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Pompano Beach getting a dose of luxury residential to go with its small-town vibe

Nick Perez's earliest memories of Pompano Beach stem from the time his parents and grandparents maintained a winter home in the city.

He remembers it, he said, "as an older town."

But now Perez, a senior vice president at his family's company, The Related Group, the Miami-based development juggernaut, is among those developers who are steering the [city to an identity as a nascent luxury hot spot](#).

Related is formally launching sales next week on Casamar, a yet-to-built 20-story beachfront high-rise along State Road A1A north of Atlantic Boulevard.

That "older" character might be exactly what makes it appealing to developers. Aging waterfront properties still exist, and look ripe for redevelopment. At the same time, the barrier island has been revamped with a six-acre fishing village near the pier, a more accessible public beach and new hotels and restaurants populate the area.

"Pompano was overlooked for a very long time — it was kind of a sleepy market," Perez said last week. "When you look at the beach it's wider and has much more dunes and vegetation. It's a more beautiful beach than Fort Lauderdale."

Casamar, at 900 North Ocean Boulevard, is the second of two Related projects under way on the beach: Solemar, which is a short distance to the north at 1116 North Ocean, is under construction and scheduled for occupancy in the second quarter of 2023, Perez said. All but one of the project's 105 units has been sold.

Ground will be broken at Casamar by the end of this year, with completion expected in the first quarter of 2025, Perez said. Casamar units start at \$1.8 million, with spaces ranging from 1,000 to 3,900 square feet. Each unit would have private elevators opening directly into the residence.

That Related is in Pompano at all is a commentary on the explosive rate of South Florida's population growth and an incessant demand by out-of-state residents for new upscale residential real estate. Developers who aggressively built up the Miami area are in search of new vistas in Broward and Palm Beach counties.



Rendering of Casamar, The Related Group's planned 21-story luxury tower on the beach at 900 N. Ocean Blvd., Pompano Beach. The developer bought out all 49 condo unit owners at the Beach Villa, which covers a little more than 3 acres of beachfront property adjacent to State Road A1A. (Arquitectonica via City of Pompano Beach/Courtesy)

But the company is not alone, as other high end condo developments are taking hold.

Fortune International is building a luxury project under the Ritz Carlton brand. The plan includes a 14-floor structure on the Intracoastal Waterway with 88 residences starting at \$800,000 and a 14-slip marina, and a 32-floor high-rise with 117 residences starting at \$4 million across State Road A1A on the ocean. The project, called The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Pompano Beach, is at 1380 South Ocean Boulevard.

[Briny Residences, a curvy 10-story, 40-unit condo tower](#), is scheduled to rise from a 1.3-acre parcel south of Atlantic Boulevard. The ground floor would have several spots reserved for shops and possibly a restaurant.

They all follow a previously built 227-foot, 68-unit luxury tower built in 2019 – Sabbia Beach at 730 North Ocean Blvd. The project was developed by Fernbrook Florida, an extension of a firm based in Ontario, Canada.

Locals like the Ritz

Harvey Daniels, director of sales for the Ritz-Carlton Pompano Beach, said the majority of would-be buyers expressing interest are area residents from who live within a 10- to 20-mile radius of the project.

“These are people who live in some of the top luxury residences right now,” he said. Some are unit owners at the newly built Four Seasons Private Residences Fort Lauderdale Beach. Others are from the Miami area.

“There’s a huge demographic that wants to be farther north where there is a little less traffic and a little less congestion,” Daniels said. “We’re not in an area on the beach where we are competing against other buildings. And we have this brand.”

Analysts say the developers are in Pompano for good reasons.

“Obviously the price for land on the beach is considerably less than Fort Lauderdale and Miami and Miami Beach, said Jack McCabe of McCabe Research and Consulting in nearby Deerfield Beach. “I think that’s been an attraction for developers. We’re starting to see more luxury development in places where they never were before — Pompano Beach, Hollywood and Dania Beach.”

Edgardo Defortuna, president, CEO and founder of Fortune International, said “more quiet towns like Pompano” are “changing their DNA and becoming more progressive.”

“The city commission and authorities have been more pro-development and willing to create the projects like we’re creating,” he said.

Moreover, there aren’t too many cities where developers can buy sites on both the ocean side and the Intracoastal Waterway side of State Road A1A.

“It’s practically impossible to obtain,” DeFortuna said. “That really allowed us to create an incredible lifestyle for our customers.”

Long-term plan

Pompano Beach Mayor Rex Hardin says the emergence of luxury development is part of a greater plan for a city that seeks new tax revenues and growth, but a developmental balance and zoning that allows it to retain its small-town identity. The approach, he says, didn’t “happen by accident.”

Though there has been some grumbling from residents about changes, he said, “this is something we’ve been planning for years — to attract this kind of attention,” Hardin said. “Our residents have been crying out for things to do for years. We’ve got restaurants and venues. But we’re not looking for a huge South Beach or anything like that. That’s not the view that residents have called for.”

McCabe, though, thinks many long-time residents eventually will be priced out of the area by the surge in growth.

“There are some definite advantages for Pompano Beach,” he said. “But it’s going to mean a lot of people on fixed incomes are going to be forced out.”

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The city is green-lighting sizable development projects ranging from the LIVE! Pompano project covering 223 acres in the city's Southwest sector that is home to Isle Casino Pompano Park, with the casino recently rebranded as a Harrah's by owner Caesars Entertainment. Its development partner, The Cordish Cos., is planning a broad spectrum of residential, office, industrial and entertainment segments.

Pompano also is working on an innovation center north of City Hall and has welcomed the development of multiple apartment complexes and various other projects on the barrier island between the ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway.

Perez doesn't see the LIVE! Pompano project as a catalyst for people who are signing contracts to buy his beachfront condos. However, "it is a great addition to Pompano to make it a more assertive place on the Gold Coast."

Judging from the buyer response, it already is.

After buying out the owners of the existing low rise Beach Villa condo complex for Casamar, Related has sold 30% of the proposed Casamar units under contract, Perez said.

"It's been just under two months," he said. "That is more affirmation that people are seeing Pompano as a real destination."