

February 6, 2014

A Chelsea Duplex Becomes a Family Affair

Price: \$5,000,000

Location: Chelsea, NY

The conversion of this duplex from a dance studio into a five-bedroom home, now on the market for \$5 million, was done with a looming deadline: the arrival of the owners' twin boys.

Asher Remy-Toledo and Marc Routh purchased a duplex apartment at 131 West 24th Street, pictured at center, in 2002, according to records provided by the couple. Mr. Routh said the apartment cost slightly over \$1.2 million. The space was formerly a dance studio, the couple said, and they started renovations with a deadline. The home had to be ready in time for the birth of their twin sons.

The seven story co-op building has only six units. Messrs. Routh and Remy-Toledo's apartment on the fifth and six floors has private access via a keyed elevator on both floors and a living room with almost 19-foot ceilings, created for the dance studio. The couple were previously living in Midtown Manhattan near the theater district but purchased the home for their growing family. 'We were creating a family, a life together. [The apartment] was an opportunity to do that,' Mr. Routh said.

The relatively raw space was 'appealing as a canvas to work on,' Mr. Routh said. The renovation involved building three bathrooms and four bedrooms and converting an existing studio apartment within the space into a master bedroom suite with gym and walk-in closet. Mr. Routh said the renovation cost in the 'high six figures.' A storage space off the kitchen has plumbing available to be converted in a fourth bathroom, Mr. Remy-Toledo said.

Some of the décor and furnishings in the apartment reflect the couple's respective careers.

Mr. Routh, 50, is a theater producer who has worked on Broadway shows locally and abroad, in addition to bringing international productions to the U.S. He is also the co-owner of 54 Below, a 150-seat music entertainment venue in Midtown. A chaise, pictured here, is from a 2002 production of 'My Old Lady.'

A sarcophagus from 1998's 'The Mystery of Irma Vep' currently serves as a toy closet. Mr. Remy-Toledo, also 50, is an art advisor and curator, currently working on projects related

to Art Miami and on establishing an art fair in San Francisco. He is also the co-founder of Hyphen-Hub, an arts and technology non-profit. When he is not travelling, he often hosts meetings and events in the apartment. 'This space is a hub for all these artistic people,' Mr. Remy-Toledo said. 'It's very useful,' he said.

The dining area, pictured, extends into the full chef's kitchen. Mr. Routh said that they have seen their neighborhood change substantially over the last 12 years. 'When we moved in, there were a lot of empty lots,' some of which hosted antique markets on the weekends, Mr. Routh said. 'Now huge buildings are on those properties,' he said.

Mr. Routh said the couple did not make substantial changes to the 'industrial' kitchen in their renovation because they don't spend much time cooking. The renovation took almost eight months. 'At the time it seemed like forever, but we had a real hard deadline,' Mr. Routh said. Their sons were born six weeks early and the couple had to spend a week in a hotel when they brought them home from the hospital, as the apartment floors were being finished. 'It was up to the last minute,' Mr. Routh said.

The couple have been together for 15 years and were married last year. The approximately 4,400 square foot apartment has three bathrooms and five bedrooms. The master bedroom is shown.

The master bathroom was designed by Mr. Remy-Toledo to 'look like a spa,' in homage to the couple's love of taking spa vacations before their children arrived. The space, with shower and separate bathtub, is done with slate stone tiles. 'I wanted that zen feeling,' of a spa, Mr. Remy Toledo said. 'It's not pretentious at all, it's all very down to earth,' he said.

The bathtub, decorated with glass mosaic, is shown. Mr. Remy Toledo said he also tried to create a calm, peaceful 'zen-like' atmosphere in the rest of the home, using minimal decor and thick city windows to block sound from the street.

A second bedroom is shown. 'We're not into showy, pretentious stuff,' Mr. Remy-Toledo said. 'It's more that [the space] feels grounded. You're home.' Contemplating a possible move to Brooklyn, the family spent a few weeks last summer in rental apartments across the borough. They are selling because they've officially decided to move, although Mr. Remy-Toledo said they haven't found a neighborhood that matches Chelsea in its convenience. 'Here, everything is so immediate,' he said. The home is close to several subway lines as well as Fairway Market and Trader Joe's.

An upstairs living space and library is shown. The apartment was briefly listed by the owners in March 2013 for slightly under \$4.5 million. It was relisted towards the end of December last year for its current listing price of \$5 million. Patrick Lilly and Adie Kriegstein of CORE hold the listing.