

Cover Story

LIVING IN LUXURY

Trendsetters in real estate segment are redefining luxury lifestyle for high net income individuals with polo-themed suites and spanish architecture villas, among others



ABODE OF OPULENCE: (Top) ING Vyssa Bank on Cuffe Parade, Mumbai and (bottom) EmaarMGF Marbella Villas

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SO YOUR pad has a modular kitchen, French windows and overlooks a patch of greenery and you think is the epitome of modern living. Think again! The race for luxury is still far behind with polo suites, fashionable collaborations and even neighbourhood banks donning a new look, luxury living is experiencing a new high.

DLF, the real estate giant, were the trendsetters when it came to pushing the luxury bar in terms of spaces that defined lifestyle for residence, work and recreation. Of late, they've been busy forging relations with fashion designers for events in their palatial residential properties such as Aralias with models as the high net income occupants themselves, giving the residents another reason to be elated. With a cause attached, it makes it even more meaningful to engage in these events, while the brand seems socially responsible. Designer Gautam Gupta says, "It is a win-win situation. I feel good to dress up distinguished people, apart from networking, since there is a noble cause involved, there is a personal sense of satisfaction".

Other developers in the space seem confident about the opportunities in the market. So far, building high rises flanking golf courses was considered posh, now polo grounds have taken the centre stage. M3M India is being touted as the only developer in India to build a polo-themed project, M3M Polo Suites. The exclusive apartments come with an access to a polo ground and an elegant polo lounge. The entrance with 'polo' themed sculptures and motifs, leads into the 'Polo Lounge' on the ground floor. The M3M Polo suites will provide exclusive concierge services to all its members that will include invitations to polo matches, access to riding clubs and assistance towards hiring/leasing horses for interested polo players. To allow its owners to enjoy an actual polo-living experience, and not just a polo-themed project, M3M India signed an agreement with Equisport, a pioneer polo sport agency headed by major

Adhiraj Singh, who is also the brand ambassador for the project, making this a pioneer in the concept for 'branded residences'. The project is expected to be completed by the middle of 2015.

Director Pankaj Bansal says, "The overwhelming buyer interest and the fact that our project has been a complete sellout underscores the demand for such exclusive homes that offer distinctive lifestyles". Today, homebuyers are looking for a house that reflects and enhances their lifestyle and this demand has paved the way for innovation in realty. Such projects facilitate true sport living with unique features. M3M Polo, for example, offers buyers the opportunity to be able to enjoy a game of polo and events surrounding the sport and yet experience the comforts of five-star living. The Polo Apartments celebrate royal living and the equestrian heritage of the region.

Making a statement with villas is the latest fad. High-rises have been around for a while but luxury villas, especially in space-snuffed cities, are known to have a different snob value all together. Emaar MGF, catching onto this international definition of ultimate luxury, decided on Marbella which is built in Spanish architecture - spread majestically over 110 acres of sprawling green with 4/5 BHK luxury villas in the range of Rs 4.5 crore to 8.5 crore. This villas only

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development is amongst the largest in the country with avant garde facilities that even include a cigar lounge. For the first time, facility management of the level of luxury apartments is being provided in a township format. This includes power back up, elevation control, exterior maintenance, lawn maintenance, concierge services, central security and monitoring. A representative on anonymity says, "Majority of the buyers are NRIs from West Asia and

Singapore and around, who want a swanky base in the capital".

The Club House offers facilities matching the stature and lifestyle of the residents including an indoor heated pool/outdoor pool, bowling alley, tennis courts, basketball courts, a high tech gym, a salon/spa, a banquet hall, coffee shop as well as beautifully landscaped jogging and walking tracks. Another draw for high net income residents is the fact that the airport is only 20 minutes drive away.

Speaking of revving up spaces, who would have thought of clinical looking staid banks also going in for a makeover? ING Vyssa was recently compelled to make its outlet in Mumbai's upmarket Cuffe Parade look savvier than any bank outlet in the country with a World Art bank. Tying up with a leading architecture and design company Dr Art+Design, they have made a creative space that spells pure class. Mitul Bajaj of Dr Art+Design says, "The interesting fact is that we didn't just introduce some special features but built the outlet as an artistic expression to make it an interesting and learning experience for whoever steps in".

Welcoming the guests are two six-foot tall and grand lion sculptures at the entrance that personify the ING Vyssa's logo - also a reflection of royal gatekeepers and trustwor-

thy guardians. The sculptures stand authoritatively holding a coin in a rather protective manner ensuring the customers that their wealth is in good hands. The sculpture's non-ornamental cubic rendering and rustic copper finish is certain to hold one's eye giving a preview of the world of art they are about to enter.

Each artwork leads to another; bringing us to an installation of historic Indian coins. This installation weaves a texture of legends from various empires, which ruled India since Indus Valley civilisation, through medieval era, till the Mughal reign. Each symbol cast on the coins is an evidence of socio-political, cultural and administrative influence. So as customers withdraw 21st century money from the ATM, the intricately carved coins displayed in museum style give a peek into India's history of currency and an overall interesting experience.

The interiors have ample use of beige with hint of rustic textures that elegantly flow all over from ceiling to the floor. A one-of-a-kind art lamp displaying the rupee symbol illuminates the surroundings. A simple yet classy 'Art Bench' is positioned in an apt place within the interiors for a perfect view of all the artworks, while adding to the overall aesthetics.

Group head, banking and wealth management at ING Vyssa Bank, Sonalee Panda says, "The ING Art Branch is unique and a first of its kind, it is an art gallery which also caters to banking and wealth management needs of our clients. Globally, ING patronises art and has a collection of over 15,000 artworks. This, coupled with a growing appreciation for art in India, was the reason we decided to launch our Art Branch. What we are trying to achieve here is to bring that tradition into India and at the same time make our branches more vibrant, and to offer our customers an unique banking experience". ■

