

The pandemic changed what Miami's buyers want in a home. Developers are taking notes

BY REBECCA SAN JUAN

Luxury home buyers are changing their wish lists after the pandemic. Some items are rising from the bottom of the list to the top.

The biggest trend? More buyers are shopping for single-family homes, said Hillary Hertzberg, sales-associate of the Jills Zeder Group. All residential sales dropped for Miami-Dade and Broward counties in April 2020, but the number of transactions for single-family homes still outpaced that of condos for both communities, according to the Miami Realtors Association April 2020 report. More square footage and outdoor space are drawing buyers to single-family homes, Hertzberg said.

The activity may lead to long-term preferences.

“People used to pick their homes based on the proximity to their office,” Hertzberg said. “As people recognize that they can work from home, there might be a shift towards suburban living where you can get larger lots, such as in Pinecrest. People may sacrifice the proximity to downtown and the office for extra space to unwind.”

Home offices are rising to the top of many buyers wish lists, Hertzberg said, given the social distancing and stay-at-home orders after the pandemic. Buyers prefer home offices with high-quality finishes, including wood paneling, large windows, storage and distance from other common areas to ensure a quiet space.

Pools are carefully scrutinized, Hertzberg said. “Pools were on the list before but there weren't such specific questions: ‘Is it a lap pool?’ ‘Is it chlorine or saline?’”

Some condo associations that blocked showings during the pandemic are somewhat to blame for the slowdown in condo sales, said Alicia Cervera Lamadrid, managing partner and principal of the family-run, downtown Miami-based brokerage firm Cervera Real Estate.

Miami Herald

“In the pre-construction arena, we had buyers considering life after the pandemic. But for existing sales, lack of access to condos drove more interest to single-family homes,” Lamadrid said.

Condo buyers want proximity to a park and units with more space, enough “if they want to compartmentalize,” she said.

Some also want private or semi-private elevators, Hertzberg said.

“I don’t believe people are going to define their life by this pandemic. If people wanted to live in a house, they are going to live in a house, despite the extra responsibilities and costs that come with a home. The maintenance of the lawn and pool are still there,” Lamadrid said.

Some condo developers are adapting strategies to help maintain healthier homes and communities, including Shahab Karmely, founder and chief executive officer of the New York-based real estate investment and development firm KAR Properties. The firm is developing 2000 Ocean in Hallandale Beach and One River Point in downtown Miami.

“Wellness is going to be of prime importance,” Karmely said.

Both projects will include elevators with UV-light rays. Once an elevator is empty, the UV-light rays will flash and kill any bacteria in the space, he said.

Doors in common areas will automatically open. “Buyers won’t have to touch surfaces,” Karmely said.

Karmely is also considering a concierge medial program.

“We already have planned a concierge for art and museum tours in each of our buildings,” he said, “but we may want to add a 24-hour nurse station where a resident can go if they are feeling unwell.”

Wellness will remain a top priority for condo buyers, Karmely said. “As 9/11 shaped us, this will also be etched into our memories.”

Miami Herald

The article was also featured on Miami Herald's Twitter: [@MiamiHerald](#)



The pandemic changed what Miami's buyers want in a home. Developers are taking notes



The pandemic changed what Miami's buyers want in a home. Developers are taki...
One condo developer will add UV-lights in elevators, automatic doors and, possibly, a 24-hour medical concierge program to promote wellness in his ...
[miamiherald.com](#)

7:22 AM · May 28, 2020 · SocialFlow

7 Retweets 7 Likes

The article was also featured on Miami Herald's Facebook Page: [@MiamiHerald](#)



The biggest trend? More buyers are shopping for single-family homes.



MIAMIHERALD.COM

The pandemic changed what Miami's buyers want in a home. Developers are taking notes

46

4 Comments 45 Shares

Like

Comment

Share