

# A City's Landmark

Beirut Terraces



DEVELOPED BY BENCHMARK AND DESIGNED BY SWISS ARCHITECTS HERZOG AND DE MEURON, BEIRUT TERRACES, IS A UNIQUE RESIDENTIAL TOWER, LOCATED IN BEIRUT CENTRAL DISTRICT'S MOST HIGH END RESIDENTIAL AREA, MINA EL HOSN AND, EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY 2015.

Photos © Beirut Terraces  
Words: Yasmina Chabli





Inspired by layers of history, it is set to become a local landmark with a global address. It is shaping the city's future by revising the indoor outdoor living experience through the introduction of the first vertical village concept with hanging gardens and extended perforated slabs. The proposed building concept, structure, and appearance are conceived by both awareness and respect for the city, as well as self-confident optimism that it shares with contemporary Beirut.

Conscious of energy use, the environmental engineering coupled with the integration of vegetation into the architecture, enhance the quality of living while lending to the buildings sustainability. Being almost on the shoreline of Beirut, the sea-views are precious qualities of the project.



"The integration of vegetation into the architecture, enhance the quality of living..."



Throughout the building's terraces plantings create vegetated screens, which simultaneously provide shade, but, more importantly, guarantee the necessary level of privacy between the individual apartments' terraces. Additionally, the building's vegetation frames views and generates pleasant microclimates by tempering their immediate environment and providing an active breathing part of the architecture.

The moderate climate of Beirut being most certainly one of the city's biggest assets makes outdoor living an integral part of Beirut's urban life. Capitalizing on this asset and cultivating apartments that foster such specificities is one of the key design principles, allowing each apartment to be a Limited Edition by its own right.

Swiss Herzog and de Meuron is "one of the most admired architecture firms in the world" according to the New York Times. It was awarded the Pritzker Prize, in 2001, the highest of honors in architecture. They were said to "refine the traditions of modernism to elemental simplicity, while transforming materials and surfaces through the exploration of new treatments and techniques."

Their formal gestures have generally progressed from the purist simplicity of rectangular forms to more complex and dynamic geometries. The architects often cite Joseph Beuys as an enduring artistic inspiration and collaborate with different





artists on each architectural project. Their success can be attributed to their skills in revealing unfamiliar or unknown relationships by utilizing innovative materials.

Speaking of their first residential project in the Middle East, the architects said: "Beirut's moderate climate is certainly one of the city's biggest assets, making outdoor life not only an additional, but an integral part of its urban life. Each of our projects is unique and defined by its immediate cultural and climatic conditions; we take it upon ourselves as architects to take maximum advantage of these inherent potentials and bring them forward through the design. The consequence of air conditioning has meant that the inherent climatic conditions have been forgotten in architecture since its introduction in the sixties, whereas the assets of climatic conditions especially in the case of Beirut, lead to a more natural and less technically dependent way of living. We are seizing this potential and creating apartments that enable a flexible living between inside and outside."

The Herzog & de Meuron design of Beirut Terraces was highly inspired by the urban history of Lebanon, where the richness of the layers of civilization that have swept through the nation have been reflected in the multi-layered approach that has been adopted for the tower.

Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron have designed projects worldwide, such as Rada Tokyo, the Barcelona Forum Building and the Beijing National Stadium for the 2008 Olympic Games. They are perhaps best known for their conversion of the giant Bankside Power Station in London to the new home of the Tate Modern.

Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron have been visiting professors at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design since 1994 and professors at ETH Zürich since 1999.