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**Empty nesters, singles
targeted for 'soft' lofts**

BY ED DUGGAN

Development in Fort Lauderdale's central business district is moving north with the announcement of Strada 315, a 20-story residential mixed-use tower on the southwest corner of Northeast Third Avenue and Northeast Fourth Street.

Pre-construction prices for studio units will start in the low \$200,000s, with initial pricing in the \$350 a square foot range for the studio, one- and two-bedroom units, according to Thomas D. Laudani, president of Northpointe/Southpointe, Strada's developer group.

**NORTHPOINTE/
SOUTHPOINTE**

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STACEY SHERVAN

"Some people were unhappy after they moved into some early loft projects because of the sparseness and lack of privacy with no interior walls," he said. "Strada is a compromise, giving the spaciousness of a loft, but the finish of a luxury unit."

The headquarters of Morgan, Olsen & Olsen will take up 4,000 square feet of the ground floor commercial space. The law firm currently occupies the existing office building on the site, which is to be demolished for the new construction.

The fit is tight for the compact land parcel the 20-story tower will rise on.

"It is tight like most urban infill developments, but we are prepared for it and already have planned for nearby staging areas and off-street parking during construction," said Alan Macken, director of operations for Southpointe and VP of Aventura-based Vercon Construction Management, the general contractor for Strada.

Macken doesn't envision any shortages of building materials or skilled labor.

"Contractors who pay their bills promptly and deal fairly with their suppliers and subcontractors will always be at the top of the list for service and delivery," he said.

A marketing feasibility study has highlighted certain target groups as potential buyers.

They include Generation X-ers, empty nesters, those who live west but want the urban lifestyle, gay couples and singles, and young professionals who want some balance in their lives.

"It's a pretty broad group," Macken said. "People can save two hours a day of commuting. They can walk to work downtown, sample a variety of restaurants, enjoy day and nighttime entertainment, and in general, reclaim their lives."

Amenities at Strada include a workout room, a curvilinear swimming pool, a walking/jogging track on the seventh-floor amenity platform, a lounge area, juice bar and a residents' suite with computers and related equipment.

Sales are being handled by Fort Lauderdale-based Galleria of Fine Homes.



Strada 315 comprises ground-floor commercial space, plus five floors of parking and 13 floors of lofts.

The \$38 million project's development company is split: The Northpointe division develops in the New England area, while Southpointe concentrates in Florida.

Ocean City Lofts in Delray Beach was the group's first local venture, and Strada is its first project in Fort Lauderdale. Additional projects in both locales are in the pipeline, Laudani said, declining to give further details.

Strada comprises 9,000 square feet of commercial space on its ground floor, topped with five floors of parking, an amenity deck, and 13 floors - 117 units - of "soft" lofts. Those are condominium apartments with 10-foot-high ceilings, but without the exposed ductwork and raw concrete floors of a vintage loft.

Fort Lauderdale architect Jiro Yates, said he thinks the popularity of the old-style loft has peaked.

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