



NYC's Brownstone and Townhouse Experts

Richard Herman and Gary Mindlin “Our services have an impact on our clients’ quality of life and also on the future resale value of the home.” Top Hat Home Services

Ask any owner of a townhouse or a brownstone what it takes to maintain his or her home, and you’ll get an earful. With no super to call, owners must handle everyday upkeep, cope with emergencies, and make sure they meet city and community-board mandates when executing interior or exterior projects.

Homeowners will tell you that they never expected to have so much work on their hands. That’s why two friends—Richard Herman, a 25-year licensed contractor, and Gary Mindlin, a seasoned business manager—came together and started Top Hat Home Services. The company was founded after Herman and Mindlin realized that many homeowners needed more than just a contractor. Instead, they wanted a partner they could call for help with anything from emergency repairs to small handyman jobs.

As the need for a full-service Manhattan home management firm revealed itself, Herman and Mindlin developed a business model to meet the special requirements of this market. They secured the proper licensing, bonding and insurance that larger buildings required, but few independent homeowners asked for. They also hired highly qualified craftspeople and handymen who brought both experience and a professional demeanor to the job. Today, Top Hat has become a well-respected, full service home management company specializing in the care of single-family homes and small co-ops located in townhouses and brownstones. The company works with clients on an ongoing basis to solve problems, undertake projects, and care for the home when owners aren’t around or don’t have the time

or expertise to do it on their own.

Top Hat’s services include major renovations, plumbing and electrical work, seasonal preparations, caretaker services and 24/7 emergency response for clients. Top Hat employees can even wait for outside service technicians—such as those from cable or telephone companies—to arrive. Because of its broad range of deliverables, Top Hat maintains a list of dedicated professionals who share their expertise and craftsmanship on an as-needed basis.

Wanting to foster ongoing relationships with its clients, Mindlin and Herman largely shunned piecemeal work in favor of annual service agreements. They also worked with their craftspeople to ensure each fostered a real relationship with each homeowner to understand how owners wanted their places maintained. “When clients sign up to be a part of the Top Hat ‘club,’ they know that we’re not there for a quick buck,” said Herman. “Our goal is to keep the home running as smoothly as possible in the long term, making life easier for all our clients.”

Real estate professionals have seen the value of Top Hat. “Many prospective buyers are scared away because they don’t think they can handle home ownership in the city,” said Leonard Steinberg of Prudential Douglas Elliman. “Top Hat can be there to help get a building or co-op ready for sale or be there when the new owner renovates and moves in.”

Top Hat is very proud of its track record in solving client problems and tackling client emergencies. “We were across the country on a business trip in December when the

boiler went out, leaving our two children and their caretaker in the freezing cold,” said Shelagh H. of Gramercy Park, a client of Top Hat for two-and-a-half years. “We called Top Hat from the hotel and they rushed over to our house and assessed the situation. They were able to get the boiler working and have our boiler company come in the morning to make the permanent repair. The crisis was averted and our family and home was safe and sound.”

Top Hat Home Services currently serves dozens of homeowners in every area in Manhattan with plans to expand its operations into Brooklyn in the near future. “With the down economy, homeowners are looking to protect their investment and take better care of their homes,” said Mindlin. “Our services have an impact on our clients’ quality of life and also on the future resale value of the home. We use our experience and intimate knowledge of each client’s home to develop both short-and-long term plans for ongoing care, maintenance and improvements, which are prioritized based on urgency and financial requirements.”

Top Hat’s professional approach, experience and focus provide townhouse and brownstone owners with the peace of mind to know that they have the resources to handle any project or problem that they might confront. ■

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