



THE HIGH LIFE

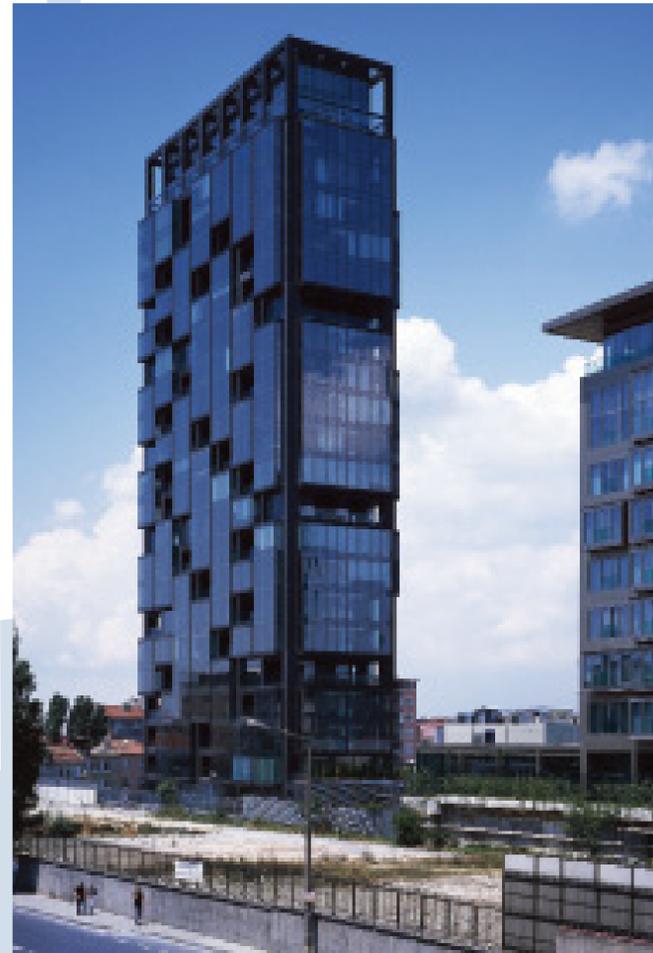
MEA looks at five of the most highly acclaimed residential towers in the region

LOFT GARDENS

ARCHITECT: Tabanlıoğlu

LOCATION: Istanbul, Turkey

Turkish firm Tabanlıoğlu designed a 21-storey residential tower in Istanbul, which was among the 13 winners of the RIBA International Awards 2011. Loft Gardens was described by judges as “an extreme demonstration of elegance and restraint within a subtly modified typology”. High-rise garden patios are inserted into the façade as a counterpoint to the protruding bay windows and deepen the play of solid and void. Plan and section are organised to create a range of apartment types - some horizontal, based around patios, and others vertical with double-height spaces. The interior has an industrial loft aesthetic with exposed services and structure and a use of concrete, steel and timber.



MAYSAN RESIDENCES

ARCHITECT: dwp

LOCATION: Abu Dhabi

This tower by dwp was the top ranking residential high-rise project at last year's Middle East Architect Awards, receiving the runner-up prize at in the Residential category. A member of the jury proclaimed the project as "one of the most exciting tower designs ever." The twin tower complex, for developer Aabar, contains a total of 337 apartments in the Al Najmat district of Reem Island, Abu Dhabi. Five slab profile variations generate the chiselled façade effect, with shaded roof gardens sheltered by deep overhangs.



ADVERT

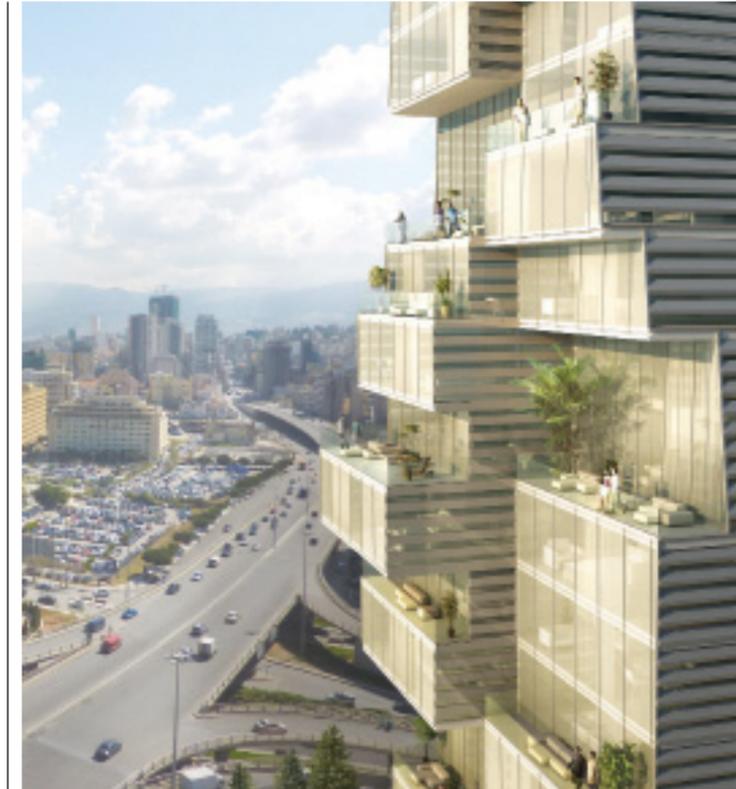


FLAME TOWERS

ARCHITECT: HOK

LOCATION: Baku, Azerbaijan

Nearing completion in Baku is a sculptural three-tower complex, named the Flame Towers due to its fire-inspired design. Created by US giant HOK, the tallest tower in the scheme is purely residential, while the other two house office and a Fairmont hotel. A podium, which bridges the three towers at ground level, contains high-end retail and leisure facilities. At 192m in height, the residential tower will be one of the tallest buildings in Azerbaijan and contains 130 luxury apartments over 39 floors. At the top of each tower, the curve of the structure inverts to form a 'flick'. The construction of the flicks involved the use of 30m high structures of conventional steel welded box and architecturally exposed steel sections.



BEIRUT OBSERVATORY

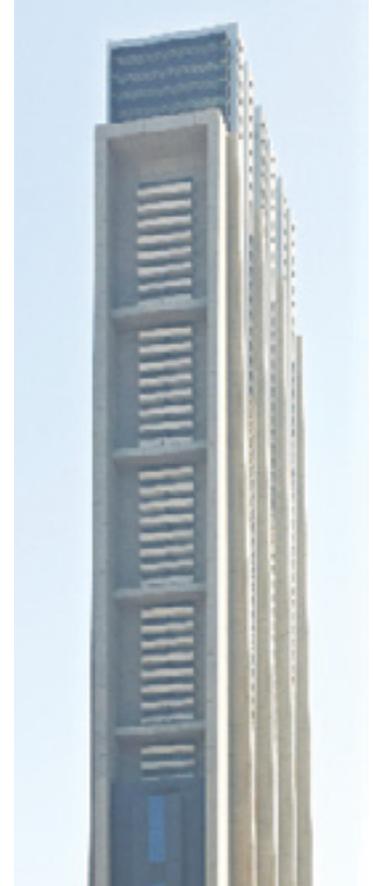
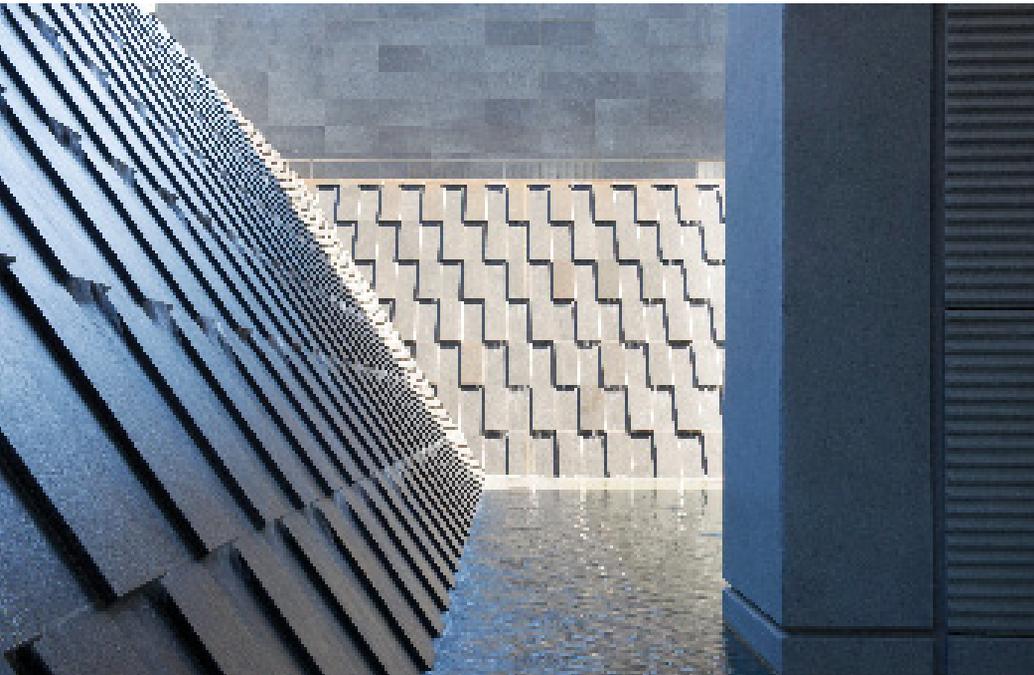
ARCHITECT: Accent

Design Group

LOCATION: Beirut

Accent Design Group's Beirut Observatory picked up this year's WAN Residential Award in the unbuilt category, beating entries from Italy, China, Estonia, Canada, Sweden and Norway. Located in the centre of the Lebanese capital, the tower is composed of a smoothly rising stack of glazed-unit apartments. The panel of seven judges was impressed by the opposition between the front and back façades, the double height spaces in the middle of the tower and the cantilevered balconies. Louvers protect from excessive eastern and western exposure while adding privacy and providing an opportunity for a vertical 'green' screen that acts as a unifying element on the façade.





THE INDEX

ARCHITECT: Foster + Partners

LOCATION: Dubai

A distinctive landmark in the shadows of Burj Khalifa, Foster + Partners' The Index was judged the best new high-rise building in the Middle East and Africa by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH). The 80-storey tower, developed by Union Properties, combines 520 luxury apartments with 25 floors of office space and the different functions are separated by a spectacular double-height, glazed sky lobby. One of The Index's most celebrated attributes is its response to the desert sun. Unusually offset against the urban grid, the east to west orientation reduces solar gain, as the building's core mass absorbs heat and reduces its reliance on mechanical ventilation. A system of sunshades shelters the interiors on the exposed south elevation. The tower is crowned with 12 luxurious duplex and triplex penthouse apartments with knock-out views over Dubai.

