



Singer Island's 2700 North Ocean now succeeding as a Ritz

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The Ritz-Carlton Residences on Singer Island

A 242-unit Singer Island project that began in 2006 is seeing strong sales activity after a bulk buy and the addition of new management.

Since the Ritz-Carlton officially took over last month, there have been seven sales at the property, said Carolyn Block-Ellert, co-owner of Premier Sales Group. After an average sales price of around \$803,000 per unit in the bulk deal, the range of units extends from \$700,000 to \$10 million.

Lionheart Capital [swooped in on the biggest bulk deal in Palm Beach County](#) and the second-largest of 2010 in South Florida in the early summer. While a number of private equity firms have taken steps to maximize returns, from renovations to remodeling upon assuming control, Lionheart did something different: a rebranding.

Lionheart took over the property in a joint venture with New York-based Elliott Management by purchasing the remaining 146 units out of 242 in a \$120 million deal that closed in June. The investment firm then began looking at options.

"We decided to approach some of the best brands out there, talked to a few of them, and then we approached Ritz-Carlton," said Ophir Sternberg, managing partner at Lionheart. "They immediately came down, saw the property, and loved it. We were negotiating an agreement with them and a few months later we had a deal."

The Singer Island property is now one of six standalone Ritz-Carlton Residences (that is, without an accompanying hotel) in the world, but for the first time, the Ritz-Carlton entered a pre-existing property for a Ritz-Carlton Residences.

"It's [Ritz's] staff, their training, their whole employee philosophy program," Sternberg said of the company.

Ritz-Carlton signed a 30-year management contract, bringing in its team in a deal that also includes the Ritz receiving some licensing fees.

Block-Ellert said the re-branding is having an impact.

"[Activity] is up significantly, as we anticipated," said Block-Ellert, whose Premier Sales Group is exclusively handling marketing for the property and works on a number of similar projects including

condominium hotels like the Brazilian Court, in Palm Beach County.

"There was anticipatory excitement that the Ritz was coming, and we started to see that in July. We've written just under \$18 million [in contracts] since July."

Foreign buyers have been swooping in on higher-end condos in South Florida, and Ellert said activity at 2700 North Ocean has been no different.

"Our buyers have been from everywhere," she said, mentioning neighbors in Jupiter and Palm Beach and purchasers from Canada and the United

Sternberg said Lionheart is in the preliminary stages of pursuing another residential property in South Florida. After a number of deals in New York, including multi-family condo conversions and office buildings, this is his first venture in South Florida.