



Miami heat

Hotelier Ian Schrager and architect John Pawson are raising temperatures in South Beach

PHOTOGRAPHY: BEN STOCKLEY WRITER: JOHN ARLIDGE

Before Art Basel Miami, before The Raleigh or Soho Beach House Miami or any of the other big name, big bucks investments that transformed South Beach from a slum to a strip with a soul, there was the Delano. Ian Schrager's first hotel outside New York created the urban resort and elevated Miami from an in-the-know place for artists to a stylish destination for anyone who knew how to spell mojito.

It and its lofty neighbour, the Shore Club, made millions want to go to Miami and stay there, instead of disappearing down the Keys. Millions did – and still do. 'There wouldn't be a Soho Beach House Miami if Ian Schrager hadn't opened the Delano,' says Nick Jones, the founder of the London-based private members' club.

One market-making hotel in a small city might be enough for most hoteliers, even one as leading edge as Schrager, but a generation after he first flew to South Beach and stuck his (Philippe

Starck-designed) flag in the sand, he's having another go. A few blocks from the Delano, which Schrager sold eight years ago, is a hoarding that reads: 'EDITION'.

Edition is a joint venture between Schrager and Marriott, the world's biggest hotel group, to establish a global chain of boutique hotels.

The idea is to combine Marriott's scale and bullet-proof management systems with Schrager's proven 'cool' – he created the hip hotel, with properties including Morgans, the Paramount and the Royalton in New York, the Mondrian in Los Angeles, and the Sanderson and St Martins Lane in London. An Edition is already open in Istanbul; London will be next, followed by the Miami hotel and then two in New York.

The 294-room Miami Beach Edition will have the usual pool scene and beach club for the party crowd, but Schrager is adding some of his signature – expensive – touches. The nightclub

will have an ice rink, lit to look as if it's on fire. 'It's Cirque du Soleil meets Studio 54,' he grins. 'I expect to see girls skating in bathing suits.'

Opening a hotel that will cost tens of millions of dollars in an age of austerity is a tough business, even for Marriott. To get the Miami project off the ground, it had to buy the existing hotel on the site, the Seville, and build a new 18-storey tower. To offset the cost, it is turning the top floors of the main hotel block and all of the new tower into homes. Schrager has signed up British architect John Pawson to create 26 apartments in the two towers. The triplexes, mezzanine and single-floor properties will not be completed for another year, but three have already sold – one, a 4,000 sq ft triplex, for \$16m.

Schrager and Pawson make an odd couple. Schrager's hedonistic past includes co-founding Studio 54, the world's most notorious nightclub in New York, and creating some razzle-dazzle >>



SUNSET TRIP

This page, set to open in 2014, the new Edition Miami Beach hotel and residences are located in the revamped 1955 Seville and a new 18-storey tower, from which this shot was taken
Opposite, Ian Schragger and John Pawson in the architect's office in King's Cross, north London



New York real estate, as well as his hotels. He has been married twice, and has had the odd brush with the law. He lives in a \$30m penthouse in NoHo, New York.

Pawson comes from Halifax, a northern English mill town. He is noted for his minimalist – he prefers the word ‘pure’ – aesthetic. He designed a monastery in the Czech Republic that was so austere even the monks complained it was a bit plain. He drives a second-hand, grey Volkswagen Golf and works out of a basement studio on a grotty (if now on the up) street in King’s Cross, north London. ‘I’m not in this business for money,’ he says – although, given his surroundings, he hardly needs to.

Yet just listen to what they say about each other. ‘John is very talented. He marches to his own drum beat, yet he is easy to work with. No pretence. No indulgence,’ says Schragger, 66. Pawson, 63, describes Schragger as ‘a passionate innovator with an acute instinct for how living patterns are evolving’ and ‘obsessional in a good way’.

The two men have known each other, and occasionally worked together, for two decades, but it was only a few years ago that Schragger asked Pawson to design

the kind of multimillion-dollar residences currently rising above the South Beach skyline. He started with his own home in New York, which takes up the top two floors of a building designed by Swiss master modernists, Herzog & de Meuron.

Schragger’s 8,500 sq ft penthouse has white oak floors, glowing underlit stairs and windows cut to frame the New York skyline like pictures on the wall. ‘I really

UNDER THE SUN

Left, Pawson designed the apartments ‘to make the best use of the great light’, he says. ‘All are designed as containers for light. There are beautiful views – sunlight and shadows inside and out’

Below, buyers can choose a shell then decorate it themselves, or, if they prefer, Pawson and Schragger will kit out the whole place ‘right down to the pillows on the pale oak bed’

went all the way because I had none of the commercial concerns that you have in a hotel,’ Schragger says. ‘It was a Utopian experience. I love everything about this house.’ Miami was the obvious next step.

The new Miami apartments are, says Pawson, ‘simple, straightforward and intuitive’. The walls are neutral, the floors bleached Burmese teak and the Bulthaup kitchens stainless steel. Pale grey concrete and white onyx line the bathrooms. Each apartment will have its own entrance and be linked to the hotel. ‘You can get room service, a maid for a few hours, have a dinner party catered,’ Schragger says. ‘It combines all the benefits of ownership with all the benefits of a hotel.’

How do the transatlantic unlikely lads make it work? It helps that Pawson has little or no ego, in spite of his success. ‘I’m rather surprised when things go right,’ he says with no false modesty. And it is useful that Schragger is not really a developer at all. For him, property is not about making money, although, as his apartment shows, he’s not averse to making it and spending it. It is, he insists, about doing something right. ‘I’m always out to change things, rethink them and make them better,’ he says. ‘This is what I did with my nightclubs and hotels, and what I intend to do with people’s homes.’

Perhaps. But isn’t there something terminally naff about buying a condo in Florida, even a Schragger/Pawson condo? ‘Miami has changed,’ Schragger insists. ‘There are sophisticated people there now. It is up with the great cities of the world, and you can see it in the real estate.’

As they pore over the renderings for the new Miami flats, talking designer talk – ‘The onyx is lit by day and by night, it’s beautiful,’ Pawson says – it seems inevitable that they will end up buying homes in the development. ‘I’ve got one,’ Schragger confirms. ‘It has a bay view and a city view, which is magical at night.’ Alas, Pawson will not be joining him. ‘I don’t have the money,’ he says. ‘Besides, I fly so much in my job, going to the airport feels like work, so I prefer to go on holiday anywhere where I don’t have to get on a plane. Gloucestershire, mainly.’ ★
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