

## The sky's the limit: Manhattan's architects go green with gardens



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'Going green' is the new edict of developers when seeking to enhance life in urban settings. Now, architects are bringing on pivotal landscape designers to fine-tune residential and mixed-use condos.

In conceiving New York's 53W53 tower, Pritzker Architecture Prize winning architect Jean Nouvel has teamed up with the Paris Ritz architect Thierry Despont and the landscape designer Patrick Blanc, the modern developer of the 'vertical garden'. The condo

development, to be perched directly above the city's Museum of Modern Art, is set to open in 2018.

'For my vertical gardens, which will be 18 ft in height and surround the swimming pool, I'm using more than 100 species, many of them sourced from the tropical rain forest,' says Blanc. 'They will give a sense of poetry to the space.'

Creative schemes like these aren't restricted to the United States and Europe, either. 'Right now, Jean and I are working on a huge project in Kuala Lumpur,' says Blanc, speaking from Malaysia. At the same time, he is also creating vertical gardens for developments in Singapore, Riyadh and Kuwait.

Down in Chelsea and directly opposite the High Line, David Kelly of Rees Roberts + Partners recently completed a \$1 million garden for the Kohn Pedersen Fox condo tower at 500 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street, which spans the length of the building and the installation of which took an entire two years to complete. Composed of multiple layers of local trees, shrubs and flowers, Kelly's landscape design includes fully-grown 45 ft high honey locust trees and white birches.

Just why is this trend gaining traction so fast? Blanc explains: 'With increasing urbanisation globally, residents are seeking the sanctuary of nature and a direct connection between indoor and outdoor space.'

By Brook Mason