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Selling New York S4E2: Movers & Shakers

HGTV's Selling New York rides along with brokerages CORE, Gumley Haft Kleier and Warburg as they try to sell fabulous properties fabulously. Here's our recap of how the NYC real estate industry is portrayed to the world, penned by Molly Reisner. Episode air date: 10/20/2011.



Hey Recap Party Peeps! Sidle up with me next to last night's SNY episode where we'll LIH (Laugh Inside Head), CBAB (Curse Bank Account Balance) and WWHBNA (Wish We Had Bigger Nicer Apartments). In the first story, we fall into the flipside when a broker helps a Canadian couple find the best subpar apartment so they can renovate and resell. Will they sing the sweet song of ka-ching? Then, a broker tries to sell an apartment and its Harlem locale to his already-apartment-burned buddy. Will uptown turn his frown upside down? Ye aske questions, and ye shall be granted responses!

CRISIS #1: COUPLE WITH LOTS OF EXTRA MONEY WANTS TO BUY, RENOVATE & FLIP NYC PAD

Buyers Sebastian and Astrid (far-out!) Labno hail from our red maple-leaved ally to the north, O Canada. They've come to NYC to meet up with broker Sabrina Kleier, with the hopes of investing in a fixer-upper to makeover and eventually flip. So how did the Labnos even here about the Kleiers? Through their work with animal charities! You may recall Mama Bear has a stash of dogs and once gently petted a turtle.

Astrid plucked this little white fluffer stray from the mean streets:

Clearly we are dealing with good, nice people. That's so Canadian of them. The Labnos leave it to Sab to show them some spots. Their first stop is at 2 Cornelia Street in the West Village. This triplex penthouse is 1,823 square feet of pure peculiarity:



Because it's in a flatiron-y building, every room seems to end in a sharp, unfriendly point. At \$2.12 million, the Labnos aren't buying into the quirkiness, and def not feeling the Japanese soaking tub chamber.

For when you want to drown your victims:



Heebie jeebies! Seb tells Sab that the place is "out there for us" and that he's willing to put in \$100k of renovations into the right place to make it "spectacular." Sab's all "what they're looking for is like looking for a needle in a haystack." The Labnos naturally want to look at less crazy needles.

So off the trio trots to a less freaky, less Japanese soaking tubby place at 49 Howard Street in Soho. There's no nutty bathtub in the bedroom in this unit, but there is 1,813 square feet of wide open loft space:

The Labnos like the loft, but also find the raw guts of the pipes and wires sticking out everywhere "overwhelming."

These cables have no shame:



Listed at \$1.42 million, Astrid wants something more straightforward. Like, with walls. Sab takes this info as a newsflash, and instantly has a more conservative alternative to show them at...

150 West 56th Street in Midtown. The address alone means we're not going to get anymore of these arty-partments. With a view of Central Park and separate rooms, the Labnos are enamored:

The Labnos call the \$1.28 million abode "a contender" and "pretty much what we're looking for." Nailed it, Sab! Way to play the ol' "show 'em two uncontesters first" trick. The building was built in '88, so the kitchen and bathroom especially are looking cruddy.

I suspect this yarn toilet cover is original '80s. Seriously, these things are disgusting:

Sab's concerned that the place will go quickly if the Labnos don't put in an offer. Dum-dum-dum... Later, the Labnos attend a Humane Society benefit



where they tell Sab that YES! OUI (if they are from a French provence)! They want to flip that midtown apartment like it's never been flipped before! The updater informs that they not only bought and began renovations on the apartment, but they also put in an offer on another pad in Tribeca. Pretty savvy Canadians, eh?

CRISIS #2: ONCE BITTEN TWICE SHY GUY EXPLORES HARLEM'S HISTORIC & HAUTE OFFERINGS

CORE agent Adrian Noriega is up in Harlem to show his pal, buyer Doug Marino, a fancy condo inside a converted old schoolhouse at 220 West 148th Street aka P.S. 90 Doug and Adrian take a spin inside the \$595k 1BR/1BA luxe layout:



Doug digs the high ceilings and the sunlit space, and gives the place an A-. The minus because he doesn't know the nabe very well like he did in his XBN (Ex Best Nabe), Williamsburg. Y'see, Doug had been working with Adrian on an offer in a W'burg building, but the developers got sent to detention. Now, Doug's skittish about getting burned by a new prospect.

Adrian assures Doug that he's in good hands (that's what they all say, I don't even know what that means). To ease his queasiness about Harlem, Adrian sets Doug up on a boisterous tour date with neighborhood diplomat and chef Alexander Smalls. The gentlemen gander about Harlem on a tour of cultural and savory treats:

I learned a lot on the tour! Like, guess which famous singer used to live in Harlem? The answer my friend is blowing in the wind by this house:



Bob Dylan used to folk out here! Something else I learned, there's a really nice wine store in Harlem that DELIVERS TO YOUR HOUSE.

Kind of a dealbreaker for Doug. After strolling through Striver's Row and past the Apollo and Sylvia's Restaurant (note to self: yum), Doug is hooked on Harlem. Later, Adrian and Doug meet at The Cupcake Cafe to have a contest about who can ignore their cupcake the longest:



While pretending their delicious cupcakes don't exist, Doug reveals to Adrian that he wants to make an offer! The tour clinched it. BUT, Doug is having major heart palpitations about losing the apartment and wants to bid the asking price of \$595k. Dougie say wha? Adrian's all hells to the no, schooling Doug that he should come in lower. Like at \$525k. After all, the unit has been on the market for months. Still, Doug is scared about lowballing and the two rest at \$535k. Adrian assures Doug "Trust me, I know what I'm doing." Do I think this entire back and forth was manufactured for TV tension? I'll tell you my answer if you buy me a cupcake.

Later, this happens:

Huggie time! Doug bought the apartment for \$548k and is moving in to his slice of schoolhouse. He and Adrian share a "Yay, it all worked out!" hug and Doug expresses his supreme satisfaction with Adrian's wheeling and dealing. Extra credit for Harlem!



Episode grade: A spooky tub, some Sylvia's spicy rub plus 2 contracts racked add up to 4 out of 5 cackling Kleiers!

