

The gray palette and heated concrete floors contrast with the loft's vivid accessories.





Room at the Top

Want to escape the city without even leaving downtown? **Barry Salzman's** sky-high loft might be just the haven for you.

by **Jennifer Gould Keil**
photographs by **Peter Murdock**

THERE'S A BALANCED AESTHETIC to Barry Salzman's Chelsea penthouse that's both cool and inviting: cool, thanks to a palette of grays that lends the minimalist sophistication that's almost required in this part of town; and inviting, thanks to Salzman's precise touch and the talent of the Pierce Allen interior design team. All the amenities required for full-service entertaining have been incorporated into the sleek design. "Every time I walk in, it's like taking a deep, calming breath," says Salzman.

Yet it's only once you've walked up the customized staircase, through the skylit recreational room—complete with a second kitchen's Sub-Zero fridge, freezer, and two dishwashers—and out to the 1,200-square-foot terrace that you can truly appreciate the loft's splendor. The zenlike roof deck, adorned with lush white and green plants (courtesy of the folks at Sawyer/Berson Architects and Landscape Architecture), brings *un peu de* Provence to 15th Street and provides for as much outdoor living as Salzman, who was born in Zimbabwe, could realistically bring to the city. There's an enclosed shower, top-of-the-line grill, granite dining table for 12 with Jean Prouvé-inspired chairs, plus two sofas and armchairs. It's like having the rooftop lounge of a hip boutique hotel all to yourself.

"This is my retreat from the madness," says Salzman as he surveys his terrace, the sounds of the soothing infinity waterfall drowning out the bustling city below. "This place gives me balance. It grounds me in a city that can be so excessive."

And it's all for sale.



Salzman's kitchen is equipped with top-of-the-line stainless steel appliances. BELOW: The dining room follows the loft's muted color scheme.

Unsettlingly, the kitchen is a stark contrast to the rest of the loft's muted color scheme.

After more than 20 years in the corporate world, Salzman is now pursuing his passion for commercial and fine-art photography full time. He divides his time between Manhattan and Sydney when he's not jetting off on, say, a trip to the South Pacific for a *Vanity Fair* photo shoot. As a result, the media exec turned photographer has put his masterpiece on the market and plans to put down roots in Australia, then buy a smaller pied-à-terre here in the city. The 3,000-square-foot, two-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath interior, combined with the 1,200-square-foot terrace, is listed with Sotheby's International Realty for a sale price of \$6.25 million.

"It's unusual to find such openness in an intimate loft unit, but this one is awash with spectacular light, views, and sublime elegance," says Sotheby's broker Mara Flash Blum.

"And it's a very private, peaceful loft both inside and on the terrace," adds cobroker Glenn Norrgard. The duplex's location is also a plus. Two of Salzman's favorite restaurants, Bar Pitti and August, are nearby. He also frequents local photo galleries, including Matthew Marks, Sean Kelly, and the Yossi Milo Gallery.

Salzman purchased the loft eight years ago, and spent two years converting the space into his dream home. He describes his design style as "clean, open, and minimal.... I embarked on the design and renovation process and spent a lot on expensive finishings because I thought I'd live here forever. Creating it was a labor of love." The walls were even hand-plastered using a Venetian plaster technique. "Doing it was a bloody mess!" he says.

The heated concrete floors and the staircase are covered in custom-made



polished pale gray concrete tiles. The exterior tiles are the same, though unpolished, "to achieve a consistent inside-outside feel," says Salzman. "I wanted all the surfaces to have a clean, linear feel and to look like panels of stainless steel." True to that aesthetic, there's a brilliantly disguised home office just off the open kitchen. When the doors are closed, it's almost undetectable, hidden like a bat cave. "It was built to maximize the use of space under the staircase," Salzman explains.

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Salzman has often entertained on the zenlike 1,200-square-foot terrace, with its garden designed by Sawyer/Berson Architects and Landscape Architecture.



Everything is design-showcase spotless, from the stainless steel kitchen outfitted with top appliances to the nearby Boffi wet bar and 72-bottle wine cooler, complemented by gray textiles. The dishwasher, refrigerator, freezers, ice machine, and warming drawer all have surface panels made by B&B Italia to match the stainless steel cabinetry in the kitchen. Little paw prints, unavoidable if you had children, would destroy this place in an instant.

Salzman's photographs decorate the loft, including two photographs of greenhouses in California from his series *From Above*, aerial shots of everyday subjects "highlighted in an abstract light to emphasize the architectural elements of shape, pattern, and symmetry," explains Salzman. The photos above his bed add to the elegant tones of his gray-hued bedroom. His pictures, which don't come with the loft but may be for sale to the future owner, also include a shot taken from the terrace, showing the beams of light at Ground Zero this past September 11.

Versatility is a major selling point of the loft. "I've had lots of fun parties here. The space works so well for it," Salzman says, reflecting on his countless rooftop barbecues and even a 500-person bash not long after 9/11. Salzman had planned the party long in advance, but when the terrorists struck, he called everyone to cancel. "But people kept calling, saying that now was the time we should be together with friends," he says. "So I told everyone to come and bring whoever they felt they needed to be with." And they did.

"Everyone was so open, honest, and engaged," Salzman recalls. "People made new friends and shared their extraordinary emotional experiences. I'd love to have a party when the World Trade Center reopens, with the same guest list. It would be far more celebratory," he says wistfully, knowing that soon someone else will be hosting fêtes in the oasis he painstakingly created.

So then, why abandon his masterpiece? "Most of my family has relocated to Sydney, including my parents, sister, and nieces. It's time to reestablish adult family relationships, work between here and there, and get the best of both worlds." [G]

