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Mindful Architecture

By Marguerite Gil

Miami Beach's skyline has drastically changed within the last few years. While the Deco structures and hotels hold on to their past heritage, many of the newer constructions have successfully broken away from traditional design to become tropical high rise sculptural monuments. More often than not, these newer buildings offer apartments that considerably lack interior and exterior quality space for future homeowners.

Architects Carlos Prio-Touzet and Jacqueline Gonzalez-Touzet, both founders of Miami-based Touzet Studio Design & Architecture, have successfully found a thoughtful 'juste milieu.' A perfect middle ground between aesthetics and an urban environment. "We never design anything that we wouldn't want to live in ourselves" said Carlos.

The couple has created VITRI (from the Latin root meaning 'glass') a mixed-use, steel, glass and concrete development, at the crossroads of Miami Beach's MacArthur Causeway and Alton Road. "You approach VITRI in motion" said Jacqueline "from the bridge, South Point or Fifth Street. We wanted to treat the exterior as a visually dynamic landmark for onlookers."

Slated to start construction in September, 2005 more than half of the penthouses and

lofts have already been sold. And with good reason. Touzet's design team was extremely mindful of their South Beach neighborhood and created a curving façade with a concrete frame that encloses a blue toned irregular grid pattern of glass walls. "The colors are reminiscent of the sky and waves" said Jacqueline.

The 66 individual units, offer residents 20 foot floor to ceiling rooms with cross ventilation windows. VITRI's interiors will include natural motifs and colors found in nature. Sliding frosted, sea foam colored glass partitions close off kitchen and bathroom spaces. Each master bath opens onto a balcony, designed to serve as a meditation or lounging space off the master suite. The Touzet's used only the highest quality materials, within each of the units. Dornbracht plumbing fixtures and Duravit toilets and bidets give the areas a luxurious aspect. All of the kitchens are custom designed and fitted with clean lines and smooth surfaces. Cabinets are provided by Boffi, makers of super-luxurious Italian furniture.

VITRI had landscape architect Raymond Jungles create the common area's modernist garden. Bamboo, hardwoods, limestone and river rock will surround guests as they walk towards a resort style swimming pool. Beyond the pool's waterfall lies a hidden grotto. Also available are quiet retreat spots with hammocks and seating. Bamboo enclosures open onto relaxation decks and also lead residents towards an adjacent gym and fitness center. This award winning couple focused on connecting the outdoors with all of the different spaces within VITRI. Every part of the structure is opulent and made for comfort.

"We worked very hard on this project and know people will be pleased to live here" said Jacqueline.

Majestic Properties is the exclusive sales agent for VITRI. Prices for the two-story lofts, which range from 1,000 to 2,200 square feet, will start in the \$600,000 range. The sales office is located at 541 West Avenue. www.vitrimiami.com

