



# THE DESIGN SKINNY

Ismael Leyva Architects designed one of the slenderest towers in the world with their residential highrise at 785 Eighth Avenue in New York City.

Story by **Drew Grossman**  
Photos courtesy of Ismael Leyva

**I**n his prime, long jumper Mike Powell set the world record for leaping 29 feet and 4 inches at the World Championships in Tokyo. Certainly, a long distance when you're jumping, but not so spacious when you're

designing. Ismael Leyva Architects designed a 43-story, 122-condominium residential tower on a wedged site on New York City's 8th Avenue, 23 feet in width at the front and 44 feet at the back. With a running start, Powell could have easily leaped the width of the site.

"The site was a challenge because it was very narrow, it's a little wider in the back," said Ismael Leyva, principal architect at Ismael Leyva Architects.

The tower has a slenderness ratio of 15:1, making it one of the most slender structures in the world. The first seven floors are the main residential lobby and retail spaces, and the units on the second through seventh floors include outdoor terraces. The very elegant lobby has custom cast terrazzo floors with accents of inset onyx and the walls are detailed with glowing wedge strips of Mexican onyx set into classic mahogany wood veneer panels.

The exterior is a butt-glazed curtain of blue-tinted glass walls that reflect scenic views of Hell's Kitchen and Manhattan's Theater District for passers by. From inside the tower, residents can see out over the Hudson River, as well as Midtown and Downtown Manhattan. On most floors there are only two condos per floor, so each condo has a balcony, on either the east or west side of the building.

The firm intended to create a sense of motion with the alignment of the balconies on the 8th Avenue facade. They shift from one side of the building to the other as they climb up the building toward the sky, according to ILA, reminiscent of a bird taking flight.

"There is glass, floor to ceiling, and expansive views all around and people appreciate that," Leyva said.

People are also likely to appreciate the modern design of the interior of the rooms, with the Brazilian cherry floors, high ceilings, granite counters and imported porcelain tile. Because of the narrow massing of the building, apartments have frontage on more than one facade, creating great natural light for the room.

Residents of the 43rd floor penthouse and the 42nd floor apartments have access to the rooftop's outdoor terraces and hot tub that sits 500 feet above the Manhattan street.


Below grade in the tower is a state-of-the-art fitness center with cardio training and specialized workout rooms. Also, down there is a lounge with a conference/business center and tenant bicycle storage.

ILA began design of the luxury tower in 2009 and it is scheduled to occupy at the end of June. **ALT**

**TOP:** There is a very modern design to the interior of the tower, with Brazilian cherry floors, high ceilings, granite counters and imported porcelain tile.

**CENTER:** With all of the glass, the building offers beautiful views of Manhattan, even the bathroom overlooks the city.

**BOTTOM:** Every apartment in the building has a balcony and the alignment of the balconies creates a sweeping sensation as you look up from the street.



**785 EIGHT AVENUE, NYC**

**Floor Tile:** Pro Spec, LLC

**Granite - Master Bathrooms:** Stone Source

**Quartz Surface:** Caesar Stone

**Window Treatment/Wallpaper:** Angela Brown LTD

**A/V:** Audio Unlimited

**Metal Work:** Milgo Bufkin

**Carpet:** Mohawk Group

**Resilient Flooring:** Chilewich

**Mirror:** Carcart

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