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HOME **SPRING SPECIAL** NEW DEVELOPMENT

THE PLACE

By KATHERINE DYKSTRA

WHILE developers all over the city froze or abandoned projects during the downturn, VE Equities didn't even break stride.

VE's 250 Bowery development is just one of the firm's four new buildings either just entering the market or about to debut. In addition, the development of two land acquisitions is in the works.

What's the secret?

"We're picking the best properties block by block, not even neighborhood by neighborhood. Perfect corner pieces, great frontage on the Bowery," says Zach Vella, who is partners with Justin Ehrlich in VE. "We're finding deals that are attractive for our lenders, and we use the same group of

Downturn didn't slow down this deal-making developer

lenders all the time. I think they're confident with our ability to execute."

The team has had success with distressed properties. VE bought the site at 250 Bowery after a condo-hotel developer had trouble getting out of the ground.

"I think it was the wrong time to build a condo-hotel, I don't think there was the appetite to finance it," Vella says.

Over in TriBeCa, 471 Washington was another failed development site, which VE bought out of foreclosure and resurrected into 12 condo units — 75 percent of which were sold at \$1,700 to \$1,800 per square foot in the first week the building was on the market. Today, 10 of the

12 are under contract. The building will be ready for occupancy in late summer.

Also in TriBeCa and also distressed was 1 North Moore, which VE bought out of foreclosure and turned into a boutique development with five unique units, including a 6,000-square-foot townhouse and a 6,000-square-foot penthouse with a private pool. Though the penthouse is on the market for much more, the rest of the units, three of which are on the market at this time, average around \$2,000 per square foot.

And 949 Park Ave., too, recently came to market, though it wasn't a distressed site. Indeed, VE worked on it right through

TO VE



Zach Vella

the downturn. The Upper East Side building has six duplex apartments all measuring around 2,000 square feet and priced around \$2,400 a square foot. There

are two units in contract. VE's Bowery building doesn't yet have approved pricing. It is out of the ground and will be a residential building with



DELUXE DEBUTS: VE Equities' portfolio includes 250 Bowery (left), a site the developer bought after a condo-hotel builder gave up. It will be home to 24 condos. Over at 949 Park Ave. (above), VE is selling duplex condos for about \$2,400 per square foot. Two of the six apartments are in contract. Contact: The Eklund-Gomes Group, Prudential Douglas Elliman, 212-727-6178

roughly 84 feet of store frontage. The 24 condo units, a mix of one- and two-bedrooms, will be on floors three through eight, and there will also be a

penthouse level. The one-bedrooms will run around 850 to 900 square feet, the two-bedrooms around 1,100 to 1,200 square feet.

"You see momentum and

you see confidence. There's not a lot of product available especially downtown," Vella says.

"The confidence is there and the banks are starting

to lend again. The they were holding on their portfolio — a lot it is being worked out things are getting reworked."