

Vertical Gardens Grow up



Botanist and garden designer Patrick Blanc, who usually stays just a few stories off the ground with his densely-planted vertical gardens, is now moving higher and higher. Working with architect Jean Nouvel, Blanc has been sheathing two 380-foot-tall buildings in green. What once looked like a fanciful graduate school student's thesis has now become reality: vertical gardens are now climbing up skyscrapers, too.

One Central Park, a residential tower in Sydney expected to open this winter, has plants and vines climbing up its glass facade. Blanc told Dezeen: "The building, together with my vertical garden, will be an architectural work floating in the air, with plants growing on the walls – it will create a very special result that will be very new to Sydney."

The greenery is meant to extend the nearby park onto the buildings, creating a verdant district. According to *The Architect's Newspaper*, "the lush green tapestry of the structure's facade will be entwined with the foliage of the adjacent park in order to replicate the natural cliffs of the Blue Mountains, which are located in the Western part of Sydney."

Some 190 native Australian species and 160 non-natives will cover more than 1,200 square feet from the 2nd to 33rd floors, or some 50 percent of the building's exterior. *The Architect's Newspaper* said this is possible because Blanc has perfected the use of "synthetic moss instead of soil for the growing medium."



Dezeen tells us that the building is specially designed to redirect light to parts of the vertical gardens. “The tallest tower features a large cantilever. On the underneath, there is a heliostat of motorised mirrors that direct sunlight down onto the surrounding gardens. After nightfall, the cantilever is used as a canvas for a LED light installation by artist Yann Kersalé.”

Those lucky enough to snag one of 624 apartments will be able to descend to the ground levels, where there are stores, restaurants, and some office space.

By using plants and natural sunlight throughout, the building cuts energy use and therefore greenhouse gas emissions.



Nouvel and Blanc are also now teaming up on another green skyscraper in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which appears to be even taller and more ambitious.

Fast forward sometime in the near future: Hopefully, this model has spread fast — not just for wealthy renters and owners, but for all urban tower dwellers.

Image credits: Atelier Jean Nouvel