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HELL'S KITCHEN/CLINTON—A MANHATTAN MIDTOWN WEST NEIGHBORHOOD NEAR THE BIG APPLE'S THEATER DISTRICT

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"West Side Story" / Photography from The Annex

Hell's Kitchen is also known as Clinton, but most New Yorkers use the former when talking about this section of the city. The name relates to its past, as so many neighborhoods in Manhattan, it carries a bit of interesting flavor before its gentrification.

Its rough boundaries are Eighth Avenue to the Hudson River and 59th Street to 42nd Street.

No one really knows how Hell's Kitchen acquired its name. According to an article in the New York Times, the name may have come from an Irish gang in the mid-1800s or a cop's summertime remark that "the place was hotter than hell's kitchen."

It **was** a tough neighborhood for decades, but it's now home to celebrities, artists and those who enjoy not only its "edgy" reputation, but the convenience of the nearby Theater District and the extraordinary luxury living that's cropped up in the area. The Actors Studio, founded in 1947 on 432 West 44th Street has developed the talents of numerous well-known actors and its co-Presidents are Ellen Burstyn, Harvey Keitel and Al Pacino.

As for the other name, Clinton, it's derived from one of many Manhattan green spaces, this one for Hell Kitchen's community, De Witt Clinton Park. Family-friendly, the park is over five and a half acres of gardens, dog runs, playgrounds and spaces dedicated to sports play. There's also the beautiful Hudson River Park at 44th Street and Pier 84 that gives residents beautiful river views while jogging, picnicking and playing.

On its southern boundary is Chelsea, to the East is Times Square, to the North is Manhattan's Upper West Side (close to Columbus Circle) and to the West is the Hudson River.

Hell's Kitchen is hip—the Theater District, an 11-block strip from 53rd to 42nd streets, has over 40 theaters. On a section of 46th Street (between 8th and 9th Avenues) is Manhattan's famous Restaurant Row. Theater-goers can stop in for casual and/or upscale dining. Most restaurants on Restaurant Row market toward this concept— dinner and a show and offer "specials" throughout the year.

The ambiance is wonderful, especially in the Spring and Fall, where you'll see people out strolling everywhere and dining, al fresco. There also brownstones and classic New York walkups along some of these streets that've been in the area since the mid-19th century. Imagine having that atmosphere at your doorstep!

There's a homey, neighborhood feel to Hell's Kitchen as well; its population is multinational and it was the setting for the movie and play, West Side Story. The annual Ninth Avenue International Food Festival brings New Yorkers out in droves in May where, between 37th to 57th Streets, Ninth Avenue is closed to traffic. Every kind of food imaginable plus live music, street vendors and entertainment are in full swing, from nine in the morning until six or so in the evening.

Hell's Kitchen is within walking distance to cultural icons as well—the American Museum of Natural History at Central Park West at 79th Street; Carnegie Hall at 881 7th Avenue; the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum at Pier 86, West 46th Street; The Museum of Modern Art at 11 West 53rd Street and The Museum of Television & Radio at 52 West 52nd Street.

On the far West Side, are brand new luxury rentals, there's Silver Towers at 600 West 42nd Street that offers one and two-bedroom apartments, a quarter-acre park and 20,000 square feet of spa and gym facilities. The Atelier at 635 West 42nd Street is a 46-story luxury apartment building that has 475 units—from studios to three-bedrooms and the views from some of these—**the Manhattan skyline and the Hudson River**—are breathtaking.

The Hit Factory at 421 West 54th Street was once a recording studio (the Rolling Stones, John Lennon, Eric Clapton, Billy Joel, Bruce Springstein and Madonna recorded here!) and it now serves as one of Manhattan's most successful residential developments. Twenty-seven state of the art condos with a rock-n-roll legendary past, right in the heart of Hell's Kitchen.

Griffin Court at 454 West 54th Street has two eight-story towers connected by an expansive lobby with glass walls. Residents have access to an 8,700 square-foot courtyard. The Orion on 350 West

42nd Street is a luxury high-rise for both sales and rentals and the Emerald Green is a two-towered, luxury rental high-rise offering 569 apartments, from studios to two-bedrooms.

Hell's Kitchen may have lost some of its "grit" but its colorful personality is now urban hipness with a proud, checkered past.

Sources:

Cohen, Joyce. If You're Thinking of Living In/Clinton: Gritty Gives Way to Gentrification. The New York Times. May 7, 2000. (Accessed 15 Feb 2011).