

Crystal castle in the sky

Baccarat tower to shine in midtown

BY JASON SHEFTELL
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THE FIRST NAME in luxury crystal now wants to be the ritziest name in city real estate.

Baccarat, which has been making its namesake glass since the days of Louis XV, is launching a hotel and condo complex in a sleek 50-story tower on W. 53rd St.

"Guests and residents (will) admire the company's artisanship and commitment to perfection in both service and design," said Barry Sternlicht, whose Starwood Capital Group owns Baccarat.

The hotel and apartment project is the latest ultra-luxury development in an already hot market. But forget keeping up with the Joneses — the Baccarat is more staying in pace with the Rockefellers.

The lobby is filled with Baccarat chandeliers hanging from 40-foot ceilings and

custom-made bronze sparkling with crystal.

The hotel will have a crystal bar with a Parisian terrace reminiscent of the Tuileries Garden and 26 suites.

Homes range in price from \$3.5 million for a one-bedroom to \$60 million for a duplex penthouse atop the tower designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the same firm in charge of One World Trade Center.

Total cost on the project is estimated to be slightly more than \$400 million.

Units will feature high ceilings and signature crystal chandelier.



"This whole project oozes sex and money," said a broker associated with the building.

Sternlicht, one of America's shrewdest and creative financiers, founded Starwood Hotels and is the creative mind behind the W brand, which started in

Union Square in 1998. He bought the Baccarat brand in 2005.

Baccarat was founded in 1764 after a decree from Louis XV. Ever since, clients have included royalty from around the world, including Russian czars.

Baccarat Hotel & Residence is being built on the site of the former Donnell branch of the New York Public Library. The new building will include a smaller, but new, branch.

jsheftell@nydailynews.com

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