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RPC'S HIGH FLYER REACHES FOR THE SKY

By Peter Hawkes

AN ELEGANT TOWER IS RISING ABOVE BISCAYNE BAY, MAKING A DRAMATIC IMPACT ON MIAMI'S SKYLINE. WITH ITS BREATHTAKING VIEWS, PARAMOUNT BAY, CREATED BY ROYAL PALM COMMUNITIES, IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A NEW EXPERIENCE OF CITY LIVING FOR FUTURE RESIDENTS IN ABOUT 360 LUXURY CONDOMINIUMS.

Paramount Bay rises up above "Mary House," the house that was used in the movie, "Something About Mary," and features Edgewater Square, with European-style cafes and classy shops and restaurants.

This is exactly the way Dan Kodsi, President and CEO of RPC Holdings, planned it. There are actually four of the high-rise buildings being created under the name of Paramount. The plan, for those who move into these luxury homes, is to offer high-end restaurants and a worldwide VIP concierge program, with access to shows and yacht charters, rather like service in a five star hotel. And for the people on the top floors with the best views, high speed elevators to return them to the ground floor and the fast track.





Innovative Futurist

Kosi sees himself as catering to the urban environment that a city like Miami is becoming. He's building high for the high-end consumer who wants to live in the center.

In downtown Miami, directly across the street from the American Airlines Arena, home of the NBA Champion Miami Heat, a second and equally elegant tower, with panoramic views of Biscayne Bay and South Beach is planned. Paramount Park, which will have 300 residential homes and 280 hotel and condo-hotel rooms, has a futuristic look almost like a giant spaceship about to take off.

A farther tower, graced with white circular turrets like a galactic castle, is going up above Sunny Isles Beach between Bal Harbour Shops and the Aventura Mall. From the top you have a view of ocean and unspoiled beach that is almost beyond imagination. Down below you can plunge into its one-of-a-kind "Island Oasis" pool. This elegant tower, which will provide 232 residences, is called Paramount Beach.

The fourth building under the Paramount banner, in Las Vegas, contrasts dramatically with the three ocean-gazing high-risers in South Florida. Paramount Las Vegas is designed as two broad 22-story structures. Their sloping fronts make the balconies look like giant steps, lending a suggestion of an ultra-modern variation on ancient Mayan architecture.

Paramount Las Vegas will be built in what is probably the most prestigious spot in the city, adjacent to the famous signature "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada" sign. It will be the first casino resort you see as you drive up the Strip. The building will look out at the entire southern end of the Las Vegas strip and the magnificent Red Rock Canyon. At Paramount Las Vegas, RPC says, residents can "own it all in the middle of it all." The building is planned to hold 1,100 condo-hotel rooms and 700 regular hotel rooms. And there's more...much more. Paramount Las Vegas is expected to be a significant addition to the Strip, with 70,000 feet of casino, restaurants, and a 1,200-seat theater presenting live shows.

Dan Kosi has been successfully building luxury real estate for 16 years. At 57, he is at the top of his game. Like a puppeteer with many strings or a conductor with many musical forces, he has his hands on a lot of projects at the same time. Each of the four properties that currently make up Paramount is moving along in different stages, and yet Kosi carries an air of unfazed calmness with no visible signs of any panic that might be mounting up inside. And he has his mind on what building comes next.

"It's going to get even snazzier," he says. "We're not done yet."

At the same time he's working on an entirely different kind of property in the Fort Myers area of Southwest Florida. Aldes in South Lee County is planned to have 450 residences and 80,000 square feet of shops and restaurants.

Kosi sees a certain commonality in the Paramount properties in spite of contrasts in design. All of them, he says, will be in prime locations with superb views. They will all have large floor plans designed for comfortable living and state-of-the-art residential technology. The Paramount building, he says, is a brand. When a client buys the brand he knows he is buying into a high standard of luxurious living.

The Paramount series makes a marked contrast with one of his signature works, the remarkable Villagio in Naples, which in many ways is more like a small town than a luxury development. Here, he went beyond the classic development surrounding a clubhouse and pool. Instead he created a self-contained town center. Residents can go to the movies at a small cinema built into the complex or lounge over coffee in Villagio's own Starbucks. Canals and bridges are designed to give Villagio a truly Mediterranean atmosphere.

"I've always had my finger in both high-rise and horizontal developments," says Kushi. Two years ago he altered the skyline of West Palm Beach with his magnificent 15-story Esplanade Grande. Like Villagio and Alder, it makes an interesting contrast with the Paramount buildings. Esplanade Grande has the warm, comfortable look of old-fashioned home splendor.

And overlooking the Atlantic and the Intracoastal at Juno Beach and close to a natural preserve is Ocean Royale - two 12-story buildings which each hold 60 luxury residences.

There's a demand for high-end housing in cities, he says, and as urban areas become more densely populated the only way for a developer to go is up. There's less space to build on nowadays and, Kushi says, "There's not much waterfront left."

All of the development designs are created in-house and Kushi says he has a big hand in what RPC Holdings is making.

"We tend to out-perform our competitors because of our design and the ability to pick the right location," he says. "Now that we're entering the hotel and casino business we'll have the most interesting and innovative trends there, too."

He studies the market and he's helped, he says, by working with a long-term view and always having a back-up strategy.

"It's a tough business," he says, "and you have to be prepared to ride storms - and hurricanes! And when the price of oil goes up so does the cost of trucks to bring in the cement. The development business is based on international economy, taxes and interest rates. It takes its toll on you. Markets are slow now. It takes a lot of experience to know when to launch a project."

Kushi has a wife, Bruria, and a baby of nine months, Tali, so naturally he has a pull between home and work. It's a tough balance, he says, but he has an understanding wife. And while he has to travel a lot, his home is only ten minutes away from the new office of RPC Holdings in the Crystal Corporate Plaza on Military Trail in Boca Raton.

"One of our goals is to see how people are going to live in the future," he says. "How will people vacation in the future? How will they look at national and international trends?"

It's not surprising, looking at the tall sleek buildings that are going to overlook the ocean and Biscayne Bay, that Kushi is a serious reader of *Future Magazine*.

"One of our goals is to see how people are going to live in the future," he says. "How will people vacation in the future? How will they look at national and international trends?"

Kushi sees himself as catering to the urban environment that a city like Miami is becoming. He's building high for the high-end consumer who wants to live in the center. He's catering also to people who, thanks to laptops and email and the Internet, are bound less to workplaces and offices and don't have to live in big cities in cold places: they can choose where they live.



There are few sites with unobstructed water views and they are on expensive land. But he has found a niche in catering to consumers who can afford to live in such places and providing them with homes that are comfortable and luxurious.

"If you can draw the most beautiful buildings and have them make economic sense - that's the balancing act," he says.

What Kushi likes about his work is its permanency.

"I enjoy the job - the challenges and the strategies. I don't drive fast cars or fast boats." But the high flyer whose graceful high-rise creations are cutting into the skylines of Miami and West Palm Beach feels compelled to add, "Though I do fly planes."

"You live in a house for a long time," he says, so he wants to build homes of lasting value. He wants to change the landscape and improve it and he likes to feel that his buildings are changing the skyline. And the change will be there to stay.

"What's good for me is knowing that our developments and permanent structures are going to be around for a long time," he says.

The moment he loves best is when the great idea comes.

"The first day...when you get the vision," he says. "Development is always fun when you find a site and decide what you're going to put on it. It's fun on the last day, too, when you've done it. But everything in between - that's a lot of work and a lot of headaches." ☐