

THE REAL DEAL

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Global by design

The latest architectural arrivals in Miami hail from around the world

BY ERIK BOJNANSKY

Miami-Dade is an international hotspot. About 55 percent of the county's population is foreign-born and it was foreign investors who reenergized Miami's real estate market following the fall of Lehman Brothers and the ensuing financial crisis.

Yet despite the area's global appeal, most developers have been content until recently with retaining local architects to design their buildings.

Not anymore.

An increasing number of private developers are looking all over the world for architectural superstars to design their products. Rodolphe el-Khoury, dean of the University of Miami School of Architecture, said local developers are casting a "wide net" for acclaimed architects. The hunt is also a "recent phenomenon," which started taking place in earnest within the last three years, he added.

"A lot of developers now see a value in having one of those big name architects designing their building," el-Khoury told *The Real Deal*.

A lot of that value is promotional. But not all of it. "You can say that this is just a fad and it's all about marketing and branding," el-Khoury said, "but that is a limited, cynical view. It is really about delivering a better product."

"We were trying to figure out what Miami Beach is all about, what the architecture of Miami Beach is all about, and then find our own interpretation."

—Thomas Juul-Hansen

David Martin, president of the development firm Terra Group, said he appreciates the knowledge that renowned foreign-born architects bring to a project. "I learned how to be a better developer," Martin said. "That's why we work with some of these amazing people and why we want to bring them to Miami to learn our city and our ecosystem."

Below, meet some of the architects from abroad who have recently entered Miami's market.

RICARDO BOFILL

Ricardo Bofill, a Spanish architect who founded Taller de Arquitectura in 1963, has designed government buildings, theaters, airports, train stations, retail centers, hotels, apartment complexes, condominiums and office towers.

Those projects can be seen all over the world, including in Spain, Sweden, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Iraq,

Israel, Lebanon, China and Japan and in countries in South America and states in the U.S., too.

But in South Florida, Bofill's contribution to date has been limited to designing a waterfront mansion for Mexican singer Paulina Rubio.

That's about to change. Camilo Miguel, Jr., the chief executive officer of Mast Capital, retained Bofill to create 3900 Alton Road, an eight-story luxury condo development in Miami Beach set to break ground in 2017.

Miguel told *TRD* in an email exchange that he obtained Bofill's architectural services because "it was important to have someone whose talents aligned with our vision of elegant simplicity while also integrating the highest quality."

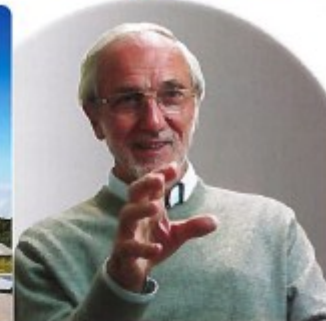
The 76-year-old architect's reputation doesn't hurt either. "The arrival of an architect like Ricardo Bofill signifies how dynamic and exciting the South Florida market has become," Miguel noted.

Bofill said his design for 3900 Alton Road was inspired by water.

"When first visiting the site, I immediately thought of the surrounding water and I imagined a transparent building, a fluid floating weightless object," the architect told *TRD*. "The challenge was to make a



Italy's Renzo Piano is the creative force behind the oceanfront tower Eighty Seven Park — his first Miami condo project.



contemporary yet classical design."

The result is a layer L-shaped building with a "glass-skin, connecting streams where energy and space flow," Bofill said. "Gardens are introduced to create an ecological scheme that not only makes the building more sustainable but allows the building to become alive."

RENZO PIANO

In the course of his 51-year career in architecture, Italian architect Renzo Piano has won several accolades for his work, including the Pritzker Architecture Prize, which is basically the Pulitzer Prize for architecture.

Piano's firm, the Renzo Piano Building Workshop, has designed more than 120 projects across the planet, including the

Menil Collection in Houston, the Tjibaou Cultural Center in New Caledonia, the Kansai International Airport Terminal in Osaka, London Bridge Tower (the Shard) in London and the new Whitney Museum in New York.

Now Piano, 78, has finished plans for his first condo project in Miami.

"He is just an amazing gentleman," said Martin. "He's someone who has accomplished so much."

Martin said Piano was the perfect man to design Eighty Seven Park, a future 233-foot-tall oceanfront luxury condominium tower in Miami Beach at 8701 Collins Avenue, where units are being marketed for as high as \$20 million.

"Renzo has worked all over Europe building these amazing museums and structures," Martin said. "And what I found in every

project he did is that it's connected to nature."

That was one of the reasons Martin sought Piano to build a "simple and elegant" building that would match the green natural surroundings that can be found in nearby North Shore Open Space Park, as well as the development's own two-acre private park. "It was truly an honor to work with him," Martin said.

THOMAS JUUL-HANSEN

Thomas Juul-Hansen, 46, was born in Copenhagen and journeyed to Miami at the age of 18, soon after graduating high school in Denmark.

"It was supposed to be a short period of time," Juul-Hansen, who ended up staying for nearly six years, told *TRD*. "I ended up liking this country a lot more than Denmark," he said.

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Ricardo Bofill from Barcelona is the architect behind the eight-story condo project 3900 Alton Road.

Photo credit: Mast Capital



Jason Halpern hired Denmark-born Thomas Juul-Hansen to design Three Hundred Collins.



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