

# GOTHAM

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## Eco-Conscious Living in Chelsea

By: Mike Olson



Kitchens feature high-end appliances

Translated from German, developer Anbau Enterprises' company name means "to add on to a building," an appropriate sentiment in a city where each vacant lot serves as a foundation onto which a new piece of the future is built. And whether they were transforming the former InterContinental into the luxury residences that today make up 110 Central Park South or constructing Harsen House, the Upper West Side's first LEED-certified residential building, Anbau has taken its responsibility to the city seriously.

"Every addition we make is building our urban fabric," says Barbara van Beuren, one half of the husband-and-wife team that founded Anbau. "It's not about us; it's about how a building interacts in an urban context." Nowhere is that worldview more apparent than at their latest development, Citizen, at 124 West 23rd Street—a 16-story condominium that fits seamlessly into a historic neighborhood that has undergone a historic reinvention.

Today, being in this part of Chelsea puts you steps away from lunch at Eataly, a stroll to the Union Square Greenmarket, a visit to one of West Chelsea's many art galleries, or a jog along Hudson River Park. But five years ago the future wasn't quite so bright on this stretch of 23rd Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Not only had Madison Square Park and the High Line—the two destinations that

bookend this corridor—yet to have their Renaissance moments, but a hazy real estate market put plans for the lot at 124 on hold.



Expansive windows bring in a lot of light and very little noise

Eventually the timing was right, but the original design for Citizen—a trendy glass façade that didn't exactly mesh with its surroundings—no longer worked. "We didn't want to stick out like a sore thumb," explains Corcoran executive vice president Iva Spitzer. "We wanted to fit into the streetscape." So the new and improved Citizen shed that impersonal glass exterior, opting instead for traditional elements such as brick, steel, and terra-cotta that recall local legends like the Hotel Chelsea and London Terrace Gardens.

Though the exterior is reminiscent of its historic neighbors, the inside of Citizen is nothing like a 100-year-old Chelsea walk-

up. Whether it's a spacious studio or a two-bedroom with a study, each of the building's 29 units has been designed to optimize natural light and air quality, featuring high ceilings and expansive windows that offer beautiful views of the city, as well as sound attenuation that greatly reduces street noise.



Natural wood abounds throughout the building

Better yet, most apartments come with outdoor space. Communing with nature on a Juliette balcony or private terrace is another of Anbau's founding principles, and it's the reason why one element of Citizen has stayed constant through every design change. "Anbau has been committed to being a gold LEED certified building since the get-go," Spitzer explains. "It's a huge selling point, but they do that because it's what they believe in, not because it's a marketing tool."

True, for Citizen, working to be recognized by the US Green Building Council is a matter of philosophy, not something to tout in a glossy sales brochure. (In fact, Citizen's brochure is more like a neighborhood newspaper, complete with ad space given,

for free, to local businesses.) Anbau has always focused on building performance from an environmental perspective, going beyond LEED baselines to save energy and reduce heating, cooling, water, and lighting needs. "The health benefits are going to have a long-term impact on the buyer and also set a standard that everybody should be building to," says van Beuren of Citizen's sustainable design and construction.

The people lining up to tour Citizen might not notice that the cabinets, floors, and doors are made from wood and other natural materials, not composites, to reduce off-gassing and thus maximize indoor air purity. And when they sit back and enjoy the air quality, light, and lack of noise in their new home, they might even take it for granted. In a way, that's the point.



The brick façade meshes with the historic neighborhood

Anbau Enterprises' name isn't the only thing that holds deeper meaning. The developers chose the name "Citizen" because it carries its own significance. "It came from wanting to be a good citizen in our neighborhood and world," van Beuren explains. "We sit between two different neighborhoods on a cross-town street, so it really becomes a nexus. You've got this mixed, live/work neighborhood with tech people and art people and families. There's a lot going on in this area, so Citizen seemed to be a good descriptor of where we are and our beliefs."