



November 24, 2010

# Casement Windows Are Architects' New Darling

By JONATHAN VATNER

FOR a long time, mullioned steel casement windows, the gridded kind that swing out like a door, had fallen out of fashion. They leaked badly, and a stiff wind could blow out their panes or knock their hinges askew. Over the years they have been replaced in many buildings by single-pane aluminum casement or double-hung windows.

But now those classic casements are appearing on new apartment buildings with startling regularity, especially in West Chelsea and the West Village, as part of an architectural style that pays tribute to prewar buildings.

In large part, New York has Cary Tamarkin to thank for the return of casements. An architect and developer, Mr. Tamarkin is sometimes referred to as "the window guy," because of the distinctive casement windows in his New York City buildings, including 140 Perry Street, 495 West Street, 397 West 12th Street and, most recently, 456 West 19th Street, a 22-unit 11-story all-duplex building with 5 apartments still for sale, starting at \$2.2 million.

As to the reason for using old-fashioned casements, which are typically more expensive than conventional windows, Mr. Tamarkin said, "It's a kind of commitment to a classic Modernism which is rooted in traditions of authenticity." Most of his projects are in neighborhoods rich with warehouse buildings, he said, so he designed them to "live comfortably amid their settings."

Mr. Tamarkin says he uses pricey steel casement windows — as opposed to aluminum — because the mullions are slim ("I don't like fat-mullioned windows," he says) and because the metal shows pockmarks and other signs of use, lending them an old-fashioned character.

His windows are also made the old-fashioned way. "You've got actual little panes of glass that are painstakingly put in one by one," he said. "They're very subtle details, but the people buying in our buildings are sensitive to the design. Either you don't get it and it's meaningless to you, or you can't live without it."