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Fifty-Five Riverwalk

RAUVISIO noir™ Boxcar Blonde brings serene sophistication to multi-family mid-rise.

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Serenity meets sophistication: Renovated multi-family community stands out in competitive Manhattan-area market

Across the river from Manhattan, the rental market is fierce. Rental communities cannot stand out based on location alone— they need to offer a curated lifestyle. Inspired by this challenge, Aker took on the renovation of Fifty-Five Riverwalk, a 349-apartment mid-rise in West New York, New Jersey. The goal was simple: to create homes that feel both timeless and tactile, where every detail, from cabinets to everyday touchpoints, brings ease.

With multi-family communities across the Northeast, Aker specializes in reinvigorating living spaces through thoughtful renovations designed to enhance the resident experience. “What’s unique about every community we work on is that we lean into its individual character,” said Tina Ladd, head of development at Aker. “When we begin planning a renovation, we start with a branding mindset. We think about how we want the community to be perceived, and how its unique traits can be highlighted.”

For Fifty-Five, that meant embracing its serene riverside setting. Just a stone’s throw from Manhattan, the building offers a rare blend of urban convenience and peaceful waterfront living. This duality shaped the design approach and scope of the renovation.

Working in collaboration with Bromley Caldari Architects, the project team focused on strategic improvements that would modernize the apartments. “The building has strong bones and generous layouts,” said Stephanie He, lead design manager at Aker.



Project: Fifty-Five Riverwalk, West New York, NJ

Project type: Multi-family remodel, ongoing

Architect: Bromley Caldari Architects

Building owner and operator: Aker

REHAU products used: RAUVISIO noir™ Boxcar Blonde with perfectly matched REHAU LaserEdge™ technology

Photographer: Jay Litton



“But to stay competitive in today’s market, we needed to refresh the finishes with contemporary materials that reflect the quality and comfort we want our residents to experience.”

One key opportunity was the cabinetry. While the existing cabinet boxes were structurally sound, their orange-toned wood fronts reflected a dated design. Instead of a full replacement, the team chose to limit unnecessary waste by preserving the boxes and refacing them with RAUVISIO noir Boxcar Blonde.

Given the high expectations of residents influenced by nearby Manhattan, the team needed a finish that felt both modern and refined with durable features, which led Bromley Caldari to recommend RAUVISIO noir. This monotonic matte surface offers a serene and sophisticated tone that complements the renovation’s design palette, while meeting the quality standards today’s renters expect.

“The neutral color of RAUVISIO noir Boxcar Blonde paired with the modern slab cabinets perfectly matched our contemporary, calm design vision,” said He. “I love the soft touch matte surface and how it exudes quiet depth and texture that invites touch, not just visual appreciation. It feels more bespoke compared to other products, which speaks to the material’s quality.”

Quality was a top priority for Fifty-Five’s renovation, not just for aesthetics, but for long-term durability as a rental community where apartments see turnover throughout the years.

"As a building owner and operator, we strive for the best material quality and prioritize longevity," Ladd said. "Investing in quality upfront means fewer costs later on, and a better return on investment. With RAUVISIO noir, you can feel the quality when you open a cabinet— it's not an average replacement."

RAUVISIO noir was an ideal choice for this multi-family renovation with its durable features, including resistance to bacteria, stains, mold, fingerprints, scratches and impact. Even micro-scratches can be thermally repaired, keeping cabinets looking new over time.

Despite its upscale appearance, RAUVISIO noir is easy to maintain and is compatible with most cleansers, disinfectants and solvents. He noted, "Durability and ease of cleaning were prioritized in our surface selection, as we want to minimize the need for repairs or replacements as apartments transition between residents."

Beyond quality, a streamlined procurement process and the ability to order custom sizes were essential factors behind the surface selection. "The original doors were smaller than the boxes, so it wasn't a simple one-to-one replacement," explained He. "During the mockup phase, we spent time figuring out the right dimensions to fit existing hinges, eliminate visible gaps and ensure the doors opened properly."

REHAU's cabinet door order portal simplified the customization and ordering process. The team submitted custom measurements for various kitchen layouts throughout the building, then received edgebanded doors and drawers that were ready for hardware fitting and installation.



Refacing the cabinets proved to be a strategic move, allowing the team to refresh the kitchens without undertaking a full renovation. "We didn't need a complete overhaul to make an impact," said Ladd. "Refacing the cabinets gave a new feel to the apartments with a muted, bespoke look that's different from the standard white cabinet renovation."

In addition to updating the cabinets, the team replaced key touchpoints— adding hardware from Signature Hardware's Novak Collection, quartz countertops from Caesarstone, kitchen backsplashes from Roca Tile and new plumbing fixtures and sinks. "These changes reinvigorated the whole feel of the homes," said He. "Using high-end products like RAUVISIO noir helps elevate our community and keeps us competitive with newer developments around us."

By upgrading everyday elements and refacing cabinet fronts with RAUVISIO noir, the renovation at Fifty-Five delivers a serene urban living experience that reinforces the community's elevated brand identity and stands out in a competitive rental landscape. It's a home that feels considered in every way, and a reflection of the brand's belief that design and comfort go hand in hand.

As Aker expands into more urban markets, this renovation marks a pivotal moment in their evolution. "This project is a milestone in our company's growth as our first community that is adjacent to Manhattan," said Ladd. "As we continue to scale our portfolio, we would definitely use RAUVISIO noir again in future projects."