



Meer of Friedland Realty represents Flight Centre in 10,000 s/f lease; Worked with Mollozzi of Liberty Travel to close deal

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Friedland Realty has brokered a 10,000 s/f lease at 271 Madison Ave. for Flight Centre, Ltd. (FC), the parent company of Australia-based Liberty Travel. The doors of its first United States flagship store have opened and Liberty Travel's megastore is in business.

The storefront will house Liberty Travel, Travel Associates, and other Flight Centre brands in an integrated travel center. Offering a 3-D travel planning experience, the center has vacation experts providing demonstrations of cruise lines, hotels, far-off destinations, and more using the latest technology. Gene Meer, president of the Friedland Realty Manhattan office, represented Flight Centre, working with Ron Mollozzi, director of real estate for Liberty Travel.

Prior to its new location, Liberty Travel had been leasing a 2,000 s/f space, also on Madison Ave., with eight employees (the new flagship location has more than 40).

Upon the expiration of its lease, Liberty called upon Friedland to find a replacement retail space of the same size. A decision was then made by FC to combine the desired retail space with the executive travel firm Travel Associates, whose lease was also coming to an end. The shift in needs required Friedland to be flexible - and quickly.

"With time working against us, we were inspired by my client's hyperstore concept that is highly successful in the U.K.," said Meer. "I knew of the former bank site at 271 Madison Ave., which has soaring ceiling heights, an inviting glass facade, and beautiful architecture. I requested that each division of the company visit and approve the site, from the local offices to the top executives in Australia. Everyone was thrilled and the recent opening of the flagship store has been a spectacular benefit to New York City and to my client."

Flight Centre intends to open 10 more storefronts similar to the Madison Avenue flagship, both in size and offerings, throughout the U.S. over the next five years. For now, the current Manhattan location - which drew inspiration from Apple stores and its storefronts in Britain, London and Manchester - is the company's largest.

"We constantly strive to exceed the expectations of our clients and as a result, often exceed those we place upon ourselves as brokers, contributing to our steady growth and expert knowledge of the market both locally and regionally," said Tony Lembeck, CEO of Friedland Realty. "Gene's flawless representation of Flight Centre, the leading global travel firm, confirms that Friedland can handle the biggest, most challenging assignments in the biggest, most challenging market in the world: New York City. There's no better way to send off 2012 and step into a new year."

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