

Special Advertising Feature

New Developments

The Boca Raton-New York Connection

by Julie Bennett

Forget sandy beaches and palm trees. Many condo owners love Boca Raton, Florida, because it feels so much like New York.

Brian Weiner of Colts Neck, New Jersey, says, “My wife Janet and I grew up in New York, but now we live in an area with a lot of horse farms. A few years ago we bought a vacation condo in Boca, and within 24 hours we felt at home. It was like living in the city again.”

“We can leave our condo and walk to 30 to 40 restaurants and bars. Several New York restaurants have opened branches here, and one local steakhouse even named itself after New York,” he says. Top New York retailers have stores in the Town Center of Boca Raton Mall, as well.

It helps that “60 to 70% of the people we meet in Boca and Delray Beach are also from New York or New Jersey,” he says. “There’s even someone from our own town here.”

ESCAPING TAXES AND SEEKING THE SUN

Jay Parker, CEO of Douglas Elliman Real Estate’s Florida brokerage, says that potential buyers are “coming in droves” from states like New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and California. Many are tax refugees who want to escape high-income-tax states for Florida’s income-tax-free status, he says. Others follow corporate jobs headquartered in Boca Raton. And many are empty nesters and retirees wanting a place large enough to entertain their vacationing children and grandchildren.

Such buyers, Parker says, are used to a certain level of luxury, and Boca-area developers are evolving their architecture, unit sizes and interior finishes to suit them. Akoya Boca West, for example, is the first luxury property to be built within the Boca West Country Club community in over 20 years. The high-rise offers 113 units with two to four bedrooms, plus a den, priced from \$1 million to over \$4 million.

“The minute we drove through the gate, Akoya was beyond my expectations,” says one buyer. “It’s like living in a fancy hotel. We bought a three-bedroom unit with three-and-a-half baths because we have grown children and grandchildren. The pool and outside areas will be wonderful for them.”

Like luxury buildings in Manhattan, Akoya has a concierge service, with staff members available to deliver dry cleaning or help carry up groceries. “We’re in our 60s,” she says, “but this lifestyle will accommodate us into our 80s or 90s, even if we have physical challenges.”

BUYERS GETTING YOUNGER

Yoel Shargian, CEO of the Elad Group, has made notable contributions to the New York skyline, including One West End, 22 Central Park South and, recently, the landmarked jewel, 108 Leonard in Tribeca. Shargian is now bringing Elad Group’s expertise to Boca Raton with the ALINA Residences.

Now under construction in Downtown Boca, ALINA will have 121 high-end condos, many of which overlook golf courses of the nearby Boca Raton Resort and Club. Units range from one to four bedrooms with a den. They all have 11-foot ceilings and are priced from \$1 million to over \$6 million.

“The demographics of Florida buyers have changed,” Shargian says. “They used to be mainly retirees. Now we have people in their 40s and 50s who work from home or still work in New York but want to spend more time in the sun.”

“To attract New York buyers, you have to start with a bigger canvas. They want more than just walls and expensive appliances. They are looking for a lifestyle,” he explains. “We have designed ALINA with distinguished residences, but we are also providing an expansive suite of indoor and outdoor amenities.”

Inside, residents will find an entertainment lounge, his-and-her spa with treatment rooms, a state-of-the-art fitness and wellness center, and a rooftop indoor pool. Outside, they can stroll 30,000 square feet of green space and enjoy beautiful golf course views. “We are providing the resort experience we believe people are looking for,” Shargian says.

Julie Bennett is a freelance writer specializing in franchising, small business and lifestyle issues.



New Yorkers will enjoy the golf courses surrounding the ALINA Residences, but they will feel right at home in Downtown Boca Raton, which includes restaurants and stores straight from Manhattan.

RENDERING COURTESY OF ALINA RESIDENCES