

2018 Amenity Watch: Social Spaces, Porte Cochères and More

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Plus, double appliances are in demand inside the homes

By Bill Cary

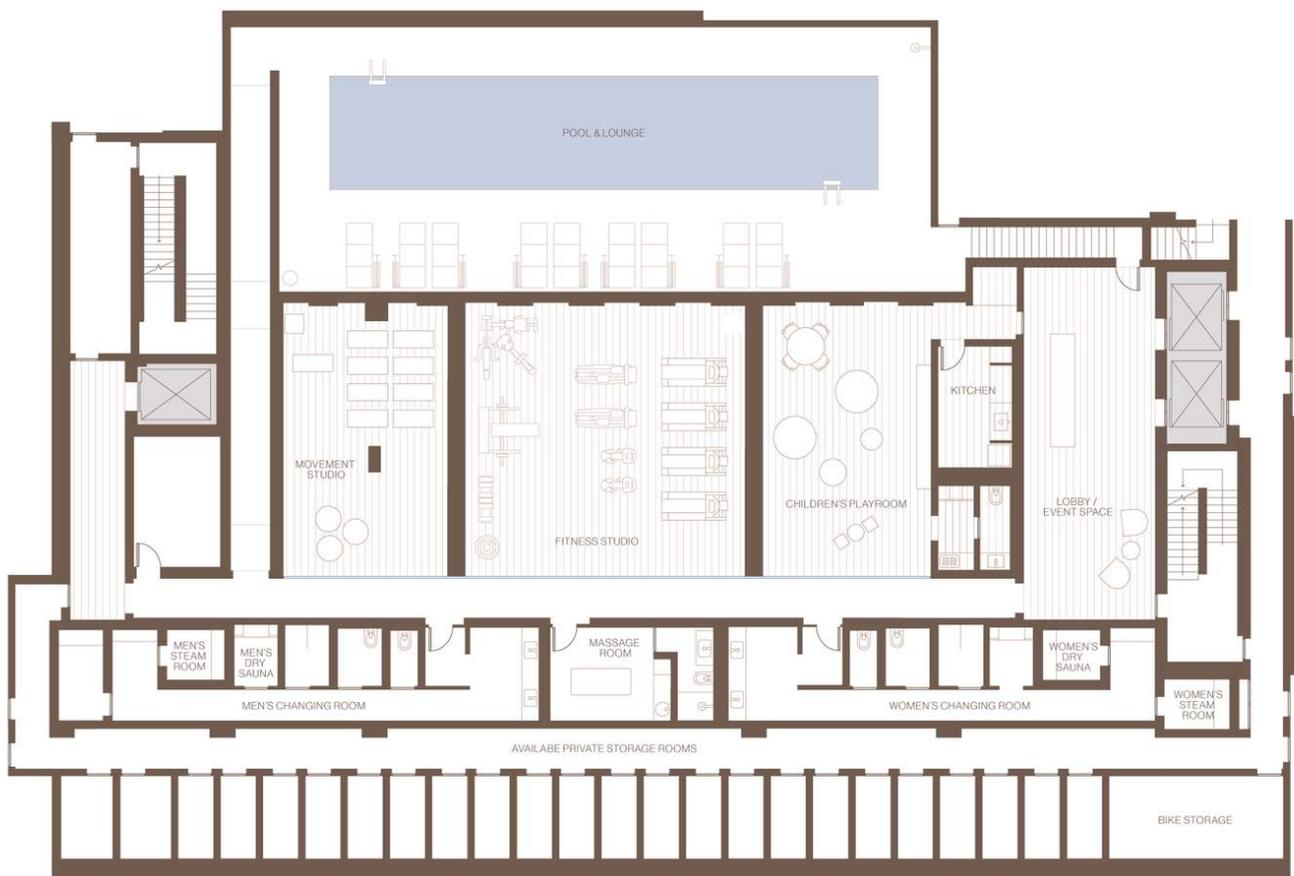


Whether it's a must-have new kitchen gadget in a high-end spec house in Los Angeles or whole floors of party rooms, pools and gym clubs in New York and Miami condo buildings, the right amenities continue to be a key factor in real estate sales.

"Amenity packages have become quite unbelievable," said Frances Katzen, a new development agent at Douglas Elliman in New York, ticking off must-haves for buildings that include lobby stroller storage, simulated golf, children's gaming rooms and pet spas.

"Everybody is trying to outdo each other as far as size, height and finishes—and then it's all about the amenities," she said.

Here's a look at some of the amenities we're seeing growing in demand as we look ahead to 2018.



(pictured: Jardim's pool and spa floor plan)

“Outside of the standard terrace and parking or a gym, the most important amenity right now is a swimming pool,” Ms. Katzen said.

Jardim, which is set to open in the second quarter of 2018 at 527 West 27th St. in Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood, will have a 60-foot indoor pool with skylights, terrazzo floors, and old-growth pine walls along with men’s and women’s changing rooms, steam rooms and sauna. The pine walls open to courtyard gardens with rhythmically staggered skylights.

“It has 25,000 square feet of amenities yet it’s only 36 apartments,” Ms. Katzen said.

At 70 Vestry, which is set to open in early 2018 in Manhattan’s Tribeca neighborhood, the brushed limestone and quartzite spa suite features an 82-foot swimming pool, separate children’s pool, and hot and cold plunge pools.

“People really appreciate swimming pools,” said Stribling’s Pamela D’Arc, sales director of the new luxury condominium building at 252 East 57th Street in Manhattan that offers a 75-foot pool with two lanes for lap swimmers plus an area for more relaxed swimming. Adjacent to the

pool area is a spa with a hydrotherapy circuit that features a sauna, steam room, and ice room equipped with a cold rain spout and a Kneipp hose. “They’re asking me about the water temperature, who uses it.”

“Pools are very important,” said Darren Sukenik of Douglas Elliman, whose recent projects include 111 Murray Street in Tribeca, which will feature two pools—a 75-foot lap pool and a 25-foot-wide splash pool with floor-mounted water jets for children. Condo closings there should start in January. “The idea of a pool is very important—it just says luxury. Will they actually use it? Probably not.”



The rooftop infinity sky pool at the Palm 360 on Dubai’s Palm Jumeirah; Scheduled for completion in mid-2020

Swimming pools have become important in new buildings in London, too.

"If you're asking 1,300-plus pounds per square foot for a unit in a building with 160, 180, 200 units, there is an expectancy for a pool," said Raul Cimesa, residential development partner for Knight Frank in London.

"It's becoming a norm now, and it's actually being used and people are asking about it," he said.

So-called "sky pools" are a hot new amenity, too. When it is completed in mid-2020, Palm 360 on Dubai's Palm Jumeirah will feature 12,000-square-foot penthouses as well as a rooftop infinity sky pool.

Also in Dubai and set for delivery in 2019, the Royal Atlantis Residences on Palm Jumeirah Island will feature a 90-meter-high sky pool and lounge along with a wide range of other water features that include elaborate fountains, a children's pool, a family pool, a resort pool and a residents' pool.



The Royal Atlantis sky pool & lounge.

Porte Cochères and
In-Building Parking

Rendering: Jardim

Covered porte cochère entrances have become a big must-have for deluxe apartment buildings in New York.

One of 252 East 57th Street's defining features is a gated, attended interior porte cochère that also includes one of the largest automated parking garage in the city, with electric car charging stations exclusively reserved for residents.

Porte cochères, Ms. D'Arc said, "are needed more than ever, because of an inability to pull over in the city to load and unload a car," Ms. D'Arc said. "It's quite difficult, especially if you have pets or children."

"It speaks volumes to the security people want," she said. "It draws people in—along with parking. It's a very sought-after amenity at this point."

The Robert A.M. Stern-designed building at 20 East End Avenue on Manhattan's Upper East Side has a dramatic porte cochère entrance with a private gated motor court that features a chandelier, trellised garden pavilion, cobblestone pavers and a carved limestone wall fountain.

Even if the building doesn't have an actual porte cochere, very private entrances and in-building parking garages are big now. At the new 60 East 86th St. condo building, also on the Upper East Side, "you walk through the lower level to the parking garage, without having to go outside," said Sharon Baum of Corcoran. "That's very unusual for uptown properties."

At Jardim, you arrive at the lobby through an inviting brick-vaulted private drive that connects West 27th and West 28th streets. Jardim also features an automated parking system in the sub-cellar designed by Park Plus.

Porte cochères have been in style in Florida for quite some time, said Louise Sunshine, strategic adviser for Fort Partners, developer of Four Seasons Private Residences Fort Lauderdale. "Almost every luxury building in Florida has a porte cochere."

The new 18-story Paramount Fort Lauderdale Beach has an enormous porte cochere illuminated with changing colors that can be seen down Highway A1A at night.



[252 East 57th Street](#)

A Demand for Top-Shelf Services



“The one very major trend in the luxury market are services—I mean real services, not pretend services—because when people come to Florida they want to leave their worries behind,” Ms. Sunshine said.

These services would include “beach butlers, pool butlers, and room service and dining in the privacy of your own home,” she said, along with “housekeeping, concierge services, travel services, spa services.”

“And they want a brand they can identify with,” said Ms. Sunshine, the founder of the Sunshine Group, which was the exclusive marketing and sales agent for such Manhattan properties as The Time Warner Center and Trump International Hotel and Tower NY.

“The next most important thing that people want, oddly enough, is the opportunity to travel with their pets, and they are looking for their pets being accommodated where they live,” she said. “And they want services for their pets—a pet concierge, pet menus, pet accessories.”

Florida condo buyers also want outdoor space, according to Ms. Sunshine. “Not a token balcony, but a wide terrace—at least 11-, 12-feet wide, where they can cook and entertain.”

When it comes to high-end services, some developments are going all out to lure residents. In Manhattan’s Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood, 525 West 52nd has appointed a director of resident experience to curate attention-grabbing experiences for residents such as outdoor yoga, an Oktoberfest social gathering, a trip to a winery, film series in the screening room, and a virtual Masters event on the golf simulators.

At the new 50 West in Lower Manhattan, residents can enroll in an astronomer-led star-gazing program on the observatory of the 64-story tower.

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The new Maravilla Los Cabos residential resort in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, will have a hidden campsite two miles from the resort, with a camping butler on hand for overnight stays. Residents also have access to picnic packages or chef services for dining.

And time itself may be the ultimate deluxe amenity for busy people. As part of a new partnership with Hello Alfred, a New York tech company, residents at Related Companies' luxury residential rental buildings across the U.S. can get help with day-to-day errands thanks to Life Simplified, an exclusive new in-home service platform with a digital app and a personal home manager. Services include app-based grocery ordering and pantry and fridge stocking, dry cleaning and laundry pick-up and delivery.



525 West 52nd

“People are asking me, how can I meet my neighbors?” Ms. D’arc said. “They want to be able to socialize within a building.”

Buildings are offering more community spaces where people can actually meet, Ms. D’Arc said, where they can cook together or watch movies or have a drink. “People don’t want to be as isolated as some buildings are.”

At 252 East 57th Street in Manhattan, there are three floors of social and leisure amenities reserved exclusively for the owners. The 191-unit 50 West has four floors dedicated to amenities, including an Entertainment Floor with a game room, library, screening room, lounge with a bar and large television, screening room and children’s playroom.

In Tribeca, 111 Murray will have shared living spaces for owners and their guests, including a “private dining room that can seat 30 to 50 people without having to bring them up to your apartment,” Mr. Sukenik said.

“Instead of sitting alone in your apartment, or with your mate, having a glass of wine, people are saying ‘let’s go downstairs and be with some of our neighbors,’” Ms. D’Arc said.

In London, “it’s all about the community these days,” Mr. Cimesa said. “I’m seeing a much bigger focus on bar and lounge areas in these buildings’ schemes, so that you have spaces that have darts, pool, games,” he said. “It’s all about getting people to hang out together.”

At the new Landmark Place on the north bank of the River Thames in London, all of the amenities, including a pool, gym, sauna and Jacuzzi, have been gathered on the very visible ground floor “instead of burying them on the lower-ground floors,” Mr. Cimesa said.

“There is definitely a move to show off these amenities, to make them very obvious, very usable,” he said. You don’t want people to have to make an extra



252 East 57th Street

High Ceilings, Big Views

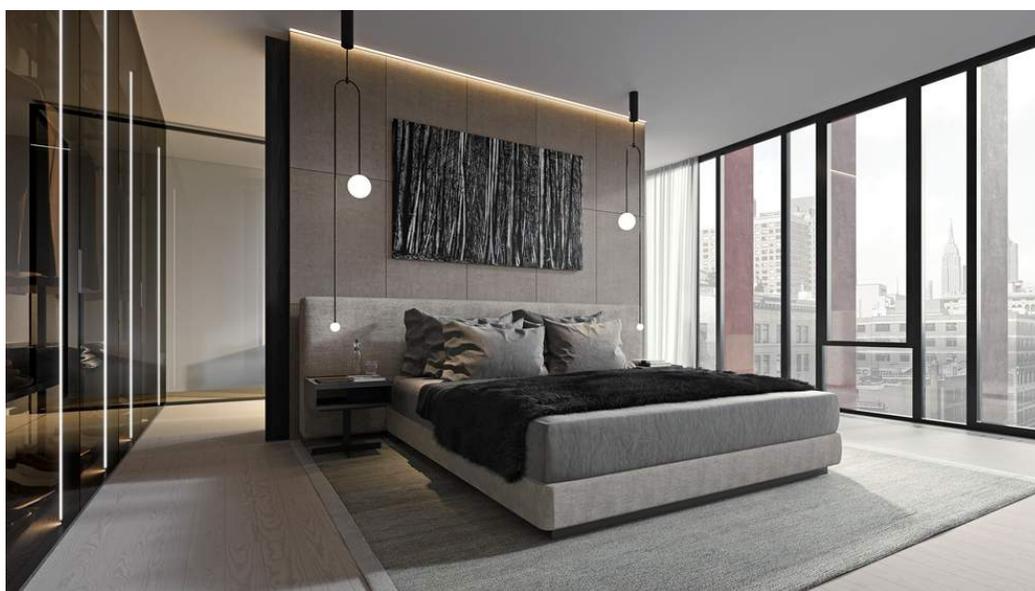
To open up views and bring in lots of natural light, ceiling heights and oversized windows continue to be on the rise as a must-have in-apartment amenity.

“People are more and more expectant of 11-plus—9 feet is no longer enough,” Ms. Katzen said. “You have to move up to 12, 13 feet for people to feel like they have it all.”

Apartments at 20 East End Ave. have 11-foot ceilings and oversized bay windows to maximize light and views of the East River and the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Some of the ceilings in the new 11-story building at 22 Bond in the NoHo section of Manhattan top out at 22 feet.

At the 90-home Four Seasons Residences Fort Lauderdale, which has begun preliminary construction and will open in 2019 or 2020, some homes will have 20-foot ceilings.

Meanwhile, 10-foot ceilings in all apartment living spaces are the norm at the new 18-story Paramount Fort Lauderdale Beach.



22 Bond

A single washer and dryer is no longer enough, especially for families with children, Ms. Baum said.

“In apartments, people are wanting two washers and two dryers, and if they have room for a laundry room in the apartment, that’s very big now,” Ms. Baum said.

And kitchens keep getting bigger, she said. “People want built-in espresso makers. They want at least two refrigerators, two dishwashers, two freezers. You need a big, big kitchen to accommodate all of these appliances.”

Buyers want a flat-screen TV in every room and “they want to have them hidden so the they don’t show,” Ms. Baum said.

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In Los Angeles, “people want his-and-hers master closets,” said Donovan Healey, Estates Director at Hilton & Hyland/Christie’s International Real Estate. “That’s almost a necessity these days in a new-build.”

In Montana, where hunting and target practice are popular, shooting ranges in big private estates, though infrequent, are a popular amenity now, said Dawn Maddux of Engel & Völkers Western Frontier.

"It's the ultimate luxury in Big Sky Country for families of this status to have," she said. "This provides a safe, effective way for aspiring sportsmen to hone their marksmanship skills before they head out to hunt the great outdoors."



20 East End Avenue