

INDULGE

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LADY OF THE RIVER
Lissette Calderon's quest
to reshape Miami's skyline

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INDULGE HOME IMPROVEMENT

THE NEW WELLNESS MOVEMENT FINDS HEALTH-CONSCIOUS TRENDS
MOVING BEYOND FOOD AND BEAUTY TO THE WALLS THAT SURROUND US.

WORDS BY JANA SOELONER DANGER

Just about everybody these days is paying more attention to getting and staying healthy. Articles on the benefits of diet and exercise are everywhere. Restaurants ranging from pricey white tablecloth establishments to fast-food chains are adding healthier menu choices, and activewear has become both fashionable and expensive. People are more acutely aware of the importance of breathing clean air and drinking pure water. They're also exploring connections between alleviating stress and living longer, happier lives, leading to increased popularity of yoga and meditation.

South Florida developers are embracing the trend by incorporating wellness amenities into their designs. They're adding elaborate gyms, lap pools, running tracks, tranquility gardens and hammam spas to their projects, as well as new wellness technology.

"Wellness is a primary driver in our decision making," said David Martin, president of Terra, a development firm in Coconut Grove. "People are more concerned today about their health and the health of their families."

Although some wellness features have been around for a while, developers are paying more attention to them now, said Alicia Cervera Lamadrid, managing partner at Cervera Real Estate in Miami. "These spaces are being used more. People are embracing them, so the square footage is becoming more significant," she said. "There's more thought going into them."

"The wellness aspect has moved the goal posts," said Jason Adams, managing member at Miami-based Strang Design. "It becomes an element of priority."

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Like most aspects of life, technology has changed the face of wellness. One of the newest features is Darwin, a home wellness intelligence system that creates and maintains a healthier environment by monitoring, calibrating and responding to changing conditions throughout the day.

Developed and manufactured by New York City-based Delos using research from top medical facilities like Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic, along with leaders in science, design, architecture and

sustainability, Darwin purifies air and water and employs a circadian lighting system that mimics the color temperature of the sun's natural daylight cycle.

"For most of history, we lived outdoors," said Paul Scialla, founder and CEO of Delos and founder of the International Well Building Institute. "We breathed pure air and drank pristine water. Today, most people spend 90 percent of their time indoors. Darwin brings back the benefits of an outdoor environment so people can live like nature intended."

Jan Vitrofsky, founder of the Miami integration company HEDSouth, worked with Delos to develop an easy user experience and helps to market the system. "A smart home isn't smart unless it's healthy," he said. "This is about providing a solution that nourishes and takes care of the health and well-being of your family."

The Darwin system purifies water and removes allergens, toxins, pathogens and pollen continuously from the air. In the morning, light with cool tones helps a person wake up, while warmer tones in the evening help him or her get ready for sleep. "Certain things, like air, water and light, are universal to maximizing health and wellness," Scialla said.

The system is completely automatic. "The person inside the space doesn't need to do anything," Vitrofsky said. "Delos is given plans for a project or home and writes a prescription for wellness."

PUTTING DARWIN TO WORK

Location Ventures, a developer in Coconut Grove, is incorporating Darwin at Villa Valencia, a condominium project in Coral Gables, as well as two single-family homes, one in Coconut Grove and another in Coral Gables. "We want to be socially and environmentally responsible developers, and we use leading-edge technology to create the healthiest environment possible," said CEO Rishi Kapoor.

Botaniko, a single-family home neighborhood in Weston being developed by Terra, will feature Darwin in two of its eight models. "When we build a new community, we look at new innovation to create an environment that impacts people's lives," said Martin. "Our clientele is learning to understand health and wellness better, and we're evolving to make homes sanctuaries for their souls rather than just shelters."

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Eighty-Seven Park's equally lush interiors and exteriors are showcased in the project's library and yoga/meditation deck (opposite page), as well as the hammam (below); one of several serene views at The Sacred Space.



A SACRED SPACE

For Karla Dascal, a growing awareness of wellness was life-changing. "I went from being morbidly obese, diabetic, and depressed and filled with anxiety to living a holistic lifestyle, which has opened my whole world," she said.

To help others achieve health and well-being, Dascal founded The Sacred Space, a wellness-oriented gathering place in Miami dedicated to the principles of holistic living. She is also building a 7,000-square-foot home for herself that will incorporate Darwin. "Mine will be one of the first residences to have that technology," she said.

Fort Lauderdale resident Doug Feirstein is putting Darwin into a 7,000-square-foot family home designed by Strang. "We've always been a big proponent of healthy lifestyles, and we wanted the environment we're living in to be optimal," he said.

TRADITIONAL, NONTRADITIONAL

Traditional features, as well as nontraditional programs that help residents get in touch with the natural world and spirituality, are also important.

Dascal is building Paradise Farms, an extension to Sacred Space, where biodynamic organic agriculture, a system of natural farming that emphasizes interrelationships of nature, will be used to grow food. She'll also teach others how to prepare it. "As I heal myself, I can help others heal," she said.

Villa Valencia will have a gym, his-and-her hammam spas and hydrotherapy pools. "Everybody wants to seek better health, and we want to create the healthiest environment possible for them," Kapoor said.

At Eighty Seven Park, a condominium project being developed by Terra in conjunction with New Valley and Bizzi & Partners in Miami Beach, the Soul Center Spa will have a brain fitness program, aquatic therapy, meditation and health coaching. There will be a reflection pool, gym, yoga garden and a miniature greenhouse in the lobby where residents can grow their own plants. "The future of health and wellness is to be proactive and preventive," Martin said. "Mind, body and soul are important in everything we do."

At Aventura Park Square, wider-than-usual sidewalks are meant to encourage walking instead of driving. "We also planned the location of stairs for easy access so people would be more likely to use them than the elevator," said Nelson Stabile, a principal at Integra Investments, developer of the project. Retail space was planned to include wellness-oriented tenants, and there's also a medical center.



MAINTAINING FITNESS

Even though they're on vacation, guests at 1 Hotel and Homes on South Beach often want to maintain their wellness routines. "People still care about taking care of themselves," said marketing manager Julia Cavalieri.

The hotel offers traditional programs as well as spiritual ones centered around nature, the seasons and cycles of the moon. Cacao and sound healing ceremonies are designed to help guests feel connected to nature and each other. Sunrise and sunset yoga sessions encourage relaxation, and one of the hotel's restaurants caters to specific diets.

Wellness amenities are also a selling point for buyers at 1 Hotel and Homes. "People are more aware now of wellness and longevity and are gravitating toward properties that help them achieve their goals," said Tracy Gayla, director of residence sales.

One River Point in Miami and 2000 Ocean in Hallandale Beach, both condominium projects by KAR Properties, will offer air purification systems, gyms, meditation areas, hammam-style steam rooms and ice rooms. To avoid exposure to chemicals, both lap and lounge pools will use salt generators instead of chlorine. "These things are important," said CEO Shahab Karmely, "because health is important."

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A rendering of one of the wellness-friendly luxury homes in Weston's new Botaniko neighborhood; the Darwin Home Wellness tablet monitors and adjusts to the changing conditions in your home; Villa Valencia in Coral Gables.

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