

# Single-Family Manhattan Townhouses

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The headaches of owning a Manhattan house are obvious. No super when a pipe bursts. No doorman to sign for deliveries. Trash cans that spill. Crazyes on the stoop.

Want to play the drums at 4 a.m.? Paint your door in Peter Max sunbursts? Unless you're in a landmark district, you probably can, and you are in rarefied territory: There are only a few thousand one-family houses in Manhattan. The go-it-alone romance is part of the equation.

As it happens, single-families are having something of a moment. Available inventory in Manhattan is down from last year, to 516, according to appraiser Jonathan Miller. Sales, which started the year slowly, have picked up, particularly at the very high end. From June to December 2011, only one downtown house with an asking price over \$9 million went into contract; in the past six months, nine did. Weirdly, cost may be a factor, even in that elite market: Luxury townhouses can be cheaper on a price-per-square-foot basis than top-shelf apartments, and prices for many single-families have yet to catch up to increasing demand.

## *The Oldest*

Price: \$5.4 Million

27 Harrison Street

The mostly original façade and upstairs window frames show off this Federal-style townhouse's 1796 roots, though inside, all but a few beams have been hidden by renovations. It was built by John McComb, who was the first New York starchitect (he built Gracie Mansion and City Hall). Originally on Washington Street, the 4,000-square-foot house was moved to its present site when Independence Plaza was built in the early seventies.

Brokers: **Patrick Lilly** and **Martin Eiden**

## *The Only Completely Freestanding Mansion*

Price \$14.95 Million

351 Riverside Drive

Freestanding single-family houses-those with exposures on all sides – are truly rara in Manhattan. At the moment, it appears that there's only one on the market: the Schinasi Mansion on the Upper West Side, named after the tobacco trader who commissioned it in 1907. (There's another listing downtown, 38 Bethune, that's fully detached, but one wall is mere inches from its neighbor.) The Schinasi house is just ridiculously royal: Twelve bedrooms, eleven baths, solid-oak banisters that are nearly a foot wide. Down below street level, there's a remnant of a tunnel that once led to the Hudson River and may have been used to haul in hooch during Prohibition.

Broker: **Tod Mercy**

### *Fame Slept Here*

*"You'll never guess who used to live in our house."*

Price: \$38.5 Million

101 East 63rd Street

A seriously chic trifecta of former residents: fashion designer Halston, industrialist and Fiat heir Gianni Agnelli; and photographer and filmmaker Gunter Sachs.

Broker: **Bonnie Pfeifer Evans, Carmen Marques Perez, and Noble Black**