

DC

STYLE & STRUCTURE

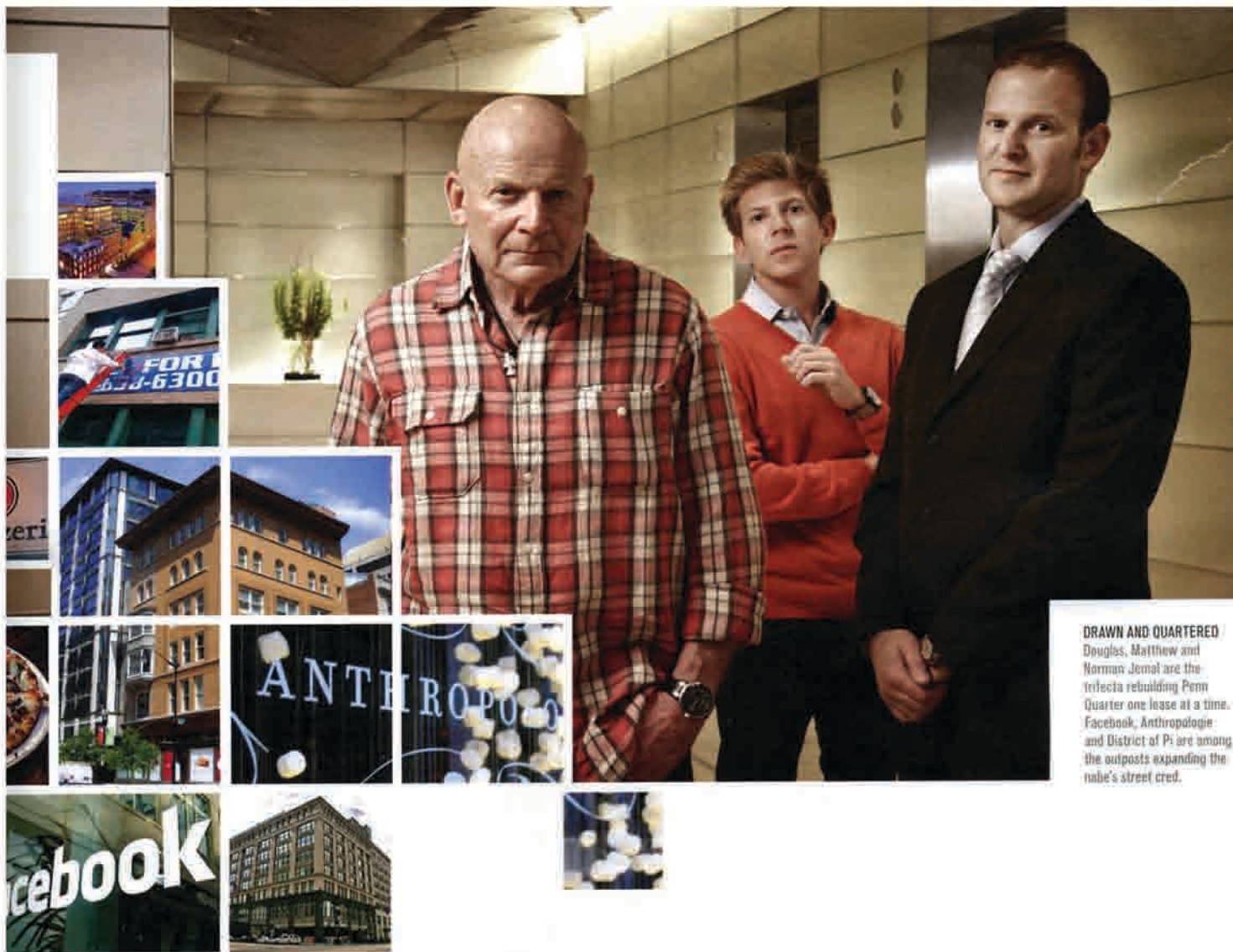
FASHION AND HOME ISSUE

Tysons Titan: Elie Tahari Sets Up Shop

Diane von Furstenberg Hits Home in DC

District Decorators Define the Party Line

Model Manse: Local Style Icon Gets Colorful



DRAWN AND QUARTERED
Douglas, Matthew and Norman Jemal are the trifecta rebuilding Penn Quarter one lease at a time. Facebook, Anthropologie and District of Pi are among the outposts expanding the tube's street cred.

Leases Unleashed!

A local developer at last unlocks Penn Quarter's best addresses.

| By Matt Dornic | Portrait by Greg Powers |

Penn Quarter's phoenix-like ascent from the ashes of blight is now the stuff of urban-development dreams. You can credit the Shakespeare Theatre for the reference and, at least in part, for the neighborhood's rise, as well, along with the countless restaurants and boutiques that have turned this once-shoddy district into one of the city's most vibrant destinations. But amidst the renaissance, a few mysteries remain. Chief among them: Why have so many of the area's sexiest storefronts gone unleashed—until now?

"No fast food chains, tattoo parlors, palm readers or strip clubs," says Norman Jemal, rattling off his strict list of development don'ts. "We only lease to businesses that will add to, not draw from, the neighborhood." Along with his father, Douglas, and his brother, Matthew, Norman is behind the wheel of Douglas Development, the driving force responsible for many of Penn Quarter's most defining moments in the last 20 years. The pioneering firm resuscitated much of F Street, with projects like the International Spy Museum, the Atlantic Building and the Woodies Building. Arguably downtown DC's most influential developer, Douglas is famed both for his philanthropic outpouring to the city, and for landing on DC's delinquent real-estate tax rolls.

Owing nearly \$6 million to the city last summer, the firm pointed out the fact that keeping leases open in order to create the best mix of long-term commercial renters for a neighborhood has a price. Recruiting the nation's hottest tenants doesn't happen overnight. After several years of keeping the Atlantic Building storefront space vacant, the Jemals will open Anthropologie's second District dwelling in May, after negotiating with the chic boutique for three years. That's just one example of how patience pays off—eventually.

A slew of new Douglas Development tenants will join the store to give Penn Quarter its second wind before summer sets in. The firm's recipe for revitalization has attracted companies like Target, Living Social and Facebook, blue-chip names that are buying into the Douglas dream by snatching up office space within the group's vast Penn Quarter portfolio. Both Target and Facebook are moving their government relations teams to the swank F Street property that already houses offices for Home Depot, Novo Nordisk and Intel. Street-level occupants include New York eateries Pret A Manger and Crumbs Bake Shop. The DC-based social-buying site Living Social will expand its corporate digs into 12,500 square feet of a Douglas Development building on Seventh Street. The trendy pizzeria District of Pi will soon start spinning on F Street and *Top Chef* devotees will be able to feed their cravings for Italian fare at Mike Isabella's new two-story eatery, Graffiato, just around the corner.

Such selectivity is the key to Douglas Development's success, according to Norman, who says that the blast of business represents more than just revenue. His passion for Penn Quarter's revitalization is a family affair and a way to make his mark on the city he loves. The slower-is-better business practice, now that the back taxes are being paid off, will indeed benefit the city for years to come. "Sometimes you're rewarded for not getting the most money," says Norman. "It's more important to build a sense of community." ■