

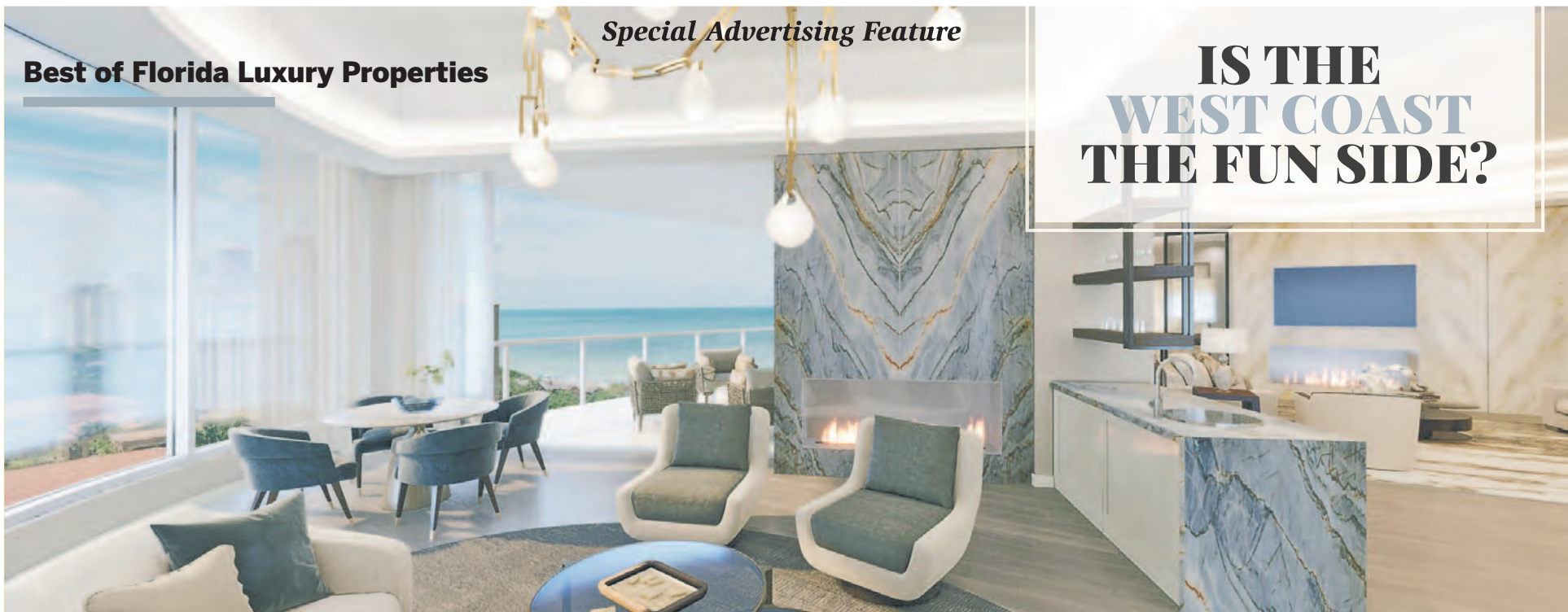
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Best of Florida Luxury Properties

Special Advertising Feature

IS THE WEST COAST THE FUN SIDE?

RENDERING COURTESY OF THE RITZ-CARLTON RESIDENCES, NAPLES

This amazing great room belongs to one of the penthouses available in the Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples. The private balcony overlooks Vanderbilt Beach.

by Julie Bennett

Despite recent weather events, residents who live in communities along Florida's southern Gulf Coast claim a more relaxed and friendly lifestyle than their east coast neighbors.

For decades, hard-charging Northeasterners vacationed along Florida's east coast while more laidback Mid-westerners gravitated to Naples, Fort Myers and other chill towns lining west coast beaches. Now trends may be shifting.

Claudine Léger-Wetzel, vice president of sales and marketing for STOCK Development in Naples, says a growing number of people from the Northeast are making deposits on luxury condos at the brand's current project, the Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples. And the 2,500 full- and part-time residents of Miromar Lakes Beach & Golf Club, a gated community in southwest Florida, claim they've found the happiest place on earth.

PUTTING ON THE RITZ

When it opens in 2026, the Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples will have 128 large condominiums in five low-rise buildings, an amenity-packed clubhouse, a private park and a 22-slip

marina. Seventy-five of the 108 residences released so far are taken. Some buyers are longtime seasonal residents, Léger-Wetzel says, moving there from single-family vacation homes. "Perhaps they want a more pampered lifestyle, the luxury of lock-and-leave security when they travel and the care-free lifestyle that The Ritz and our amenities offer," she observes.

But others are coming from both the Midwest and the Northeast, plus a few from Canada, California and Hawaii. "Many of our Northeast buyers say they vacationed in Naples and wanted to return to this part of the state," she says. "I've been here for close to 40 years and friends from Florida's east coast who moved here tell me the people are gentler and kinder."

Naples, along with the rest of Collier County, she adds, "is known for our philanthropy and our Winter Wine Festival and Auction [scheduled for January 24-26, 2025], which raises millions for the Naples Children and Education

Foundation. Our Gulfshore Playhouse is opening in a new performance space this year and we have well-known museums and art galleries."

"Anyone who comes here," Léger-Wetzel says, "mentions our beauty. Because we have a height limit of 10 stories above the parking lot, our beaches are not lined with high towers like those in Miami and Fort Lauderdale and are less crowded. Landscaped medians are in the center of our public roadways, and the city has many nature preserves and public parks."

"And everyone here seems to be into physical fitness. Everywhere I go I see people biking, running, playing golf or otherwise leading an active lifestyle." Since the average age of Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples buyers is mid-40s to mid-60s, Léger-Wetzel expects them to be active, too. The community's amenity space, called the Vanderbilt Club, will have a private restaurant, business center, fitness center and spa, plus rooftop lounges, a room with a Formula 1 simulator for kids and one with a golf simulator for their parents.

Outside, residents can swim in the lap pool, splash around in the resort pool or relax in cabanas or around fire pits. A marina is available for resident boat owners, and beach lovers can

walk to the nearby Vanderbilt Beach. Although Ritz-Carlton will manage the property, they will have no on-site hotel, "but Naples has two Ritz-Carlton hotels now and both are just a short drive away," she says.

A few two-, three- and four-bedroom condos are still available, at prices starting at \$4.8 million. "We also have six penthouses," Léger-Wetzel reports, "at prices of \$14 million to \$30 million, and already sold two of them to people who hired us to furnish them as well. When we open in March 2026, those residents will be able to move right in."

ONE OF A KIND

The luxurious, fun-filled community of Miromar Lakes Beach & Golf Club — an enclave with its own ZIP code, 11 miles inland between Naples and Fort Myers — is the creation of Margaret Antonier, a Canadian businesswoman. She recalls, "I had been developing factory outlet malls in Canada and traveled to southwest Florida in the 1990s looking for a retail site. I'd visited the area years before and remembered that it was beautiful."

Antonier was building the first phase of Miromar Outlets when a real estate agent sent her a prospectus

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Best of Florida Luxury Properties

Special Advertising Feature

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about 1,800 acres of land with a 700-acre, 26-to-40-foot-deep lake. “I was in my office in Montreal and made an offer on the property sight unseen. I’d always dreamed of building a one-of-a-kind community in which I’d want to live.”

Antonier created 3 miles of white sand beach along the lake’s perimeter and called it Lake Como. “I love Italy and used Italian names for the 40 different neighborhoods we built.” Today, Miromar Lakes’ three newest neighborhoods are called Positano, Messina and Nerano.

“We created all the infrastructure, landscaping, clubs and amenities, then chose trusted local builders to design and build luxury homes. Most of them are still with us today,” Antonier says. These builders, plus a few carefully selected additions, built the more-than-1,200 residences now in Miromar Lakes. “Buyers select their preferred lot and meet with builders to discuss the specific style and features they envision for their new home. Each is uniquely tailored, giving it a distinct character.”

Miromar Lakes Beach & Golf Club has been named the number-one community in the U.S. and best clubhouse by the National Association of Home Builders, the only Florida community to receive both awards. “We built a 10,000-square-foot pool that is the largest in the area and everybody loves it,” she explains. The Beach Club has two restaurants for fine and casual dining with views of Lake Como sunsets, plus a European wellness spa, library, fitness center, card room and theater. The Racquet Club has tennis, pickleball and bocce courts.

The centerpiece of Miromar Lakes Beach & Golf Club is Lake Como, Antonier explains. “It is perfect for water skiing, sailing, paddleboarding and fishing. We designed the Beach Club as a place for people to enjoy themselves, and once they discovered it, they couldn’t resist staying.”



Lake Como and its 3 miles of sandy beaches are the private playground of Miromar Lakes Beach & Golf Club residents. The resort community of condominiums, townhouses and single-family homes attracts happy people from around the world.

COURTESY OF MIROMAR LAKES

PAR FOR THE COURSE

An on-site Arthur Hills-designed signature championship golf course has its own private members clubhouse and dining room. According to Antonier, 68% of all sales are to current residents. “They love it here and never want to leave,” she says. Minnesota residents Tony and Rikki Jacobson, for example, purchased a small home there in 2003, then built a larger one on the shoreline later. Tony recalls, “I was visiting a client who asked if I’d ever considered a winter house in Florida and showed me a photo of his. When I got home and showed Rikki the Miromar Lakes website, we decided we should try to get there right away.”

Tony laughs, “By the time we got to the Atlanta airport and called our realtor, he said that the houses were selling out, so he’d pick us up at the Fort Myers airport and show us the three that were still available really quickly.” “We chose one on the golf course that afternoon,” Rikki adds, “and made a deposit on a beach lot as well.”

“Our daughter was only three then and everything was so convenient. We made great friends in no time at all — our daughter and her older brother are still close to the children they played with that first winter,” Rikki says.

“A great selling point is how close Miromar Lakes is to the Southwest Florida International Airport,” Tony says. “We can fly there directly from Minneapolis, and it’s only a 12-minute drive to our house.”

OPEN ARMS

Richard and Debi Blue, who have a second home in North Carolina, say they like the variety of ages of Miromar Lakes residents and the variety of housing within the community. “It adds to the energy of the place,” Debi asserts.

While most of the homes are single family, “we are also building coach homes in Nerano, a new neighborhood of 10 four-unit buildings, which sell for prices beginning at \$1.2 million,” Antonier says. Messina’s villas along the golf course

start at \$2.9 million, while Positano will have three-story homes with elevators right on the beach and will start at \$8 million, according to Antonier.

Richard observes, “There are a lot of very wealthy people here, but everyone is so easy to get to know.” “We looked at a lot of gated communities in the area before we bought a house here two years ago.” Debi says, “and they were either elegant and luxurious or laid back and friendly. Here we get it all.”

Although he’s owned boats in the past, Richard says he rents them at the Beach Club marina now. “You can pick up a clean pontoon boat for \$50 an hour, cruise the lake and hand back the keys when you are done.” Both play golf and dine at the Beach Club or Golf Club three times a week. Debi comments, “And there’s every store imaginable just outside the gates. I rarely go beyond a 5-mile radius of our house.”

“It’s such a lively place, and our average age is 48 as we have many residents with young families, and the lifestyle is very vibrant with over 300 events annually,” Antonier says. “I have a spot picked out for my own house in Miromar Lakes, and will move there once the community is turned over to the homeowners’ association. New neighborhoods feature homes with innovative styling along with unique landscapes.”



**THE RITZ-CARLTON
RESIDENCES**

NAPLES



Naples' first-ever Ritz-Carlton-branded residence is on the rise, with excitement growing daily for the signature waterfront project. Construction is progressing steadily at The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples, with owners expected to be welcomed into their sprawling retreats in the winter of 2026. Featuring 128 designer residences, penthouses and grand penthouses, the exquisite condominium enclave is attracting buyers drawn to its spellbinding water views and direct Vanderbilt Beach access. A plethora of magnificent amenities and marquee, white-glove services managed by The Ritz-Carlton include rooftop lounges, resort-style pools and cabanas, a dazzling owners' club, a private spa, a restaurant and park, a full-service marina, firepits, chic entertainment spaces and more. Adding to the project's status as a marketplace rarity, units have been likened to single-family homes, with floorplans starting at 3,000 square feet. Residences start at \$4.8 million.

**For more information,
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THE RITZ-CARLTON RESIDENCES

NAPLES

A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME ADDRESS

As an icon rises along the Vanderbilt Beach skyline, there will be a new address in Naples to surpass all others. With coastal residences of unrivaled space and finishes, 50,000 square feet of inspired amenities, and impeccable service by the first name in luxury, every moment of every day will be yours to enjoy at The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples. A rare opportunity reserved for the few, the time to select your residence is now.

Occupancy Early 2026



The best time to select one of these incomparable homes for yourself is now.

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The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Naples Pricing from \$4.8 million.

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STOCK
RESIDENCES



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