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REAL ESTATE

Fancy Swimming Pools as Building Perks

By JANE MARGOLIES JULY 22, 2016



A rooftop pool at QLIC in Long Island City offers Manhattan views. Credit Santiago Mejia/The New York Times

For those of us who slog on the subway to Rockaway for a dip in the ocean, or sit in traffic en route to weekend houses by the water, the idea of having a pool in our apartment buildings might sound like the ultimate luxury. Simply push an elevator



button and, moments later, dive in.

But for certain rarefied strata of residential real estate in New York, a pool is becoming common. And pools in new or soon-to-open buildings go way beyond the basic. Some have been elevated from the usual location in the basement to ground level or higher, opening up to gardens and skyline views. Many are long enough for lap swimming, embellished with fancy finishes and flanked by lounge chairs.

“A pool gives an aura to a building,” said James Lansill, a senior managing director of the Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group.

Some developers are going to significant lengths to provide that allure, even shoehorning pools into existing buildings during conversions. At [135 West 52nd Street](#), a condominium created in a building that previously housed the Flatotel, the Chetrit Group and [Clipper Equity](#) took basement space that the hotel had used for offices and filled it with a lap pool with a wall of backlit glass painted to resemble onyx. At another condo, [88 & 90 Lex](#), a merger of a 1927 building and a 1958 building, the [HFZ Capital Group](#) is installing an L-shape pool for the joined buildings to share.

Some lower-level pools have skylights, keeping them from feeling closed in. At [Jardim](#), a West Chelsea condo being developed by [Centaur Properties](#) and the Greyscale Development Group, the skylights will be framed with greenery from the garden above.

The pool at the [Steiner East Village](#) condominium will be on the ground level, overlooking its garden through floor-to-ceiling windows.

As fitness centers have moved up in buildings to so-called amenity floors, so too have pools. At [53W53](#), developed by Hines, the Pontiac Land Group and Goldman Sachs, the 14th-floor amenity “pavilion” will include a pool in a high-ceilinged space with a wall of south-facing windows and two walls of vertical gardens.

Increasingly, pools are on the roof, according to James Gilday, a landscape architect and partner of the [Moss Gilday Group](#) of Little Silver, N.J. The firm designed the rooftop pool for [QLIC](#), a [World Wide Group](#) rental in Long Island City, [Queens](#), capturing views of [Manhattan](#). From the pool deck at Glenwood’s [Encore](#) rental on the Upper West Side, residents can see the Hudson River.



At Steiner East Village, the pool will overlook gardens. CreditWilliams
New York

At least one pool traverses residential towers. The [JDS Development Group's American Copper Buildings](#) rental is made up of two towers overlooking the East River and connected by a bridge containing a lap pool, enabling residents to swim from one building to another.

Pools for lap swimming are more commonly found inside. Although 50-foot pools are being billed as lap pools, serious swimmers generally seek a pool that is competition length: 75 feet.

The pool at the [Greenwich Lane](#) condo and townhouse development in the West Village, by the [Rudin Family](#) and [Global Holdings](#), is even longer: 25 meters, or a little over 82 feet. “With 25 meters, you can say it’s half an Olympic pool,” said the project’s fitness consultant, Jay Wright, the principal of the [Wright Fit](#).

Some properties offer multiple pools. At [111 Murray](#), a condo in Lower Manhattan being developed by [Fisher Brothers](#) with [Witkoff](#) and New Valley, a lap pool will be accompanied by an oval-shaped children’s pool with spouting fountains.

Other buildings will have hot and cold plunge pools, and something called a vitality pool is on the horizon, according to William R. Simmons, a partner of Lothrop Associates in



White Plains, who oversees its [Trace Pool Design](#) division. “It’s a shallow pool with tepid water aerated with jets to make the water super-oxygenated,” he said. “It provides a light stimulation to the skin.”

Pool water is being tinkered with in other ways. To reduce the use of chlorine, alternative methods are being used to meet sanitary standards, including ultraviolet light and ozonation. The pool at [70 Charlton](#), a Hudson Square condo, will be filled with saltwater.

The cost of installing a pool depends on its location, size and features. According to Mr. Simmons, putting a three-lane, 75-foot lap pool in an upper story of a new building can cost \$650,000 to \$750,000, not counting the costs for the pool room, finishes and building mechanicals.

The outdoor pool at the [Grand at Sky View Parc](#) in Flushing, Queens, will top a shopping center and required strengthening structural supports. The pool area will be fitted with cabanas, lounge chairs and outdoor kitchens.

“If you added it all up, I wouldn’t be surprised if it was a \$2 million amenity,” said David Brickman, the director at [Onex Real Estate Partners](#), the project’s developer.

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