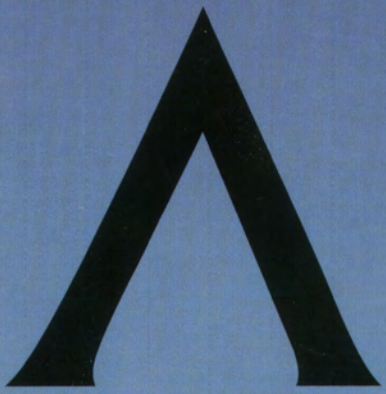


Love & live in style

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Building around Beirut

BEIRUT'S REAL ESTATE SECTOR IS STILL BOOMING, AND A NUMBER OF NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS ARE SET TO BECOME CITY LANDMARKS



©Beirut Gardens, Nabil Gholam

Platinum Tower

Beirut is witnessing an architectural renaissance: from sea level to wind-tunnel tested balconies at over 100 meters, Beirut's skyline is set to change yet again. *Aishti Magazine* looks at five new projects in the capital.

Platinum Tower

Recreating Levantine-style living at up to 150 meters above sea level is quite a feat, particularly when you have access to a balcony at such heights and are not blown away. By using innovative wind-tunnel tests, Nabil Gholam and team designed 50-square-meter balconies that are sheltered by glass wind-breakers on either side of the 30-storey tower. Overlooking the Mediterranean on Beirut's seafront, the seemingly all glass structure is constructed of four types of low-E glass to offset the glare of the sun and to give the building that platinum sheen.

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Beirut Gardens

With Martyrs' Square free of the obtrusive tent city and Downtown Beirut back to its swinging ways, architecture is revitalizing the area as the capital's beating heart. Standing next to the remodeled Opera House (now home to Virgin Megastore) and overlooking the Garden of Forgiveness, the Beirut Gardens project is a lush mixture of greenery and linear architecture with a white mottled casing over the front and back façades that present an artistic visage. The building's strong lines and sandstone coloring contrast with the Roman ruins the building overlooks.

Visit www.beirutgardens.com

Beirut Marina

Beirut's seafront is changing fast, with the Steven Holl, L.E.F.T and Nabil Gholam-designed Beirut Marina that adjoins the



Beirut Gardens



Beirut Marina

legendary St. George's hotel, extending the city's much-loved Corniche with a harbor and Town Quay. Through a series of overlapping platforms to create an "urban beach" of public space amid residences, a yacht club, restaurants and stores, the top floor of the five-level Town Quay building is reached by a ramp that seamlessly flows from the Corniche. Further adding to the aquatic feel of the quay, the building's tile work is reminiscent of a swimming pool, while gravity-fed fountains and pools dot each level amid sculptures and art work.

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Saifi 606

Gemmayze is chockablock with concrete structures and Ottoman-era buildings, while Saifi Village is a modern recreation of old Beirut. Architect Raed Abillama has bucked this trend with his Saifi 606 building, starting with a monolithic stone facade on the first few floors before ascending to 11 stories, with each floor being gradually set back, pyramid-like, from the



Saifi 606

©Raed Abillama, Bernard Khoury



Ashrafieh 732

street to tame its imposing height on the eye of the street observer. While the lower half of the building overlooks the garden of the neighboring church, the top five floors have a sweeping view of the Mediterranean.
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Ashrafieh 732

Bernard Khoury's 732 building in Ashrafieh has a decorative steel structure for a façade with stainless steel stairs and tension rods adding to its exoskeleton structural visage. This eight-storey residential building is comprised of open-plan lofts and a duplex penthouse, while Khoury has played on three types of balconies of varying sizes. The Western side has generous decks that seclude the balcony from the street while also giving the building a domestic feel amid its urban surroundings. On the eastern edge, organic-shaped wooden-shell balconies counter the industrial feel of the building, further bolstered by the plants incorporated into the design that change with the seasons.

Visit www.bernardkhoury.com

Paul Cochrane