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On The Rise

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Unique Homes provides a look at the some of the best high-rise developments underway this year. Considering the endless variety of new luxury condo developments that are in the works at any given time worldwide, it's difficult to pinpoint any one of them as more outstanding than the others. However, a few always seem to carry some unusual features and details. Here, we show you a sampling of condos that are coming down the pike in 2008.

Lofty living

Penthouses are the ultimate retreat from the daily grind, and Jade Jagger for Yoo is making life at the top even sweeter. The international design and development company has created a rooftop oasis at its newest project in Chelsea just one floor up from the private penthouse abodes. This residence on West 19th Street will be topped by a two-tiered Mediterranean terrace with a landscape of exotic plants, a Moroccan latticed wall, a reflecting pool, sun deck, and indoor fitness club and spa. And the penthouses themselves will be a visual treat. With breathtaking views, private verandas and freestanding soaking tubs, the penthouses include a "living pod" that contains the apartment's kitchen, bathroom, laundry and storage spaces. The exterior of the pod is made of glossy lacquered door panels, which fold open to reveal an ornate, colorful interior with glass mosaics.

The Art of the Matter

Soho Mews isn't just any mixture of loft apartments, townhouses and penthouses. Befitting its place in the heart of New York City's artistic community, this posh new development offers its residents membership in the New Museum of Contemporary Art, private exhibition previews at the Deitch Projects gallery, shopping benefits at design emporium Moss and with the carpet artists of Fort Street Studio, and vintner service from the sleek Soho wine bar Centovini. Also, the Art Production Fund will curate a collection of original artwork for the communal spaces of each building and the courtyard.

Homes at Soho Mews span from 1,225-to-3,900 square feet and range in price from \$2.4 million to \$11 million. The building's exterior will be a modern incarnation of classic cast-iron architecture, with a layered composition of stone, metal and clear, frosted and fritted glass.

It's Easy Being Green

The Albanese Organization was known for pioneering green residential development in 2003 with its project The Solaire. Now, the developer is adding to its portfolio with its greenest residential project to date, The Visionaire, located in Battery Park City, will utilize materials such as eco-friendly paints, pesticide-free rooftop gardens and wood flooring harvested in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Council. Fixtures such as teak bathroom cabinets and limestone flooring add to the organic feel. Condo prices range from \$690,000 to \$2.3 million. Set for occupancy later this year, the residence is designed to qualify for a Platinum LEED rating from the U.S. Green Building Council.

An Oasis in the City

Billed as "the world's first urban resort condominium," Element offers a dramatically different condo experience in New York City. The 35-story tower includes an unprecedented 12,000 square feet of landscaped outdoor space with an expansive great lawn, private sundeck and meditation garden. Adding to the escapist appeal are a 60-foot lap pool and giant whirlpool enclosed in atrium-style glass, a Scandinavian-style sauna, basketball and squash courts, a state-of-the-art Cybex Fitness Center, and a lounge laced with the latest entertainment

technology. Even the kids get in on the action: Element contains a playroom outfitted with F.A.O. Schwartz toys, an outdoor playground, a children's pool and classes provided by Jodi's Gym. Condo prices range from \$800,000 to more than \$2 million.

Swank in the 21st Century

Back in the '50s, Miami became the hot spot for hipsters such as the Rat Pack and Jackie Gleason. Now, the old, swinging hotels and nightclubs are being replaced by sparkling high-rises. The Sheraton Bal Harbour, on legendary Collins Avenue, is among them. It will soon make way for a lavish St. Regis Resort and Residences catering to travelers and entrepreneurs. The five-star resort and condo complex will pamper its residents with a major palette of amenities including an around-the-clock concierge, children's activities and a spa with customized hair, skin and body services. The property's three all-glass towers will rise 27 stories over 1,000 feet of pristine white sand on the Atlantic Ocean. The past has given way to an elegant future.

Interiors Made to Order

One new luxury complex in Manhattan is offering the perfect amenity for condo buyers who are particular about their dcor: a free consultation with acclaimed interior designer Eric Cohler. The boutique condo, 8 Union Square South, offers loft-inspired residences with general features designed by Kohler, such as warm spice-colored woods and texturized limestone. Kohler meets individually with condo buyers to discuss options such as special lighting and wine storage. With only two condos per floor, the residences have ample room for their Juliet balconies, 10-foot ceilings and oversized windows. Equally as attractive is the Union Square neighborhood, a colorful mlang of taverns, art galleries, cinemas, off-Broadway theater and more - enough to keep the senses stimulated and the mind growing.

Sweeter Than Wine

Developers set a record when they opened sales for the first branded condo/hotel development in Napa, Calif. Set to open in late 2008, the Westin Verasa Napa Residences sold more than \$60 million worth of real estate in the development's first offering in December 2006 - nearly double the Napa Valley's yearly condo transactions that year. With its location near the Napa riverfront and downtown cultural scene, the condo/hotel is highly sought for its convenient access to fine dining, wine tasting, shopping, arts and entertainment. The



West 19th Street

residences themselves will combine rustic details such as exposed timber posts and wine-stained barrel staves with the amenities of a four-star hotel. A whole ownership real estate opportunity, the development offers condos ranging from \$500,000 to just more than \$1 million.

Inspector Gadget Here

When Manhattan developer Flank builds its newest luxury condominium in New York this year, it won't hold back on the technology. A 24-hour security service will monitor and control access to the building, residents will carry a special key that automatically opens the front door and elevators, and a biometric thumb print reader will allow regular visitors (such as delivery couriers) to have access during particular times. Beyond all this, each owner will be able to operate their thermostat, blinds, lighting and video remotely via an office computer, iPhone or BlackBerry. "We have united the elegance, convenience and technology of a 21st-century apartment house with the exclusivity, craft and privacy of a 19th-century townhome," said Mick Walsdorf, co-founder of

Flank. Residences at the futuristic 15-story tower, which is rising at 441 East 57th Street, will range from \$2.7 million to \$7.1 million.

Look Me Over

Alchemy Properties Inc. is continuing its trend of unique faades, such as zinc and terra cotta, with its newest project in Manhattan. Hudson Hill Condominium, a luxury development in Columbus Circle West, will feature an exterior made of Trespa, a flat paneling that is extremely resistant to impact, moisture, chemicals and abrasion. It's not only durable, it's got a look that can only be described as "funky chic." The attractive redwood design reflects light while ensuring a weather-proof and well-insulated building. All residences will feature luxury amenities including Brazilian cherry floors and doors, double-glazed Wausau windows, sophisticated video-intercom system and high-end Poggenpohl cabinetry. Condo prices will range from \$900,000 to \$2.9 million.

Viva Las Vegas

This market may be classified as overinventoried in some circles, but other real estate experts say it's still reaching its zenith as baby boomers continue to retire to the sunny West. In fact, the Las Vegas downtown is undergoing a radical \$14 billion renovation, with new restaurants, bars and retail outlets.

Former San Diego Padres outfielder Dusty Allen is positioning himself to get a slice of this market by developing Streamline, the only high-rise residence ascending from the new downtown Las Vegas Entertainment District. The residences range from \$400,000 to more than \$1 million and are selling fast, with their prime location and top-of-the-line appointments. "Streamline Tower has been a hit with a broad spectrum of buyers looking to become part of the downtown transformation," said Todd Grotstein, director of the High Rise Division of Prudential Americana Group Realtors, the project's listing agent.

From Blight to Bling

Once a booming vacation town on the New Jersey shore, Asbury Park dropped into decline and urban decay by the 1970s. But a major redevelopment effort is under way that will create an entertainment and shopping district along the boardwalk.

Sensing a prime location, Metro Homes LLC is developing The Esperanza at Asbury Park, a two-tower, beachfront collection of luxury condos. Prices for the lavish residences start at only \$400,000. Also located onsite will be a fitness center and spa, children's arcade, club room with poker and billiards tables and many more amenities. "This is a one-of-a-kind development in New Jersey that offers all the accoutrements you would expect at a five-star beachfront hotel in Miami," said Jackie Urgo, president of The Marketing Directors Inc., Esperanza's sales and marketing agent.