



Vertical living is no longer a concept that draws perplexed looks. No one has to sell Houstonians on the advantages of the high life, especially not in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. A flurry of high-rise openings over the last few years made power players from River Oaks to Katy aware of the benefits of this lock-and-leave urban lifestyle. Now, a new wave of buildings is raising the stakes — a spectacular view and valet parking is no longer enough. Houston's new cloud-huggers must stand out to make their mark. These next-gen buildings will change how the city looks at the sky.

BY CHRIS BALDWIN

A NEW GENERATION OF ULTRA-AMBITIOUS HOUSTON HIGH-RISES AND MID-RISES RAISES THE CEILING ON THE SKY-HIGH LIFESTYLE.

When it comes to high-rises, most people tend to look up — to gawk at a building stretching toward the clouds. It's instinctive to imagine what life must be like, swaddled in a cocoon of sky-high luxury, literally above it all — this sense of looking up and being able to escape is powerful and almost primal.

Hines director **William Elser**, however, knows it's often just as important to look down the hall. These seemingly innocuous corridors can set a tone for a tower — which is really, if one thinks about it, supposed to be a home first. “That's one of the first things Mr. Hines looks at when he tours a building,” Elser says, referencing **Gerald Hines**, founder, chairman and still very active 91-year-old visionary for the company that bears his name. “He looks down the hallways. It can't look institutional.”

Therefore, Elser and the rest of the team orchestrating the development and build of the **Southmore**, a new 24-story Hines high-rise in the Museum District, made sure that its hallways are not simply long rows of doors. Instead, doorways are recessed, the lighting is muted, and fresh outside air is pumped in.

This kind of attention to detail marks the next wave of high-rises now transforming Houston's skyline — and our way of life. Why does every little detail matter so much now? “It's certainly an arms race,” says Hines director **David Haltom**. “Our competitors are putting out some high-quality product, too, and we need to stay ahead.”

Haltom, who shepherded the newly opened **Aris Market Square** — Hines'

32-story downtown tower — to completion, knows the lines have been drawn. Now it's “May the best towers win.”

Sitting in his own old-school offices near the Galleria, developer **Marvy Finger** notes the escalation with a sense of nostalgia. In many ways, Finger is the godfather of the modern high-rise in Houston, with his then-audacious **One Park Place** heralding a new era with its 2009 opening. “The demands are so much greater from people who live in these buildings now,” he says. “People expect much more. Everyone wants to live in a Class A building [the highest rated]. People who used to live in a Class B building won't accept anything but Class A amenities. Whatever you do, it had better be special in some way.”

The Power of Distinction

Customization rules in this next wave of buildings. No project embodies this more than **The Sophie at Bayou Bend**. This six-story, 39-residence condominium from **Jacob Sudhoff** and **Mirador Group** architect **Jerry Hooker**, offers near-complete customization — which is vital, considering most of its future residents are accustomed to living in nearby elaborate private homes.

When one power couple considered buying at **The Sophie** (a \$1.6 million-and-up proposition), they said they'd only do it if they could have a wine cellar with room for 2,000 bottles. Sudhoff and Hooker had it built into one of the residences. To Hooker, this is the way special buildings should be done — and it's a change long needed in Houston. “All too often, especially in Houston,” Hooker says, “you'll get this decked-out

lobby and a cool façade, but then inside, it's like a generic prison.”

The Land-Hunt Pressure

Finding a prime swath of land for such ambitious developments has become so difficult that making a mistake is not an option. The power brokers behind this new generation of high-rises know that many of these projects are their one shot to get it right.

Hines had to make nine separate land purchases to cobble together a space for **Aris Market Square**. By Elser's calculations — and he's one of Hines' numbers guys, as data driven as any sabermetrics-obsessed baseball GM — the site secured for Hines' **Southmore** high-rise, across from **Asia Society**, is one of only two that could have worked for such a tower in the Museum District. Developer **Jacob Sudhoff** relentlessly, and fruitlessly, pursued a **Rice Village** site for years before taking over a stalled project and reimagining it as **The Moderne**. “There are no do-overs,” Sudhoff says. “We're not going to find a spot like this in **Rice Village** again.” In other words, the pressures centered around this new wave of buildings is intense.

Veteran developers **Robert Bland** and **Derek Darnell** of **Pelican Builders** see **The Wilshire**, a 17-story high-rise in the shadow of **River Oaks District**, and **The Revere at River Oaks**, a nine-story building that caters to **River Oaks** empty nesters, as legacy-type projects. “I really do think these are the best buildings we've ever done,” Bland says. They'd better be. In this next wave of showcase buildings in Houston, expectations are sky-high.

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HOUSTON'S NEXT-GEN BUILDINGS

THE NEW WAVE OF SUPER BUILDINGS WILL BE DEFINED BY HIGH-RISES AND MID-RISES THAT HAVE NOT YET OPENED — OR THAT HAVE VERY RECENTLY BEEN COMPLETED. HERE ARE 16 THAT WILL REDEFINE VERTICAL LIVING IN HOUSTON AND CHANGE SKY-HIGH EXPECTATIONS.



Arabella

ARABELLA

Developer: Randall Davis and Roberto Contreras, DC Partners

Address: 4521 San Felipe

Completion Date: January 2018

This 33-story tower on San Felipe looks as if would fit right in if plopped into Manhattan, and there's good reason for that. **Randall Davis** and partner **Roberto Contreras** are influenced by New York architecture. With its fritted-glass windows, a design borrowed from some of Frank Gehry's and Richard Meier's most memorable high-rises, the Arabella was designed by 212box, the NYC firm that has designed the Christian Louboutin boutiques worldwide. This is a building that demands to be remembered. And it will be, with a magnificent soaring 22-foot lobby, and two resident swimming pools (one indoors and one out), as well as sky pools on the terraces of many of the 99 units.

ARIS MARKET SQUARE

Developer: Hines

Address: 409 Travis Street

Completion Date: Opened mid-September
PaperCity was the first media to gain entrance to this four-year-plus Hines project, and the sense of mystery shrouding the just-opened building pays off. There's a cozy lobby with fireplaces and distinctive old-school clock art, an homage to the historic Houston clock tower a block away; The Vinyl Listening Lounge, a small alcove



Aris Market Square

JENNY ANITILLI OLIFSON

with a vintage 1950s Silvertone record player and a sweet collection of old vinyl records; and a New Orleans-style private garden courtyard tucked into the back and shielded from Main Street, which came about when the Hines team and Ziegler Cooper Architects found a way to take advantage of an odd-shaped extra space. A pet-grooming station and a bike-repair room reinforce the downtown lifestyle. "All the amenities in this building are designed to be used," Haltom says. "We didn't put anything in just for show."

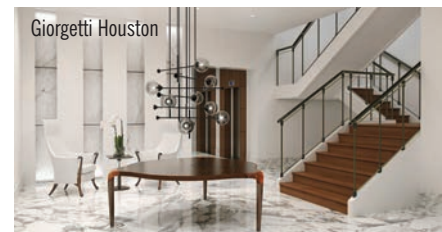
THE DRISCOLL

Developer: Weingarten Realty

Address: 1958 West Gray Street

Completion Date: 2021

Weingarten Realty isn't saying much about the 30-story high-rise it plans to build at River Oaks Shopping Center, but its impact on this section of the city is undeniable. One restaurant/bar (Local Pour) is already closing to make room for the tower's build, and Ziegler Cooper is on board as architect, with visions of opening in 2021. Weingarten believes a new showpiece tower will draw upscale retail and keep the shopping center on West Gray relevant for decades to come.



Giorgetti Houston

GIORGETTI HOUSTON

Developer: Stolz Partners

Address: 2701 Steel Street

Completion Date: Late 2018

Giorgetti Houston is one building where style and architectural craftsmanship is embedded to the core. This 32-unit, seven-story mid-rise is focused on a unique partnership with the revered Italian cabinet and furniture maker, Giorgetti. Designed by Mirador Group and marketed by Sudhoff Companies, the handsome lobby will be furnished with Giorgetti furniture, and the company's handcrafted kitchen and bathroom cabinetry and custom closets will be in each residence.

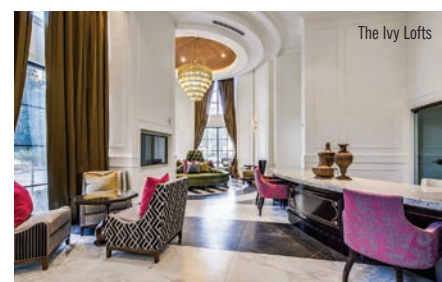
THE IVY LOFTS

Developer: Novel Creative Development

Address: 2604 Leeland Street

Completion Date: January 2018

The micro-condos project in East Downtown is back, with a goal to make sky-high living accessible and attractive to first-time home-buying millennials. After nixing the micro-condos plan in July 2016 and refocusing efforts on a condo-hotel, New York's Novel Creative Development has circled back to the original idea of streamlined living and tweaked it to appeal to micro-loft buyers (starting at 384 square feet with larger showers and higher ceilings than in the original plans) and to those looking for a more spacious situation (up to 2,000 square feet).



The Ivy Lofts

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KIRBY COLLECTION

Developer: Thor Equities
Address: 3200 Kirby Drive
Completion Date: December 2017

This \$125 million residential, retail and office project from Thor Equities will lord over one of Houston's busiest streets in the Upper Kirby District, and its elliptic tower shape is designed to make sure every unit has a view. The 25-story residential tower has 199 units with floor-to-ceiling windows, a rooftop terrace, clubhouse, cabanas and a Sky View lounge, as well as 65,000 square feet of retail and restaurants.



MANDELL MONTROSE

Developer: Midtown/Uptown Development Partners
Address: 2312 Commonwealth
Completion Date: 2019

One of Houston's most coveted and historic neighborhoods has been one of the slowest high-rise lifestyle adopters. Mandell Montrose wants to change that. This new 24-story, seven-story mid-rise, designed by Mirador Group and inspired by New York City's Tribeca neighborhood, took over the site of another canceled mid-rise. There will be only four condos per floor, with residences averaging 2,400 square feet of living space. Outdoor terraces are standard, keeping with the Montrose neighborhood feel.



MARLOWE

Developer: Randall Davis, and Roberto Contreras, DC Partners
Address: 1311 Polk Street
Completion Date: 2018

Developer Randall Davis saved the landmark Rice Hotel 22 years ago by converting the historic building into the Rice Lofts, thus ensuring it would not become another Houston teardown. He's back downtown with an ultra-modern 20-story building, with the recent topping out of the Marlowe. With a soaring lobby, this tower brings a sense of showmanship to downtown living with its façade resembling a pin-stripe suit and its 22 floor plans named Brando, Newman and Redford. The Marlowe is short walk to The Toyota Center and Discovery Green, and has all the requisite massage, sauna and steam rooms. Residents receive memberships to the Downtown Club and its tennis, racquetball, squash, basketball, and exercise facilities. After all, you'll want to look good getting your mail in this building.



MIMOSA TERRACE

Developer: Citiscape
Address: 2240 Mimosa Drive
Completion Date: Not determined

Why can't you have a yard in the sky? This new seven-story, 11-unit Upper Kirby mid-rise project aims to redefine how people look at green spaces in condominiums. Mimosa Terrace's units come with a terrace, some as large as 3,200 square feet. With a maximum of two units per floor, Citiscape chief designer Victoria Lee has enough room to make the outdoor spaces a priority. Then again, with the residences ranging from 4,400 square feet to the 9,800-square-foot, top-floor penthouse, space itself is one of Mimosa's luxuries.



THE MODERNE RICE VILLAGE

Developer: 1 Tangley 2016, LP
Address: 2406 Tangley Road
Completion Date: December 2017

Jacob Sudhoff brings a youthful touch to a Houston development scene, and there's no building where this may show more than The Moderne, with but one residence per floor. — The Moderne is a sleek seven floors with but six units, with no doorman, fitness center or pool in order to keep association fees low. Units start at \$1.4 million and all are 2,690 square feet, with private keyed elevator access to each unit. Privacy and high-tech amenities are a priority, so it shouldn't be a surprise when Sudhoff lets slip that he's considering using a drone delivery service at The Moderne. "You need to be thinking three, five, 10 years ahead when you're planning these buildings," he says. "You can't become outdated." Designed by Cameron Armstrong Architects and Mirador Group, the building sits on the property where the late Houston artist Charles Schorre had his home and studio.

THE POST OAK

Developer: Tilman Fertitta
Address: 1510 West Loop South
Completion Date: 2018

Tilman Fertitta's 38-story tower that's rising next to his Landry's world-headquarters building on Post Oak Boulevard will have just 20 residences and a 250-room luxury hotel with the largest ballroom in the Galleria and Uptown area, Mastro's Steakhouse and Willie G's restaurants and a Rolls-Royce showroom. These residences will be among the most coveted (and most expensive) rents in the city. Houston's most famous billionaire may have a new toy (he's the owner-to-be of the Houston Rockets), but anyone who watched season two of his *Billion Dollar Buyer* CNBC television show knows just how special and personal The Post Oak is to him. Hoops will not take Fertitta away from making sure his legacy building is perfect in every way. See more on The Post Oak on page 44.

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**RESIDENCES AT
LA COLOMBE D'OR**

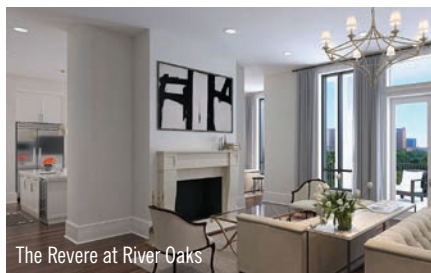
Developer: Hines
Address: 3410 Montrose Boulevard
Completion Date: 2020

Hines may have only been in the multi-family residential segment for six years, but no one can say the company hasn't jumped in full force. Besides having opened both Southmore and Aris high-rises, Hines is taking on a new 34-story tower with 285 luxury apartments that will be connected to the historic La Colombe d'Or hotel. Developed in a joint venture with Steve Zimmerman and sons Dan and Mark, long-time owners of the historic 1923-era La Colombe d'Or, The Residences at La Colombe d'Or will attach to the hotel via an art gallery. The outdoor plaza with fireplace and a second 14,000 square feet of green space make this an exceptional — and historic — high-rise project.

THE REVERE AT RIVER OAKS

Developer: Pelican Builders
Address: 2325 Welch
Completion Date: 2019

Pelican Builders' Robert Bland envisions this 32-unit luxury mid-rise as Houston's version of a Park Avenue palace. Architecture and interiors are classic. It's designed by Kirksey Architecture as an iconic building, with fireplaces and 11-

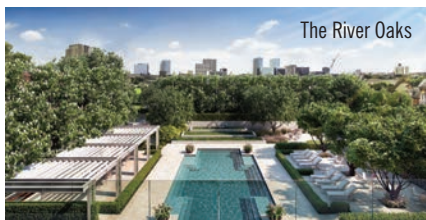


The Revere at River Oaks

foot ceilings standard in all units. Expansive white walls, rather than the floor-to-ceiling-glass approach of many Houston high-rise buildings, appeal to serious art collectors. Like a number of next-wave buildings, The Revere is geared toward attracting current Houstonians rather than transplants. "We expect that the majority of our residents will come from a five-mile radius from the property," Bland says. These are apartments built for people used to living in very large homes. The smallest units measure in at 2,621 for the Brentwood unit to more than 4,000 square feet for the Inverness plan.



The Revere at River Oaks



The River Oaks

THE RIVER OAKS

Developer: Richard Leibovitch, Arel Capital

Address: 3433 Westheimer Road
Completed Date: Early 2018

When the mailroom's been obsessed over — and made into "the best mailroom in all of Houston, maybe anywhere," in developer Richard Leibovitch's words — you know the \$10 million penthouses and garden townhomes will be showstoppers. With this high-rise, which converted rather than demolished the 17-story River Oaks Luxury Apartments that stood on this land, the anticipation is real. "This is my baby," Leibovitch says. "We've done a number of buildings in New York, but this is truly special. This is the one where I'm going to come back in 50 years and say, 'We built that.'" Designed by EDI International and Rottet Group, with landscape architects McDugald-Steele, and marketed by Sudhoff Companies, the building has a staggering 13,229-square-foot penthouse, with another coming in at 6,541 square feet; three-bedroom garden residences; and one-, two-, and three-bedroom tower apartments.

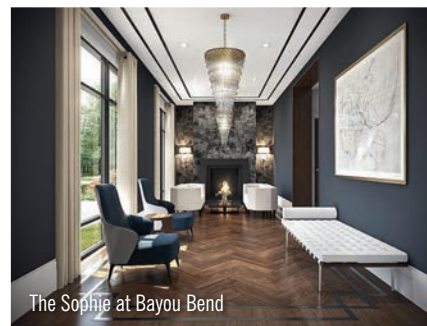


The Sophie at Bayou Bend

THE SOPHIE AT BAYOU BEND

Developer: Stolz Partners
Address: 6017 Memorial Drive
Completion Date: Fall 2018

Even the building's name is a nod to sophistication — the driving force of architect Jerry Hooker's (Mirador Group) vision that's inspired by icons ranging from Chanel's little black dress to the classic New York apartment houses of Rosario Candela and Robert Stern. But the most striking feature of The Sophie is that every residence has a private outdoor living space with its own summer kitchen, grill and fireplace, some as large as 1,000 square feet. "This is certainly the first condo project in Houston, and maybe anywhere, where everyone has a private outdoor living space," Hooker says. "These are 42 custom homes."



The Sophie at Bayou Bend

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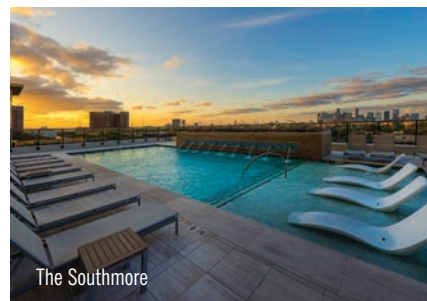
THE SOUTHMORE

Developer: Hines
Address: 5280 Caroline Street
Completion Date: Open now

To say no expense was spared on this 24-story tower, which takes design cues from its stunning Asia Society neighbor, is an understatement. Hines spent more than a million dollars just to make sure its parking garage is hidden behind a limestone façade. Italian cabinetry is standard (as it is at Hines' Aris), and wraparound floor-to-ceiling windows and corner glass give many units dramatic views of the city on three sides. A 10,000-square-foot private Japanese-style park keeps things green and minimal, and there's also a sports lounge with shuffleboard and a poker table. "We wanted to make it a peaceful escape," Elser says. During Hurricane Harvey, the few residents who had moved into the recently opened building and the staff hunkered down in the tower's Screening Room to watch movies on an 80-inch screen. A tenant to fill a 3,000-square-foot ground-floor restaurant is being pursued..



The Southmore



The Southmore