



Best of Florida Luxury Properties

Special Advertising Feature

RENDERING COURTESY OF THE RITZ-CARLTON RESIDENCES, NAPLES

The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples, is less than a minute from the beach, but it may be hard for residents to leave this pool behind.

PRETTY NICE

An increasingly popular town boasts Midwestern charm while a hotspot gets even more glam

by Julie Bennett

Miami and Naples are about two-and-a-half hours apart, connected by highways colorfully called Alligator Alley and the Tamiami Trail. So far, none of Miami's glitter has made the trip.

"Miami, on the east coast of Florida, and Naples, on the west coast, are completely opposite worlds," says Nita Max, who previously worked in Miami and is now a managing broker in one of Premier Sotheby's International Realty offices in Naples. "Miami is fast-paced while Naples has a more laid-back, outdoorsy lifestyle. When spending part of the winter in Florida became popular decades ago, families from New York and New England

gravitated to the Miami area. Naples is more of a Midwestern town."

SOUTHERN DRAW

Naples accelerated as a luxury market during the COVID-19 rush to leave northern cities, explains Budge Huskey, president and CEO of the 40-office Premier Sotheby's International Realty. Affluent buyers bought up luxury properties of all types, yet preferred single-family homes that offered greater space

and privacy. "A seismic shift has occurred in recent years with far more purchasers arriving from New York and New Jersey than in the past," Huskey says. "Many who would naturally gravitate to the east coast of Florida now, in many cases, are looking at multiple coastal markets before making a final decision."

While technology titans and persons rising in the ranks of financial firms may choose to stay in Miami, "It is often the company founders and CEOs who have decided Naples is where they want to live," he notes. "Accordingly, many have established small offices or work remotely and stay connected to the home office."

The evolution of Naples as a true luxury destination has also been fostered in recent years by active new development construction in the market, such as branded hotels and residences.

GETTING UP TO SPEED

Claudine Léger-Wetzel, vice president of sales and marketing for STOCK Development, now building The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples, also says, "We are seeing more buyers from New York and New Jersey than we have for previous luxury projects." This project, which features 128 large condominiums in two 12-story towers and three mid-rise buildings, plus a 22-boat marina, is 60% sold.

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Many of the established condo communities in Naples are dated, Léger-Wetzel reveals. STOCK is offering The Ritz-Carlton's level of service and amenities, which includes a private restaurant, business center, state-of-the-art fitness center and a full-service spa. The development will have a resort-style pool, an on-site park, a movie theater and, for teens, a room with a race car simulator. Prices start at \$4 million and completion will be in 2026.

"You'll find me at the race car simulator," laughs Adam Zink, who is buying a condo in The Ritz-Carlton Residences with his wife, Angela. The couple, who have four children, live in Harford County, Maryland. "We started going to Naples for vacations because my parents vacation there, and fell in love with the weather," Adam says. "During the pandemic we bought a three-bedroom condo in another community, but we needed a bigger place. When we saw that STOCK was developing this level of residences so close to the beach, we chose a place with a gulf view in one of the towers."

"We can get from home to the beach in 47 seconds, even with four kids in tow," he says. "We like the active lifestyle in Naples," Angela adds. "It seems that everyone is outside enjoying their time."

HUNGRY FOR MORE

"We also go on vacation to eat," Adam points out, "and there seem to be a lot of new restaurants popping up in Naples targeting a younger audience."

Max says that's part of Naples' evolution. "Naples was a steakhouse and Italian restaurant town. When people from the Northeast started moving here, a lot of local restaurant owners noticed they had a different palette and began opening places with more diverse menus."

The Naples arts scene is also getting a makeover, Léger-Wetzel reports. "I was just at a gala for our Gulf Shore Playhouse, which is moving to a new location. Artis-Naples, an art museum and performance venue, is home to the Naples Philharmonic and has a full schedule this spring, and the Naples Players' regional theater is planning a multimillion-dollar expansion."

"We love the Old Naples downtown district and the Naples Zoo," says Mike Misleh, who, with his wife Kelly, just purchased their second vacation condominium through Premier Sotheby's International Realty. "We live in Cincinnati and get there whenever we can. Everything is pristine and the people are so respectful of each other. The vibe is great."

Huskey concludes, "Ultimately, it's all about lifestyle, light and outdoor recreational areas. There's no flash in Naples."



RENDERING COURTESY OF THE RITZ-CARLTON RESIDENCES, NAPLES

This designer kitchen, with its clean lines and neutral palette, looks like it belongs in an upscale metropolitan apartment. Instead, it is one model available to homeowners in The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples.



PHOTO BY SPACECRAFTING PHOTOGRAPHY

The waterfront estate, Greystone Manor on Marco Island, is listed by Premier Sotheby's International Realty in Naples. It features a 100-foot dock, a koi pond, a charming gazebo and meandering walking paths.



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