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Joan Collins' midtown east apartment gets a makeover



Let's face it, she is Joan Collins. She owns apartments in New York and Los Angeles, a villa in the South of France and a flat in London. She has starred in more than 50 feature films, and acted on stage since she was 13. She has charities, and is equally as glam now as when she starred as one of TV's great she-devils, "Dynasty's" Alexis Carrington.

In person and on the phone, Collins speaks quickly, has strong opinions and knows what she wants and how to get it. She understands how real estate, sex appeal and celebrity work.

"They follow celebrities everywhere these days," says Collins, on the phone from the South of France. "Where they go on vacations, when they have babies, so why should it be any different when it comes to when they change abodes? I have moved over 40 or 50 times in my life, and each time everyone knew it was my house. I don't think that hurts."



The Dorchester at 110 E. 57th St., where Collins has lived with her fifth husband, Percy Gibson. The building is known for its tight-knit staff.

Collins recently put her New York home back on the market, listing it with Tom Postilio and Mickey Conlon of CORE. The \$2.35 million three-bedroom, three-bath had been on the market at various prices for a year with three brokerages but saw little action in a slow sales period. Postilio and Conlon, partners in work and life, saw an opportunity to restore Hollywood glamour that was diminished when Collins shipped many of her belongings to her homes around the world. They worked with interior designer John Lyle to put more than \$1 million worth of rugs, chairs, art and other items to help the home show better.

“The place shows fantastic,” says Postilio. “We didn’t hide the fact that this is Joan’s apartment. We used that to our advantage.”

Postilio is a star himself. He and Conlon are main cast members on HGTV's "Selling NY." Before becoming a founder of CORE, the Ozone Park-born Postilio was a professional singer, headlining the Glenn Miller Band in a national tour and playing Tavern on the Green, the Algonquin's Oak Room and the Rainbow Room.

"It's all show business at the end of the day," he says. "Sales is showmanship and personality. Of course, it's more than that, but that's a big part.



Persian carpets from Doris Leslie Blau cover parquet floors. Two Chanel chairs (background) add pedigree to the room.



The master bedroom is full of France toile.

Conlon plays piano. As a freshman at Duke University, he got his real estate license to make money while home in Long Island during summers. He started out producing Broadway shows. He dresses in colorful suits with vests and bow ties.

“We sell luxury real estate,” says Conlon. “It’s what we do. CORE, our brand, reflects that. It’s not a part we’re playing.”

Postilio is always dapper, looking as much a 1950s Rat Pack crooner as 2012 luxury real estate agent. The two always seem to be smiling. They have an easy way about them, unlike other high-end brokers who have an intense look in their eye. These two take it as it comes. They know they are not curing cancer.

“Flexibility is a hallmark of good mental health,” says Postilio. “You have to be flexible in life, this city and this business.”

If ever a client and a set of brokers were born to work together, it might be Collins, Postilio and Conlon. When together, they laugh like old friends. The three met over Thanksgiving dinner at Michael Feinstein’s house around a table that included Liza Minnelli and Elaine Stritch. They sealed the deal at a party at Suzanne Somers’ Malibu home.



The master bath reflects a star's needs. Mirrors are everywhere.

The apartment and Collins will guest- star in an episode of “Selling NY” set to air this fall. The home has its original parquet and herringbone floors, which Collins says is “chic.” The master bathroom is completely mirrored. The master bedroom is full of sage green toile. It covers the headboard, walls and curtains. In the makeover, Collins insisted it stays.

“This is the first time I’ve ever let a decorator touch any of my homes,” she says. “I’ve always done all the work myself.”

Collins bought the apartment in 2002. Her husband, stage manager Percy Gibson, saw 60 homes before they decided on the three-bedroom in the Dorchester at 110 E. 57th St.

“I like light and I need space,” says Collins. “This home had 16 closets. We combined one, so now it has 15. The master bedroom is large. I like the East Side. Right on my block, I can get a manicure, pedicure and massage. They have a diner we love and top restaurants nearby. Bloomingdale’s is a five-minute walk, and I’m steps to Park Ave. It was perfect for us. We love New York. Who doesn’t love New York? It was just time to sell. It’s not practical to have so many homes and there is more work for me in Los Angeles and London.”

The apartment has needs.

While a wall of windows fronting 57th St. makes the space feel loft-like, the home feels dated. Collins and Gibson spent little time there. The kitchen hasn't been touched, except by caterers.

"Who cares about the kitchen?" says Collins. "I don't cook."

Designer Lyle placed \$1 million worth of furnishings, carpets, accessories and paint inside to give it a golden age of Hollywood feel. He unveiled the makeover at a party last week.

Moroccan and Indian hand-woven carpets priced at more than \$180,000 apiece from Doris Leslie Blau anchor the space. For spice, Lyle added vintage Chanel chairs (\$10,000 each), mirrored bedside tables (\$14,000), and walls colored by paint and wallpaper donated by Farrow & Ball (\$4,200).

"Glamour, drama and sexy was my mantra," says Lyle. "We wanted a buyer to see the full space. To update it properly, you'd have to gut the space. It works now, but it could be a sensational apartment."

Artwork of Collins is everywhere. One portrait of the star is by her son, noted artist Sacha Newley. Photos of Collins' idols Cary Grant and Laurence Olivier are in the red room, which served as Gibson's study.

"We try desperately to get exposure for a listing," says Conlon. "In this case, we wanted to use the glamour and sex appeal that is Joan Collins. The thing is, this is a very well-priced home. It is priced to sell. For \$2.35 million, you get to live in one of the best-managed buildings on the East Side at the crossroads of the world."

Architects and designers who know the value of the building and location have already toured the home, some more than once.

"There could be the temptation to keep some of the original design," says Postilio. "The master bathroom could be in a museum. It's pure glam."

You Should Know:

WHAT: Joan Collins' East 57th St. apartment, on the market for \$2.35 million.

WHY: Designer John Lyle gave it a Hollywood makeover. Added goods cost over \$1 million.

TO BUY: CORE brokers and HGTV "Selling NY" stars Tom Postilio and Mickey Conlon have the listing. Call (212) 612-9623.