

'Garden' apts.

Where to put down roots in New Jersey

By KATHERINE DYKSTRA

Hoboken and Jersey City are hardly the only New Jersey areas with spanking new housing stock on offer. Newark, South Orange, Trenton and Union City all have new roofs to put over your head.

And it's no surprise, in this economy, that developers are highlighting exactly the same selling points. Namely, cheap and commutable.

"The Trenton market is probably the most affordable urban market that you can commute to New York from," says Michael Goldstein, principal at HHG Development, which has turned the city's original oyster cracker factory into condos.

"We're the last affordable place left 20 minutes outside of New York," says Joe DiMare, director of sales and marketing at Union City's 100-unit Altessa.

But despite the similarities of the sales pitches, the products are all quite different.

THE CRACKER FACTORY *Trenton*

File the conversion of the Exton oyster cracker factory under one-of-a-kind. The development, constructed in the mid-1800s, had four additions/expansions over the years and now offers 18 unique apartments in one complex.

These units include two two-bedroom triplexes in Victorian rowhouses, originally constructed for the Exton family, and five lofts built in a Civil War-era expansion.

"We built a bedroom inside an oven," says Goldstein. "There's a vaulted brick ceiling and the original tile floor where they did all the baking prep work."

That residence has sold, but there are four units left on the market, one of which is a two-bedroom, three-bathroom with 17½-foot cathedral ceilings and 11 windows on three exposures.

On the market since late 2007, the remaining units start at \$209,000 and go up to just over \$261,000.

The NJ Transit express train from Trenton to Midtown takes 1 hour, 14 minutes.

