

# CULTURED

## TAKE ME TO THE RIVER

Architect Rafael Viñoly makes his mark on Miami along the city's downtown riverfront.

BY SHONQUIS MORENO



Rafael Viñoly's notable structures include the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University and the Curve Theatre in Leicester, England.

"Luxury is a symphony," says developer Shahab Karmely, whose One River Point residential towers are currently the only Miami property designed by architect Rafael Viñoly. "Luxury is not defined by a single characteristic, the same way that music is not about a single note. Aesthetics without functionality are not luxury. For some, luxury is about facility, for some it's a view, and for others it's about security or serenity. Our job is to combine these in a way that the whole becomes greater than its parts."

Rising out of downtown Miami, One River Point sits at the confluence of the city's art, design and culture districts—its "Riviera"—and an increasingly tony riverfront. Karmely, the founder and CEO of KAR Properties, tapped world-class talents including interior designer Rémi Tessier, Sasaki Associates for the lush outdoor spaces and hotelier Adrian Zecha for "lifestyle curation." The towers, scheduled to open in the winter of 2020, will also benefit from other developments nearby: the plush mixed-use Brickell City Centre and a property rumored to be the most expensive acre of land to trade in Miami, expected to be branded with British automaker Aston Martin.

One River Point has been a labor of luxury. Its distinctive silhouette consists of two offset 60-story towers with a triple-height lobby linked at their crowns, connected by a three-story Sky Bridge. In it is a 35,000-square-foot members-only Sky Club—think high-end eateries, a craft cocktail bar, cigar lounge, library, screening room and wine cellar—with "Sky Villas" perched on top of it all. The project features 50-foot villa swimming pools that slosh around 800 feet above the city, biometrically accessed elevators, unusually deep-set terraces with and an 85-foot waterfall cascading from the property's cantilevering podium curtaining the driveway.

"Initially, the consensus of the local brokerage community was that only properties on the ocean are capable of supporting a starchitect, and projects

not built on sand can't justify the expense," says Karmely, who works closely with his architects, attending the design meetings and signing off on everything from concept to gym programs, door handles and kitchen appliances. "But we're trying to introduce a new level of luxury and finish, so we debuted Viñoly not on the sand, but back from the water."

Born in Uruguay, Viñoly, 72, is the son of an artist and a math teacher. He has snowy hair and wears multiple eyeglasses simultaneously. His buildings seem to blend analysis and intuition, art and economy, design and engineering, and he has more fun studying the life that will be contained by his architecture than shaping the architecture itself, making the work less visually "Viñoly" and more site-specific. The New York-based architect has a lifetime of monumental commissions under his belt that demonstrate a potent combination of aesthetics and function, including skyscraping residential towers, civic master plans, hospitals, universities and landmark arts and cultural hubs like the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University and the Curve Theatre in Leicester, England.

It took Viñoly's team several months to do an in-depth analysis of single and double towers with different focal points and varying shapes and configurations. They then decided to create two sleek, glass-enclosed, light-filled boxes. By placing the elevators at the rear, the architect gave every apartment unobstructed views in up to three directions, including front doors that open onto panoramas. "It's easy to say, 'My building is the best,'" Karmely admits. "Everybody does pretty pictures, but then the finished project falls short." He sends buyers to nearby B&B Italia or Gaggenau showrooms to see the appliances or cabinetry they're going to get. "The budget came in second here," he continues. "The design brief was: If we can't build something that's unique, we don't want to be building at all."

PHOTO BY ELIZABETH LIPMAN

230 culturedmag.com