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NEW YORK REAL ESTATE NEWS

## Let's make a meal

Brokers dish on the city's best spots to take clients when a deal is on the table

BY KATHERINE CLARKE AND GUELDA VOIEN

For New York's savviest residential brokers, wining and dining clients is not just an enviable perk of the job, but an essential part of expanding one's business and ensuring referrals.

Fred's at Barneys, the Upper East Side eatery inside the famed department store, others revealed some less obvious gems downtown and beyond.

Brokers should pick a restaurant or bar that provides a feeling of luxury, said Town

or vegetarians, and often find the white-hot spotlights of the hottest of-the-minute establishment to be a turn off."

### Upper East Side

Sotheby's International Realty broker Nikki Field, who is currently listing a \$25 million townhouse at 14 East 82nd Street, said she often hosts clients for cocktails or dinner at the Metropolitan Club, a private social club on 60th Street off Fifth Avenue. Original members of the club, famously founded by J.P. Morgan in 1891, include William Vanderbilt and James Roosevelt.

The old world-style meeting place features a regal dining area.

"No press, no photographers, no cell phones permitted," Field said. "The privacy that the club provides is appropriate for relaxed, confidential conversations without

any concern that our meetings may trigger unwanted rumors."

Meanwhile, Fred's is still a popular venue for broker meetings. While the elevators — always swarming with bargain-hunting tourists — may frustrate in-a-hurry brokers, Fred's affords decent food and a modicum of privacy for conversation, although it also serves as a place to see and be seen.

"They give me this great table that is in the center of everything," said Royce Pinkwater, also of Sotheby's, "but it has a big privacy factor."

### Midtown

Bustling Midtown is perpetually buzzing with brokers making deals. Michael's

restaurant at 24 West 55th Street, for instance, is a longtime venue for commercial brokers and developers to discuss deals, while the iconic Plaza hotel is a favorite of almost everyone.

For years, the lobby bar at the Four Seasons hotel at 57 East 57th Street has also been a popular deal-making venue for residential brokers. By virtue of being in one of the most luxurious city hotels, it affords a sense of exclusivity while serving snacks, afternoon tea, wine and champagne by the glass, as well as cocktails and cigars.

Also popular is the Core Club at 60 East 55th Street, which has become a haven for New York elites from all industries, including Blackstone Group president Stephen Schwarzman, architect Richard Meier, football legend Dan Marino and Hollywood talent agent Ari Emanuel. Warburg Realty executive managing director Richard Steinberg is a founding member of the invitation-only club and said it affords privacy for client meetings.

As previously reported, the club features a facialist, a massage parlor, a gym, a library, a screening room and famous artworks hanging from the walls — all for a \$50,000 initiation fee and \$15,000 in annual dues. Elliman broker Michael Lorber, son of company chairman Howard Lorber, regularly checks in at the club on Foursquare, according to his Twitter page.

Field said her favorite venue for a closing celebration is nearby Le Cirque, restaurateur Sirio Maccioni's eatery at One Beacon Court. The iconic French Italian bistro is "always festive and perfect for champagne toasting," Field said.

### Tribeca

Sonia Stock, a Douglas Elliman broker who specializes in Tribeca, said she tends to seek out eateries in the neighborhood with great food — and a low decibel count.

"There are so many restaurants out there that are great — they're packed and hip, but they're too loud," said Stock, who is listing a \$3 million loft at 161 Hudson Street. "You can't hear what your client is saying."

Stock recommends the Odeon at 145 West Broadway as a meet-up spot for brokers and their clients because "it's busy, but the tables are set apart so you can talk openly with your client."

The longstanding neighborhood brasserie has been a favored haunt of late night diners and serves staples such as homemade pasta and steak tartar.

City Hall, a grand American steakhouse at 131 Duane Street, is also a favorite of Stock's. The marble checkerboard-floored eatery has top cuts and a well-stocked raw bar.

### Soho

In nearby Soho, Elliman's John Gomes recommends the Crosby Hotel at 79 Crosby Street.

"We actually have a standing weekly breakfast meeting there with one of our developers," Gomes told *TRD*. "It's a happy room that was thoughtfully designed by Kit Kemp, who is the master of using color, patterns and texture. It's easy to be inspired there."

As for the Crosby's clientele, Gomes said it's a creative mix, which makes for great people-watching.

"The dining room has a comfortable feeling to it that reminds you of home," he said, "which is always a good feeling to have when you're trying to close a deal."

Also popular with brokers and other real estate pros is the Mercer Kitchen, the restaurant in the basement of the Mercer Hotel at 99 Prince Street. Famed chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten is at the helm of the operation.

The Mercer Kitchen serves anything from scallops to designer hot dogs, as well as custom cocktails.

Lastly, Warburg's Steinberg said Soho mainstay Balthazar is his favorite spot for finalizing a sale.

While the popular bistro is "far too crowded" to hash out early negotiations, he said, it's a great spot for ironing out the last few details.

"I usually take people there to fine-tune a deal," Steinberg said. **TRD**



The Metropolitan Club at 1 East 60th Street. Inset, Nikki Field of Sotheby's International Realty.



From left: The Crosby Hotel dining room; Elliman broker John Gomes.



But identifying the right place to take a client to lunch or dinner — and which spots are conducive to deal-making — can be difficult, considering the sheer number of New York City restaurants out there and the ever-evolving tastes of moneyed New Yorkers.

*The Real Deal* asked some well-known city brokers which restaurants and bars they favor for meals with clients. While many cited longtime beloved hangouts such as

Residential's David Salvatore, but the definition of luxury has changed in recent years as client bases have evolved and people working in creative industries have joined finance executives as a key group of buyers.

"It's no longer about spending vast amounts of money," Salvatore said. "It's about personal connections and the specific attention you give your clients. Many of my clients in the technology field happen to be vegans