

Turn up the heat

Luxury Miami condo buildings make even bigger waves

By ANDY WANG

The sweltering summer is the time when many avoid South Florida, but Miami's high-end pre-construction condo market shows no signs of taking a breather.

"I never expected the market would have a summer like this," says broker Mayi de la Vega, founder and CEO of One Sotheby's International Realty, who has already secured \$100 million in reservations for downtown Miami's forthcoming Zaha Hadid-designed 1000 Museum condo tower, which won't even open its sales center until July.

Miami "is not a seasonal place anymore," says Ian Schrager, who's developing the Residences at the Miami Beach Edition, which has sold about 75 percent of its 26 units, including two penthouses to the same buyer for a combined \$34 million — a record-breaking \$3,800 per square foot. "When I used to go down to Miami, the season was January and February and it fell off the cliff in March. Now it's a year-round market."

Unlike many Miami buildings, Schrager's development — luxe John Pawson-designed apartments atop a new hotel and its Jean-Georges Vongerichten restaurant at 29th Street and Collins Avenue — has sold primarily to domestic buyers.

That's also true of Faena House — part of developer Alan Faena's five-block hotel/residential complex a few blocks north of Edition — where more than half of the 47 condos have sold for prices that average upward of \$3,000 per square foot. The "vast majority" of those Foster + Partners-designed units have sold to New Yorkers, with many purchasing multiple residences to combine, Faena says. Selling points include Molteni kitchens designed specifically for Faena House. And the entire Faena development — inspired by Faena's Buenos Aires project that transformed a once derelict area into an elite neighborhood — will also include an arts center, a shopping area and a parking garage all designed by Rem Koolhaas.

"I create neighborhoods," Faena says. "It's not easy to find someone who can create a neighborhood that's based in art and culture."

Douglas Elliman broker Oren Alexander, head of sales at Faena House, notes that the ease of transportation to Miami, along with its world-class cultural offerings, restaurants and doctors, makes it an ideal destination for well-heeled New Yorkers. Plus, Alexander adds: "A lot of these people purchasing [in Miami] today realize that they're going to retire in the next 10 years. It secures them a place; they realize the prices are only going up. The Caribbean is not as stable. One year St. Bart's is hot. The next year it's Anguilla."

All of the aforementioned Miami condo developments are fetching prices that might have seemed unfathomable even a summer ago.

While much of downtown — including the new Bond at 1080 Brickell, which secured 130 deposits in four hours after launching sales in May — trades for about \$500 per square foot, 1000 Museum has deposits for two 9,900-square-foot condos priced at more than \$10 million each.

And in Miami Beach, exclusive condos “used to be \$1,200 to \$1,500 per foot,” Schragger points out. “We’ve doubled that.

“We based [the pricing] on what we would do in New York. There’s always room in the market for doing something special. People will respond.”

As The Post previously reported, “As Seen on TV” creator Ajit Khubani bought the record-breaking Edition penthouses, which Cantor Fitzgerald CEO Howard Lutnick had his eye on.

Up on Collins Avenue in Sunny Isles Beach, where buildings like Regalia, Chateau Beach Residences, the Mansions at Acqualina and Jade Signature have briskly sold condos for upward — sometimes well upward — of \$1,000 per square foot, developer Gil Dezer broke ground in April on his Porsche Design Tower and its “sky garages” that allow buyers to park cars next to their apartments. The 132 units are about two-thirds sold, with a 9,000-square-foot penthouse featuring two swimming pools on different levels and a six-car garage selling for \$22.5 million.

“Our main business comes from South America,” says Dezer, who aims to sell out Porsche Design by September/October and plans to launch another luxury Sunny Isles development in the coming months. “Our summer is their winter.”

In fact, Dezer, who also developed Sunny Isles’ Trump Towers, has noticed more South Americans buying in the summer than any other time in recent years.

Down in South Beach’s always sizzling South of Fifth area — where Jorge Perez of the Related Group has resurfaced with One Ocean, offering units starting at about 3,000 square feet and more than \$5 million — the demand at the top end of the market remains high. De la Vega is marketing Glass, a new 18-story condo building on Ocean Drive with 10 residences that start at 3,500 square feet and between \$8 million and \$9 million. The building was getting bids even before sales officially launched last month and has already sold seven units, with buyers coming from New York, Boston and London, says David Martin, president and COO of Terra Group, the developer of Glass.

“Miami Beach is big on historic preservation, so there’s a high barrier of entry in South of Fifth,” Martin says. “There was a pent-up demand by the time we launched.”

A demand for something that’s not just a vacation home.

“There are very few residential buildings in areas that are not so touristy,” Martin says. “South of Fifth has become a place where people can live year-round.”