

## BEIRUTI VIEWS

Bernard Khoury Does it Again

The architect's latest design marries Beirut's cultural and historical heritage to create something wonderful. Sitting in the heart of the city's fashionable Saifi district, Quasar Tower is smack in the middle of the Beirut Central District. Overlooking Charles Helou Avenue, the mixed use development designed by Bernard Khoury represents the very best of Beiruti urban living and might just have become the city's new benchmark.





Positioned right on the only artery leading to Martyr's Square, at the gate of the city's center, Quasar Tower overlooks the city's port. Its harbor having played a prominent role in its development and economy, Beirut has always been a port city, and still is one to this day. Quasar Tower addresses and celebrates this history by extracting elements of the port and grafting them to the project, such as the ever-so-prominent crane, an icon of Beirut's port which continues to allude to a city in perpetual densification and development. Housing a camera-monitoring room, the crane-like apparatus seemingly hovers above the building, branded with the superstitious symbol of the eye believed to ward off evil, and with the ability to be lifted up to 50 meters in altitude. The building's very own guardian, the sentinel represents security, stability and tradition. The stationary towers of the project are fully glazed on all orientations, giving way to uninterrupted 360° views of the city. A continuous grid of 60-cm-deep vertical sun-breakers interlocked with 40-cm-deep horizontal louvers

forms the building's second skin, and its vertical elements are concentrated in the cores and peripheries of the tower, giving rise to unobstructed free plans at every level. In contrast to the sentinel's functional purpose of security, silently watching over its residents, the building houses certain elements which convey euphoria and exuberance. These include a luxurious penthouse addition, sumptuous terraces belonging to exceptional apartments, as well as an oversized arch above a swimming pool. Open at its peripheries, this pool also has a slit along its length allowing the user to overlook the Mediterranean while swimming, while the large horizontal opening at its cantilevered extremity simulates complete levitation above the city at the end of a lap. Quasar Tower is rooted in a determination to conceive a tower very specific to Beirut, rather than inspired by foreign designs or concepts. As a result, the building does not cater to a movement or a design philosophy, but rather to the city and region in which it is located.

