



Living life king size

Luxury villas, gated communities, high-rise apartments, Chennai is slowly waking up to the trend of luxury living. Catherine Gilon takes a look at the latest housing trends that Chennaiites vote for...

Villas in the city

With apartments closing upon every space in the city, Chennaiites have taken a recent liking towards independent villas even it means living in the outskirts. Inno GeoCity, a township spread over 131 acres at Oragadam is a case in point. Harinath M, Director - Sales & marketing, Inno GeoCity says, "While we have some independent villas in Sectors 1 and 2, we are coming up with more higher-end villas including water-front villas and gated communities in the future sectors as we are seeing a positive trend for such formats among HNI in Chennai. These will have hi-end fittings and accessories and value-added services attached." Apart from a public school, proposed supermarket, he feels that strong IT support is an added advantage. "We are perhaps the first large development in India to provide FTTH (Fibre to the Home) which provides telephony, broadband connectivity, DTH and the internet on an optical fibre at 100 Mbps speeds, so that our residents can enjoy communication and entertainment of the highest quality." With primarily the middle and senior level managers in the companies located at Irungattukottai, Sriperumbudur and Oragadam SIPCOTs and Mahindra World investing here, this is a smart move. Apart from the IT crowd, the affluent Chennai crowd is also buying such villas for weekend parties.

If you are a high-end investor, looking to party it up, Bay Influence in ECR is another good choice. It has one of the largest pools in the city with an aqua gym. There is also a snorkelling pool! Together with the sea breeze and the spa therapies, these villas are great locations for weekend parties. And the best part, privacy is ensured. "We have included some details to ensure privacy. For instance, the parking is on the ground floor but the cars need not drive around the building. The parking area is surrounded by numerous trees and shrubs, so the cars cannot be seen from the villas," explains Naresh Jain, MD, Evolution lifestyle and homes.

Gates to heaven

Gated community is another trend that's been picking up this year. With better security, maintenance and a sense of community, this seems to be a

good option for conservative Chennaiite. Jayanthi Sathish, Head, sales and marketing, Vijayshanti Builders says, "With gated community, you get all high-end amenities like gym, swimming pool, club house inside your campus. For example, inside our Lotus Pond, we have about 60-70% open space with children's play area, swimming pools, indoor and outdoor games, department stores. You don't have to step out of your campus for anything and the best part is you can be one with nature here." She adds, "You need to wait a little longer like 2-3 years to occupy these gated communities." With three projects near Kelambakkam, Poonamale and Vandalur moving like hot cakes, Jayanthi tells us that gated community is the future of Chennai realty.

Where is the future?

Kishore Kumar, Director, Atlas Foundation tells us that ECR, OMR are more of a service corridor development. He says, "People have always pursued South Chennai as a more prestigious residential area. But we can observe that not much development can happen beyond Paddur on OMR or Muttakaadu on ECR. While the projects development lengthwise has come to standstill, the adjoining areas between OMR and GST will see radial development." Ask him about the gated communities and he smiles. "Of course, you get the club house, billiards and other such things but at the end of the day, the guy has to pay out of his pocket for maintenance. With government not setting these basic amenities like parks, developers are selling it as value-adds; if somebody is willing to shell around 3,000 rupees for maintenance then these communities are a good option, else you need to think twice."

On the contrary, gated apartments are much preferred by middle-class families, Dr Archana who resides in Indraprasad Fort, Adyar says, "These apartments are specially useful as it gives a sense of belonging to the kids and they get facilities like large play area, swimming pool etc. Maintenance and security are added values."

With the needs of our families constantly evolving, the real estate scene in Chennai is also constantly reinventing itself to meet their needs.