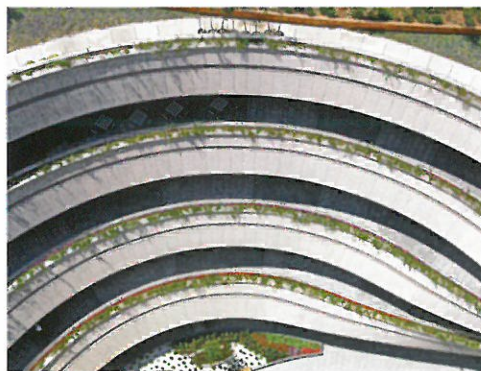


# GRAND KANYON

A meticulously crafted complex set in the center of Istanbul might offer tips on easing the strains of the population explosion and unregulated city sprawl

Story TIFFANY JOW



**AT HOME IN THE ABYSS:** The various levels of Istanbul's Kanyon development connect visitors at work, home and play with its residential, office and retail venues. Exceeding international earthquake regulations, the neighborhood integrates all aspects of life in a cohesive, aesthetically impressive shell

Given Istanbul's rapid rate of urban expansion, infrastructure development continues to lose ground to new construction, the latter consuming the city and leaving little space for residents to decompress and unwind. Hoping to instill a sorely lacking sense of community connection, a 2.74 million square foot mixed-use district named Kanyon has been built in the financial district of Levent.

Opened in June 2006, Kanyon includes offices, luxury residences, entertainment venues and both local and luxury retailers. Designed by architecture and urban planning firm Jerde Partnership, this "city within a city" integrates various aspects of daily life and intends to invert the stifling feel of haphazardly designed commercial and retail centers of the 20th century. While Kanyon undoubtedly makes a striking addition to the Istanbul skyline, Jerde's architects actually strive to mitigate the usually imposing aspects of large buildings in order to actively engage people's senses.

A curving open-air walkway lined with courtyards connects the complex, creating a 600-foot long canyon. Below the main glass-walled office tower and accompanying 17-floor residential building, four terraced levels of retail destinations, nightclubs, cafes and cinemas line either side, allowing visitors to sneak a peek into the bustle below.

From the project's inception, Jerde focused on shaping a complex environment as opposed to constructing a uniform development. "We took the oldest urban archetype – shops

on the street, housing and workplaces above – and presented it in a varied, compelling architectural format," says Jerde managing director Markus Lehto. "The main concept behind Kanyon is to create a much needed urban oasis, a meeting point that would allow families to retreat from the car-clogged street," Lehto explains. As a result, Kanyon stands out conspicuously as a unique blend of design and city planning and, perhaps even more importantly, provides a model solution for the overcrowding and alienation that plague similar urban epicenters. **TJ**

