



# And the Bermondsey beat goes on

A funky lifestyle scheme beside the Thames and a Home House boutique hotel are raising the glamour stakes in SE1, says **David Spittles**

**B**ERMONDSEY has brushed off its recent past of cockney sparrows, dock workers and pearly kings to join the ranks of London's la-di-da. The area's residential rise has been gathering momentum for years, with the arrival of the hedge-fund boys and creative types enjoying warehouse space and loft-height ceilings, and now the celebrity set is being drawn to the old character with the new-spin Thameside.

And there is no better benchmark for glam-

our than the latest tenant — Home House. The fashionable West End club, which counts Madonna and Sting as regulars, is to open a boutique hotel and members' club alongside 76 funky apartments, an arthouse cinema, loft offices, delicatessen, bars and restaurants.

Called Bermondsey Square, the development is being built on the site of the famous antiques market. A semi-enclosed public square will become a new space for

antiques traders and other weekly markets.

The boomerang-shaped development rises to nine-storeys and has a colourful timber-and-perforated-steel façade. Apartments — up to three-bedroom flats — will be released in January, with completion due in the spring.

Prices are expected to start at £340,000. Call DTZ on 020 7710 8111.

Bermondsey Square will be refreshingly diverse scheme, the first of its kind in London, according to Giles Sequeira, project



manager for developer Igloo Regeneration. "We're targeting owner-occupiers, not buy-to-let investors, and the design of the flats reflects this; they are bigger than normal and have high-grade interiors. It's genuinely about lifestyle."

Residents will get free club and spa membership for a year and concessionary rates on hotel rooms should they want to book in friends or relatives. Part of the service charge will go towards a "community chest" to finance local arts and educational initiatives. All occupiers (commercial as well as residential) will have a stake in a management forum. And in keeping with the quirky, individual nature

of the development, restaurant premises will be let to local independents rather than high-street multiples.

The Home House link-up will strike a chord with London fashionistas.

Boutique apartments are spreading to smart pockets of central London as the "club generation" of dot-com entrepreneurs, brand consultants and DJs comes of age.

Developer Londonewcastle has successfully tapped into this market. "I can't remember the last time we sold a flat to a married couple," says its director, Robert Soning. "Most buyers are singles aged between 25 and 45 who work in the City or the creative sector. They've got money and are part of the London vibe. They're design-

conscious, image-sensitive people who want a cool home because it's an important statement of who they are."

The same can be said for Soning and business partners David Barnett and Simon Berg. The thirtysomethings set up as developers in the mid-Nineties

after cutting their teeth in West End estate agency and have created a distinctive label. Now backed by Bank of Scotland and property company Chelsfield, the firm sponsors the annual 100% Design event, hosts elite parties at Glastonbury and produces compilation

CDs for its followers. "We want to be a movement," says Soning.

Involvement with 100% Design is aimed at nurturing young talent whose ideas and products can be showcased at Londonewcastle developments. Bond Street gallery owner Max Wigram is the company's art consultant, and a relationship is being formed with technology giant Apple.

Already an iPod is included in the welcome pack when buyers move into a

flat, while an "after-care" website, accessed by a personal code provides, warranty and technical details, and lifestyle information prepared by the publisher of the Hedonist Guides.

Andrew Palmer, development director of DTZ, handles more than 30 residential schemes across London. He describes Londonewcastle as "the Soho House of the property world".

"There's a sense of being part of a small club. Buyers want a home that relates to their lives, their time and their culture." Typically, purchasers have a budget of £400,000 to £800,000.

Parking is not a priority because the apartments are in busy central neighbourhoods where there are lots of amenities and people can walk to work.

Clerkenwell, Camden, Islington, Borough, Covent Garden, Shoreditch, Soho, the South Bank, Bloomsbury and Notting Hill: these are the districts where there is the biggest demand for boutique apartments.

Coming soon are 56 flats at Central St Giles, a redevelopment of an ugly office complex behind Centre Point, right in the heart of the West End. Call estate agent EA Shaw on 020 7240 2255.

Other Londonewcastle schemes include The Wenlock Building on Wharf Road, N1: 55 canalside flats overlooking City Basin. Prices start from £440,000, rising to £1.5 million. Call Hurford Salvi Carr on 020 7791 7071.

**T**HE Henson Building in Oval Road, Camden Town, is named after Jim Henson, creator of The Muppets, whose workshop was on the site. This is a scheme of 46 flats. Call Savills on 020 7409 9995. While in Battersea, The Pendlebury is being built on a landmark site that was formerly The Plough pub. Call Cluttons on 020 7223 7574.



Sting and Madonna are

Alpha-PhotoFab



regulars at the fashionable West End club Home House, which is to open a boutique hotel and club in Bermondsey



Bermondsey's famous antiques market will have a new space within the Bermondsey Square development





**From £340,000:** Bermondsey Square, SE1 (top and above). Being built on the site of the former antiques market, this fashionable development of 76 flats will include a cinema, bars and restaurants. Call DTZ on 020 7710 8111



**From £565,000:** Londonewcastle is creating a funky scheme of 24 flats on the site of the former Cole & Son wallpaper factory in Offord Road, Barnsbury, N1, called The Wallpaper Factory. Call DTZ on 020 7710 8116.





**From £440,000:** another Londonecastle scheme is The Wenlock Building, N1, where 55 flats are going up beside the canal. Call Hurford Salvi Carr (020 7791 7071)





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Berry Phillips

Under the shadow of Tower Bridge (above), locals and visitors can enjoy Bermondsey's continuing renewal as a lively central hub, while Butlers Wharf (right), once the largest warehouse complex on the Thames, is now a centre of gastronomic excellence

