

THE JEWEL RISING

INTERVIEW WITH DEVELOPER TOM MANNAUSA

BY ED BERTHA | PHOTO BY GIOVANNI LUNARDI



Tom, you opened The Jewel's sales office in November, 2012. In December, 2013 you began converting deposits into binding purchase agreements. During the same timeframe you had to deal with permits and other legal hurdles. Construction began in April, 2014. The Jewel's residents are slated to move in early August, 2015. What a ride, and the most satisfying part is only beginning. Let's reflect.

WHAT POSSESSED YOU TO COME UP WITH THE IDEA TO CONSTRUCT THE JEWEL?

I was watching that block since 1989 when my 5th floor office in Palm Tower over looked it. I knew of two other developers who tried to assemble the block to no avail. When the end cap parcel with the view came on the market I thought about it for a week wondering if I wanted to commit five years of my life to a new condominium development. They are one of the more difficult development types to undertake, due to the fact you must have so many components confirmed and most all loose ends tied up before you can pursue construction and completion. So I went ahead and proceeded.

WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE THE SUCCESS OF THE JEWEL TO?

The first was being able to successfully assemble and purchase the property, ending up with sparkling views and a brilliant location. Without that you can dream all you want. Immediately after land acquisition was secured we moved forward with design. I spent many hours with Kurt Lucas and Gary Hoyt designing and costing out beautiful finishes. Ultimately, the success is truly based upon The Jewel's customers who desire new crisp modern condominium housing with a full array of amenities and the ability to walk versus drive to so many downtown venues.

CAN YOU BRIEFLY ELABORATE ON THE STEPS REQUIRED TO NAVIGATE A PROJECT LIKE THIS?

I like to explain that a condominium development looks like a clock with the very center being start, but instead of 12 numbers around the perimeter there are 30 arms of the clock coming to the center. They all move at different speeds and when all 30 reach the center you can start construction. These 30 arms take time to synchronize. So quite honestly selling out,

permitting and starting construction in two years seems reasonable to me.

WHAT WAS THE MOST FRUSTRATING PART OF GETTING TO CONSTRUCTION?

Finding people who truly wanted to work hard and dedicate themselves to a new project, period. Through an intensive selection process we picked the best experts in their respective fields dedicated to move forward and complete the project.

WHAT WAS THE MOST ENJOYABLE PART OF GETTING TO COMMENCEMENT?

Meeting many of the Gulf Stream Avenue neighbors was very enjoyable. Gulf Stream Avenue is a terrific neighborhood. I also enjoyed walking down the sidewalk with you, Ed, and seeing the site with its white shell and fence. That is the prettiest the site will look as construction is an ugly process.

SHARE SOME TIDBITS ABOUT THE \$50 MILLION PROJECT, THE JEWEL.

Well we have 2 miles of concrete and 5 miles of steel below grade. Our 25,000 sq ft of glass will be an amazing design feature with 11'6" of curtain wall glass on both Gulf Stream Avenue corners. It will create quite an impression. Our cabinets and vanities, doors, floors and walls (porcelain products) all come from Italy.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO CREATE THE BOOK THE JEWEL BACK IN TIME?

The site is such an amazing location with history tying it to the original landing by the Scots. The Jewel site has a historic monument attesting to this fact. The Jewel was waterfront property when the town of Sarasota, Manatee County, was first platted in 1886. As I presented the Jewel project to customers I found it enjoyable to go over the neighborhood history. I ended up utilizing a plat map that Mike Hartenstine of Williams Parker gave me in all my sales presentations. I then decided to jump in and create a large coffee table photo book with captions primarily covering lower Main Street over a 140 year span of time.

DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU LIKE TO ADD TO CLOSE OUT THIS INTERVIEW?

I look forward to putting on a hard hat with you Ed and going up the buck-hoist to each level as The Jewel pushes skyward.

