



Green *Development*

RUSSELL ALBANESE

By Jodi La Marco



We caught up with Russell Albanese of the Albanese Organization to discuss green residential building in NYC.

CAN YOU GIVE OUR READERS SOME BACKGROUND ON THE ALBANESE ORGANIZATION?

We are a real estate development firm and we've been around for approximately 60 years. We do a heavy concentration of work in New York City on high rise multi-family and commercial projects as both owner-developers and development managers. We began working on our first holistically green project back in 2000 with the building which today is known as the Solaire in Battery Park City. That building was completed as the first LEED Gold high-rise residential building in the country. We recently constructed our second green building in Battery Park called the Verdesian, which is a LEED Platinum certified high-rise.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOLAIRE?

Back in 2000 and 2001, there was much less awareness about going green in the general industry. Things that we almost take for granted now—like green finishes and nontoxic paints—weren't really around. There were challenges with getting materials that we were comfortable putting into a high-rise building. Over time, many aspects have been simplified. The Solaire is the first building with an on-site waste water treatment plant within a high-

rise building. That hadn't been done before. It's much easier the next time around. For example, installing solar panels has become much easier because manufacturers and contractors have become more accustomed to using them.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR OTHER BUILDING, THE VISIONAIRE?

With the advances in technology and what we've learned from previous buildings, we've been able to implement additional technologies into the construction of the Visionaire. We have micro-turbines, which are natural gas-fired engines that generate a portion of the electricity for the building and also heat the hot water with the waste heat. We've been able to utilize LED lighting. LED is even more efficient than fluorescent. Improvements in optimizing the delivery of fresh air also became very important in these buildings. The ventilation system conditions the air in the summer months and heats it in winter months, so all of the apartments have fresh air. One thing we've been able to implement in the Visionaire and in our other building, the Verdesian, is what's called "energy recovery technology." Energy recovery technology recaptures energy from the air that is being exhausted from the building. It then transfers that energy—that heat or cool—to the incoming air. The elevators use regenerative braking which makes them much more energy efficient. When the elevators slow down and brake, they put energy back into the system in the building. It's much like how a hybrid car uses the energy from braking to recharge batteries. It's a similar technology.

WHY HAS THERE BEEN SUCH AN INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR BUILDINGS LIKE THE SOLAIRE, VERDESIAN, AND VISIONAIRE?

I think the big thing is really the transformation that's taken place in the market. With the first building back in 2003, there were very few people who saw green as an important part of their decision-making process. I think that consumers are really starting to demand these better buildings. They think of green as a high quality. That's really what it's all about. ■

BUILDING PROFILE

THE VISIONAIRE

LUXURY, GREEN LIVING



The Visionaire, the latest Battery Park City residential tower from green development pioneer The Albanese Organization in partnership with Starwood Capital, will provide residents with high-end, luxury finishes and amenities while offering an ecofriendly lifestyle. Slated for completion in the fall of this year, The Visionaire has been designed to qualify for the U.S. Green Building Council's highest rating for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED Platinum).

Designed by Rafael Pelli of Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, the 35-story condominium will feature 251 residences, studios to three bedrooms, starting at \$690,000. The contoured glass and terracotta tower will feature a unique curved façade showcasing generous Manhattan Harbor river views from all corners of the building.

The Visionaire will offer high-efficiency filtered air and water treatment, natural materials, and top-of-the-line, environmentally sound finishes as well as other innovative sustainable elements including programmable thermostats, building-integrated solar panels and wind-generated power.

Amenities at The Visionaire will include a state-of-the-art fitness center and spa, an indoor pool, two beautiful landscaped rooftop gardens with built-in grills, a screening lounge with fireplace, dining area, a children's playroom and on-site parking.

The Marketing Directors, Inc. is the exclusive sales and marketing agent. Call (212) 425-2550 for an appointment or visit www.thevisionaire.com.

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