

February 24, 2012 – Jason Sheftell

## Inside Chelsea's most stylish new building



It doesn't hurt to be a few feet from the Google building at 16th St. and Eighth Ave., but that's not why this building is cool. It's cool because its developer has some taste, he's young, and he's not a jerk.



*The roof and sculpture*

Harlan Berger put many of his own touches on 305 W. 16th St., a 75% sold "condop" (a co-op building with easy condo-style rules) overlooking Eighth Ave. on one side and a small park on the other. He and a friend built the wood installation in the lobby after Berger picked the slabs out himself from a wood mill in Saugerties, N.Y. He selected the sleek mailboxes, too. He even got New York artist Peter Tunney to create collages to designate each floor. Taken from newspapers, they show fashion, film and music scenes.



*A long kitchen with views of the park behind the building*

Berger, who owns properties in SoHo, Hudson Square, Flatiron and West Chelsea, knows how to spot a piece of land. A warehouse that he and his partners at Centaur Properties own on W. 27th St. houses the avant-garde performance “Sleep No More.” The guy not only goes to Burning Man, he and his neighbor throw a weekend festival each July at his Woodstock home called Burning Lamb.

The Chelsea building, with exteriors by SLCE Architects, has a piece of that creative fever. Berger placed a 34-foot sculpture on the building’s roof. He bought the giant stainless steel and porcelain tile flower after seeing it at Burning Man. By artist Robert Buchholz, the piece titled “Perhaps” represents his mother, father and self. It’s a metaphor for being an only child. Berger had the city close some of Eighth Ave. to get the 5,385-pound steel sculpture of three daisies up to the roof. Then he had to build it into the building and tie it down with steel cables so it wouldn’t blow off.



*Developer Harlan Berger*

“Could you imagine how I would feel if that happened?” says Berger. “This thing is meant to enhance someone’s life. People thought it was a marketing risk, but it gives the building something special. Hanging out here on a nice day next to this thing is just cool.”

Thirteen of 53 units are available. Three contracts were signed in February. Style isn’t cheap. Apartments in the building start at \$670,000 for a 464- square-foot studio with 677 square feet of private outdoor space set aside for this unit on the roof. There’s a one-bedroom left for around \$825,000. That might be pricey for mortals, but for Google engineers with stock trading at around \$612 at yesterday’s closing, that’s a bargain.



*The slate mailroom*

Go to [305w16.com](http://305w16.com) for more. Of course, the building has a blog, Facebook page and Twitter account. Its owner lives in that happy world where technology, love and profit co-exist. CORE is handling the marketing for the project.