

AMENITY

Rich

Every Community Can Have
Feel of an Authentic Resort

By Andrew Witkin, A.S.L.A.

When we were retained recently to create a South Pacific resort environment for a high-rise condominium community in (landlocked) Sunrise, our design included a stonework entry statement with synthetic bamboo and fire elements, a lagoon-shaped pool with a spa at its center, a meditation garden, bamboo and thatched roofed cabanas, multiple fountains with dancing water, a large reflecting pond with floating pots and a dramatic water wall, plus a putting green, tennis courts, and barbecue areas.

Of course, many residential developments don't have the budget or the target market to warrant such a lavish exterior environment.

But every new home community does have the potential for distinguishing itself from competitors by giving its amenity package the look and feel of an authentic resort, not a standard recreation center.

A good place to start is with pool and deck design. For larger single-family communities or high-rise developments with elevated or ground-level recreation decks, here are three good resort-style choices: a lagoon-style pool with an infinity edge; a pair of freeform

pools linked by a fountain; a freeform pool with a beach-style entrance. For a community where residents will be both young families and singles, it makes sense to create a pool design with special use areas: privacy niches at the deep end with swim-up seats where a single or couple can relax; a fountain near the shallow end to mask the sounds of children at waterplay; a tapered beach-style entrance with mini dancing waters to entice the little ones to stay at their end of the pool.

When site and budget constraints mandate a less ambitious pool concept, it's not necessary to settle for a standard rectangle. That basic shape can be softened and enhanced inexpensively by rounding the corners, adding some water jets, and inseting a colorful planter along the pool's edge. Always try to keep pool security fencing at least 5 feet from pool's edge. Fill it with as much landscaping material as possible. When a bit more



ONE WEST, FORT MYERS

Upscale, 32-floor condominium development will feature a 4th level recreation deck, offering an infinity edge pool on axis with a view to the river, a floating spa, an intimate garden with a dry riverbed and running water jets, a raised sand beach lounging area, an entertainment area with bandstand and a poolside bar.

space is available, a range of fence camouflage elements can be used, from trellises to tiered plantings.

For infill communities which are targeting a sophisticated, older market, an elegant, understated "urban oasis" can be created by using classic elements, including columns, gazebos, and arched entrances, as well as upscale materials for the deck surface such as natural stone or porcelain tiles in dramatic but understated colors and patterns.

If a recreation deck is "vertical," drainage, irrigation and loading issues make it more important than ever for the landscape architect to work hand in hand with the project's architect, mechanical, civil and structural engineers. With advance coordination, plant materials can be watered without causing leakage problems. Tree planters can be sunk so residents aren't viewing 5-foot planters alongside their pool. Drainage seams can disappear in a paver design. Grade disparities at expansion joints can be camouflaged with inset planters.

When budget and site plan permit, secondary amenities – from Oriental meditation gardens to outdoor fitness layouts, putting greens, café-style seating and the like – can reinforce the resort-style theme.



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ALAQUA, MIAMI

7-story condominium community. Arrival statement is a sculptural, landscaped wall with a large, richly-detailed, multi-level, two-sided fountain. The other side of the fountain is a backdrop for a spa which sits at the pool's edge. Deck pavers tie into overall design theme, producing a cohesive look which maximizes perceived space. Multi-tiered plantings and calculated spacing of taller palms insure that residents have both privacy and excellent views poolside and on the waterfront.

