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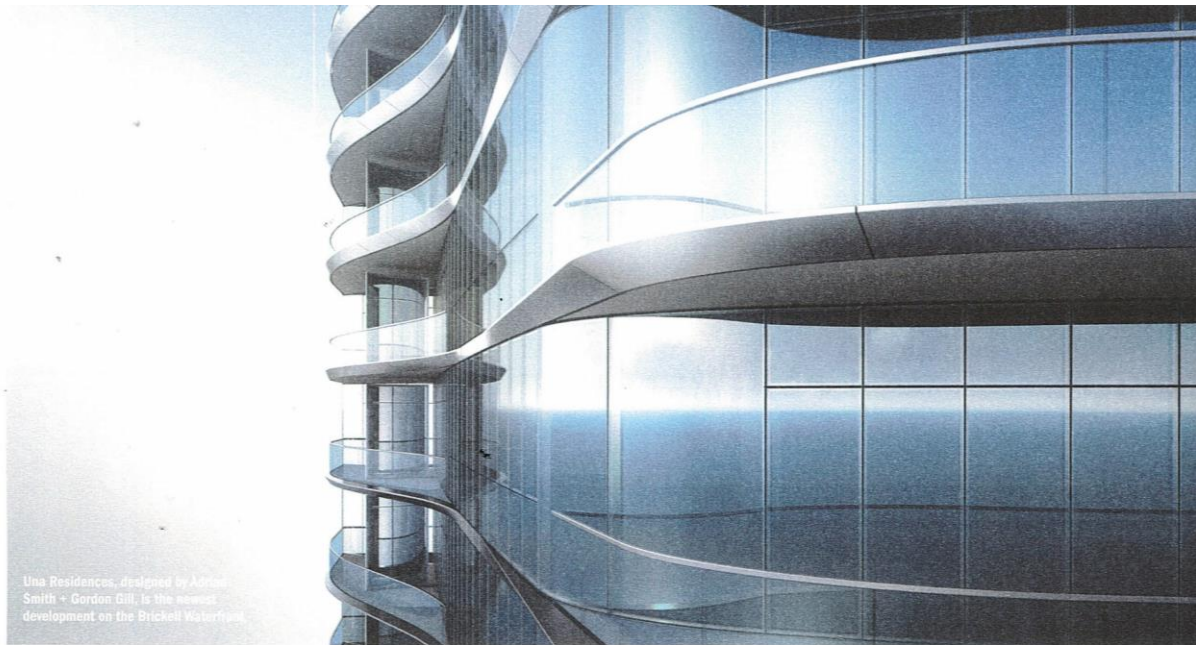
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# MASSING PROPORTIONS

Architects Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill, whose dynamic buildings have defined the skylines of Abu Dhabi and Guangzhou, embark on a property overlooking Biscayne Bay.

BY STEPHEN TREFFINGER

**What began as three lines** on a piece of paper promises to become an iconic fixture on Miami's waterfront. Una Residences, the 47-story condominium tower designed by Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill, will preside over Biscayne Bay in the South Brickell neighborhood.

The shape, like other aspects of the project, was the result of overlapping aesthetic and practical considerations. "The first gestural sketch of the building was very simple. One squiggle on the land side, one straight line on the water side and a little squiggle at the top," says Gill. It was based, in part, on the concept of *contrapposto* in classical sculpture, whereby a figure's weight rests mostly on one foot so that its shoulders and arms rest in an off-axis from the hips. "These statues had that kind of relaxed and less formal approach. And that's really the story of where the massing itself and the distribution of program came from," he adds. The duo sought to capture such nonchalant elegance in the architecture itself.

The cutaway also provided better views for the lower floors, says Smith, which would have been partially blocked by existing structures had Una had a straight profile. "Vlád, I believe, identified that it is not a great view until you get above that neighboring building and asked if we could pull it away." Vlad would be Vladislav Doronin, the international Russian real estate developer, Chairman and CEO of the OKO Group LLC, which is the developer behind Una Residences. He approached Smith and Gill after seeing some of their other projects—done separately and together—including the Burj Khalifa in Dubai (Smith), the Pearl River Tower in Guangzhou, China and the Jeddah Tower in Saudi Arabia, currently under construction. Doronin, it should come

as no surprise, was an ideal client: visionary, articulate and with a definitive idea about what architecture should be. (His own house in Russia is Zaha Hadid's only residential project.)

The placement of the drop-off and amenities areas, like the fluid design, benefitted from the meeting of form and function. The building's electrical transformers had to be accessible to the power company from the exterior—and at ground level and the entrance to the parking garage is also at grade. Lifting the pool area up was a way to shield residents from such goings-on. It's a win-win: the views are much better up there. Smith and Gill wanted the arrival zone to be a carved-out podium space, something to capture you "in the body of the building and create a room around that experience of arrival," says Gill.

Una's interiors, are based, in part, on an Italian yacht, *The Riva*, which Cerone says "is an image of nostalgia, yet it is performance driven, modern. The boat is at once minimal and yet perfectly appointed and luxurious." Using warm, natural materials that complement each other—wood and highly polished metal—the vibe is both sleek and comfortable. Gill and Smith were, of course, pleased that they also got to oversee this aspect, which is not always a given. "Some developers want a completely different experience on the inside than they do on the outside. It's not something that I really understand," says Smith.

The project turned out so well that OKO has already tapped AS + GG to undertake another in the area, this time an office building. "No great client, no great project. It's really that simple," says Gill.

