



July 7, 2009

## New to the skyline



The “punctured” windows of Cassa NY give punch to what could otherwise be just another skyscraper.

Cassa NY  
70 W. 45th St.  
[www.cassanyc.com](http://www.cassanyc.com)

Ask any architect: Real estate development has taken a painful hit in our financial crisis. Even a starchitect such as Mexico’s Enrique Norten, of 1 York St. fame, has sacrificed design aesthetic to lower costs.

Take his Mexico City-based firm TEN Arquitectos’ latest feat, Cassa NY, a hotel from the waist down and luxury condo above the belt. In many respects, it’s yet another tall, mixed-use sliver of a building that joins the packs of building slivers developers manage to keep squeezing into the Manhattan skyline. Cassa started out as an interesting, asymmetrical shape, but as development progressed it was edited into a uniform and cylindrical tower.

To make some dough in this economy, Cassa, like many new residential towers, added the hotel feature. Desires Hotel is on floors one through 27, with 166 boutique hotel rooms priced at \$600 a night. Starting at floor 28 are the 57 residential condominium apartments. A 1,300- square-foot, two-bedroom is around \$2 million. A 3,500- square-foot, four-bedroom duplex penthouse bids at \$15 million.

The name, Cassa, smells a bit victim to marketing, considering Norten is Mexican and there is no word “cassa” in Spanish. The Italianizing of “casa” to make “home” sound chic is ironic; in Italian, “cassa” means cash register, and this building is certainly expensive.

