

YOUR HOME

It's a steel!

First-time Queens developer proves mettle with rust-see condo

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It's all about the façade at East of East.

Made from Cor-Ten steel, the ribbed exterior cladding with square window cut-outs changes color in time. A few months up, it's already burnt orange and shines like pink dusk when the sun hits it right. Standing in front, you'll find it hard not to nod at how the desire to do something different turned into raw success, or snicker at this metal thing that juts out of the ground like a junkyard fence. Already, passers-by point at it.

The brainchild of Amol Sarva, founder of licnyc.com, this 13-unit boutique condo takes cues from the neighborhood's artsy legacy, industrial past and artists Richard Serra and Piet Mondrian. On Jackson Ave. near 47th Road, this building gets my vote for best in the neighborhood.

As the need for distinctive buildings outside Manhattan continues, this might even be the most important new building in the borough.

Why? In some ways, it fits with the brick and terra-cotta structures around it. In other ways, it stands half-tall like a rebel on a road full of run-of-the-mill wanna-bes. Growing up in Little Neck Queens, first-time developer Sarva lived in the neighborhood eight years before trying his hand at real estate.

"Here we are across the street

from PS1 and 5 Pointz, this major crossroads for local art, and all these new buildings look banal and conventional," says Sarva, who invented the PEEK, a mobile device that sends/receives unlimited emails and texts for \$9.95 per month. "I was walking around with my dog, and I just thought I could do better. So I tried. It would be a betrayal to the neighborhood to do something boring."

Working with architect Brian Ripel, who founded the DUMBO-based RSVP Architecture Studio, Sarva asked for something special.

"I showed up with 40 to 50 photos of the neighborhood," he says. "I had shots from the N.Y. Terra Cotta Company building, PS1, Empire City Iron Works and the Noguchi Museum. It's amazing what we achieved with simple materials like oxidized steel and polished cement block. It looks like copper and marble."

Sarva is not your typical developer. He has a Ph.D. in cognitive science from Stanford University, testified before the U.S. Senate on wireless policy and was a national debate champ at Stuyvesant High School.

Working with Ripel, whose wife is found-object artist Jean Shin, the two sought to connect the neighborhood's past to a hopeful future. What they created is as humble as the lumberyard next door and as urban as



High-tech entrepreneur and real estate developer Amol Sarva in front of East of East, his new condo building with an oxidized steel facade

ANTHONY LANZILOTE

the train yard behind it.

While some might say the façade is an architectural gimmick, aren't they all? And I don't care, as long as it makes you think, feed off its energy or live there. Even if Cor-Ten has been used before, it hasn't in this way, here.

"The intent was drama," says Ripel, who worked with Sarva 4½ years on designs for other local sites before finalizing this five-sided building. "The idea was to do something inexpensive and alchemize it into something fantastic. We went with the

horizontal ribbed steel to give the vertical windows a floating feel."

Inside, two-bedroom apartments have 33-foot living rooms and windows faced directly at local sites such as PS1. Already three units are in contract, with Sarva taking the duplex penthouse for his young family. Units have stainless-steel countertops and walnut floors stained dark. Sales people think the façade and lofts will attract a certain buyer.

"There are a lot of buyers who want art or architectural integrity," says Patrick Smith, in charge

of selling the building for Nancy Packes Inc. "Not much in this neighborhood has appealed to them before. If they buy now, this will appreciate as the neighborhood does."

Wishful thinking, but if the architect goes on to become a Richard Meier or the developer Ian Schrager or Bill Gates, consider yourself in this one early.

Located at 13-14 Jackson Ave., East of East has two-bedrooms that start at \$727,000. For more details, go to eastofeast.com or call (646) 450-3278.

Four more we like:



The Industry
21-45 45th Drive
theindustrylic.com
(718) 784-0880
Smart layouts and finishes. Roof deck with incredible skyline views. Prices start at \$390,000 for studios and \$485,000 for one-bedrooms. Some

ground-floor units have backyards. Tax abatement decreases monthly cost.



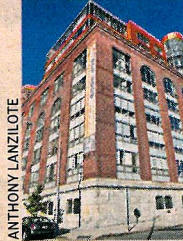
The Murano
519 Borden Ave.
muranolic.com
(718) 488-1986
According to the Developers Group, which markets it, these are the best finishes in the area. The building is 40% sold or in contract. Prices start at

\$480,000 for one-bed. Beware of lighting scheme that changes color on the hour.



L Haus
11-02 49th Ave.
Lhauslic.com
(718) 945-4287
Closing credits and 15-year tax abatement keep condo with odd façade affordable. Prudential Douglas Elliman's Karen Mansour likens LIC

to "SoHo or Tribeca in the early days." We agree. Two bedrooms start at \$675,000.



The Powerhouse
217 51st Ave.
thepowerhouselic.com
(718) 472-5009
One block from state park, the building has one-bedrooms ready for move-in for \$680,000. It's a converted

powerhouse, so expect soaring ceilings and original brick. Pool and sauna, too.

INDUSTRY

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