

# A Stylized Sanctuary in SoHo



Tim Williams for The New York Times

A futuristic six-foot-tall marble fireplace anchors the great room of this thoroughly renovated SoHo apartment.

By [ROBIN FINN](#)

After a spare-no-expense renovation that juxtaposes late-19th-century architectural elements against Venetian plaster walls and a futuristic six-foot-tall marble fireplace, a sprawling artist's studio in a former textiles warehouse in SoHo has metamorphosed from a bare-bones loft with great light to a self-illuminating, Savant-powered 7,200-square-foot pleasure palace ripe for the ultraluxury market.

The top-floor penthouse at 383 West Broadway, between Spring and Broome Streets, is about to be listed at \$32 million, a price point that, if met, would break the prevailing record for a downtown co-op by \$4.5 million.

According to its listing brokers, Leonard Steinberg of Douglas Elliman Real Estate and Adam Modlin of the Modlin Group, the downtown record was set nearby by Rupert Murdoch's former co-op at 141 Prince Street, which the designer Elie Tahari bought for \$24.675 million in 2005 and sagely sold to Ted Waitt, a founder of the computer company Gateway Inc., for \$27.5 million.

As that trophy aerie did, this one includes a picturesque water tower on its roof. For intrepid climbers in search of even better views of the World Trade Center to the south and the [Empire State Building](#) to the north, the tower's metal ladder is intact. Besides six custom skylights dominated by a pyramidal 30-foot-high bulkhead skylight above the oak-and-marble stairway, the home receives northern and southern light; the library/game room section of the great room overlooks the West Broadway skyline.

Low-maintenance billionaires who prefer their frills without a lot of stuffy fuss — the small co-op is not awash in intrusive white-glove concierge services — may find themselves right at home, especially if they enjoy table tennis, outdoor showers and high-end cigars. (There is a walnut-and-steel Ping-Pong table in the great room, a Boffi shower on the roof, and a sizable humidior in the wine room; conveniently, the co-op's anchor tenant is the noted tobacco boutique OK Cigars.)

The monthly charges for the five-bedroom five-and-a-half-bath penthouse — the great room has 16- to 22-foot ceilings, cast-iron columns lit by LED lights, and a 60-inch revolving LED Samsung TV screen recessed into a custom console — are a relatively non-stratospheric \$5,223. That, apparently, is the compensation for having to open your own front door.

The seller of the studio-turned-penthouse is the minimalist sculptor and earthwork artist Charles Ross, who was among the pioneering artists to colonize and reanimate SoHo's industrial landscape in the late 1960s. Mr. Ross moved to 80 Wooster Street in 1967. In 1973, he and several friends bought 383 Broadway, a block-through building with separate entrances on West Broadway and Wooster, and he set up a studio and living space on its sixth floor. He rented out the smaller top-floor space on the Wooster Street side. (He also spends part of the year in the [New Mexico](#) desert, where he has worked on [Star Axis](#), an earth/sky sculpture and observatory, since 1976.) The arrangement lasted until 2006, when a friend, the British fine arts photographer Damion Berger, had a vision for the underutilized West Broadway studio and proposed a grandiose renovation from which they could both benefit financially.

“I approached my friend and fellow artist with a deal to which he agreed,” said Mr. Berger, who entered a partnership with Mr. Ross. The artist downsized to the Wooster side of his property in 2010, essentially granting Mr. Berger, the managing partner in the venture, permission to demolish the studio and replace it with a tastefully sybaritic penthouse. The co-op agreed to sell the roof rights in 2011: besides the shower, the rooftop amenities include an outdoor kitchen with a Wolf barbecue and a dumbwaiter, Balinese stone walls, an ipe wood deck, a covered patio, outdoor television and audio, and a sunning/play area with a synthetic grass base and a hammock large enough for a crowd.

“I led the transformation of his former studio space into a bespoke family residence that in my opinion is one of downtown's most exceptional and sophisticated penthouses,” Mr. Berger said. He was assisted by his wife, Debla Manara-Berger, an interior designer, and his brother-in-law, Piero Manara, an architect. The siblings own the Monaco-based design firm [Casamanara](#), the source of the furnishings, which are included in the asking price. Mr. Berger's artwork on the walls throughout the residence is not, though it is available for the right price.

He did not stint on amenities. The Bulthaup kitchen has a Carrara marble counter and sink, Gaggenau appliances, a pantry and a laundry room. Four of the bedrooms have en-suite baths. The master bath, with polished Gaudi slab marble and a wall of white onyx, has an octagonal skylight and a free-standing cast-stone soaking tub. There is also a spa bath with a steam shower that accommodates six people comfortably and provides chromatherapy via a fiber optic starlight lighting system integrated into the mosaic tile ceiling. The shower actually twinkles. Party on.