

DAILY NEWS

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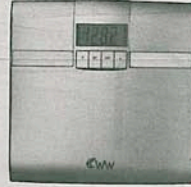
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your HOME

Friday, January 11, 2008

DAILY NEWS

Weighty matters



*Husband-and-wife developer team pulls off a different kind of "bank job" in the West Village

*The Closer: Brooklyn buddies to launch home show on cable's DIY Network

*Looking at foreclosure properties?



Barbara Corcoran has the advice

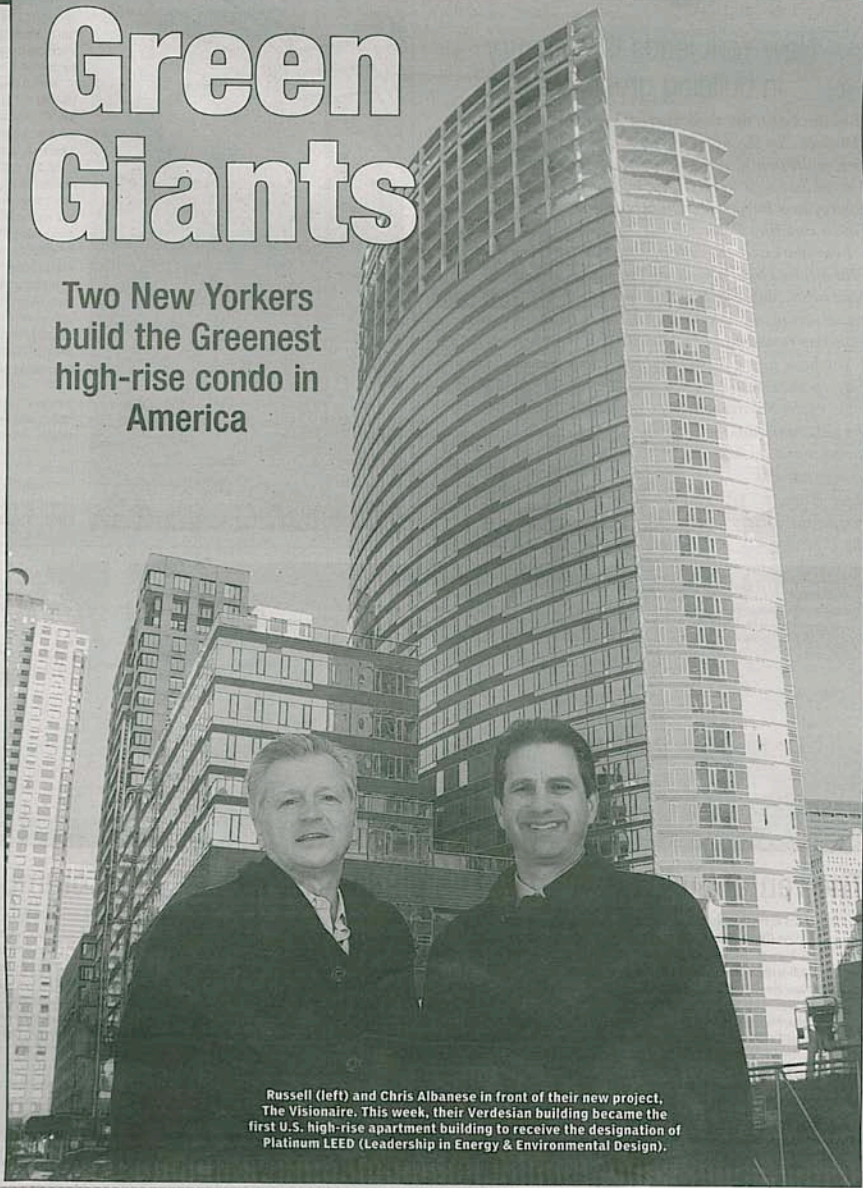
FEATURED INSIDE

- **Florida Lifestyle Expo** showcases choice Sun Belt housing opportunities.
- **Pondside at Spring Hollow:** Luxury townhomes in Middletown, N.Y.
- **St. Andrews Park** combines year-round Florida lifestyle with maintenance-free design.

FRANCES ROBERTS

Green Giants

Two New Yorkers build the Greenest high-rise condo in America



Russell (left) and Chris Albanese in front of their new project, The Visionaire. This week, their Verdesian building became the first U.S. high-rise apartment building to receive the designation of Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design).

YOUR HOME THE FUTURE

The green giants

New York leads the country in building green firsts

Two days ago, the Verdesian, a 26-story rental building developed by the Albanese Organization, became the first multi-family, residential high-rise building in the United States to receive Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) status from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Five years ago, the Solaire, built by the same Long Island-based family, became the first-ever green residential high-rise building in the U.S. Currently under construction, the Visionaire will soon be the greenest high-rise residential condominium in the country.

You have to see these buildings, all in Battery Park City, to understand what it means to build green. While tours of the Solaire are given on request, here's the next best thing—a visual and textual look inside the three greenest residential towers in the U.S.



By Jason Sheftell
Daily News
Real Estate
Correspondent

Russell and Chris Albanese in front of the Visionaire, soon to be America's greenest condo



FRANCES ROBERTS

Inspiration

The first thing developers (and cousins) Russell and Chris Albanese will tell you is that building green equals building quality.

In Battery Park City, the Albanese Organization built the Solaire in 2003, the Verdesian, this week named the first ever Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified residential building in the country, and the under-construction Visionaire which, when finished in early 2008, will surpass the other two as an efficient green building.

If you live in any one of these buildings, you'll enjoy cleaner air that has allegedly cured some tenants of allergies and asthma, electricity bills reduced by 40% per month, an ongoing education in a new way of life, and bottled-water-quality liquid flowing from your taps.

"We'd prefer our tenants not to buy bottled water so they don't have to recycle the plastic container," says Chris Albanese. "When you build in this manner, every decision has to be dealt with in a manner that is best for the environment."

Russell and Chris credit the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA) for giving them the chance to build. It was the BPCA's vision that led to the green guidelines and the bidding proposal for the Solaire building site, which the Albanese Organization ultimately won.

"It started for us with the Battery Park City Authority looking at green in a holistic way for the entire community," says Russell, a civil engineer who educated himself on the importance of building green for commercial and residential projects. "Our fathers always focused on building high-quality. Green is the next evolution in that process."

In December, Russell accepted the Green Building Design award for the entire company from Global Green USA, an organization founded by Mikhail Gorbachev. Katie Couric hosted the event, attended by Mayor Bloomberg, Glenn Close and other leaders in the field of raising public awareness of living green.

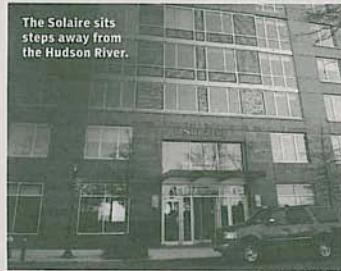
"A green building runs more efficiently, expends less energy and is easier to maintain," says Russell, whose father and uncle built 100 United Nations Plaza in the 1980s. "What might cost a few dollars more now will be less expensive to operate in the near and long-term future."

"Tenants all the time tell us how much their life and health has improved since they moved in here," says Chris. "That's what's most satisfying for us."

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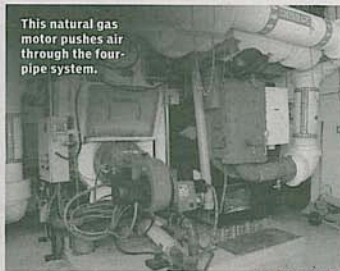
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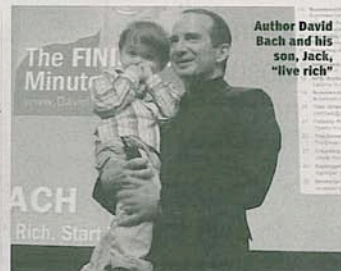
The Solaire sits steps away from the Hudson River.

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This natural gas motor pushes air through the four-pipe system.

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Author David Bach and his son, Jack, "live rich"

The rental buildings

Residents at the Solaire and Verdesian are approximately the same. The buildings run parallel to each other, with the Solaire at 20 River View Terrace directly across from the full-length basketball courts and New York City water taxis and New Jersey ferries. The Verdesian is behind the Solaire, toward the West Side Highway and closer to Chambers St.

Studio apartments cost between \$2,500 and \$3,200; one bedrooms start at \$2,450, with two-bedrooms costing between \$5,500 and \$7,500. Three-bedrooms cost from \$7,500 to \$9,600.

"We typically get more for rent than our competitors," says Chris Albanese. "That's partly because the air quality is so much better, and the amenities and high level of service from the staff."

Almost all tenants mentioned that they have never experienced such hands-on, personal service in any building where they have lived before. One called it as "five-star" as any fine hotel.

The engine room

The building's machinery and pipes are cleaner than most restaurant kitchens or health club locker rooms. The mechanical areas are free of dust, the engine machinery free of dirt. You could almost eat off the floors on the roof and the basement.

Tours of the building's innards occur whenever a resident, a school, a group of 5-year-olds, or a political figure wants. Signs detailing purpose are placed on every pipe, engine, tank, or operational system.

Mikhail Gorbachev was the first world leader to officially tour the Solaire when the building was initially completed. Governor George Pataki, who contributed to the success of Battery Park City and was among the group who selected the Albanese Organization to develop the site, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, and the energy ministers of Germany and Austria also toured the Solaire.

Community spirit

"Finish Rich" financial guru David Bach moved into the Solaire in 2004. The author of "Start Late, Finish Rich" and "Smart Women Finish Rich" says living at the Solaire changed his life.

"I didn't move in because it was green," says Bach. "I moved in because I loved the area. A few months after living here, I noticed my energy was up and I was feeling better. I was taking prescription drugs daily for allergies and then my allergies disappeared."

Bach even reports that Jack, his 4½-year-old son, showed reduced asthmatic problems once he moved in.

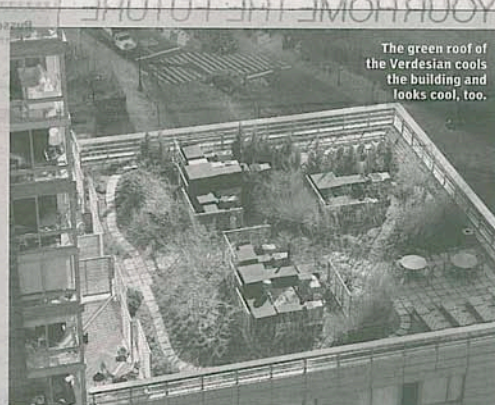
"After my health improved, I started paying attention to the green thing," says Bach, whose experience motivated him to write his next book on the green movement. "It just takes buying the right light bulb to get started. The next huge investment opportunity is the green wave."



The roof of the Solaire, with just some of the 382 solar panels on top



Heliostats on the Verdesian redirect sunlight.



The green roof of the Verdesian cools the building and looks cool, too.

Solar power with private sunshine

What if you could make a shady spot sunny? Well, now you can.

Three heliostats placed on top of the Verdesian are lined with solar panels. On the Solaire, 382 of these photovoltaic panels contribute to the building operating at 67% less electricity at peak time. The building also conserves 32% more energy than similar-sized buildings in NYC.

"Some residents place smaller solar panels on their windowsill to recharge their cell phone, using sunlight," says Michael Gubbins, director of residential management for the company that handles all three of their Battery Park buildings. He also talks to residents on a daily basis about health, recycling and the mechanics of the build-

ing. "Every day, people incorporate how the building works into their lives."

A master switch by each unit's door allows residents to turn off all apartment lights at once. Dimmers and motion sensors in public areas increase and decrease the amount of light based on the amount of natural light in the room or if the room is occupied.

A four-pipe air system brings cold and hot air to apartments. Most buildings use two-pipe valves, meaning you can only get hot air in the winter and cool air in the summer. Generated by natural gas, all air pushed into apartments goes through two filter systems, ensuring freedom from toxins.

Floor-to-ceiling Turnbull windows with Low-E glass prevent temperature from passing through from the outside to inside, while double caulking allows no air passage.

"With the exception of the front door or an open window, air does not escape from the building or get in from the outside," says Russell Albanese.

Fresh water and clean toilets

The tap water in the building tastes better than bottled, refrigerator water and ice is double-filtered, and because of a water recapturing system and a green roof, these buildings use 55% less water than a building of similar size.

For toilet water, a 25,000-gallon tank located in the Solaire's basement recycles the water from the kitchens and bathrooms. A bioreactor puts the water through an anoxic (no air) and anaerobic (air-filled) chamber, which destroys different types of bacteria that live in each environment.

The water then passes through an ultraviolet disinfectant system that further purifies it, before moving through an ozone machine that ensures a clear color. Finally, it ends up in the storage tank waiting to be flushed by residents' toilets or moves through the air-conditioning system to generate cooler air.

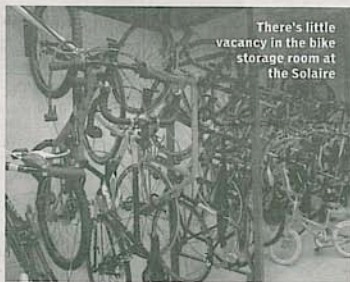
"We're making the building sustainable in its own way," says Gubbins. "This build-

ing does not drain the city's water facilities or add to its sewage. Just think if all buildings did that."

On the Solaire, two green roofs, one for residents on the 17th floor and another on the building's 27th-floor roof, capture 10,000 gallons of storm water and natural rainfall. The Visionaire tank holds 12,000 gallons. Both tanks, which look like giant black cauldrons, are stored in the buildings' basements. The capturing of the rainwater decreases the water that most buildings force to the street with poorly made gutter systems.

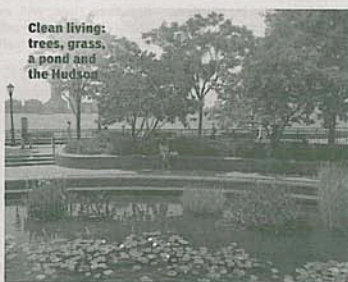
Even the washing machines are more efficient.

Front-loading washers use 10 to 18 gallons per wash, instead of the normal water usage, which is between 18 and 25 gallons per wash. That's up to 15 gallons of water, an amount water conservationists say could save certain water-deprived African families from dehydration.



There's little vacancy in the bike storage room at the Solaire

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Clean living: trees, grass, a pond and the Hudson

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A sign hanging in the Solaire's mechanical room

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Organized recycling

Children walking the Solaire's hallways pass a clothing recycling bin that contributed 6,000 pounds of clothing last year alone. A battery recycling bin is placed next to the garbage chutes. The storm water holding tank is in the bicycle room. Everywhere you look, there is something to remind you that you are in a zone of responsible living.

Even Tim Buttons, the building's interior designer with Stedila Design, had to learn green as a concept when he began ordering products for apartment interiors and common areas.

"I had no idea how much formaldehyde was in cotton," says Buttons, who did the interiors in the Visionaire as well. "The Albanese Organization actually created a facility to handle the construction waste most efficiently. New York is the perfect place to be green. We're stacked on top of each other. In California, these green buildings are 30 miles apart."

Battery Park

By mandate, approximately one-third of Battery Park's 90-plus acres must remain public park. Even on a warmish winter afternoon, people jog, ride bikes and play basketball. Inland, the large buildings may dwarf residents, but the amount of trees and grass bring locals closer to nature. Park benches and places to sit are everywhere.

Designed by landscape architect Michael Van Valkenburgh, Teardrop Park (which receives sunlight from the heliostats) has rock seats, a sandbox, a water park and a rock hop.

Construction will begin shortly on New York's first green Platinum LEED public middle school on Battery Park's south end, next door to the Visionaire.

"There are more green prisons in this country than schools," says Gubbins. "The parents in Battery Park really pushed for this. It's becoming part of this neighborhood's way of life."

The future

On the south end of Battery Park, next to the Ritz Carlton hotel, the Visionaire will be the greenest residential condominium in the United States. Rafael Pelli, the building's architect, who also designed the Solaire, points out the challenges of building green.

"Traditional insulation technologies did not work because of the amount of air that can enter a building," says Pelli, a partner in Pelli Clark Pelli. "With the Solaire, we couldn't rely on anything that had been built before. With the Visionaire, we improved everything."

Studies in the Visionaire start at \$680,000, while one-bedrooms start at \$840,000 and two-bedrooms start at \$1,285,000.

"People get really pumped about seeing the construction," says Jackie Urgo, president of the Marketing Directors, Inc., the group handling sales. "This building is the wave of the future."

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