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Selling New York S5E5: Setting Grand Goals

HGTV's Selling New York rides along with brokerages CORE, Gumley Haft Kleier and Warburg as they try to sell fabulous properties fabulously. Here's our recap of how the NYC real estate industry is portrayed to the world, penned by Molly Reisner. Episode air date: 2/23/2012.



What's that ripe scent in the air? It's SWEAT, because last night's episode of *Selling New York* had brokers (semi) pumped with (a touch of) pressure! First, an agent with a quick turnaround track record is **expected to sell her client's Flatiron apartment in no time flat**. Will she beat her own record or finish last place? Then, a **prominent showtune man** relies on his broker buddy to find a kingdom worthy of a move. Will he croon over a commission or sing a super sad song? Dim the lounge lights, get a bowl of salted nuts, and gently stir the olive in this recaptini!

CRISIS #1: ART GALLERY DIRECTOR WANTS TO UNLOAD FLATIRON PAD IN A NEW YORK MINUTE

Warburg broker **Leslie Modell Rosenthal** has sold two apartments at 108 Fifth Avenue—each within a 2 week period. Which is what seller Stefany Benson, an art gallery director, wants Les to do with her 108 Fifth Avenue unit. Over lunch at Tocqueville, Stef tells Les that the **"pressure's on"** to work her market mojo. Will the third time be a charm?

Next, Les meets up with Warburg photographer Garrett to take professional pics of Stef's blah **\$1.725 million** place. Get ready for disappointing decor!



Stef's art gallery, Ceres, is having an opening. What better place for Les to butter up some potential buyers and let them know about Stef's upcoming open house?

These busts are next on her target list:



Magically, Les hones in on a very interested candidate—Josh Freidfertig. The catch? He's also a broker. Les thinks this might make him "a tough sell", since, he, um, is a broker? Score one for circuitous logic!

It's open house season, and the only person to show up is...Josh! Here he is, coolly checking out the goods:



Les doesn't want to give Josh the hard sell, but does that thing that all brokers seem to do. Tell the potential buyer that the place could go ANY SECOND!!! Meanwhile, this apartment's been around the block. If you look deep into the listing, it was repped by another agency in April. Then moved to Warburg in July. Yeah, call me Inspector Gadget cuz I'm a sleuth like that.

Later, Josh heads to Warburg for a negotiating session with Les. Welcome to the world's most chill deal maker ever:



Josh's first offer of \$1.5 million gets nixed by Les, but when he counters with **\$1.6 million** she's all thumbs up. Wow, that one random guy at the opening turned out to be the buyer!

Sidenote: Josh is handsome, but the bare chested V neck sweater with hair unfurling out of the V? Whyyyyy. It reminds me of that SNL short with Ben Stiller:



Over ice cream treats at The Soft Serve Fruit Co, Les shares the offer news with Stef:



Stef is loving the ice cream (and the offer) and thinks Les "**knocked it out of the park**" with her brokering. And even sweeter for Les? A day after closing with Josh, Les closed on a new home for Stef. Sounds like she got a double scoop of commission!

CRISIS #2: WEALTHY CROONER WITH NO URGENCY TO MOVE WANTS TO LOOK AROUND

As we've learned in past episodes, CORE agent **Tom Postilio** used to be a professional singer. Which explains his tight friendship with mega-music man Michael Feinstein.

Tom goes to Michael's recording studio where a whole lot of classic crooning is going on:



Michael and his partner, Terrence, want Tom to list their Upper East Side palace and find something better. Tom is stoked and thinks it's "**a very big deal**" that he'll be their broker. Well, yeah...there's a baby grand full of commission cash at stake! Their current home isn't just any ol' townhouse though...it's a double wide. Yep, they smushed two townhouses into one **9,000 square foot** opulent showpiece.

A peek at the piano man's **\$23.5 million** manse:



Where there's a fireplace every 10 feet:



Michael wants a place with more entertaining space for his sizzling soirees and more storage for stuff. And Terrence? He's ready for a design project. Michael thinks it will be "hard to top" his townhouse, but he's willing to try!

While Michael is away on tour, Tom brings Terrence and architect Carol Vinci to the Centurion at 33 West 56th Street. Co-designed by Sandi Pei with dad I.M., the building sports a **\$39 million** triple-wide penthouse. Yes, that's three penthouses for the price of four!

Naturally, this is the unit Tom shows Terrence. Carol demonstrates what can be done with so many boxy white rooms with giant windows that all look alike:



"**I like it a lot,**" says Terrence, loving that Tom brought Carol along to help with her design vision. With Michael back from the road, the trio cross the bridge to Queens to amble around the historic Steinway family mansion.

Tom claims these light grey suits weren't planned. Riiiiight, and I didn't call my best friend up the night before Non-Uniform Day to coordinate matching Benetton rugby shirts:



This 1858 estate, priced at **\$3.495 million** (now price chopped to \$2.995 million!), has 10,000 square feet of regal detail:



Michael is enamored with the home's history and its grandness, but demurs ownership by saying "**I don't think we have the energy**" to do a restoration. No mention if its industrial location has anything to do with it...

Later, Michael sings a sweeter tune when he performs at his club in The Regency Hotel:



After the show, Michael tells Tom he would like to keep looking at places, but...he'll be on tour for four months. The update explains that while Michael is away, Tom continues to search for Michael's quadruple wide love nest.

Episode Grade: A story of a too simple sale feels stale but we got a peek at the faded grandeur of Steinway so it wasn't a total fail with **2.0 out of 5.0** cackling Kleiers.

