

HI THERE, HIGH-END

There is an underserved demand for high-end and luxury residential developments due to the increasing needs from expatriates, local executives and quality-seeking overseas Filipinos. Unlike the middle income residential market, which is seen to be the most competitive segment, there are only a handful of really high-end products.

Whispers of property bubble are due to the prolific construction of developers who have been cashing in from the huge demand for condominium products. This is buoyed mainly by the backlog in housing. The projected housing backlog for this year is approximately five million, and this is increasing by 400,000 units per annum based from the National and Economic Development Authority (NEDA) projections. In terms of residential developments, the annual average is a little over 200,000 units in the past eight years, and condominiums units comprise only about 27% of these units, using the statistics from the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB).

Unlike the price conscious mid-market segment, the high-end and luxury residential market is price resilient. Expatriates working in the Philippines, high caliber local executives, and discerning overseas Filipinos who experienced luxury amenities abroad are all looking for facilities and services that suit their tastes and whims, and are willing to pay higher costs.



One Rockwell

Historically, the Rockwell brand, Pacific Plaza Condominium and Towers, Essensa, and One Roxas Triangle have cornered the luxury high-end market. These developments offered big units; some are even exclusively three-bedroom or larger developments only. It is common for elevators to be shared by only two units per floor, which says a lot in terms of exclusivity. Often times, these luxury high-end condominium projects are secluded, quiet and away from the bustling noise of the central business district (CBD), even when they are in the middle of the CBD.

In recent years, this serene and secluded atmosphere of luxury high-end is giving way to the atmosphere of Hong Kong and New York. High-end residential developments are offering luxury amenities and services. First and foremost, newly-built high-end residential condominium projects are inevitably integrated with mall developments, which is a trademark of Hong Kong and New York living. The Residences at Greenbelt followed the model of the Rockwell brands. While the Rockwell developments were initially secluded, their proximity to the Power Plant Mall made them very desirable and successful. The newly-built One Rockwell sits on a retail podium catering to high-end restaurants, which used to be a no-no for luxury high-end residential. Even Discovery Primea made use of the Ayala underpass to ensure that its luxury offering is just a short walk to Glorietta and Greenbelt area.

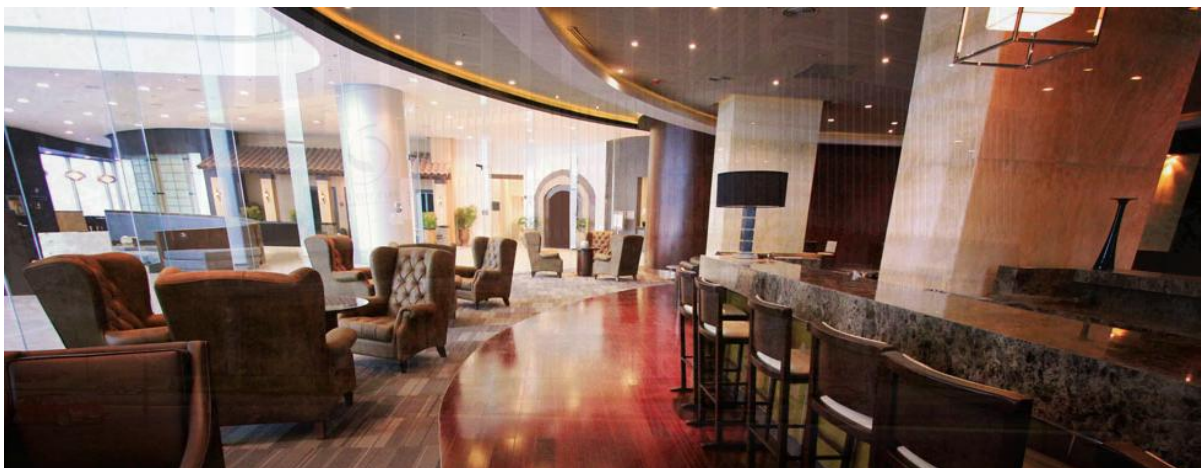
Another trend in high-end residential developments is the offering of smaller units. While the ultra-luxury is very low density to a point of “snobbish,” the new projects are now offering one bedroom units. Offering smaller cuts means slightly higher density. The additional foot traffic is balanced out with the third trend, offering concierge/butler services similar to a hotel.

Luxury and high-end residential developments are “high specs” or to use Century Properties Group’s term “hyper amenitized.” When high-end occupiers enter their premises, they are greeted with snappy and service-oriented staffs. Most if not all concierge services of a hotel are present in these new high-end products.



The Residences at Greenbelt

The newest trend is levelling up the amenities to the level of a “Club.” The Residences at Alphaland Makati Place raised the bar of amenities and services and incorporated The City Club in this high-end development. The City Club is over three hectares of floor space offering sports, leisure and entertainment amenities, as well as business and function room facilities.



Alphaland Makati Place – The City Club

The Residences at Alphaland Makati Place fully utilized its retail podium, and it is now serviced by Rustans, Canadian American School and other shops and restaurants. In a way, this high-end development is providing luxury amenities and facilities, complete with retail shop, to be an enclave on its own. On a separate note, Alphaland, the developer of this project, is also the developer of the luxury and exclusive “Balesin.”



The mantra of location, location, location has been successfully circumvented by some of these luxury and high-end residential products. Rockwell was initially viewed negatively because it was at the “fringe” of Makati City, and not even within the central business district (CBD). Some whispers about being a former power plant could even be heard before. Nowadays, “Power Plant” is a very plush and successful mall. Gramercy, Milano and Trump in Century City were also considered “outside” of Makati CBD. Again, nice specs and finishes, high-end amenities and services, and an integrated retail complex, Century City Mall in this case, did the trick again. One new trend to watch for is “clubbing” like what is offered by The City Club in The Residences at Alphaland Makati Place.



The Residences at Alphaland Makati Place

Ultimately, all of these high-end residential projects are still in Makati City, the premier financial center of the Philippines. While the new projects are shedding the low-density, snobbish enclave, they are offering high-specs and fully-serviced amenities and facilities.



Infinity pool of Alphaland Balesin Island Club

Photo Source:

One Rockwell – www.cladding.com

The Residences at Greenbelt - www.facebook.com/TheResidencesAtGreenbelt/photos_stream

Alphaland Makati Place: The Residences & The City Club - <http://www.makatiplace.com.ph/>

Alphaland Balesin Island Club - <http://www.balesin.com/>

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