



## A Brickell Extension

A ONCE-FORGOTTEN PORTION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD GETS A FACE-LIFT WITH THE ADDITION OF HIGH-END RESIDENCES AND HOTELS, AND LUSH GREENERY AS A FINISHING TOUCH. BY ANDY WANG

Call it a new Brickell bonanza. A building boom in mid-Brickell (west of Brickell Avenue between Southeast 10th and Southwest 16th Streets), an area that was largely single-family houses for decades until the first condo craze hit in the 1970s, is making for an exciting extension of downtown's growth.

"It's becoming a true neighborhood," broker Alicia Cervera Lamadrid says of the evolving area. "There shouldn't be gaps in neighborhoods. We're seeing the neighborhood connect. It's all becoming one thing—north to south is connecting very quickly." And this is something Cervera, whose office (1492 S. Miami Ave., Miami, 305-374-3434; [cervera.com](http://cervera.com)) is in mid-Brickell, sees every day. "There already is more foot traffic," she says. "It always brings a smile to my face when I see people there. I'll leave my office and see people on the

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street. I'm a walker; I'm walking all the way into downtown Miami. It's very exciting. At no point do you feel alone or not secure or bored."

Condo developments Le Parc at Brickell, the Bond on Brickell, SLS Brickell, and Echo Brickell, all rising on or around the often-overlooked Simpson Park, have brokers and buyers busy. And this is in an area about a mile south of the colossal Icon Brickell, which was completed in 2008 and became the poster child for the last Brickell boom.

In 2006, when developer Rilea Group (*1450 Brickell Ave., Ste. 1420, Miami, 305-371-5254; rileagroup.com*) took a big chance by opening the One Broadway condo building at 1451 South Miami Avenue, this area was a lot less livable. But Rilea Group saw the potential of a huge mixed-use neighborhood and broke ground on the adjacent 1450 Brickell office tower. With it came restaurants and bars that would grow to include PM Fish & Steak House, Novecento, Segafredo, and Brickell Irish Pub.

Now the company's vision has been validated by its new high-rise condo development, the Bond on Brickell. The 44-story, 328-unit building at 1080 Brickell Avenue (*305-639-2663; bondonbrickell.com*), which is being marketed by Cervera, secured 130 deposits in its first day of sales in May. Prices are now in the mid-\$500-per-square-foot range. Diego Ojeda, vice president of the Rilea Group, remembers how the sites of One Broadway and 1450 Brickell "were 13 little homes divided by an alley." But now the area feels like a true high-rise neighborhood. "I walk to work—I live on Brickell, I walk to a Crossfit gym, I go for drinks in the area. I used to live in New York, and it's the same kind of feeling," Ojeda says.

The highest-flying of these new kids on the block is Echo Brickell, at 1451 Brickell Avenue, where about 75 percent of the units in the Carlos Ott-designed 57-story building were reserved as of July.

"We're blending to \$1,000 per square foot," says Philip Spiegelman, a principal at ISG World (*2875 NE 191st St., Ste. 200, Aventura, 305-931-6511; isgworld.com*), which is selling Echo Brickell.

The combination of large units (Spiegelman notes that there are only 181 in a building that

could easily fit 300 apartments) with high-end finishes and smart-home technology has attracted well-heeled international buyers who might actually reside in their condos. "There's a difference between an investor and a user," Spiegelman says. "And that's what we're seeing more of, the users. The user is saying, 'I want to live there.'"

The 12-story Le Parc condo building, at 1600 Southwest First Avenue (*305-373-5333; leparcatbrickell.com*), and the future Atton Hotel will bring even more pedestrian-friendly services to the neighborhood, right on the edge of Simpson Park. Codeveloper Henry Pino, the man behind Strategic Properties Group (*2950 SW 27th Ave., Miami, 305-448-5252; strategicpag.com*), is a Brickell pioneer who built residential buildings in the Mary Brickell Village area. Now, at the 128-unit Le Parc, he's selling well-priced apartments for around \$400 per square foot through Cervera. The building is more than 40 percent reserved as of July.

The site, Pino says, "was of such interest because we could deliver a product in a location that would never have obstruction of any views of the Brickell skyline, and partial bay views. And that's even in a 12-story building. It's not a high-rise." Now Pino is focused on making Simpson Park and its adjacent green space into more of an amenity for the neighborhood.

"Simpson Park is a very underutilized park," he says. "We've met with city officials to create a new family park with actual benches [and] playground facilities for kids. That portion is where the Metrorail crosses over. There's a big green space, probably about 60,000 square feet of park, that's presently not used."

While Pino is working on that, Jorge Pérez's Related Group and Sam Nazarian's SBE are busy with their high-profile SLS Brickell hotel-condo complex, at 1300 South Miami Avenue. Starchitect Philippe Starck and super-chefs José Andrés and Michael Schwartz are all involved. And with the transformation of this new neighborhood and its green space, maybe SLS can stand for Some Lush Surroundings.

Either way, something lovely is starting in the Brickell area. Again. **OD**