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New Miami living: Apartments mimic boutique hotels

Call it Manhattan South. Clusters of residential towers are rising up to fill in Miami's snaggle-toothed skyline. But these luxury condominiums more closely resemble full-service boutique hotels than domestic dwellings. Projects like Ten Museum Park, Bellini Bal Harbor, Cabana, and a host of others feature metropolitan amenities like valet service, spa service, and state-of-the-art technologies in the comfort of your own condo.

"Hotels have always tried to mimic high-end residences," says Daun St. Amand, an architect with RTKL Associates. "Now residences are trying to mimic high-end hotels. Condominium developers keep upping the ante on residential amenities."

Apartment towers with beauty salons, scaled-down grocery stores, and concierge services offer time-saving conveniences often found only in hotels. Condo owners, who run the gamut from successful young executives to wealthy empty nesters, subscribe to the theory that time is money and convenience is worth the cost.

In designing the structures, Miami architects are taking a page out of the design books of popular area boutique hotels like the Mandarin Oriental Miami, a slim, 20-story hotel with a curved face and Asian theme; Lowes Miami Beach Hotel, an 18-floor building with a modern Art Deco flare; and the 31-story Trump Sonesta Beach Resort, with its stunning use of exterior glass and staggered building structure.

While boutique apartment towers are springing up in New York, Atlanta, Dallas, and Las Vegas, observers point to Miami as the mother of the trend, which was born of necessity: A state-drawn boundary line to protect the Everglades National Park has halted western growth. And the ocean, bay, and rivers crossing through Dade County limit available land. The only



Contemporary rooms and furniture at Ten Museum Park (above) mimic hotels lining Miami's South Beach.



The Cabana: apartment building or boutique hotel?

place to go, says Charles Sieger, FAIA, principal of Sieger Suarez Architectural Partnership, is up. Sieger's firm has designed skyscraper residential properties like Portofino Tower, the Trump Ocean Grande, and now the Cabana, a 10-story private beach retreat on the Atlantic Ocean.

Cabana features 210 luxury studios appointed with items like plasma screen TVs, surround sound, SmartBox technology (controlling lighting, temperature, and other functions), and fine furnishings. The building also offers a restaurant, a spa, and an infinity edge oceanfront pool. "In Manhattan you can enjoy plenty of amenities, but you have to leave your building and walk to them," Sieger says. "In Miami's suburban structure, once you leave your building, you

have to drive. Having the amenities encased on the property is more convenient." Just up Ocean Drive a few miles, Bellini Bal Harbor, a 24-story boutique condo has only four residences on each floor. Amenities include a 24-hour concierge, valet, heated oceanfront pool, a spa, fitness and beauty centers, and a café.

Architect Chad Oppenheim, AIA, says it's all about the lifestyle. The design of his 50-story Ten Museum Park plays off Miami's tropical climate and provides a splash of European flavor. The 50-story tower features on-site a Clinique La Prairie of Montreux, Switzerland, a wellness center, high-tech fitness equipment, and two skygardens.

"Miami is the zenith for residential lifestyle experiences as developers work to differentiate themselves with cutting-edge design, creative amenities, and hype, hype, hype," Oppenheim says. *Jennifer LeClaire*

