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THE CLOSER

Flips and splits of New York's real-estate community

✿ Germantown just got a jolt. The charming upstate New York hamlet with an art-conscious citizenry will get a variety store this spring. The brainchild of **Otto Leuschel**, a former **Whole Foods** exec who opened **Otto's Market** on Main St. three years back, Germantown Variety will sell beauty supplies, hardware and household necessities such as corkscrews and frying pans.

"I think people yearn for small-town Main Street life," says Leuschel, who purchased the building that will house the store. "Like places where people can get one of everything without having to

go to a big-box store."

The variety will go into a building whose ground floor was occupied by **ARTspace**, the town gallery. Since 2008, ARTspace has exhibited work by 60 to 70 local artists. The last show featured East Village artist **Larry Silver**, who explored the notion of home and place in abstraction.

According to **Corinne Curry**, chairwoman of the town's first economic development committee who also runs the gallery, ARTspace is happy to move over for Leuschel's latest downtown venture.

"We're sort of in a renaissance here," says Curry, an opera singer. "Otto has brought the beginning of a new feeling of enthusiasm. The whole town is abuzz."

And full of real estate opportunity. Loft rentals on Main

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New York designer Amy Lau has a lot to smile about. Her book, "Expressive Modern," just came out

St. are hot, and second homes with space and views can be had for less than \$350,000. **Central**

House is a hotel with guest suites originally built by a **Rockefeller**. There's a 143-acre bird sanctuary. How many towns can boast that? See ottosmarket.com and germantownny.org for more.

✿ New York interior designer **Amy Lau** recently feted her new book, "**Expressive Modern: The Interiors of Amy Lau**," at one of the duplex penthouses of **75 Wall St.** The fashionable Lau signed books and waved her mane of red hair at a host of downtown artists, real estate agents and admirers. The book takes you through a decade of Lau's

projects, which are really rooms doubling as mixed-media compositions filled with mid-century furniture, contemporary custom art pieces and modern materials such as resin and plaster.

If anything, it's fun. But it's also smart. The book, from **Monacelli Press**, ends with a visual glossary of industrial designers and artists who inspire Lau. The **Vladimir Kagan** pages examine Lau's love for a living legend. The book is available at amazon.com and wherever books are sold for \$50. And the four-bedroom, four-and-a-half bath duplex penthouse with eastern and southern views? You can score that for \$7.75

million. **Corcoran Sunshine's William Bish** has the listing. See 75Wall.com and amylaudesign.com for more.

✿ The **Bedford-Stuyvesant Real Estate Board** has a lot to celebrate. It remembers its roots, which date to 1937 when it formed its own organization after being barred from the **National Association of Realtors**. In 1947, they became the local Brooklyn chapter of the newly formed **National Association of Real Estate Brokers**, the largest and oldest minority trade organization in America. Fortunately, times have changed. Now **Bed-Stuy** is an emerging real estate market with increasing home ownership and

streets full of historic brownstones and friendly neighbors. Just walk down Hancock St. if you don't believe me.

To say thanks, attend their holiday party on Wednesday, Dec. 14 from 6 to 10:30 p.m. at 1103 Fulton St. The cost

of admission is unwrapped toys or clothing or a \$20 suggested donation. There will be live jazz, refreshments and plenty of community empowerment. Call (917) 740-7367 with questions.



SUSAN WATTS/DAILY NEWS



GILBERT RIOS; (INSET) GARY HE

Otto Leuschel sparks a Germantown boom



Bainbridge St. in Bed-Stuy