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The sky is the limit

REAL ESTATE

Luxury living takes a glamorous turn with opulent sky villas, complete with five-star facilities, coming up across India, says **Sushmita Biswas**

Would you like to combine the space and style of a sprawling villa with the amenities that come with living in an apartment block? If the answer is yes — and you aren't worried about the hefty price tag that comes with it — then it might be worth checking out one of the luxury sky villas that are coming up in India's top metros.



Greensville in Pune will combine the grandeur of villa living with the convenience of an apartment; (below) Poggenpohl kitchens will be one of the features at Aristo, Mumbai



A sky villa is a giant apartment — sometimes stretching over two or three floors — with every amenity, from private plunge pools to gyms and walk-in closets. And, no these aren't penthouses. All the villa-like apartments in the blocks are huge and spacious.

"In a penthouse, the luxuries are restricted to only those living on the top floor of a building. But in a sky villa, everybody can enjoy the privacy of villa living with added luxuries. Sky villas effectively combine the twin benefits of undisturbed privacy and high rise splendour," says Samujwal Ghosh, senior general manager, marketing, Lodha Group, Mumbai.

Exclusivity is the watchword in the villa blocks with each developer trying to outdo the other and offer luxury that can't be matched. So there are private elevators, private spas and in some cases, even a butler on call.

Says Raminder Grover, CEO, Homebay Residential, Jones Lang La Salle, India: "Super-luxury homes are very much in vogue and are bigger and better than ever. The units are fitted with ultra-luxurious provisions."

Obviously, you'll have to fork out large sums to own one of these villas in the sky. Prices start at an almost modest Rs 80 lakh and escalate to about Rs 40 crore. The target buyers are, of course, bankers, industrialists and well-heeled NRIs.

Says Pranay Vakil, chairman of real estate advisory, Knight Frank India: "Today, a minuscule number of people live in bungalows. These sky villas therefore provide a good alternative for those used to living in bungalows. But here you don't have to bother about privacy and security issues."

Leading the way is Mumbai where sky villas are being developed by the Lodha Group (Aristo), Kumar Builders (Kumar Couture), Prem Nath and Associates (Skydham) and India Bulls.

Other sky villas are also coming up in Pune (Gera Greensville), Bangalore (Prestige White Meadows), Hyderabad (Lodha Bellezza), Chennai (Olympia Opaline) and Haryana (TDI Kingsbury, Kundli). However, Calcutta may still have to wait for a few more years as the Forum Group's planned a sky villa project, Atmosphere, is still in the development stage.

So let's look at the sky villas coming up in various parts of India.

ATMOSPHERE, CALCUTTA

This is a premium project planned by the Forum Group. Super-exclusive and luxurious, it will come up on the EM Bypass near Science City and will have villas stacked on top of each other. There will be two 125-metre towers, joined by a hanging sky-garden.

There will be heaps of amenities, including private gardens, lap pools and private elevators. Says Nirmal Lunawar, executive director, Forum Group: "Though it's a niche concept, Calcutta has huge potential in terms of luxury projects." Prices haven't been decided yet but you can expect it to cost a few crores.

Status: Currently in the planning stage, the project is expected to be launched by year end.

ARISTO, MUMBAI

This one aims to offer a combination of villa living with five-star facilities. Located in Thane, it is being developed by Mumbai-based Lodha Group. It has 29 villas (one villa per floor), each sprawling across 4,500sq ft. There'll be private plunge pools and sundecks, master suites with walk-in-closets, a home-theatre lounge, Poggenpohl kitchens, electronic surveillance and a concierge on call.



Olympia Opaline sky villas will come with lavish swimming pools

Says Lodha's Samujwal Ghosh: "The project is by invitation only where the parameters include the profile of earnings of the buyers." Prices will start at Rs 5 crore.

Coming up is another block of by-invitation sky villas in Hyderabad called Bellezza which the company says, will be based on 'Californian-style' living. There will be six towers (42-storeyed) with a total of 300 sky villas spreading across 4,761sq ft each. The first villa starts from the eighth floor, below which there will be multi-level parking facilities and clubhouses. Prices start from Rs 2.27 crore.

Status: Work for both is at the advanced stage of construction. Also planned is a set of spa villas in Hyderabad with dedicated spas in each apartment.

SKYDHAM, MUMBAI

This 60-storeyed residential tower built by architect Prem Nath and developed by Ajmera Realty, is coming up in the Wadala area of central Mumbai. There will be 50 sky villas, each covering 5,000sq ft. The lowest villas will be on the 25th floor. The features include private pools, terraced gardens, mini-gyms and a common business lounge. Explains Prem Nath: "You have the opportunity to live in a villa at the sky level which is the high point of this project." Prices start from Rs 25 crore.

Status: The project will take four years to complete. Nath is also planning sky villa projects in Calcutta and Delhi.

KUMAR COUTURE, MUMBAI

This Rs 130-crore project is being developed by the Mumbai-Pune realty developer, Kumar Urban Development (KUDL) in central Mumbai's Worli area. It will have 24 bungalows. It's a 74-storeyed tower and each villa will spread over 8,000sq ft. The first villa will be on the 10th floor.

"The project, targeted at the premium segment, will have triplexes and duplexes which will be sold only by invitation," says Lalit Kumar Jain, managing director, KUDL.

Each villa will come with swipe-card-operated private lifts that will open inside the villa, plunge pools, a spacious master bedroom and two extra family rooms. Prices start from Rs 30 crore.

Status: Work is on in full swing and it will be completed within three years.

OLYMPIA OPALINE, CHENNAI

With the Bay of Bengal as backdrop, the Olympia Group is coming up with a duplex sky villa project, located on Old Mahabalipuram Road at Siruseri near Chennai. The Rs 60-crore project built on 16 acres will have 19 luxury duplex villas spread across 6,100sq ft each. Says Julian Francis, head, marketing: "We have already sold 40 per cent of our villas. The USP is the stunning view of the waterfront which all the villa residents can enjoy."

The key features include private plunge pools and *hamams*, gardens with anti-skid flooring, automated mood lights, private elevators inside each villa, spacious bedrooms, a separate family lounge area, library and coffee and juice bar. The villas are priced at Rs 3.5 crore onwards.

Status: Phase I of the project will be ready for possession from July 2011 onwards.

GREENSVILLE, PUNE

Developed by the Gera Group in the Kharadi area of Pune, these duplex sky villas are smaller than some of the others being developed. They start from 1,800sq ft and go up to 2,700sq ft. There are three towers with 60 sky villas each. "It combines the grandeur of villa living with the conveniences of an apartment. They are exclusive since the production quality and amenities that are on offer cater to a very niche audience," says Kaajal Shaikh, general manager, marketing.

The key features are spacious rooms, an entrance patio, sloping roof, picket fencing, backyard, private terrace garden and a family lounge area. Prices start at Rs 90 lakh.

Status: The villas will be ready for possession by end of this year.

WHITE MEADOWS, BANGALORE



White Meadows in Bangalore will have duplexes and triplexes

Located in Whitefield, the IT hub of Bangalore, White Meadows is being developed by the Prestige Group. It offers 214 sky villas (there are single level villas, duplexes and triplexes) spread between 5,576sq ft and 6,219sq ft in four towers of up to 27 floors. Says Uzma Irfan, director, corporate communications, Prestige Group: "The driving reason behind the demand for sky villas is that they provide optimum utilisation of space and a panoramic view with opulence galore."

The villas come with walk-in-closets, a gym with a Jacuzzi, landscaped gardens, open sun-decks and pools. Explains Anjum Jung, owner and director of the Morph Design Company, the interior design arm of the Prestige Group: "We have used imported marble in the foyer and the living rooms and laminated wooden flooring and modular wardrobes in the bedrooms." Prices start at Rs 5 crore.

Status: Work has already started and the villas will be ready for possession by the end of 2013.

KINGSBURY, KUNDLI

Located in Kundli in Haryana close to the capital, this project combines sky villas and ordinary apartments. There will be 18 towers, each with four duplex sky villas on the topmost floors. The project is being developed by the TDI group. The key features include sky gardens, splash pools and a separate party terrace in all the villas. Prices range from Rs 39 lakh to Rs 75 lakh. Says Anil Kohli, general manager, TDI: "They are a unique alternative to villas on the ground, given the urban land rates. Therefore, this trend is only going to rise."

Status: Work has already begun.

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