

SEEING JADE

AN ELEGANT TOWER IN SUNNY ISLES BEACH FULFILLS A DREAM AND LAYS OUT A VISION FOR THE FUTURE.

BY ROBYN FRIEDMAN

There are few South Florida developers as ubiquitous as Edgardo Defortuna. Founder, president and CEO of Miami-based Fortune International Group, Defortuna has more than 30 years of experience and is considered a visionary in South Florida real estate. His projects include 1200 Brickell, Artech, Auberge Beach Residences & Spa Fort Lauderdale, Hyde Resort & Residences Hollywood and The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Sunny Isles Beach. Defortuna and his wife, Ana Cristina, are also the driving forces behind the Jade brand: Jade at Brickell Bay, Jade Beach, Jade Ocean and, now under development, the couple's crowning achievement: the Herzog & de Meuron-designed, 192-unit Jade Signature in Sunny Isles Beach, which opened in December.

When did you introduce the Jade brand, and how did you come up with the name?

Edgardo Defortuna: The first Jade was born at the end of 1999. We acquired the site and went to market in 2001 and completed it in 2004-05.

Ana Cristina Defortuna: The marketing company suggested using the 'Fortune' name, but it was Edgardo's dad who first noticed the land on Brickell. After he passed and we were able to buy the property, it was clear to us that it was his dad



A dream in progress: Edgardo and Ana Cristina Defortuna at Jade Signature pre-completion

PHOTO BY VANESSA ROGERS



Jade Signature's beachside terrace features a bar and grill with sweeping views of the Atlantic.

who was watching us from above and made it happen. So we wanted him to be honored. His name was Jose Andres de Fortuna, so that was J-A-D, and the E comes from Edgardo. We have no doubt that he has a lot to do with the success of all the Jades. **You planted a 65,000-pound, 38-year-old kapok tree at the entrance of Jade**

Signature. What does that signify?

ACD: It's a beautiful tree that is very sculptural and organic. We wanted to be really connected to nature, and that's what the tree represents to us.

Jade Signature is unusual because the parking garage is underground. Was that a challenge in South Florida, and what are

the benefits?

ED: The same company that did the parking at Brickell City Centre did our parking. Ours was twice as difficult because we are right on the beach.

ACD: It was extremely important to us because most of the buildings in Sunny Isles have parking on the first floors, and the pool may be five or six stories above the beach. >

"WE WANTED TO BE CONNECTED TO NATURE—TO HEAR THE SOUNDS OF THE OCEAN."

—ANA CRISTINA DEFORTUNA

Clockwise from top left: Lofty, open-plan interiors give way to shaded terraces; floor-to-ceiling windows with unobstructed vistas; the inside of the bar and grill; a bathtub with a view.



But we have an incredible piece of property and wanted to be connected to nature—to hear the sounds of the ocean, walk from the restaurant to the beach to the pool.

How have sales gone at Jade Signature?

ED: We're pretty much sold out. We have a few choice units left; we expect them to be sold this season.

What makes Jade Signature so special and different from all the other condominiums in Sunny Isles Beach?

ED: It's a combination of factors. It's the connectivity between the common areas and nature and the beach and the ocean. Having 100 percent of the units facing the ocean. Terraces that are

extensions of your living room. You don't see any structural elements or columns within the units. Having three full levels of amenities, including a spa that the Four Seasons or Ritz-Carlton would be envious of. And an interior designer—Pierre-Yves Rochon—who designed the Four Seasons in Florence and the George V in Paris and understands how the luxury customer likes to live.

What's next for the Defortunas?

ED: We plan to do this for many years to come. We're exploring possibilities in other parts of the world. We acquired another beautiful site in Sunny Isles, and we're planning our next tower. ■