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Luxury's the Word at 'What's Cooking' Professionals network at real estate-themed cooking show

By Christine Lin



Real estate consultant John Gomes and Judy Sahagian show off a stew in the making during a taping of What's Cooking in Real Estate. (Amal Chen/The Epoch Times)

NEW YORK—"What's Cooking in Real Estate" recently shot its third episode. The web-based show brings together real estate professionals to cook for a live audience who get to network with each other between courses. Networking events organizer Judy Sahagian played the role of the essential chef host this edition, sharing some of her favorite recipes.



The taping was held in the showroom of New York Kitchen & Bath in Manhattan. NYKB is a full-service renovations and design firm specializing in luxury residences.

The first course, a lamb and vegetable stew, was put together by Sahagian and John Gomes of The Eklund-Gomes Group (Prudential Douglas Elliman). Gomes and his team focuses on luxury residential sales and resales in Manhattan, but instead of seeing himself as an agent, he consults with developers.

“It’s a different approach,” Gomes said. “The role of an agent is less and less important these days, so our number one customer is the developer. I advise them when they buy properties and introduce them to architects and designers.”

Since Gomes is in direct contact with homebuyers, he sees firsthand their likes and dislikes. He feeds that information back to the developers, and everyone wins. For example, the sleek open kitchen, so fashionable in recent years, is going out of vogue in favor of tucked-away kitchens. “As nice as it looks, it’s not functional while entertaining,” he said.

Gomes said that after the slump of 2008, when new developments dried up due to lack of financing, the market is slowly improving. Right now he is working with seven buildings.



For dessert, Sahagian taught Daniel Hedaya, president of Platinum Properties, how to bake her simple yet creative open-house cookie. She mixed a basic batter, and split it into batches to which she added pecans, caramel, chocolate, and coconut in various combinations.

Platinum Properties provides full real estate services to clientele seeking high-end property, particularly in Lower Manhattan. Hedaya recently closed a deal on an \$18 million penthouse in Tribeca.

“The Financial District is really transitioning,” Hedaya said. “It’s all residential now except for the Stock Exchange.”

The area’s high-ceilinged office buildings converted nicely into luxury lofts when the neighborhood became more residential. Conveniences such as supermarkets have moved in, sitting alongside luxury stores.



For the last segment, interior architect S. Lee Wright helped the host put together cocito, a Latin version of eggnog. Wright designs and builds spaces “from the inside out” with a holistic approach using Feng Shui as a starting point.

“I think about the people in the spaces,” she said. “It has to function for them.”

When clients can’t articulate what they want in a space, Wright teases a vision out of them with her “signature magic box,” which she asks clients to fill with objects essential to them. Then, she designs according to their personality and needs.

Recipes will be on <http://whatscooking.loh.tv/> accessible with free registration.