

THE REAL DEAL

December 1, 2010

<http://therealdeal.com/newyork/articles/the-best-of-nyc-real-estate-2010>

The best of NYC real estate 2010

The Real Deal's picks for the year's top buildings, brokers, giveaways and more

By Candace Taylor



The New York City residential real estate market has come a long way from the dark days of late 2008 and early 2009. But despite the moderate improvements in the market, succeeding in the current climate remains far from easy. Many brokers and developers left the industry when the economy soured, and those that remain have no choice but to be on their "A" game.

Best-Selling Developer: Extell Development Company



The Rushmore

Gary Barnett's Extell is one of the most active and successful developers in the city right now, though also one of the most controversial. The company has been involved in a number of lawsuits involving its new residential condos.

At the Lucida, for example, an Extell affiliate sued brokerage Sloane Square NYC for breach of contract after the firm allegedly kept nearly \$200,000 in advance commissions for deals that never closed. (In March, a New York State Supreme Court judge awarded a judgment in favor of Extell.)

The company has since sued several other brokerages to recover advance commissions, and *The Real Deal* reported that the Corcoran Group, Prudential Douglas Elliman and Sotheby's International Realty have either volunteered to return advance commissions or reached settlements with Extell.

Another high-profile fracas has occurred at the Rushmore, where a group of buyers claimed that they should be able to get out of their contracts because Extell failed to begin closings by a Sept. 1, 2008, deadline. Extell argued that the missed deadline was due to a "typo" and that closings were supposed to start a year later. In April, Attorney General (and now Governor-Elect) Andrew Cuomo ruled that Extell failed to back up the typo claim, and ordered the developer to

release 41 buyers from disputed contracts.

Instead of conceding defeat, Extell fought back by filing a suit in New York State Supreme Court, arguing that Cuomo erred.

Amazingly, all this controversy doesn't appear to be keeping new buyers away. The Rushmore closed 68 units in 2010 -- more than any other Manhattan development south of 96th Street. Those sales totaled more than \$160 million, making the Rushmore the top-grossing Manhattan development of the year, according to StreetEasy. Two Extell projects came in second and third: The Lucida closed 30 units for more than \$148 million, and 535 West End Avenue closed 12 units for roughly \$122 million, according to StreetEasy.