

RENTERS

A Race-Car Driver Cruises Manhattan for His First Apartment

Jaden Lander didn’t want to leave the Upper East Side, where he grew up, but he found what he was looking for in the Financial District.

The year Jaden Lander turned 16 he went to his first car race. It sparked something in him. When he came home all aglow, his mother suggested he enter an amateur race. Five months later, unfortunately, he failed his first driver’s license test. “I hit the curb,” he recalled. “And I almost failed the second one for going too slow.” But he did pass the second test, which was a good thing because he was already signing up to enter amateur races. “I didn’t know anything,” he said. “I actually learned how to drive stick five minutes before I went on the track for the first time.” It was his grandfather who took him to Connecticut to compete in his first race. “He said I had a smile on my face for the next two weeks,” Mr. Lander recalled.

He continued to enter amateur races as he completed high school and enrolled at New York University. He was working toward degrees in marketing and psychology, but always felt most alive on the track. “There aren’t a lot of activities in life that, when you’re doing them, the only thing you’re thinking about is that thing that you’re doing,” Mr. Lander said. “When I’m driving, my brain can’t comprehend being somewhere else.” In 2021 he turned 19 and achieved rare status: professional race-car driver from the Upper East Side of Manhattan. “There aren’t a lot of us,” Mr. Lander said, referencing the other drivers from Manhattan whom he’s met. “We all know each other.” His first professional race was in Virginia and Mr. Lander placed fifth. “It was definitely a learning experience that weekend,” he recalled. But it took only a few days for him to get back out on the track. “The next weekend we came in third one race and in second place for the next race. And it just went up and up from there.”



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Jaden Lander, 23

Occupation: Race-car driver

On changing his luck: From the very beginning, Mr. Lander’s mother has been his biggest champion when it comes to racing. “She just thought it would be a cool thing that I’d do for fun,” he said. His mother attends many of his races, even though it didn’t go so well the first few times she showed up. “Unfortunately, we had bad luck. When I was an amateur, whenever she would come, I would crash. But once I turned professional, she came and that was the first race I won. So it broke that streak.”

On the golden rule of racing: Mr. Lander recognizes that much of his early success in racing is thanks in large part to guidance from his family and other supportive figures. “My mentor told me, ‘Just stick to the basics. No matter how fast the cars get, the fundamentals and the basics never change.’ And it’s true to this day, I drive much faster cars than I started with and the fundamentals never change.” Mr. Lander had his first championship season in 2024. He was still living in his family’s apartment on the Upper East Side, and his success accelerated his readiness to start looking for his first apartment.

“There wasn’t pressure to move out,” he said, “so I had the luxury of just waiting till I found something that I wanted.” A few amenities took priority for Mr. Lander, including parking. “Being a New Yorker, you usually take the train everywhere, but I like to drive,” he said. He wanted space, too, and hoped to get a two-bedroom. “But it was kind of hard to find within my budget.”Mr. Lander had always lived on the Upper East Side but knew that he was going to have to expand his search to get the kind of apartment he wanted. It was the act of getting behind the wheel that made the change feel possible. “Being able to drive from one apartment to the next made it all super easy.” he said. “I wouldn’t have looked at them if it wasn’t for that.”

His first instinct was to explore Hudson Yards. “I thought it would be great,” he said, “because you’re right on the West Side Highway, but I realized that getting east and west from there is impossible.” A friend suggested the Financial District. Mr. Lander liked the idea because of the proximity to more than one main artery, not just the Westside Highway but also F.D.R. Drive. He liked that SoHo and the West Village were near, as well as his girlfriend who lives in TriBeCa.

He looked at several options in the area and eventually decided on a two-bedroom in [SoMA](#), a new development that opened earlier this year on Water Street. “I knew it was perfect for me,” he said.He likes the extensive gym and sports facilities (everything from courts for basketball and pickleball to bowling and golf simulation). He also has easy access to scenic runs. “I go running on the West Side Highway, up into Central Park and back,” he said. “It’s great bang for your buck down here.” Now that he’s settled into his first apartment, Mr. Lander finds himself hitting the road more and more. “This year I’ve been doing some Europe stuff,” he said. “I went to Germany for the first time this year, which was awesome.” During Mr. Lander’s second professional season he began focusing on racing different car models and participating in endurance races that take place over several hours and involve teams of drivers.“It’s all about putting a few sponsorships together to make a deal happen,” he said, “and finding the right co-drivers to mesh together. I’m working with good teammates and I’m going to make it as sustainable as it can be and drive as much as I can.” The ultimate goal is to enter a 24-hour race at Daytona or Le Mans, France. “I love endurance racing.” Wherever the next season takes him, Mr. Lander is grateful for the comfortable home and reserved parking space to which he’ll return. He signed a two-year lease said it feels good to know he’s settled for a while. But his old neighborhood hasn’t completely escaped the mind. “I hope to be able to move back to Upper East Side,” he said. “Just because that’s home and I love it up there.”



Mr. Lander signed a two-year lease at SoMA.

