

Special Advertising Feature

Florida Properties

LUXURY HOMES INCOMPLETE WITHOUT THE RIGHT LANDSCAPE

by Tonie Auer

When luxury boutique condominium 30 Thirty North Ocean was on the drawing board, the developer didn't think twice about hiring award-winning landscape architect Witkin Hults Design Group to fashion lush privacy landscaping for the Fort Lauderdale beach project.

"Backyard privacy on the 30 Thirty North Ocean large lanai terraces is very important to our residents," says Adam Adache, managing partner of project developer Cavache Properties. "Buyers had to decide between our units or single-family homes, and we are giving them the best of both worlds, from privacy to unique backyard style and outdoor living without the headaches and maintenance of a single-family home."

"Landscaping, especially in South Florida, is critical to a development. It plays a huge part of the final outcome," Adache says. "Outdoor living is a big component of this lifestyle and any high-end luxury product has to focus on that."

BRINGING LIFE TO LUXURY

Resort-style amenities and design ideas have influenced the creation of ultra-luxury homes with the main goal of building indoor-outdoor experiences that directly reflect lifestyle, says LandDesign partner Gabriela Cañamar Clark.

"The landscape creates a continuity of the luxury appeal from the driveway to the lanai to the gardens," Clark says. "Landscapes reflect the architectural

style of the homes, adding texture and depth. Today, more native plantings, trees and grasses are merging luxury homes with their natural settings and coastal seascapes. Water features are smarter now too. They enhance the South Florida aesthetic while protecting against flooding during heavy rains."

"Experience" is the new catchphrase permeating design, Clark adds. Landscape architecture design in the ultra-luxury residential market adds a high degree of detail and craftsmanship to home amenities. This is reflected in both the hardscape and landscape features of the space, she says.

At 30 Thirty, Adache says the lower-level residences include backyard lanai units that feature large terraces, outdoor kitchens and lush tropical landscaping with privacy as the key criteria. The landscaping choices by Witkin Hults include an array of Florida-friendly plantings. The project, which is about 60% sold, has topped out and construction is in its final stages with landscaping as the last step.

Among the native plants planned for the project are live oak trees to provide shade and green buttonwood trees



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAVACHE PROPERTIES, LLC

30 Thirty North Ocean landscaping was designed by Witkin Hults Design Group with privacy in mind to create a tropical modern landscape perfect for entertainment and leisure.

to control and direct the views. The entrances and common areas are flanked with date palms, montgomery palms and pink trumpet trees to provide a splash of color, he says. The understory plantings provide a cool and modern vibe with a mix of leafy tropical, colorful bromeliads and Parrot's Beak heliconia. Native grasses and philodendrons serve as the backdrop for the colorful palate, Adache adds.

GREEN DREAMS

"Landscapes immediately speak to lifestyle, especially the indoor-outdoor loving wealthy buyers attracted to Florida," says LandDesign director of planning and landscape architecture Keith Bongirno. "It is more than just curb appeal. Luxury landscape design is ultimately about creating harmony. You'll see this in successful luxury homes, where the grounds present a mix of plant textures, growth direction and colors that complement each other, with a thoughtful mix of hardscape and soft, pervious surfaces that invite both the eye and a walk outdoors."

"Additionally, we enjoy the natural beauty of South Florida and know which trees and flowers attract song-

birds and create healthy gardens and lawns. We also design for natural shade and water features that cool the property during hot summers, enhancing use and enjoyment," Bongirno says.

Engineering and landscape design go hand in hand. Landscaping not only boosts and protects luxury home value by ensuring lasting beauty. If designed properly, it can also provide resilient grounds that can weather serious storms and protect structures from weather damage, Clark says.

"Design allows us to improve privacy or openness and reduce street noise and other intrusions to foster tranquility," says LandDesign principal Chad Kovaleski. For instance, a bamboo stand and a garden-topped berm can provide a sense of refuge. "We can even fine-tune water and moisture control to reduce mold and algae."

"We've helped with innovative ways to plan sites, lots, walkways and even irrigation design. When it's done well, it merges seamlessly into the architecture, almost as an extension of the built world to the natural world," Clark says. "When it's not done well, savvy eyes notice."