



St Regis

The artistry of architects

Innovative architecture shapes Florida skyline with visionary style

Architects are artists whose medium is concrete, glass and steel. By creating its unique skyline, they are instrumental in shaping the character of a city. It's obvious that form and function, the tenets of architecture, can and do co-exist with beauty and style. Nowhere is that more apparent than in Florida, which over the last decade has seen the development of numerous innovative architectural projects.

The legacy of architects is there for all to see, live in and enjoy. All manner of architects, with a wide variety of viewpoints, have made their vision a part of the Florida landscape. Gleaming glass towers, minimalist structures that identify new areas and buildings defined by old-world charm make up its character.

One of the trends in architecture takes a page from the fashion world; making name brands out of these creative architects and commissioning them to bring their unique style to Florida's shores, with great fanfare. Some illustrious 'brands' who have worked in the Sunshine State include Michael Graves, Ralph Johnson, I M Pei and Cesar Pelli to name a few. Developers realize hiring famous architects is good for business. The impact of these architects' artistry and skill has set their projects apart from the norm and lured buyers. The bottom line benefits from this trend, as does the community and that gorgeous skyline.

Working in Florida means architects need to take the natural elements of the sub-tropics into consideration in their designs. By looking at some of the buildings, it's clear they understand what that means. A traditional federalist-inspired brick-facade looks terrific in Philadelphia, but just wouldn't work in the sunny Florida locale. A New York brownstone would look woefully out of place on a residential block in Miami Beach.

The skill of a great architect includes understanding the site on which the building will sit as well as the developer's vision for the project, all the while remaining true to his own stylistic sensibilities. Ralph Johnson, architect of downtown St Petersburg's Signature Place, demonstrates his mastery of these skills. He took on the 36-story mixed-use project knowing

the developer, Joel Cantor, wanted a landmark building overlooking Tampa Bay, one which would define the city much as the Opera House has defined Sydney, Australia.

"I set out to create the finest building ever developed in Florida, if not the country," explained developer Joel Cantor, CEO of Cantor Development. "Nothing about Signature Place will remind you of anything you've seen in development, and that's precisely the point."

Encompassing an entire city block with its extraordinary design, lavish living and urban dynamism, Signature Place pushes the

European Club



Regalia



envelope in this waterfront community's growing live/work/play corridor. Johnson's design of Signature Place takes full advantage of the location by offering prime water views in each unit. The narrow, sculptural building is evocative of a sail in motion, fitting for its site.

"It is art and architecture that defines great cities," said Johnson. "I had the city's panorama in mind when designing the project's thin angles, especially the profile from the water's edge. I realized we could make a real difference in St Petersburg - change the skyline and architectural history of the city forever. The design is one of my best and I am very proud of it."

A real appreciation for art also runs through the very foundation of Regalia, an architectural masterpiece that epitomizes gracious living on the water's edge in Sunny Isles Beach. From the shape of the building to the glass sculptures by the iconic Chihuly in the public areas, art will be pervasive at the ultra-luxurious oceanfront condominium.

"Art doesn't stop at gallery walls," said developer Avra Jain, principal of Regalia Holdings, LLC. "There is a long history of art being used for commerce. We believe creativity is a part of all aspects of life, including business."

Designed by internationally renowned architect Bernardo Fort-Brescia, founder of the award-winning firm Arquitectonica, Regalia will be a landmark building. With lines more fluid than linear, the 43-story tower appears to have been shaped by the waves, wind and sand rather than by concrete, glass and steel.

"It called for sculptural expression, something more than architecture," said Fort-Brescia. "Since Regalia won't be sandwiched between other buildings, we took an approach



Regatta 2

to the design that wasn't purely architectural. A sense of movement is more interesting than a chunky building."

Its undulating lines are reminiscent of ocean waves frozen in time, but Regalia has not allowed form to overshadow function. The residences, of which there is just one to a floor, are a testament to the most luxuriant lifestyle. Each of the homes features unobstructed, 360-degree views of the Atlantic and Intracoastal Waterway, 95 feet on the ocean and enormous wrap-around terraces. The 10-foot deep terrace surrounding the residence on four sides allows light to permeate to the center of the home, an unusual feature in a waterfront condominium. But it is these generously sized verandas that form the signature sensuous shape of the building; each has a slightly different contour and together they define the sculptural form of the building.

The hip, urban vibe surrounding many Miami projects isn't found exclusively in downtown,

it's also on display in a new up and coming area dubbed the Upper East Side. Similar to the early days of New York's Soho, the area is in the midst of an artistic invasion. Located near the city's Design District, art galleries are beginning to pepper the landscape. At Kubik, a two tower condominium, that artistic attitude is magnified on the inside.

While other architects emphasize the structure, shapes, lines and light exposure of a building, architect and developer Camilo Alvarado Boshell is more interested in the relationship between the occupant and his living and working space. By creating adaptable loft spaces, he gives residents the opportunity to be the artist of their own homes with the use of movable panels made of a variety of translucent, transparent or opaque materials.

"This design-your-space concept is relatively new to South Florida," explains Alvarado Boshell. "Kubik allows you to enjoy the convenience and social aspects of multifamily



Kubik

living but in a more personalized manner. The dynamic layouts will reflect the people who live there, and will be as unique as they are. A home in Kubik is anything but your cookie cutter project."

Kubik takes artistic vision to a level not often seen on a construction site. Instead of a billboard to promote the project, an art installation was created; a 14 foot by 14 foot light box in the shape of a lampshade has been suspended from a large crane at the sight. Alvarado Boshell intends Kubik to offer more than the typical picturesque vistas and cutting-edge designs; it will fuse with the urban and artistic energy exuded by the surrounding neighborhood.

Not all buyers want to be urban trend setters; many of them want a modern version of the tried and true, they want to live on or near the beaches. Florida's beach communities are as varied as the buildings that define them. Hallandale Beach, nestled between upscale Aventura to the south and culturally infused Hollywood to the north, is a community undergoing a stylish

transformation. European Club will be at the forefront of its tourism destination revitalization.

Alfredo Gamarra, AIA/NCARB, one of the principals of the architecture and design firm Architectura Group, has designed European Club, a distinctive 30-story modern mixed-use development which will encompass office, retail, residential and a condo/hotel on the town's main thoroughfare. Combining bold architecture with dramatic curves and lines, the project's European style avant-garde design will set it apart.

That urban, beachside sophistication can also be found in Sunny Isles Beach, an area that wasn't always known for style and refinement. In the past decade, this formerly sleepy town with its small family-owned hotels has been transformed into an affluent beachfront metropolis undergoing an economic boom.

Foremost among the new developments is St Tropez, which adds a unique element to the community, a Mediterranean inspired Towne Center at the base of its three 19 and 20-story residential towers. In addition to offering dining and shopping on its street level promenade, the City of Sunny Isles Towne Center is designed to foster a sense of community among its residents.

High-rise developments aren't always known for being pedestrian friendly, but St Tropez is the exception to the rule. Locating the Towne Center on street level invites people in and encourages strolling, al fresco dining and the chance for people to meet their neighbors. Trellises, wrought iron gates, old-world style lanterns and lush landscaping create a welcoming atmosphere.



St Tropez

"The promenade is right at the street so it was important for it to be experienced as an urban plan developed over time," explains Eduardo Castineira of Axioma 3 Architects, who was commissioned for the Towne Center portion of St Tropez.

St Tropez's three towers, which rise above the Towne Center, were designed with the various views in mind. Taking full advantage of the site's location, architect Kobi Karp maximized those water views by creating an unconventional footprint for each building.

"The triangular floor plans create different vistas for residents," said Karp. "The rotated symmetry of the buildings makes it so that when you look out your balcony it's as if you're looking out from the bow of a ship."

Truly lavish beachfront living can be found a few minutes down the coast in Bal Harbour Village. Said to be the world's most indulgent square mile, the celebrated town defines tropical sumptuousness with its elegant living and exclusive shopping. A favorite

destination for well-heeled jet-setters, Bal Harbour is home to the internationally renowned Bal Harbour Shops, which boasts some of the most exclusive boutiques anywhere including designer brands from Armani to Yves St Laurent.

Name brands and refined living reign supreme in Bal Harbour. One of the most celebrated names in the world, the St Regis Resort & Residences, will be taking its place in Bal Harbour. The nine-acre beachfront enclave will feature three 27-story glass towers, designed by the Sieger Suarez Architectural Partnership. The buildings will reflect a modern aesthetic that will incorporate neo-baroque elements as a nod to the old, but done with a new twist.

Interiors, by famed interior design team of Yabu Pushelberg, will have a distinct Miami flavor while retaining the inspiration of the revered St Regis brand. "We have created a lighter version of the richness, to reflect the more up-tempo approach to life

here in Florida," said Glenn Pushelberg. "The patterning of colors is very regional, but the overall style shares the same sophistication as the New York flagship. It's about timeless beauty."

Growth has always been the cash cow of Florida, so timeless buildings aren't in abundant supply. It is far more common for an old – which by Florida standards can mean a mere 30 years old – building to be torn down to make way for the new. Notable exceptions to that rule are found in Miami Beach's historic districts.

In Miami Beach's post World War II heyday, its hotels were the hot spots for the rich and famous. One such hotel, the

Caribbean, designed by architect Lawrence Murray Dixon and built in 1941, is undergoing a restoration. The historic oceanfront landmark will recapture that Rat Pack glamour as a new, upscale condominium.

The original Art Deco style six-story hotel is being renovated, its facade restored to its original grandeur. Immediately adjacent will be a new 19-story crystalline tower. The challenge will be synergizing the two distinctly different buildings, which will be done by utilizing landscaping, exteriors and public areas for that purpose.

"Just by sheer logistics—the renovation of the older building and the construction of the new tower—we're fusing the old with the new," explains celebrated interior designer and creative consultant Christopher Ciccone. "The landscape is there to create synergy, to make the towers look like brother and sister."

The Caribbean can be said to define the concept of modern Florida elegance; by juxtaposing two distinctive and opposing styles, it creates a new one of its own. Two things not usually associated with each other can actually work in harmony when put together.

Farther up the beach, in the historic North Beach neighborhood, now coined NoBe, Regatta and Regatta 2 were the creations of Architect Luis Revuelta, who designed the second phase as a mirror image of Regatta, highlighted by its contemporary curvilinear design and exclusive and intimate ambiance.

In the interest of paying homage to the past with modern-day architecture, G&D and The Weintraub Companies are preserving a piece of architectural history

Caribbean



by retaining part of the original facade of the MiMo building, Queen Elizabeth Apartments, and transforming it into a novel recreation room featuring a gourmet kitchen, lounge and entertainment area. The condo will also flaunt its own private marina, a rarity for Miami Beach condos.

"Regatta has been honored with several awards for beautifying the city of Miami Beach," said Fernando Levy Hara of G&D. "Regatta 2 follows in that tradition. The marina lifestyle is reflected in the style of the building with subtle nautical aspects. The historic part of this project is our way to celebrate our past – the significant MiMo era.

"Beautiful architecture has always been key to buildings in Florida," Levy concludes, "but architecturally Miami is now starting to resemble world-class cities around the globe, with landmarks and icons that stand the test of time."

All of Florida's architectural masterpieces can be viewed as pieces of a puzzle that make up our ever-evolving and exciting skylines.



Signature

Project	Location	Website
Caribbean	Miami Beach	www.caribbeanmiamibeach.com
European Club	Hallandale Beach	www.myeuropeanclub.com
Kubik	Miami Upper East Side	www.kubikspace.com
Regalia	Golden Beach	www.regaliamiami.com
Regatta 2	Miami Beach	www.regatta2.com
Signature	St. Petersburg	www.SignatureStPete.com
St Regis	Bal Harbour	www.stregisresidences.com/balharbour
St Tropez	Sunny Isles Beach	www.sttropezcondominiums.com

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