Sapphire Residences Redefine Urban Living In Sri Lanka

Sapphire Residences, ITC's first residential development outside India – a Mixed Use project consisting of luxury apartments, recreational and commercial amenities, high-end retail space and elegant offices, was launched in the presence of the team spearheading the design, construction and decoration of the towers, expected to be an iconic landmark in Colombo.

Chris Graham, Managing Director, Graham Associates, in charge of the global marketing aspect of the project, speaking at the launch described the project as a landmark building for Sri Lanka and for Colombo's skyline.

A short film – Making of an Icon – provided an overview of the building and the comprehensive philosophy behind the design of the towers by a team of international experts who created the concept of a vertical village.

The twin towers, the hotel and the residences and the sky bridge was designed by Thomas Ito from Gensler, a leading architectural firm, in collaboration with Philippe Starck, an internationally acclaimed French creator, designer and architect, who together with John Hitchcox founded Yoo, an international lifestyle studio, contracted to provide unique branded residences.

The site, links the ocean, the lake and the city. What is unique about the project is that there is no front or back to the building. Designed in a triangular shape, the building is 360o, where it maximises all the views. It allows two sides of the building to have incredible ocean and sunset views from every single room in the unit and on the other, it provides a view of the ocean and the city at the same time. The sky bridge will be the most iconic design linking the two structures, a stretch of 50 metres, at a height of 100 metres in the sky.

“I’ve seen beautiful architecture in the world, but strangely I feel that most buildings are built not for the people living inside, but more for the architects who design it. The important thing is to make a building beautiful for the family living inside. This is what we have created, a vertical village. Why a vertical village? Because people are more and more alone and less together, and this vertical village is where people can meet, and celebrate,” said Philippe Starck, introducing the show-apartment.

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In designing the 130 residences and penthouses, the fact that Sri Lankans prefer living in spacious apartments with horizontal spaces linked with land and nature, was embraced in Sapphire Residences and was transfered into a vertical living space. The average size of an apartment is 5,000 square feet. The tower will have four penthouses of 9,000 square feet and at the very top of the tower will be two master penthouses of 19,000 square feet.

Philippe Starck explained the four choices of residence, describing Classic as

appealing to the connoisseur with an understanding of the finer things of life. A blend of classical and contemporary objects, with refined and sleek interiors designed to instil a sense of finesse and sophistication in living experience.

Minimal, has pure and simple layouts to enhance space and light, creating a quiet and calm ambience to instil light and tranquillity in the apartment.

Nature, is an epitome of simplicity, with airy rooms, oak floors and light fabrics. Sun filled spaces shaped by organic materials, as well as soft and textured finishes designed to infuse a sense of freshness, freedom and health within.

Culture, offers spaces designed to socialise and engage with family as well as with friends. It has a darker and richer material palette, mixture of furniture representing different cultures to afford a sense of cool vibrancy in the living space.

“We have merged architecture, interior, development and the customer. By merging these disciplines you get much closer to the customer. With vertical villages you choose to move in with like-minded people and friends. This is one of the biggest and best buildings to come up in Sri Lanka with the best location to demonstrate this concept. The convention in the city is that you buy a house but you don’t know your neighbour. The concept of the vertical village creates a space where people would be making social contact. Sapphire Residences is a brilliant example,” explained John Hitchcox.

The emphasis of ITC is to promote the new paradigm of ‘responsible luxury’, linking luxury business with sustainability, where luxury is not separated from responsibility, given that the planet is going through tremendous changes, an ethos reflected in the design and construction of the Sapphire Residences and the hotel in Colombo.

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