

LAUREATE EXUDES SENSE OF SERENE COMPETENCE

September 03, 2010 06:00PM

By James Gardner

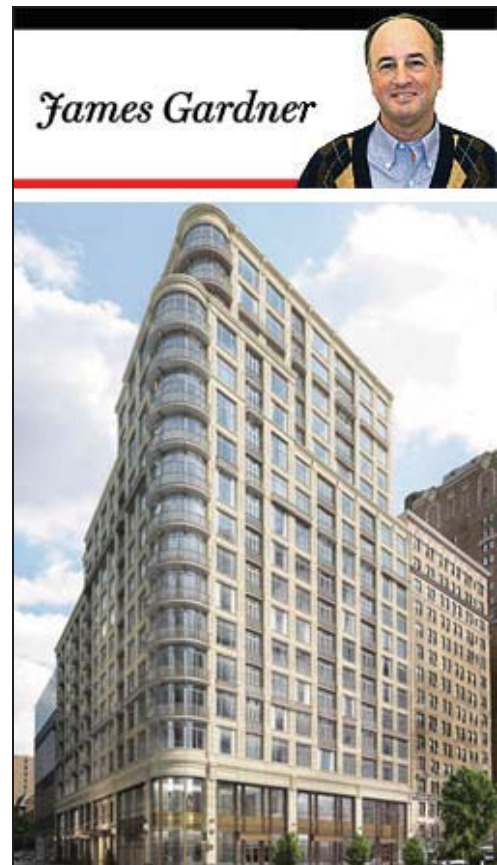
Incrementally, though not without a few false steps, the Upper West Side is getting better. Some of its more recent developments, like [the Corner](#) at 200 West 72nd Street, have done the area no favors, but the general trend is one of improvement. What with 15 Central Park West -- which is as much about Broadway as about Central Park West -- the reborn Lincoln Center and the new [Apple store](#) on Broadway and 68th Street, among others, the place is looking increasingly lustrous and expensive. For those of us who grew up here in the 1970s, before such a transformation was even dreamed of, the change is astounding.

One of the more charming adornments of Upper Broadway is the nearly completed Laureate, at 2150 Broadway and 76th Street. For years, if not for more than a century, this corner space was occupied by two very different, very low-lying buildings, united by nothing more than the fact that they were so drably generic. You could walk by them for decades and never notice them. Then came a razed lot, and now before our eyes materializes a white palace, designed by SLCE Architects and developed by Continental Ventures, headed by principals Jane Gol and Amir Chaluts. At 20 stories, it contains 75 condos ranging in size from one- to five-bedrooms, and asking prices between \$1.67 and \$8 million.

Its shape and contours roughly resemble those of the Upper West Side's Corner but the result is so much finer. Instead of glass and steel and an ineffaceable whiff of value engineering, you have a pale, limestone clad structure, with an imposing Beaux Art awning at street-level, as well as the first two floors linked by giant-order pilasters.

Above their imposing cornice, at the corner of the building, rise a sequence of Juliette balconies. On either side, the windows are arrayed with geometric regularity, but because they are punched-in, they exude classic old New York charm and never appear monotonous. The top four stories take the form of a set-back. There are no fireworks to the building, only a sense of serene competence.

James Gardner, formerly the architecture critic of the New York Sun, writes on the visual arts for several publications.



The Laureate at 2150 Broadway