

ACES IN THE SKY

An upscale club for tennis and squash aficionados opens in Long Island City.

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Ask tennis players what their ideal day on the court would consist of and chances are high-rise buildings, cramped spaces and concrete would not make the list. In fact, for many, tennis in the city is all but a thing of the past, when venues were plentiful and racquets were welcomed with open arms. Well, good news, tennis in NYC is making a comeback. Throw your preconceived notions out the window and start stretching out those quads—CityView Racquet Club has arrived.

An 80,000-square-foot facility on the rooftop of the former Swingline Stapler building in Long

Island City, CityView now offers the most exclusive tennis and squash facilities in the metropolitan area, including a 15,000-square-foot clubhouse with panoramic views of the Manhattan skyline (hence, the name), outfitted with high-end amenities, services and experts worthy of the world's top players. Its founders envisioned a destination, not just a venue, where people could come to play, relax and spend the day. "We've created an atmosphere of a country club in a city environment, where we offer only the best services and instructors," says Michael DelPrete, managing partner of CityView.



Rigorously maintained, CityView's Har-Tru courts are air-conditioned in the summer and heated in the winter. "Although Har-Tru is a heavy material and, therefore, more difficult to install on a rooftop," says Kirk Moritz, co-director of CityView tennis, "we knew we wanted to give our members the feel and comfort of softer courts."



CityView's squash/fitness lounge offers members the comfort of home with five-star hotel service, including wide-screen plasma televisions, Wi-Fi access and waiter service from the café. In the background, a floating Brazilian mahogany staircase and curved Italian marble mosaic lead the way upstairs to the cocktail lounge.

On arrival, racquet and gym bag in hand, you'll quickly realize that this is more than just a sports facility, more than a club and certainly more than what you'd expect on a rooftop. CityView is a racquet player's dream. Seven Har-Tru tennis courts, four squash courts, state-of-the-art training equipment, a luxurious spa, a juice bar and café, a cocktail lounge and an outside deck all beckon you to explore the endless possibilities that CityView holds. "Very little expense has been spared in setting this all up," says Kirk Moritz, co-director of tennis at CityView, a well-known East Coast tennis instructor and a top-seeded senior player. "There's nothing like this in the city right now, especially with the shrinking tennis marketplace. We are a real event location for a discerning clientele. All people are going to have to do is walk in the door and want to be here."

Tennis in the city has gotten a serious upgrade. The area is sleek, modern, spacious and bright; the staff is

there to cater to a member's every need; the courts are immaculately maintained, with the best indoor lighting a player could think to request. Ample windows and skylights, a 30-foot palm tree and central fireplace, plush furnishings and streamlined appeal—all these and more resonate throughout the space and await a player in between matches. A full line of spa services, from massages and facials to waxing and bronzing, and expansive locker facilities, complete with changing rooms, saunas, showers and steam rooms, are equipped to soothe and restore even the most demanding court-weary athlete.

The facilities are so well designed that even legendary tennis coach Nick Bollettieri has endorsed CityView. According to DelPrete, "He will be making some personal appearances, probably around the US Open, and it's great to know that the number one coach in the world is excited about this facility." With Bollettieri,



After a match and visit to the spa, CityView's cocktail lounge is a welcome sight. A fully stocked, 40-foot-long bar serves alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, room-length picture windows afford a brilliant view of the East Side skyline and sumptuous banquettes and leather chairs offer the best seats in the house.

who has coached such names as Agassi, Seles and the Williams sisters, giving his thumbs up, you can be sure that CityView offers the best in tennis and squash instruction, including private and group lessons, stroke production training, round robin tournaments and partner match-ups.

When asked what a typical day might look like, Joe Perez, co-director of tennis at CityView and a prominent NYC tennis instructor, says, "You'll be greeted with a smile. Perhaps you'll want to start with a private lesson or a pre-arranged game, then follow that up with a massage. Feel free to go to the juice bar or the upstairs lounge, where you can chat with your partner or check e-mail on your laptop via one of our Wi-Fi stations." The cocktail lounge area was designed for entertaining and relaxation, replete with the sophisticated edge and warm touches that define CityView. Or, as Perez points out, it's the place to have

a get-together with friends and business partners. "We also cater to corporate customers who don't reside in the city, but who come in to do business. For them, we offer a non-resident membership they can use when they're in town."

And a CityView membership is just what you'll want. The club offers a host of membership options, including peak and off-peak all access, squash only, social and the aforementioned corporate membership packages. Conveniently located near the 59th Street Bridge and the Queens Midtown Tunnel, CityView is easily accessible by train from the city or by car from Long Island. If you choose to take your car, valet parking guarantees that all is taken care of, except for a win on the court—that's all up to you.

As for squash, it's as integral to CityView as tennis. "This is a very unique facility for squash, especially for hardball doubles," says Mike Weston, CityView's



A Warhol-esque tennis mural decorates CityView's on-site pro shop. From apparel and footwear to grips and headbands, it boasts everything a tennis or squash player needs to properly battle it out on the court.

director of squash. A full-time teaching pro of 15 years and competitive, world-ranked player from New Zealand, he knows that once loyal tennis players see the space, which offers three international singles courts and one hardball doubles court, they will want to test their skills at squash. "It's another racquet sport, a little more dynamic than tennis because there are more angles, and a very intense workout. We also offer one of the few high-performance squash programs where children will have access to a great team of coaches."

What about a player's gear? CityView houses a full-service pro shop, offering the latest tennis and squash merchandise, apparel and accessories. And within the shop, players will have access to the stringing and customizing services of RPNY Tennis. Founded by Roman Prokes, stringer and racquet customizer to the stars, the company will provide members with the same level of quality and service it offers the pros. With over 20 years of experience, Prokes has worked with players like

Sharapova, Agassi, Roddick and McEnroe. "We will work with you to find the racquet that is right for your needs," he says, explaining that this involves an in-depth consultation process. Committed to his partnership with CityView, Prokes assures members, "We don't want you to worry about anything. We just want you to play."

With that said, it's time to get out on the court, and CityView is *the* place to get the most out of your love for the game, whether it be tennis, squash or both. Although the club has just gotten off the ground, it has done so with a serious advantage. Looks like game, set and match for CityView. •

CityView Racquet Club, 43-34 32nd Place (Penthouse), Long Island City, NY 11101, 718.389.6252, www.cityviewracquet.com; please visit the website for a virtual tour and call for more information regarding prices and services.