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Fresh off the farm

As one of Hudson Valley’s youngest women developers, Amalia Graziani is making a compelling case for slow living



Photos: Chris Mottalini, Harrison Lubin



As a child growing up in San Francisco, Amalia Graziani dreamed of becoming a philosophy professor. “The fact that I now spend my days on construction sites still surprises me,” jokes the owner of Noor Property Group, who at 31 has made waves as one of Hudson Valley’s pioneering developers.

In retrospect, the unconventional career choice might just have been written in the stars. “I’d grown up doing renovations with my dad and loved the design process but wrote it off as an impossibility. Although I found my way into development inadvertently, I was methodical about making this dream happen once I recognised its creative potential.”

Even as an undergraduate student at Smith College in Massachusetts, Graziani knew that she was destined for New York. She also knew that as a developer, she would need to equip herself with technical know-how in design, construction, architecture, landscaping and engineering. So she enrolled at Columbia University for a master’s in real estate development. But, by her own admission, the lessons that have truly had an impact on her career have been those learned on the construction site.

Noor is the prism through which Graziani does her development work, which includes residential, commercial and mixed-use spaces. What sets the group apart is its environmentally sensitive design ethos. This is evident in Callisto, a dairy farm from the 1800s



in Hudson Valley that Graziani has reimaged into a charming bolthole with historic details and pristine pastures. Among its standout features is the Dutch barn made of wood and stone, with a dramatic Gothic arch roof that is “extremely difficult to build today”.

The restoration, she says, was not without challenges: the structures were crumbling, the land was impossible to cultivate and large swathes of the property were inaccessible. “We built systems to allow this landscape to drain, provide water for our garden and be an appealing place for pollinators,” she says. “Now there are papaya trees, berry brambles, chestnut trees, a luxuriant orchard and a vegetable farm.”

Over the next year and a half, Graziani plans to gradually unveil the space through stays, retreats and farm-fresh produce. Her wildflower honey is already being sold to Hudson Valley restaurants and direct-to-consumer at upstate café Black Dot.

Clockwise from left: Amalia Graziani; a Dutch barn on the grounds of Callisto farm in Hudson Valley; an old cow shed; Graziani holding a bouquet of dried sage



“Each structure you build tangibly impacts the local community”

From left: Historic details and original materials are embraced throughout Graziani’s renovations; a side view of the Dutch barn on Callisto farm; an interior view of the restored fisherman’s home in Amagansett

Photos: Harrison Lubin, Alice Gao.

Graziani, who is currently an MBA candidate at NYU Stern School of Business, admits that the construction and project management aspects of her work are challenging. “The entry barriers to becoming a developer are high – and for a woman, even higher. But the work is the right fit for my personality. I love the scrappy irreverence that comes with working on a construction site,” she muses.

While Graziani has built in the Hamptons, San Francisco and Manhattan, her focus centres around Hudson Valley – and for good reason. As a result of the pandemic, the area has seen a swell of people looking for a slower pace, more space and the opportunity to be part of a tighter-knit community. “What I find

exceptional about the area is the cultural emphasis on food,” she says. “Most people I encounter are involved in the culinary scene in some capacity, and businesses go to great lengths to source the best ingredients.”

Comestibles aside, there’s a decidedly local quality to each of Graziani’s projects. In a weather-beaten fisherman’s home she recently restored in Amagansett, she juxtaposed contemporary furnishings with materials sourced from the local environment, such as lumber and natural dyes. “Each structure you build tangibly impacts the local community,” she says. “Working with local artisans and suppliers not only pays homage to the environment you’re building in and benefiting from, it also adds something special to your space.”