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Builders seek to draw buyers with creative storage

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It's a problem: Just about everybody has too much stuff and not enough places to store it. So some builders and developers are trying to attract buyers by getting creative with storage space.

NOT NUMBER ONE

Storage may not be number one on a buyer's wish list, but it nevertheless is important to them, said Christopher Zoller, residential president of the Miami Association of Realtors. "Storage is on the minds of today's buyers, and it influences their buying and renting decisions," he said. "People notice immediately when there's lots of storage."

The problem in South Florida is worse than in some other parts of the country. "We don't have either basements or attics like they do up north," Zoller said. "And as people get involved in more activities, they require more things to do them with."

UNDER THE STAIRS

Steve Svopa, vice president of operations for Minto Communities, developer of Artesia, a project with condos and townhomes in Sunrise, and Villas by the Sea, a townhome project in Fort Lauderdale, said storage is more important than ever to today's buyers. "We try to get insight from our customers about what they want and need in a home," he said. "Storage has always been important, but it's becoming more and more in demand, so we've had to get creative."

To help meet the need, Minto is designing storage in areas that might otherwise be



Riva, a condominium tower in Fort Lauderdale, will offer storage for paddle boards and kayaks. (Courtesy of Riva)



Adding a wet bar under the stairs or in an empty nook in the kitchen makes good use of otherwise wasted space. (Courtesy Minto Communities)



Larger laundry rooms with more cabinetry provide additional storage. (Courtesy Minto Communities)



In some of its communities, Minto Communities is adding mud rooms with storage space for golf bags and other items. (Courtesy Minto Communities)

Deerfield Beach, is also seeing an increased demand for storage and finding ways to meet it. "In urban areas, where the price of square footage keeps going up and up and up, you need to get more creative with storage," he said. "We're trying to create storage everywhere."

Residents at 327 Royal Palm will have individual storage cages in the underground parking area. Each will be three-by-five feet and reach to a ceiling that is about nine-feet high. The builder is also creating storage for condominium residents underneath emergency staircases.

wasted. "In two-story homes, we're finishing the space under the stairs," Svopa said. "It might be a closet, or we sometimes leave it open and people hang their bikes there."

The laundry room is an area where storage can be especially important, said Svopa. "In some communities, we're increasing the size of the laundry room, and putting in upper and lower cabinets and counter space."

In kitchens, Minto is installing extra cabinets above the usual upper tier of cabinets, a good place to store dishes and other items that are

used only occasionally. Wet bars are sometimes tucked into kitchen and den areas that would otherwise go unused.

Minto is also building homes with mudrooms, which are small spaces between the outdoors and indoor living areas. To help keep them tidy, there are cabinets, hooks to hang garments or book bags, nooks for golf bags, and slots for shoes. Bike racks are added in some garages.

DOWNSIZERS

When buyers are downsizing from a single-family home to a

condominium, storage becomes an important issue, said Bradley Deckelbaum, developer of Riva, a condominium tower on Fort Lauderdale's Middle River. "We're seeing more and more of that type of buyer," he said.

Every Riva buyer will have a six-foot-high storage area in the parking garage, but because the project is near the water, the developer is adding extra storage geared toward sports activities. Lockers will be available near the tower's floating dock where residents can store kayaks, paddle boards

and golf bags. "They will be places to store things people don't want to carry upstairs, but don't want to leave in their cars, either," Deckelbaum said.

Riva buyers can also have something else: a private garage within the community garage. "It's almost like the convenience of having a garage at a home," Deckelbaum said.

EVERY SQUARE FOOT COUNTS

Ignacio Diaz, general manager for Group P6, a company with projects that include 327 Royal Palm in Boca Raton and Elysian in

In townhomes, two-story units will have finished storage areas under the staircases within the units. "We enclose it, put in an easily accessible door, and add a light," Diaz said.

MORE STUFF THAN EVER

"The simple fact is that the current generations of buyers, whether they are millennials, baby boomers or retirees, all have more stuff than any previous generation," Zoller said. "And it's a feeling of comfort to know there's room for you in a home."