

# BROKERS WEEKLY

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## LIVING SPACE

# A little piece of heaven in Hell's Kitchen

BY LIANA GREY

New York may be the city that never sleeps, but some parts do offer refuge from all the hustle and bustle.

Hell's Kitchen, a neighborhood bordered by nightlife hotspot Chelsea and the packed streets of midtown, isn't one of them.

On any given night, dozens of theatergoers and tourists migrate from Times Square to the Thai restaurants, Sushi joints, and Italian bistros lining Ninth Avenue.

For apartment hunters that fall in love with the neighborhood's energy, but consider settling elsewhere to escape midtown's chaos after a long day at work, there's finally a compromise in the form of Griffin Court, a 95-unit condominium complex on Tenth Avenue between 53rd and 54th Streets.

The pair of eight-story towers, which were built by Alchemy Properties and opened for sales last March, are just a block from Restaurant Row and across the street from an acclaimed Mediterranean restaurant, Taboon. But it's an oasis of calm amidst all the excitement.

For starters there's the Zen-like hallway leading off the lobby, which evokes the entrance to a Japanese-inspired spa with potted plants, sleek benches, dim lighting, and slatted wooden walls. Then there's the fact that the primary amenity is a landscaped, 8,700 s/f courtyard (the "court" in Griffin Court), where gatherings for brokers and residents are held.

At a party last summer, which was announced via e-blast to a list of 8,000 brokers, guests mingled among light-strung trees, rosebushes, and other flowers in the two-level garden, which has additional tables, lounge chairs, and plantings on a loft-like deck. "You felt like you weren't in New York," said Wendy Triffon, sales director at Griffin Court.

When residents are not lounging in the courtyard, or venturing to Central Park, which is a short walk away, they stumble across constant reminders of both places.

The fitness center in the basement is lined with oversized photographs of the iconic park's walking paths and fountain, and a nature-inspired mural designed by a local artist was installed on the façade

facing Tenth Avenue, which will soon be occupied with retail outlets.

A model studio, which has a full-sized kitchen with gourmet appliances, overlooks the branches of a tree planted along a side street.

Other apartments, which range from studios to three-bedroom duplexes, offer a glimpse of urban life, including the traffic along Tenth Avenue and the playground of a public school, while drowning out the noise. Thanks to oversized double-paned windows, "you see children out there, but you don't hear them," said Triffon.

The building's location on Tenth Avenue makes all the difference when it comes to providing peace and quiet.

The thoroughfare has a spillover of restaurants and bars from Ninth Avenue, and a similar mix of mid-range and affordable independent shops. But because Tenth Avenue marks the start of Midtown West's final frontier — a formerly industrial area extending towards the Hudson River — it's slightly less crowded than blocks to the east.

Head south of Griffin Court, past pizzerias, delis, gourmet markets, dollar stores, the Skyline Hotel, a branch of the New York Public Library, and a park teeming with children, and the block becomes bright and airy thanks to an open construction site. Several new luxury rentals have cropped up on Tenth Avenue in recent years, including one that sits across the street from Griffin Court.

"Young people who have been renting and are ready to purchase" are attracted to Griffin Court, which is 15% sold, said Triffon. With prices ranging from \$735,000 to \$3,860,000, open houses have drawn more established prospective buyers, too, like a wealthy doctor who set his sights on a duplex with a wrap-around terrace overlooking a small stretch of the Hudson River.

"Not only are you in walking distance of Central Park, but you can walk to the river," said Triffon. A waterfront bike path, which runs from the Staten Island Ferry terminal to the George Washington Bridge, is an urban oasis in and of itself. Fittingly, Griffin Court is bike-friendly, with large basement storage units reserved for each resident.



Griffin Court's 8,700 s/f courtyard (above) is a focal point day and night. The apartments are bright, airy and full of views.



Also included in the package are rooftop cabanas, which allow residents to embrace the city from a distance. "It almost looks like a Hollywood set," Triffon said of the office towers of midtown, which are close enough to offer spectacular views, but not too close. "They look like cardboard cutouts."

