

The Palm Beach Post

Restaurateur José Andrés bringing restaurant to this West Palm Beach condo complex

The move boosts Olara's profile as a luxury residential destination amid a growing cluster of newly-announced luxury high-rises on or near the waterfront along Flagler Drive.



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Published 5:06 a.m. ET Feb. 27, 2024 | Updated 5:06 a.m. ET Feb. 27, 2024

José Andrés, the acclaimed Spanish chef and humanitarian, is bringing a restaurant to the planned Olara condominium in West Palm Beach, Olara officials said last week.

The move boosts Olara's profile as a luxury residential destination amid a growing cluster of newly announced luxury high-rises on or near the waterfront along Flagler Drive. It also provides a "wow" factor to would-be Olara buyers, officials said.

On a broader front, Andrés' presence bolsters West Palm Beach's efforts to fashion itself into a sophisticated city, a far cry from its former reputation as a sleepy county seat.

"This goes to show the area is transforming. There's a strong belief in this neighborhood," said Alison Newton, a real estate associate with the Douglas Elliman Palm Beach brokerage and director of sales at Olara.



Chef José Andrés is interviewed by Michele Norris at a South by Southwest Keynote event in the Austin in March 2023.
Aaron E. Martinez / American-Statesman

Added Chris Schlank, co-chairman and president of Olara developer Savanna Fund: "(The José Andrés Group) likes our demographics, they like what's going on, and they like Olara. They're going to provide amazing food services to the neighborhood and all of our residents."

A spokeswoman for the Jose Andres Group confirmed on Monday that the company will be opening a restaurant at Olara, but she said that details of the cuisine or menu are not yet available.

The 1.6-million-square-foot Olara complex is entering its second winter sales season. A new sales center on Butler Road offers buyers a peek at the floor-to-ceiling windows, recessed lighting and contemporary design in the model unit.

Schlank wouldn't disclose sales figures, but as of the fall, the project had sold more than 13% of the units, which average about \$4.7 million each.

Although ground preparation already has begun on the site, a March 7 groundbreaking will mark the start of the project's next phase: foundation work, which involves driving pilings deep into the ground.

Olara is expected to take three years to complete and will open in 2027.



The future home of Olara, a 26-story tower featuring 275 condominiums as part of a mixed-use project at 1919 N. Flagler Drive in West Palm Beach, Florida on September 7, 2023. Greg Lovett, GREG LOVETT/THE PALM BEACH POST

The best of everything, run by the best, sales agent said of the Olara condo

Olara is taking special care to provide an elevated offering of food, fitness and lifestyle for its residents, Newton said.

Amenities, including the Andrés offerings, are the lure for this 2-acre, wellness-focused project.

The Olara restaurant is the first build-to-suit eatery in South Florida for Andrés, the Spanish chef renowned for his diverse restaurant concepts in several major U.S. cities. Andrés recently took over an existing restaurant space at the Ritz-Carlton South Beach in Miami-Dade County and transformed it into Zaytinya, a Mediterranean-cuisine restaurant and sister restaurant to Zaytinya locations in Washington, D.C. and New York.

Andrés also is a frequent media presence. He even was the subject of a show on CNN and Discovery, José Andrés & Family in Spain.

But Andrés is perhaps best known for his World Central Kitchen, a non-profit that feeds people in disaster-stricken zones. According to WCK's website, the nonprofit has served 350 million meals over the years. Earlier this month, Andrés was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his humanitarian efforts.

In addition to food and beverage being handled by a pro, Olara's other amenities also will be managed by experts, Newton said.

Olara's 13,000-square-foot indoor-outdoor fitness center will be overseen by Wright Fit, a specialized personal training and fitness design and management firm. And Olara's spa and other amenities will be run by Arch Amenities Group, which handles high-end condos and hotels, including the Eau Palm Beach resort spa.

In addition to these perks, Olara will feature two swimming pools and a private marina with two boats for residents' use. Construction on the 192-foot dock recently began.

"It's like being part of a hotel," Newton said. "You have all the hotel services in the condominium, but you're not paying branding or resort fees."



Rendering of Olara condominium planned for North Flagler Drive in West Palm Beach. *M18 Public Relations*

Olara is only the first phase in a multi-step plan to "take this neighborhood and do great things," Schlank said.

During the past three years, Savanna has spent millions of dollars buying property in this still gritty section of the city, which is mostly old buildings and vacant lots near Currie Park, an Intracoastal Waterway green space that's a base for homeless people.

In addition to Olara, Savanna Fund also wants to build a 369-unit apartment complex in twin towers rising 16 stories at 1830 N. Dixie Highway. The project also would feature nearly 8,000 square feet of commercial space.

The proposed complex at the southeast corner of Dixie Highway and Pine Street would take up 1.6 acres and stretch east along Pine Street to Temple Israel, which fronts North Flagler Drive.

Savanna's redevelopment plans for West Palm Beach are a pivot from the company's longtime presence in New York as an office high-rise developer and owner.

But the company is all in on Florida now. Savanna controls about eight acres in West Palm Beach, a large and rare assemblage at a time when even small pockets of dirt are being sought by both local and national players.

Savanna isn't alone in trying to make North Flagler Drive the new "it" neighborhood for residents moving to this growing coastal city, either.

Related Cos. of New York, the city's dominant developer, recently unveiled plans to build Shorecrest, a luxury condo planned for the Temple Israel property at 1901 N. Flagler Dr., next door to Olara.

The temple will be torn down to make way for the 28-story tower, with the temple eventually tucked into two floors of the high-rise. Pre-construction sales just began for the 140 condo units, with prices per unit ranging from about \$2 million to more than \$10 million,

Meanwhile, another new condo along North Flagler Drive soon could launch, too. Related Group of Miami reportedly is readying plans to start sales of a Ritz-Carlton branded condominium at 1717 N. Flagler Dr.