



# THE RADAR REALTY!

BY SARAH GLEIM  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY YVONNE BOYD

Local real estate developer Gene Kansas

## REPO MAN *Real estate developer Gene Kansas is creatively converting everything from empty warehouses to abandoned shops.*

Talk to Atlanta resident Gene Kansas for just a few minutes and you can tell right away he's no ordinary guy. Not only has he managed to publish a book (*Police Beat*, which has sold 10,000 copies), own an ad agency and become a real estate broker, he also runs his own commercial real estate development company, Gene Kansas Developments—and he's just 33. "I want to do more than just find a space and develop it," says Kansas, a New Orleans native who's lived here for 11 years. "I want to understand the project and how it fits into the area's day-to-day culture. I want to be creative and want my developments to be thoughtful, functional and responsible."

One of his most recent developments is Inman Perk, a hip coffee shop in Inman Park, which was honored with a bronze award for retail design at the 2006 ASID awards. "We wanted to create a community gathering spot that was part lounge, part coffee shop," he says. His favorite aspect of Inman Perk (aside from the java) is the "share-a-book" wall. "There's a bookshelf that spans the entire length of the shop and it's overflowing with books," he says. "Guests can bring in books, borrow books. It really encourages communication and I think that's what makes the space so different."

Kansas' largest development to date is One Grant Park, the first and only luxury condominium complex in Grant Park. The project is being built on the site of an old tire and rim shop that Kansas bought with the lofty goal

of redeveloping. He's managed to assemble an A-list team, including Dargan Landscape Architects and award-winning architect Bill Harrison of Harrison Design Associates. "This is Bill's first crossover project into condos," Kansas says. "He joined on because he wanted to create something different than what's out there now." The two-year project—it includes eight, 2,300-square-foot, one-level condos, as well as one ground-level commercial space—will be completed and on sale in May. Prices for units start at \$500,000 and go up to the mid \$600s.

Kansas is also in the process of juggling several other new projects, including two retail spaces he purchased and converted into offices on Central Avenue in Hapeville, and the new headquarters for The Icebox, the apparel manufacturing and marketing company. "They were looking for something that really fit their image," Kansas says. "We found this 1940s warehouse on the new Beltline that, coincidentally, used to be home to the Atlanta Ice Company, so we're converting it."

Although Kansas fully admits he loves seeing one of his building ideas come to fruition, he's more interested in the effect his projects have. "To me, the people are much more important than the building," he says. "I want to create environments for people." **A**

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