

March 16, 2012

**KITCHEN
CONFIDENTIAL**

Smallbone aims high in NYC

'Made in England'
has cachet in the US,
writes Carol Lewis

There is a corner of a foreign skyscraper that will be forever England. Extell, responsible for the creation of some of Manhattan's most plush residences, has announced it is to fit the apartments in its One57 development with kitchens handmade in Wiltshire.

One57 is New York's version of London's One Hyde Park. Apartments in the 90-storey block, New York's highest residential tower, cost from \$7.8 million to \$115 million (£5 million to £73.3 million) — about \$4,000 per sq ft. Each of the 135 apartments, to be sited above a Park Hyatt hotel, will be fitted with a bespoke Smallbone of Devizes kitchen. The \$15 million deal is a fitting anniversary present for Smallbone's chief executive officer Leo



Caplan, who bought the company three years ago. "The fantastic news is that in all of the interviews and the literature, they have made a big fuss about the kitchens. Our kitchens are all handmade, and have been for 35 years, in Wiltshire, by British craftsmen," Caplan says.

The company has developed a "high gloss, high lacquer" version of its popular Macassar kitchen specially for the development. It will be available in either a dark wood finish (above) or painted in any colour. The kitchens are expected to be delivered at the end of this year/beginning of next year, ready for residents who will move in towards the end of 2013.

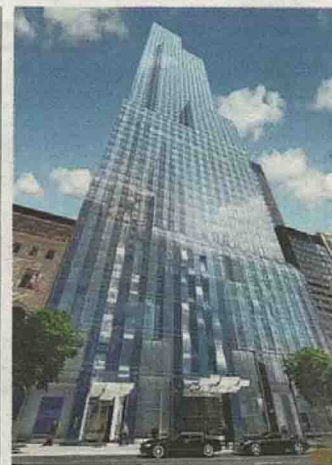
One57, at 157 West 57th Street, opposite Carnegie Hall, is the third Extell project to feature Smallbone. In two previous developments only one buyer out of about 50 declined to have its kitchens. "The

Americans love that they are handmade in England and the quality of our kitchens is superior to anything you can get in the US. The style is hard wearing but its design is delicate and European, rather than large and chunky," Caplan says.

In the past year, Smallbone's sales in the US have grown by 350 per cent with US staff, including the installers, trained in the UK. The US is now Smallbone's largest foreign export market, followed by Russia where sales increased by 300 per cent in 2010-11. Exports account for about 10 per cent of the company's turnover but Caplan wants to increase that to about 35 per cent within two years. The company is in discussions to open branches in Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong and Brazil.

With the imminent launch of a contemporary range in association with the interior designer Kelly Hoppen,

Above: the Smallbone Macassar kitchen in One57's showroom. Right: the One57 high-rise block will reach 90 storeys



Smallbone is shaking off its "slightly stuffy" mantle — Margaret Thatcher was a fan. "Very different people buy our kitchens now, including Madonna and Liz Hurley," says Caplan, before remembering he is bound by contract not to name any of his high-profile clients.

The significance of the deal at One57 is that the buyers — Chinese, Brazilian, Russian and Eastern European — are from markets Caplan is looking to expand into. He explains that the company tailors to suit local preferences, but admits tastes are changing. In China, minimalism was popular but now buyers are looking for a more traditional style. Meanwhile in Russia, where tastes have been "somewhat elaborate", Caplan says they have "become much more refined and European".

All of which bodes well for 350 workers in the small town of Devizes in Wiltshire.

**“
The style is
hard wearing
but its design is
delicate and
European**