

New York Looks East



By Sian Jay

Apartments in the SCDA-designed Soori High Line have heated pools, a first for the city.

One of Singapore's leading architects is set to take New York by storm with a taste of Asian luxury living. Chan Soo Kian, who is the founding principal and design director of SCDA Architects, already has a string of high-end luxury developments to his name in Singapore and the surrounding region. His most recent is Alila Villas Soori, an ultra-modern boutique resort in Bali.

Now Chan has begun to introduce his own particular brand of high-end living to the Americans, showing them that Asia's idea of luxury is very different to that of the West.

He recently acquired almost 1,394sqm of prime real estate in Lower Manhattan's Chelsea District. The land plot is located near The High Line, an elevated park on an old railway line, close to the prestigious Hudson Yards development. Chan has named his piece of the Big Apple the Soori High Line. Although it will be launched in early 2014 - and ready for occupation in 2016 - interest is already very keen.

What makes Soori High Line a particularly Asian brand of luxury living? "Luxury apartments in New York are usually built around practical features and concerns," Chan explains. "People move into an apartment and get a designer to pull it together. In Asia, the market has different expectations. People want to walk in and find everything already in place."

This is the particular line of luxury Soori offers, an integrated design solution that takes care of everything - from the concierge and cleaning services to the designs of staff uniforms. "It is this integrated





approach to lifestyle - one that includes architecture, interiors, product and landscape design - that creates a seamless whole that is central to the concept. The architects work directly with the interior designers, and may even move a wall if it doesn't blend with the interior design concept."

Soori High Line comprises 27 apartments and a three-storey penthouse with a rooftop pool. The apartments range from two bedrooms of around 132sqm to five bedrooms in the 564sqm units. Ceiling heights range from four to five metres and all the bathrooms are oversized. One very Asian concept that is a first in New York is the inclusion of private swimming pools in 16 of the apartments and which overlook the street below.

A private swimming pool is almost ubiquitous in tropical Asia, but not in a city that can have bitterly cold winters. "The pools are heated because of the

climate," explains Chan, "but they are also included to create a transition between the indoors and out, a concept that is common in Asia but not in the West." Each apartment also has fireplaces and temperature controls for the balconies.

The plans for Soori High Line are well under way, but Chan does not intend to stop at that. He is already involved in the early planning stages for a second development along the same street that, as yet, has no name but which "will involve art and artists in the concept". He is also working on a mixed-use downtown development and, he says slyly: "There is a fourth project that is still under wraps."