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Gold Decor a Key Element for High-End Rentals

By Lena Smirnova

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Lavish lavatory trimmings, especially gold, help increase rental prices.

Renters of high-end apartments can now chose from offerings on a newly published list of the highest-priced properties in the city, though it might be necessary to win the lottery first to finance such a glamorous life among gold vases and Greek columns.

Bazanda.ru, a portal that specializes in upscale Moscow rentals, released a list of the five most expensive yet "reasonably priced" apartments in the city. The top choices range in size from 156 to 270 square meters and cost between $20,000 and $30,000 per month.

Despite their hefty price tags, such apartments could find tenants within six months, said Alina Khisamova, broker at Penny Lane Realty.

"It all depends on the status and image of the client," Khisamova said. "The client could have such an image that would not allow him to rent anything less."

The apartments were selected based on how well their price corresponds to the quality of the offer, said Marina Shekera, head of Bazanda.ru. There are higher-priced apartments in the city — one has an asking price of $82,629 per month — but they were not included on the list because they were considered overpriced.

Elite apartments in Moscow are mostly found in the areas near Ulitsa Ostozhenka, dubbed Moscow's Golden Mile, the city center and around the Moskva-City business district.

The most expensive apartment on the list is an 18th-century-style three-room apartment in the aptly named Respect residential complex, near Pushkinskaya metro station.

"The expensive apartment interior [decorations] and exclusive furniture, combined with antique furnishings, leave a lasting impression," the ad for it reads.

The list also includes an apartment near Park Kultury metro station that features framed paintings of golden goblets on the walls, an apartment near Belorusskaya metro with a gold-themed bathroom and one whose foyer looks like it could lead to the office of a top Kremlin official.

These decor choices are an added bonus, however. Clients value other considerations more, such as whether the apartment has not been rented out before, is close to transportation routes, is newly furnished and has a functional floor plan with multiple bathrooms, Khisamova said.

The owners of these high-end properties typically undertake major interior redesigns of their apartments — modern and classical styles are preferred — to entice potential clients.

Some apartments are rented out with little or no furniture. Clients for such properties are mostly foreign top managers whose companies pay for their Moscow lodgings and ship their furniture from abroad.

For those who don't have prime real estate to offer, Khisamova said, the rental value of any apartment can be increased by a modern renovation and provision of all the necessary appliances. The condition of furniture is also important.

"Even Ikea furniture will do. The most important thing is that it is new," Khisamova said.

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