

PRIMA LUCE

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condo in the middle of the building. They'll watch the Caloosahatchee flowing past their home.

"Very peaceful," Mr. Rozner said.

Prima Luce will be the next prize in the MacFarlane Group's overhaul of downtown that began in 2004 with the opening of Beau Rivage.

Rebekah MacFarlane Barney, the company's CEO, has witnessed downtown transformation since her father, Robert, began building his projects.

She recalls what downtown was like before its renaissance.

"It had great potential," Ms. Barney said, sitting in her office in a construction trailer next to Campo Felice and only about a half mile from the Prima Luce site. "You always had a beautiful riverfront. I recall coming here when we were building the Beau Rivage and trying to find a cup of coffee. There wasn't much here."

Now, downtown bustles not only with coffee shops but restaurants. Ms. Barney estimated during her conversation there are 63 downtown restaurants. Places to eat aren't the only attractions for potential buyers to consider Primo Luce, according to Ms. Barney.

"... walk out their door to the river, walk to the water basin, go to any kind of restaurant you want," Ms. Barney said. "Go to the theater, a free lecture at the Sidney-Berne, go to the library."

To further encourage buyers, The MacFarlane Group recently announced what in a news release it called "an end-of-season flash sale of up to \$89,000 on its newest development." Units range in size from 837 square feet to 1,772 square feet.

The news release provided these examples:

- Studios now start at \$178,281, down from the original \$220,000.
- One-bedroom units now start at \$225,354, down from the original \$278,000.
- Two-bedroom units now start at \$291,810, down from the original \$360,000.
- Three-bedroom units now start at \$421,736, down from the original \$510,000.

The release said the sale "applies to the second, third, fourth, fifth, eighth and 15th floors of the east and west towers."

Mike Castleberry, Prime Luce's vice president of sales, was asked recently to make a pretend sales pitch, as if he were talking to a potential customer.

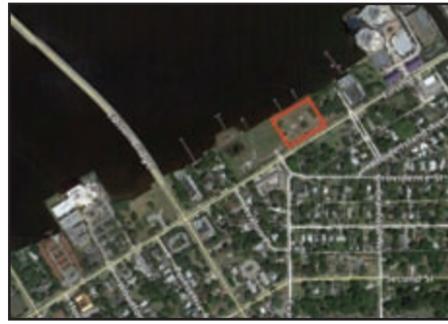
"The best part of this project is Bob," Mr. Castleberry said, referring to Robert MacFarlane, the founding partner and principal of The MacFarlane Group. "Bob has built these buildings before. He built Beau Rivage, St. Tropez. He's doing Campo. The history he has in the past of building here. We've utilized what really worked in these buildings and got rid of the things that didn't. The biggest complaint that people had in those other buildings is that they were paying to live on the water and they couldn't see the water."

At Prima Luce, every resident will have a river view.

Between the towers and the street will be a six-story parking garage.

Architect Richard Miner works out of an office in downtown Fort Myers where he's been finalizing the last details on the project. Mr. Miner said he's worked with Titsch & Ko Architects on Prima Luce.

"We were partnered to design the project and see it through," said Mr.



The site of Prima Luce on First Street in downtown Fort Myers.

Miner, who is the managing director of the PATINA Design Group.

It's been a long process.

"Prima Luce was a development that was slated to be built somewhere around 2006 but what happened was the recession and all that took place," Mr. Miner said.

Tweaks were made to the original design. Mr. Miner said the original plan called for three units per floor and it is now five. A directive from the boss set the stage for Mr. Miner's work on Prima Luce.

"The very first assignment that Bob MacFarlane gave us, he wanted to see the water from every unit," Mr. Miner said.

That required configuring floor plans from not only three or four units per floor but also making sure residents in every unit could see the Caloosahatchee.

Mr. Miner also sought to make the parking garage look like something it's not.

"It doesn't look like a parking garage," Mr. Miner said. "That's the whole point."

Mr. Miner and other architects sought to create an entrancing mood with landscaping, lights and the overall look of the towers.

"I look at it more as a sculpture to where you're inside of this sculpture," Mr. Miner said. "And when you're inside of this environment and you're in this romantic space that at night with the landscaping, the lighting can be very soft and inviting. ... Once you're inside of the space you're inside of a sculpture."

Then there will be the look of the buildings from the river or across the river or down the street or across the street.

"What I wanted to capture more than anything is the play of the light with the sun, the shadows because the building will appear different depending on what time of day it is, what time of the year because of the angle of the sun and the shade and the shadows of the building will give off," Mr. Miner said.

The MacFarlane Group and downtown Fort Myers have both come a long way since the company started planning its first Fort Myers condos early in the 21st century.

"Every one thought Bob MacFarlane was crazy," Ms. Barney said, referring to her father.

Now, with Prima Luce joining the row of MacFarlane projects, Bob MacFarlane looks far from crazy.

And if he visits any Prima Luce resident in a couple of years he'll be able to see the Caloosahatchee from their unit.

Every unit.

At the end of the day, Mr. Miner knows one thing has been critical in designing Prima Luce.

"You have to produce something," Mr. Miner said, "that someone wants to live there."

LouAnne Berg and Eric Rovner not only want to live in Prima Luce but they're looking forward to the day they move in and can look out their windows at the Caloosahatchee rolling by. ■



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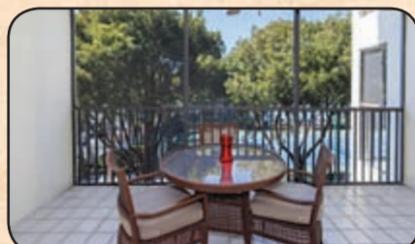
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