the famous Strand bookstore, purchased it for \$4,700,000 in 2011. We're guessing Mrs. Wyden—she co-owns the store with her father, Fred Bass, whose father, Ben, founded the Strand in 1927—may be selling the house to spend more time in Oregon with her husband, Senator Ron Wyden, who is that state's senior U.S. senator.

The couple have several small children, and if the house looks this good we'd say it must be child-proof. There's a luxurious wood-paneled library—fitting for the first family of one of the city's most iconic bookstores—and though there's plenty of play space and five bedrooms, the home's intricate historic details have been restored beautifully with added finishes (like walls of glass and several private outdoor spaces) for modern-day livability.

Delicate ironwork, high ceilings, ornate molding and several decorative marble fireplaces highlight the home's parlor living area which provides a full floor of entertaining space, framed by original arched entryways. Through stained glass French doors, the dining room opens onto a balcony overlooking the private backyard garden.

The garden level with its own separate entrance is a private entertaining and family space with a windowed kitchen, a study and, currently, a children's playroom; this floor opens directly onto the aforementioned garden, of course.

Up on the third floor, a suitably grand master suite offers another decorative black marble fireplace, four mirrored closets and a spacious master bathroom. An elegant library with enough built-in shelves to collect half a bookstore (though maybe not one the size of the Strand), another bedroom and a half bath are up here as well.

The top floor has been configured as private family space with a bathroom, an office with a skylight and roof access; the south-facing bedroom has access to a private patio through a sliding door.

Unique details—like a 100-year-old ailanthus tree in the backyard and a cherry tree in the front garden—are the result of this house having been a home for well over a century, which tends to work surprisingly well even for those looking to create their own dream home. And the neighborhood speaks for itself. Let Uma move uptown, who needs her when you've got pretty townhouses like this one (and Jimmy Fallon, Richard Gere and Jesse Tyler Ferguson).

[Listing: 236 East 19th Street by Emily Beare and David Beare for CORE]