

the REAL ESTALKER

June 13th, 2013

Saxophonist David Sanborn Lists Manhattan Townhouse



SELLER: David Sanborn

LOCATION: New York City, NY

PRICE: \$12,000,000

SIZE: (approx.) 5,500 square feet*, 4-5 bedrooms, 3 full and 2 half bathrooms

YOUR MAMAS NOTES: Your Mama first saw the listing on the internet but the lightening fast property gossips at the Daily News were the first to chat up the New York City townhouse owned by five-time Grammy-winning alto saxophonist David Sanborn and (re-)listed this week with a \$12,000,000 asking price.

This is not the first time Mister Sanborn and his missus, Sofia, have been to the real estate rodeo with their fully updated and upgraded turn of the 20th century townhouse located mid-block on a lovely, tree-canopied street just off busy-busy Broadway on Manhattan's Upper West Side. The legendary single reed woodwind blower and his educator wife listed the townhouse on the open market in September 2010 with a nine million dollar price tag. Several months later the price dropped to \$8.45 million and in August 2011, for reasons Your Mama ain't privy, the well-maintained urban mini-manse was taken off the market.

We aren't exactly sure why the Sanborns and their team of moving and shaking real estate agents think the townhouse can now be sold for more than \$3.5 million more than the reduced price it failed to sell for two years ago. Then again, children, business is quite brisk in the upper tiers of the property market in Manhattan and there is—some of y'all have surely heard it before—a certain school of converse real estate logic that suggests that if a high end house fails to sell at a certain price it sometimes and strangely becomes more desirable to deep pocketed buyers if the asking price is substantially increased. Don't scoff and pout and stomp your indignant feet, kittens. Believe it or not, this trick o' the trade isn't always effective but it works far more often than you might imagine or real estate agents would stop doing it. Anyhoo...

The 19-foot wide red brick and brownstone townhouse was originally built in (or around) 1900, according to current marketing materials, and was custom converted from a five unit multi-unit building to a single family residence by Mister and Missus Sanborn who bought it, according to the Daily News, more than 25 years for an unrevealed sum from an unidentified opera singer.

Current listing information shows the (unfortunately elevator-free) five-plus floor brownstone-type townhouse has a total of 13 rooms that include 4-5 bedrooms, depending on use, plus three full and two half bathrooms. Floor plans show half a dozen fireplaces (kitchen, parlor, living room, one guest bedroom, the master bedroom, and the music studio) although the listing description isn't specific about which of the four of them work.

A classic stoop that makes Your Mama ache at our very core with Big Apple nostalgia climbs to the parlor floor where the rehabbed interiors retain many original architectural details and features. There are intricate inlaid parquet floors, almost grand 11-foot-8-inch ceilings, meticulous mill work, and crown moldings. A narrow sitting room off the foyer overlooks the street while a larger living room at the rear of the residence benefits from a more serene garden view and an exquisite all-oak coffered ceiling that's original to the house. Mister Sanborn reportedly used the wee library beyond the living room as a meditation lounge.

The garden level kitchen has both wide-plank wood and stone tile flooring plus custom-crafted Shaker-style cabinets, some sort of stone or solid surface counter tops, a large center island with vegetable sink and snack counter, and high-quality commercial-style appliances. An adjoining breakfast room connects through to a 35-foot deep walled garden with foliage-ringed brick dining terrace. Also on the garden level are second, under the stoop entrance, a guest or staff bedroom that does not have a private bathroom and instead makes use of a nearby three-quarter hall bathroom off the laundry room. There's a full basement, which is fantastic for storage, but the floor plan shows it has but a 6'4" high ceiling height so it's not exactly the best spot for the next wildly wealthy owners to add a media room or fitness studio.

Two equally sized guest/family bedrooms on the third floor share a Jack 'n' Jill style bathroom. One of the bedrooms—listing photographs indicate Mister Sanborn uses it as a den—has a pocket door that slides open to reveal a cozy office/study. Both of the bedrooms have a shockingly stingy amount of closet space that would be barely adequate for weekend guests—never make 'em too comfortable, right?—but an out and out toy and clothing storage nightmare for a resident child or teenager. Think, puppies, about how many pairs of shoes and designer sunglasses a 16 year old New Yorker with wickedly rich parents is likely to have.

The master suite, a proper retreat that encompasses the entire fourth floor, has a comfortably-sized bedroom with a fireplace and direct access to a small, private terrace that peers through the trees over the the surrounding buildings' storage unit-sized backyards. A well-equipped (and windowless) galley-style bathroom connects the bedroom to an enviably spacious dressing room lined with built-in wardrobes.

Mister Sanborn old the peeps at the Daily News he'd recorded half a dozen albums in the 52-foot long, open-plan penthouse level recording studio that's painstakingly soundproofed so as not to disturb the neighbors. He said, in fact, that fire crackers we're set off in the space to test the heavy duty soundproofing. One end of the loft-like space has a fireplace and lounge area while the other has a jumbled plethora of musical instruments beneath a massive sky light. A half bathroom is convenient if not exactly as private as Your Mama and the Dr. Cooter might prefer.

Mister and Missus Sanborn plan to maintain a (smaller) residence in Manhattan but, according to the Daily News are also shopping for a house in the country.

*Listing information from 2010-11 show the townhouse has about 6,800 square feet, the Tax Man's records put it at 5,529 square feet and Your Mama calculates it comes in at around 4,700 square feet, give or take a couple hundred square feet.

Listing photos and floor plan: CORE