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PFI completing three-part landscaping project at Tower at Gotham West

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Plant Fantasies, Inc. (PFI) is completing a major tri-part landscape project - courtyard, terrace and rooftop - for one of the area's newest rentals, the 31-story tower at Gotham West, 550 West 45th St., a Hell's Kitchen property with Hudson River views.

PFI was commissioned by Gotham Construction Company, LLC, the general contractor, to install an interior courtyard; a second floor terrace called The Perch; and a 32nd floor rooftop garden, Sky Terrace. The building's owner and developer is Gotham Org., Inc. Thomas Balsley designed the landscape plan for the three sites.

The ground floor courtyard provides an urban green space that is both vibrant and restful with a specimen - quality majestic red maple tree as a focal point and multiple trunk white birch trees that offer beauty year-round. A huge grove of giant yellow bamboo trees stretches 18 ft. high, and a white stone dust pathway divides planting beds brimming with various accent shrubs such as hydrangea, azaleas, rhododendrons and seasonal flowers. The Perch extends the theme of high bamboo trees surrounded by accent shrubs, here complementing the ipe deck and fireplace. The bamboo continues once more on the roof where Sky Terrace houses a sizable lawn, ornamental grasses, a specimen pine tree and a vine wall of climbing roses.

Steve Martucci, PFI's vice president of operations, notes that the project had its challenges as soon as the team began work in November 2012: Over 750 cubic yards of soil as well as 25 large and heavy trees needed to be transported in before the end of 2012.

"A huge amount of manpower was required - All of the soil had to be stockpiled before the end of the year as the build out of the lobby and retail space was taking place in the winter and materials couldn't be carried in once construction began," he said. The trees also needed to be delivered before construction due to their size and weight. In the spring of this year the soil was laid out and graded, and the final positions for the trees were established, and almost 400 large bamboo trees were brought in often in hard-to-access areas.

Sourcing the trees specified for the project was difficult. "They were picked per tree and required approval by the architect Thomas Balsley Associates," said Martucci. Once located, the trees were then shipped from various nurseries along the east coast.

Teresa Carleo, president and CEO of PFI, notes that the abundance of fully landscaped areas is an amenity that is essential to the vision of Gotham West. "The goal is to join the indoors with the outdoors, to ensure that tenants are surrounded by the beauty of gardens and greenery. In addition, the beauty extends beyond the property and embraces the Hudson River."

Michael Fico, project manager for Gotham Construction and Gotham West, said, "PFI took Balsley's vision and made it come to life. They were a pleasure to work with; completing the work in a timely manner and on budget."

Serving New York for over 25 years, PFI is an award-winning design/build firm providing a full array of design, construction, and maintenance services. www.pfinyc.com.

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