



Sales slow at Trump Hollywood

Paul Owers, Sun Sentinel
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Only 16 sales have closed in nearly a year at the 200-unit Trump Hollywood luxury condominium, according to an analysis of property records by CondoVultures.com.

Last August, developer Jorge Perez said he had lined up buyers for more than two-thirds of the condos at the 40-story oceanfront project he built with celebrity developer [Donald Trump](#).

Peter Zalewski, principal of CondoVultures.com, said similar developments along Hollywood beach are selling for an average of nearly \$400 a square foot. But the average price per square foot so far at Trump Hollywood is \$616.

"There's no question that Trump Hollywood is an anomaly in that market, and that's why sales have been so slow," said Zalewski, whose Bal Harbour-based firm serves as a consultant to investor groups looking to buy condos at deeply discounted prices.

Perez and Trump were out of town Friday, their assistants said. Matthew Allen, an executive for Perez's company, The Related Group of Miami, could not be reached for comment, despite two phone messages.

Tessa Solomon, a sales associate at Trump Hollywood, said the development has 20 completed sales. Four have yet to be recorded with [Broward County](#), she said.

Perez quickly closed sales at his lavish Icon Brickell condo in downtown Miami after beginning price cuts last fall, and potential buyers at Trump [Hollywood](#) are counting on the same thing happening there, Zalewski said.

Other Perez and Trump projects have struggled amid one of the worst condo downturns in decades. Perez has handed back to lenders the CityPlace South Tower in West Palm Beach and most of Icon, while the unfinished Trump International Hotel & Tower, a condo-hotel in [Fort Lauderdale](#), faces foreclosure.

From 2000 to 2005, investors would buy units in buildings at preconstruction prices and then flip them for huge profits before the condos were completed. The demand caused developers to build more units. But not enough long-term owners bought, leaving investors and developers in financial peril.

Over the past two years, condo sales have increased while prices have plummeted. The median price for an existing condo in Broward last month was \$78,600, a 64 percent slide from a peak of \$216,800 in February 2006, according to the [Florida](#) Realtors.

"Buyers are definitely looking for bargains," said Greg McBride, senior financial analyst with Bankrate.com in [North Palm Beach](#).

Trump Hollywood's 16 closings total \$28.7 million, for an average sale price of about \$1.8 million. Marketing materials last year indicated the condos, which feature Italian cabinetry and wine refrigerators, ranged from \$1.3 million to \$7 million.

Perez acknowledged last summer the challenges of opening the \$355 million project. He said sales could suffer as buyers back out of deals, but he insisted he would not offer discounts.

The developer said he personally would meet with nervous buyers over dinner, hoping to ease their concerns. At the time, he said, the market was "bottoming out."

Bulk buyers are snapping up largely empty condo projects across South Florida, but a bulk sale probably won't happen at Trump Hollywood, Zalewski said. The units are too large – the smallest is about 1,900 square feet -- so the deal wouldn't make financial sense, he said.

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