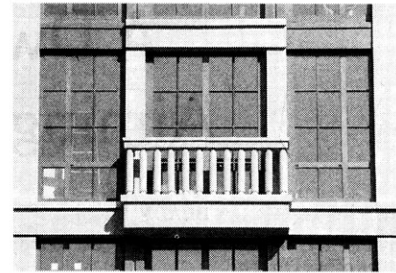


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NEW YORK UP CLOSE



Debby Murphy and Bob Bickford, left, on a Juliet balcony. Wine drinking seemed a fine use for the space, she said.

A Cozy Balcony, With Overtones of the Bard

By N. C. MAISAK

When Debby Murphy, a golf pro, saw the small balcony of the one-bedroom condominium that her boyfriend was buying on Park Avenue in Murray Hill, she was charmed.

"I could see myself out there with a glass of wine," Ms. Murphy said.

Call it love at first sight, and appropriately so. Ms. Murphy, 46, was captivated by a Juliet balcony, a feature found on a steadily growing number of Manhattan buildings.

Architects are always fashioning ways to make New York apartments look more spacious without adding as much as a little toe of square footage, and the Juliet balcony, the kind that Romeo was drawn to, is one of their newer strategies.

The Juliet is 18 to 24 inches deep, just big enough for a courting couple. Modeled after a standard feature of French apartments in the 1920s and '30s, the New York versions made their debut in 2000 on the Giraffe Hotel on Park Avenue South at 26th Street and have since become prominent features — and selling points — of new residential buildings.

Among the projects that include them are condominiums at 45 Park Avenue in Murray Hill and 985 Park Avenue on the Upper East Side, by architect Costas Kondylis; the Dwyer on St. Nicholas Avenue in West Harlem, by James McCullar; and the Hotel Gansevoort in the meatpacking district, by Stephen B. Jacobs.



Photographs by Hiroko Masuike for The New York Times
A line of "Juliets" at 985 Park Avenue.

"They give a view of the outdoors, they provide a place for a person to smoke, and they add texture to a facade because the elements cast shadows and create a pattern," Mr. Jacobs said. "It's a popular feature that we will continue to use on our projects."

The balconies' French doors offer floor-to-ceiling views that create an indoor-outdoor feel and are one of their major attractions, Mr. Kondylis said. He has also incorporated Juliet balconies in several other projects, including the Grand Beekman on East 51st Street at Beekman Place and the Arcadia on East 79th Street between First and York Avenues.

While the balconies may be charmers, they certainly cannot accommodate a dinner party.

Yet it is their very shallowness that makes Juliet balconies so appealing and versatile, Mr. McCullar said. "They are nicer than full balconies because they are more attractive from the outside," he said, adding that for the occupants, the outdoor feel they confer on the inside is useful year-round.

For Ms. Murphy, the balcony at 45 Park Avenue has an added virtue for her 57-year-old boyfriend, a lawyer named Bob Bickford, who doesn't like heights. "It gives him the feeling of going out without actually doing it," she said.

If her Romeo does get cold feet when they move in this fall, Ms. Murphy promises to do a lot of hand-holding. "He'll go out there as long as I'm with him," she said.