

July 18, 2012

Another crane rises in Miami, as BrickellHouse condo breaks ground

Building wave draws inspiration from Swire

By Alex Britell

At the height of South Florida's condominium boom, there were almost 70 cranes dotting Miami's skyline. And after several years without nary a crane in sight, Miami's second condo boom is starting to take shape. The latest is the BrickellHouse condo, which broke ground this morning — the fifth new crane to emerge from the real estate downturn.

"It's a tremendous endorsement to our city's resilience and of the development community," said Alicia Cervera Lamadrid, whose Cervera Real Estate is the exclusive sales agent for BrickellHouse.



Miami's newest crane rises at the BrickellHouse site

BrickellHouse, the brainchild of developer Harvey Hernandez' Newgard Development, is a planned 374-unit, 46-story tower at 1300 Brickell Bay Drive. The project has reportedly sold 90 percent of its units, buoyed by continued interest from the Latin American buyers that have been driving Miami's condo market, along with renewed interest from buyers in the Northeast, Cervera said.

"It was a very aspirational goal, and it was a very tough goal to meet," Hernandez said of the project. "We launched the project at a time when nobody thought that we needed more inventory — but we saw the market, and we saw what was going on, and we saw the reduction of developer inventory, and said, 'it's a perfect time.'"

More than 30 new condo towers are in some stage of development in South Florida, many of them in Miami, which has seen a number of new projects launch of late in the downtown area, including the nearby MyBrickell and Millecento Residences, both of which are being developed by Related.

The new condo wave drew some inspiration from the market entry of Hong Kong-based Swire, which broke ground on its mixed-use Brickell CitiCentre in western Brickell earlier this month.

"Everybody is moving in the wake of Swire," Miami-Dade County Commissioner Marc Sarnoff told The Real Deal. It's projects like Brickell House, he said, that are filling in the surrounding space and proving that "Miami is back."

Sarnoff said that by the end of 2013, there would be 15 cranes working in downtown Miami. "It's not the boom that it was, but if you factor in Swire and some of these other projects, you really are back at 2004 numbers," he said. "And 2004 numbers are robust numbers."