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Prices for Miami Beach luxury condos soar to records

Fancy condos in South Beach and its South of Fifth neighborhood are fetching jaw-dropping prices — \$27 million for one this week, maybe \$39 million for another soon.

BY MARTHA BRANNIGAN

Ultra-luxury condominiums on South Beach are fetching nosebleed prices.

On Tuesday, a penthouse at the Setai Resort at 2001 Collins Avenue closed for \$27 million — the highest price ever for a South Florida condominium, according to real estate agents.

“We’re definitely seeing the market turning upward,” said Jeff Miller, of Zilbert International Realty in Miami, who represented the buyer in the sale of the palatial 7,100-square-foot condominium. “We’re seeing buyers come in from all over the globe.”



The \$39 million Penthouse 2 at the Continuum at South Pointe has three floors and 11,000 square feet atop the 42-story tower at the southern tip of Miami Beach. It's the most expensive condo ever in a luxury market that has seen prices triple in a few years.
CHUCK FADELY/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

Just a few weeks ago, Ohio coal mining businessman Wayne Boich Jr. completed the sale of his Icon South Beach penthouse at 450 Alton Road in the *uber*-trendy South of Fifth neighborhood for just under \$21 million.

The 6-bedroom, 7 1/2-bath Icon condo sparked a bidding war that drove the sale \$2 million above the listing price — a level that is three times the \$7 million Boich paid in July 2007 in the depths of the bust. It was a record price for a Miami Beach bayside condo.

“The luxury market is on fire in South Beach — especially the South of Fifth neighborhood,” said Dora Puig, principal of PuigWerner Real Estate Services, who was the listing broker for the Icon unit. “It’s moving Miami to totally different pricing points.”

The Setai’s record may not reign for long.

Penthouse 2 in the decade-old Continuum South tower at 100 South Pointe Drive in the South of Fifth neighborhood is on the market for \$39 million.

That is a record listing price for a Miami-Dade condominium, according to Puig, who also snagged that listing.

Amid the market sizzle, Puig bumped up the asking price late last summer from \$35 million.

The penthouse, which has 11,000 square feet of interior space, belongs to Manhattan real estate developer Ian Bruce Eichner, who built the Continuum project at the tip of South Beach and kept the trophy for himself.

The Continuum penthouse, which has 6,000 square feet of deck and a rooftop heated pool, boasts sweeping 13 1/2-foot ceilings that give the feel of a single-family home. The floor-to-ceiling glass walls offer a 360-degree view of the Atlantic Ocean, Biscayne Bay, downtown Miami and Miami Beach from 40 stories up.

"It looks down on Fisher Island, way down," Puig said with a smile.

The unit has a private interior elevator, of course, and stretches over two indoor levels and two largely exterior levels.

One big plus: It has a gated entrance and sits on an expansive enclave of rolling lawns and gardens adjacent to a city park at the tip of the island.

The unit comes with an additional 874-square-foot guest quarters that would delight most mortals. "The guest unit is intended for professional quarters: the maid, the nanny, the chef, the pilot," Puig explained.

Also included is a snazzy cabana on the beach.

Eichner has used it as a vacation home and once rented it to Tom Cruise for a couple of months while he was in Miami to film *Rock of Ages*.

On Thursday, Puig hosted Miami's power brokers for a look at the Continuum penthouse over champagne and hors d'oeuvres. Next week, she plans to spend three days in New York touting the property to high-end brokers.

Such palatial properties typically are paid for in cash. But what would a monthly payment be?

With a 20 percent down payment of \$7.8 million, the buyer would have to finance \$31.2 million.

"I don't know that I'd be able to find anybody willing to go that high on one unit," warned Steve Schneider, a mortgage broker who is owner and president of Abacus Lending Group in South Miami.

If a buyer could line up a 15-year fixed rate mortgage at 3.5 percent, the monthly payment for principal and interest would be \$223,043.35.

"I'd hate to see the tax bill," said Schneider.

According to Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser records, the 2012 property tax bill on the Continuum penthouse was \$264,896.17. That was based on an assessed value of just \$9.5 million, less than half what the Property Appraiser listed as the market value of \$19.3 million. The tax break came as a result of the state law that caps increases in assessed values on non-homesteaded property at 10 percent a year.

The condo maintenance fee for Eichner's unit runs \$7,624 a month. "I think that's low for what you get," said Puig.