



Selling New York Episode 4: On Wine and Williamsburg

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Every Thursday night, HGTV's Selling New York rides along with boutique brokerages CORE, Gumley Haft Kleier and Warburg as they try to sell fabulous properties fabulously. Here, our recap of how the NYC real estate industry is portrayed to the world, penned (for the first time!) by funny lady Molly Reisner.

While last week's *Selling New York* was a drama doozy, last night's episode was more of a laid back snoozy. The low-urgency action trickled between two pleasant couples who both want a change of scenery (to equally expensive scenery, of course): an uber-coiffed older pair looking to flee the calm-as-hell countryside for the perfect ad impossibly well-priced uptown urban pad, and an aging Williamsburg hipsterati duo trying to sell their gut reno'ed townhouse in favor of California wine country.

Will apartments be bought? Will townhouses be sold? Will there be measured amounts of wine consumed and a broker riding through the 'Burg on a Vespa? Pour yourself a glass of Pinot, press pause on Sideways, and let's mildly do this! Recap, that is.

CRISIS #2: BIONIC WILLIAMSBURG TOWNHOUSE NEEDS A PRICE!

Our second story is perhaps the slightly more riveting tale, as it features a couple leisurely trying to sell their property instead of leisurely trying to buy one. CORE's Doug Bowen zips into Williamsburg—and we're surprised that a show about New York City real estate managed to avoid the 'Burg for this long—on his silver Vespa. He's here to meet his client Dana Bushman in front of a yoga studio where she teaches. Vespa + tattoo peeking out of shirt + yoga mat = the essence of gentrified Brooklyn. Live it, love it, sell it!



Doug and Dana saunter over to Dana's townhouse so he can take a looksie and assess the property. It's funky! It's blue! It's...familiar!



That's right, the infamous 74A Conselyea Street, a Curbed favorite, just got its big TV break. Which sadly means we already know how this is going to end, but let's play along. Dana mentions she and her husband, Eric, did a gut-wrenching gut renovation of the townhouse and are proud of their finished product.

Inside, Doug is impressed with the design and layout. Gleaming hardwood floors, top o' the line fixtures, and an open, airy feel (not to mention an envy-worthy backyard and indoor balcony, and two rental apartments) make this townhouse practically sell itself. I'm sure if the townhouse could speak, it'd be all "Pshhh, I don't need to speak because my amenities do the talking!"

Ch-ch-check it out for yourself:

And therein lies the answer to the mystery of how a yoga teacher can afford this Brooklyn oasis: They're computer programmers. "So why do we have to be in New York City paying the price that we do if we could be pretty much anywhere?" she says. Oooh...BIG APPLE BURN! Sorry New York, but you just got plaaaayed.

They're planning to go west and nestle into the bosom of California's wine country to do some heavy drinking (I suspect). Of course, this is contingent upon them getting a good price for their townhouse, which is where Vespa Doug comes to the rescue!

After the grand tour de townhouse, Dana, Eric and Doug chill in the backyard with some uncorked vino, genially discussing next steps. Are we detecting a theme this episode?



With a monthly income generating \$4300 from their two rental units (the 2nd floor goes for \$2050 and the 3rd floor for \$2250), this 3,700-square-foot 6 bedroom/4 bathroom property is worth approximately a shitload of money. But how much exactly? Doug pipes up that there's a condo

explosion in Williamsburg (you don't say?) and he needs Eric and Dana—but mostly Dana since Eric's a quiet dude and says about 6 words the entire time—to understand the competitive market and what a buyer is willing to spend. Field trip to nearby condo development to suss out prices, anyone? Let's go!

Doug and Dana head over to one of those new townhouses attached to 80 Metropolitan to see what other fancy single-family homes are going for in the neighborhood. They scamper about the townhouse-condo hybrid, and what a scamper it is!

Plus there's the building's gym, screening area, outdoor lounge area and pool for all to use. Williamsburg, you so fancy! The 2,038-square-foot, 3 bedroom/2.5 bathroom house they tour is much smaller than Dana's house, and is going for a cool \$1.425 million. Dana is taken aback when she learns the common charges are \$1750 a month, though Doug assures her buyers are willing to pay the price for the, say it with me, aaaah-meeen-iiiih-teeeez.

Dana still isn't seeing the value of the sharedness of it all, and stands firm that her "townhouse townhouse" (because when you repeat a word it makes it the real one) is a better value. Dang that over-chlorinated exercise pool! Rental income is the true true amenity.

After crunching some numeros, Doug, Dana and Eric amble down to Williamsburg joint Lodge to talk about the whole point of this story: price. Dana is concerned—like Goldilocks she wants it priced not too high and not too low. Juuust right. Doug recommends they list at \$1.695 million, which elicits agreeableness and smiles from the couple:



Doug puts on his party hat (figurative but wish were literal) and throws a wine and cheese open house for brokers. What fun! The brokers are buzzing (and possibly buzzed) about how unique and

sell-able the townhouse is as they nibble on Gruyere and inspect cabinetry. Meanwhile, Shaun Osher, the big boss guy at CORE, swoops in to the scene to see/judge Doug's latest venture. Yep, *Shaun Osher went to Brooklyn*. Almost as jarring as Babs Corcoran in Staten Island.

Doug excitedly/nervously shows Shaun around, pointing out the Doug-dubbed "storage alley" (hallway with closets) and "the mood faucet" (a faucet that weirdly has light emanating from it). I know you're dying to know what a mood faucet looks like:



For when you want to feel like you're in a 2003 industrial club instead of your home? Shaun thinks it's cool though, so s'all good. Doug basks in Shaun's overall praise with how he handled the pricing of the townhouse and proclaims "my gut tells me Doug did a brilliant job." Gold star for Doug! Next we see Doug Vespa'ing it over to Dana and Eric's to see how their packing is going. Why are they packing, you wonder? They found a buyer and are closing in a couple days! Wow, they had no trouble selling whatsoever. Easy breezy for those two. An interested buyer bid at \$1.575 million cash, \$120k under the asking price, but *hello*, \$1.575 million cash. In the time between listing and closing, Dana and Eric went to California and bought a house on 3 Sonoma Valley acres. Are computer programmers efficient or what?

There are hugs and well-wishes as Doug bids farewell to the outbound Brooklynites. Doug wishes "that every real estate transaction ended on this kind of note." That would be nice, but for the sake of peppier programming, let's hope for some downs with the ups next round.

Episode grade: 2.5 out of 5 cackling Kleiers!

