

Living the high life

Once skyscrapers around the world were full of offices, not apartments. In 2000, only three buildings higher than 200m had apartments in them. Today there are more than 250, many of them luxury apartments for rich people who want to live the high life.

Better technology makes life at the top easier. Lifts can now travel much faster, more than 40 mph. Also, the buildings don't move so much in the wind any more.

So, what's it like to live on top of the world?



A Roz Kaldor-Aroni, 54, Eureka Tower, Melbourne, Australia

Roz Kaldor-Aroni is CEO of a medical research charity. She and her husband lived in another skyscraper before they moved into the 91 floor Eureka Tower in 2006. At nearly 300m, it was then the world's tallest apartment block. They live on one of the highest floors of the building, with their son, Gideon, and Roz loves it. It's not because of the apartment itself, she says: 'It's very much about looking outside. It's not about the inside.' She never gets bored with the view. 'Every time I look out of the window it looks different – I notice something new.' They are building an even taller block of apartments nearby. 'We will lose part of our view', says Roz, 'but we can't really complain.'



When she's ready to drive Gideon to school, Roz doesn't listen to traffic reports. 'I just look out of the window,' she says. 'I have two ways we can go, and I can see the traffic from here and take the better one.' There's no need to check the weather, either – you can see where the clouds are. But you can't see the ground when the clouds are low!



Nature can seem a long way away, but it's only a three-minute walk to the park. 'When Gideon was little,' Roz says, 'he came back from a friend's and said, "Mummy, we played in the park", and I said, "No, that was their garden!"'

The family are fine with heights, but visitors sometimes find it more difficult. 'We had one babysitter who was so stressed out, she couldn't come back.' And people's ears often pop on the journey up, just like in an aeroplane!

B Mike Palumbo, 50, Water Tower Place, Chicago, US

Mike Palumbo was born in the suburbs of Chicago. However, when he went to school in the centre of the city, he felt at more home there. 'I loved it', he says. He often looked up at the 343-metre John Hancock Tower and dreamed of living in a place like that one day.



When Mike became a financial trader, he made a lot of money on the money markets, so he bought an apartment in a 262-metre skyscraper, opposite John Hancock Tower!

The 8-bedroom apartment is on the 64th floor of Water Tower Place, which has 74 floors. Mike lives there with his wife, Veronica, and they look down on most of the other skyscrapers around.

Mike got job offers from Wall Street in New York, but he never wanted to leave Chicago. 'I just love this view', he says. 'When I wake up in the morning, the first thing I do is open the blinds and let the sun come in. It doesn't get any better.'

Believe it or not, Mike is scared of heights, but he's OK with them through windows! When he sees a team of window cleaners outside, he always thinks, 'I would not want that job!'

The 64th floor is obviously not the easiest place to have small children, but amazingly, Mike and Veronica have twins! It can take a long time to get everybody and everything into the lift. Are there any other disadvantages to living there? 'I'm a dog lover', says Mike, 'but there are people who don't want them in the building.'