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FIVE FRANKLIN PLACE

PEDESTRIANS AMBLING around New York City's TriBeCa neighborhood back in the 19th century would have strolled along cobblestone roads through Dutch settlements, passing cast-iron structures. Although the following century saw Manhattan boom with skyscrapers and corporate glass towers, development company Sleepy Hudson LLC, in a fitting collaboration with Dutch architect Ben van Berkel, is reviving TriBeCa's established design elements with a 20-story residential project, Five Franklin Place.

The design of the black-banded building harmonizes with the cobblestoned, lamp-lit streets. "We talked a lot about how a modern building doesn't have to be a glass box," says Leo Tsimmer, who cofounded Sleepy Hudson with David Kislin. "We asked Ben to look at why cast-iron architecture in this neighborhood was so appreciated and how it could be applied in the future. He took cues from the historic architecture we're surrounded by, used a horizontal design, and then created a building of the 21st century."

Van Berkel's interpretation flipped Italianate cast-iron—known for its traditional columns and arches—on its side. Black metal ribbons bind Five Franklin by twisting around the structure, creating terraces, handrails, and sunshades as they rise. The architect and his firm, UNStudio (whose past projects include the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Germany and a Louis Vuitton flagship store in Japan), looked to muses outside the world of architecture to develop the bands' color and texture. "Black is not a color we think of very often when it comes to buildings, but it's a very accepted color in fashion and industrial design," explains van Berkel. "So while the bands are indeed black, the material captures color and reflects the environment around the building, bringing in light and color to animate the facade."

Inside, van Berkel teamed with B&B Italia to engineer the interiors of all 55 units. Priced

from \$2 million to \$16 million, Five Franklin's 1,200- to 3,200-square-foot homes are offered in three categories, each with distinctive design elements. The one-bedroom Loft Residences feature 20-foot-tall galleries with disappearing staircases and custom-designed, built-in soaring walls equipped with shelves. The two- to three-bedroom City Residences feature lacquered panels inspired by New York's prewar apartment entries, and three three- and four-bedroom penthouses offer chromotherapy tubs, ipe wood roof decks with outdoor kitchens and swimming pools, and cantilevered grand staircases wrapped around cylindrical glass elevators. All units have wide-plank oak flooring, Gaggenau and Sub-Zero appliances, Corian countertops, and bathrooms with oak-paneled, 360-degree rotating wall partitions.

Upon completion in late 2009 (sales began in May), Tsimmer and van Berkel hope the building becomes more than just a happy home for its residents. "Building something significant in itself, something that's not another glass box, not an eyesore, is important," says Tsimmer. *[Jessica Daynor]*

Five Franklin Place, 212.941.0005, www.fivefranklinplace.com



Location New York, New York

MAIN: Each of the three duplex-style penthouse units includes a rooftop terrace. **DETAIL, ABOVE:** Wrapped in bands of black metal, the 20-story structure was inspired by the city's 19th-century Dutch architecture. **DETAIL, BELOW:** Interiors feature furnishings from B&B Italia.



