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strada 315

Refining the Tall Residential Building

Text John O'Connor

The urban pioneers are at it again. Using the guidelines of Fort Lauderdale's downtown Master Plan as a jumping off point, new residential and mixed-use buildings are being planned for the spine of NE 3rd Avenue, just north of downtown. At the center of it all is the 21-story Strada 315 from Southpoint Realty Development, a crisp addition to the city in white with pale blue tinted glass.

Designed by Jiro Yates of Falkanger, Snyder, Martineau & Yates, Strada continues this city's move towards the contemporary... exploring the timeless mileage one can make out of clean, sculptural form. We spoke recently to Mr. Yates about the project.

JOHN O'CONNOR: More and more, it seems Fort Lauderdale's high-rise building design is moving away from the box with applied decoration. The exterior of Strada 315 is a case in point. Here the exterior of the building seems visually very active, with parts pushing forward and other areas receding into shade.

JIRO YATES: We wanted to create a contemporary building from the start. The city's master plan backed us up on this, as they want to avoid overly "wrapped" buildings and are looking for more progressive work. We were

excited about this because that's what we wanted to do from the beginning as well.

There are really a lot of set parameters, mass, parking, shoulder setbacks for the tower... that created an "envelope" if you will and we defined it further. We define the building not with color but with recessed and cantilevered balconies. Then we went one step further to define different kinds of balconies... some are curved with glass rails, some have metal rails. We knew these outdoor spaces would be a predominant feature so we used them for texture and depth.

J.O.: The first six floors, which hold parking and ground floor retail are interesting as well, which is often not the case. Here you've added elements for catching natural light as well as dramatic, stylized entry lights. Can you explain what you did here?

J.Y.: The ground floor really needs to be "activated" or connected to the street life, so it's all about glass and transparency. At the same time you want to protect the pedestrians from rain and sun, so at the ten-foot height we placed this horizontal "fin" which acts as protection. Since the ground floor is 15 feet high, the top of this fin acts as a "light shelf" bouncing sunlight into the top portion of the ground floor windows.

New interest in the area just north of downtown has planners and architects busy creating a whole new look for 21st century Fort Lauderdale. Out are the faux Palladian windows and Tuscan columns. In are clean, contemporary buildings that speak to our time more honestly. Strada 315 is one of those buildings.

