

MIAMI TODAY

WEEK OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2015

A Singular Voice in an Evolving City

WWW.MIAMITODAYNEWS.COM \$4.00

Northern buyer flow increases, concentrated on Beach sites

By CARLA VIANNA

Miami's developers and brokers are gearing up for sales as winter approaches, which is a historically active season for South Florida's residential real estate market. Northeasterners continue to flock to the sunny South in bigger numbers, local brokers say, not only to escape the possibility of another bone-chilling Polar Vortex but also to invest in Miami's relatively affordable real estate.

Projects such as The Harbour, a two-tower luxury condominium in North Miami Beach, are attracting more northern buyers than ever — about 20% of the project's condos have been pre-sold to buyers from up north, said Inigo Ardid, co-president of Key International, which is co-developing the project with 13th Floor Investments.

"We haven't had that in any project until now," Mr. Ardid said. While the condo and single-family home markets are seeing less international activity due to devalued currencies, the US dollar remains strong, he said. The appetite to own a piece of Florida is increasing among domestic buyers.

"Demand from the Northeast has been getting stronger every year since the crisis," he said. The story used to go something like this: If five New Yorkers buy in Miami, another five of their friends would follow suit. But now, Mr. Ardid said, Miami is no longer seen as just a second-home destination.

"Now it's different because the wealth is being generated by younger people. A lot of people and [their] work are a lot more mobile. You can be in South Florida; you don't need to be in New York or Chicago anymore," he said. "The young crowd is moving down here to work."

Although interest from Canadian buyers has weakened, New York remains South Florida's No. 1 northeastern market, said Fernando de Nuñez with ONE Sotheby's international realty team. He attributes the escalating demand to three factors: the recovery of the US economy, the success of key northern sectors (such as banking) giving way to more disposable income and Miami's affordability.

Buyers from Michigan, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC, have also trickled down south, with most setting eyes on



Photo by Maxine Usdan

20% of The Harbour's presale buyers are from North, said Inigo Ardid. oceanfront property, Mr. de Nuñez said. While projects in Miami Beach may see as much

more moderate numbers, like 5% to 7%, he said.

In an effort to attract both the local and Northeastern buyer, the Shoma Group is experimenting with its project designs. The developer is giving its townhouses a New York flair — steps leading up to the front door, an in-house elevator, three stories and a rooftop pool. Thirty to 40 townhomes are being built in Coral Gables, and another 11 are planned for Miami Beach, said President Masoud Shojaee.

"The local people love that flavor because it's not something they see every day," he said. "Northeasterners see that it's something they're used to, but it's different."

Namely, they get a rooftop pool they can use for most of the year, and perhaps more importantly, a two-car garage.

Aside from the weather and Miami's growing cultural scene, a promising sales point is the price. He said the Coral Gables townhomes will range from \$1.3 million to \$2 million.

"The same townhouse in New York would cost at least \$15 million," Mr. Shojaee said. "It really makes sense for them to have a second home here."

as 35% of their buyer pool coming from the North, Brickell and downtown properties reel in