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Health and wellness amenities may attract today's buyers

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Just about everybody these days is paying more attention to staying healthy. Articles abound on how diet and exercise can help people live longer. Chefs are adding more healthy options to menus in even some of the fanciest restaurants. Activewear has become fashionable and pricey. It's no wonder that builders and developers have taken notice and are incorporating amenities focusing on healthy lifestyles to attract buyers.

"Over the past 20 years, all of us have become more aware of the importance of a healthy existence," said Shahab Karmely of KAR Properties, developer of 2000 Ocean, a 64-unit condominium project in Hallandale Beach. "Everybody talks about health now; it's part of our modern dialogue. We looked at how we can integrate health and wellness in ways that are both physical and spiritual."

"We wanted to find an angle that would be unique but not gimmicky, for all different age groups," said Victor Ballestas of Integra Investments, which is developing Aventura Park Square. The complex will have 131 residential condos and assisted living units, a hotel, 100,000 square feet of general office space, a medical center with 45,000 square feet of offices for doctors and other healthcare professionals, and 50,000 square feet of retail with a wellness focus.

Being able to maintain a healthier lifestyle without leaving home can be appealing to busy people. "Today's buyers particularly want privacy and amenities that are geared toward health, wellness and activity,



Having a great view at the fitness center may make it a bit easier to exercise. (Courtesy of X Miami)

and we wanted to make sure we focus on all of them," said Oscar Rodriguez, developer of Fairchild Coconut Grove, a 26-unit condominium.

THE NEW LUXURY

Wine bars and cocktail lounges may not be enough anymore. "A fitness experience is the new luxury," said Brian Koles of X Miami, a project with 464 rental units. "To create the best possible living experience, we needed to create an environment where people can pursue their wellness goals. People want to feel good, and to feel good you need to be healthy."

"There's a new type of client coming into the market who

wants a holistic experience," said Alex Martin of Doral-based KW Property Management and Consulting. "It's all about physical health and mental wellness. People want to feel good about their health."

Not surprisingly, today's wellness amenities go far beyond yesterday's gyms with a few workout machines and humid shower rooms. "There are amenities onsite that didn't used to be there," Martin said. "A lot of buildings have healthy food and beverage options. If you want a ginger shot, you can get it onsite. You might have sunset Pilates instead of wine and cheese." Some developments even have facilities that

allow physical therapists or doctors to come to the patient instead of the other way around, Martin added.

RETAIL WELLNESS

At Aventura Park Square, many retail tenants will have a focus on wellness. Eateries will offer healthy choices, and chefs can grow fresh produce for their menus in a communal garden. Fitness and yoga studios will offer opportunities to stay active. The medical center will have doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals so residents won't have to leave the development for appointments.

Wide sidewalks are designed to encourage walking, and

slanted curbs will make them more accessible than traditional curbs. In the garage, staircases are designed to stand out so residents might be more likely to use them instead of an elevator.

Aventura Park Square is not just for residents, however. "We're creating a city center," Ballestas said. "Other than the mall, there aren't many places to get together in Aventura. It's about the community."

A ZEN GARDEN

At 2000 Ocean, an enclosed courtyard with the look of a Japanese Zen garden that will include a shaded area for meditation. A spa will feature a hammam-style steam room and an "ice" room kept below 40 degrees to cool off after a steam session.

In the gym, an air filtration system will extract mold and bacteria, Karmely said. "In a climate like South Florida, it's not enough to have a gym. It's important that the air is kept clean."

To minimize the amount of chemicals to which residents are exposed while swimming, a salt generator instead of chlorine will help keep the oceanside pool clean. Food service in the spa and pool area will focus on healthy options like shakes made with fresh fruit. "We want to deliver a limited menu that focuses on nutrition and health," Karmely said. "We're trying to make it easier for people to make healthy choices."

INVITE YOUR OWN MASSEUSE

Fairchild Coconut Grove will have a Turkish-style hammam, as well as a gym and private treatment rooms that offer

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An enclosed courtyard at 2000 Ocean will have the look of a Zen garden. (Courtesy of 2000 Ocean)



Veridan Grove will have a 65-foot lap pool for those who want to do some serious swimming. (Courtesy of Veridan Grove)



At Fairchild Coconut Grove, a hammam will offer a place to rejuvenate. (Courtesy of Fairchild at Coconut Grove)



To minimize chemicals in the pool at 2000 Ocean, it will have a salt generator instead of being kept clean with chlorine. (Courtesy of 2000 Ocean)

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spaces for residents to bring in their own masseuses and acupuncturists. Plans are underway for early morning yoga classes on the beach. "Residents will be able to watch the sun rising on the water," Rodriguez said.

The complex will also have a marina with a floating dock where fitness-minded residents can launch paddleboards and kayaks, and an area to store their equipment afterward.

AN APPEALING FITNESS CENTER

X Miami, which offers rental studios and apart-

ments with one to three bedrooms, as well as the option to rent just a bedroom, will have a well-equipped fitness center designed to keep residents onsite when they exercise. It will feature items like self-propelled treadmills, squat racks, jump boxes and dumbbells especially for heavy weightlifters. Cardio equipment is hooked to TV and Internet so residents don't have to fumble with their own devices.

"We wanted to replace the need for belonging to an outside gym and be a place aesthetically you'd want to be," Koles said. "Part of our approach

was to design a fitness facility that people will use, not just a box to check on a leasing tour. It's a bright facility with a great view. X Miami offers a variety of indoor and outdoor fitness classes that are free for residents. An early-morning poolside yoga party featured healthy snacks and nonalcoholic drinks.

For those who can't make it at scheduled times for onsite instructors, fitness classes are offered on video. Classes focused on cooking healthy are also part of the program. There's also bike storage with direct street access and tools available for tune-ups.

Veridan Grove will be a gated neighborhood with 20 homes in South Miami. The centerpiece of the development will be a 360-square-foot fitness center that includes a gym, a yoga studio, a hot tub and cold-water Jacuzzi. A 65-foot lap pool will offer opportunities for serious swimmers. "Everybody now cares about their health," said Pascal Nicolai of Sabal Development, which is developing the project.

The trend toward a focus on fitness may last awhile. It can even be a kind of bragging issue, Martin said. "Residents are very proud to say they're living a healthy lifestyle."