

Condos with a twist

► New technological and cultural developments have spawned the twisty, torso construction trend ► These condos boast sleek, elegant profiles

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The twisted condominium style has evolved through several high-profile international projects. One example is the HSB Turning Torso in Malmö, the tallest skyscraper in Sweden.

Designed by the Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava and officially opened on 27 August 2005, the tower reaches a height of 190 metres with 54 storeys. The form is built from nine individual cube structures centred around a circular reinforced concrete core.

Local va-va-voom

The most famous Canadian example of a twisting structure is the Absolute World

Tower in Mississauga, dubbed the Marilyn Monroe tower because of its sultry, feminine curving design.

Developer Fernbrook Homes/Cityzen created a community of five towers with townhome lofts and a landscaped central piazza.

The new tower, Absolute World 2, will be a companion to The Absolute World 1. "They are [architect] Yansong Ma's version of Yin and Yang," says Danny Salvatore, president of Fernbrook Homes.

Builders do the twist

Building these towers entail certain technical challenges.

In the case of Absolute, Chris Sleight from KHL

Construction illustrates the complexity in International Construction magazine: "The 170 metre high south tower and 150 metre north tower both twist as they climb, with constant rotation on the north tower, and varying changes between floors on the south tower, which makes for a complicated construction project."

Risky business

The builder always assumes some risks in taking on these elaborate designs.

Several of these structures run into bad luck or bad economic times.

The Infinity Tower in Dubai was not without its problems, for example.

Construction of the 330-

metre building began in February 2006.

The project resumed construction in July 2008, after a delay caused by the collapse of a nearby wall and subsequent flooding of the construction site.

Despite the setbacks however, upon completion it will have 73 storeys and will be the world's tallest high-rise building with a twist of 90 degrees.

And the worst-case scenario is the Chicago Spire; an uncompleted, now-defunct, twisting skyscraper project in Chicago, Illinois.

After several years of ongoing financial challenges, and the fallout from the recession that began in 2008, construction was halted.



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