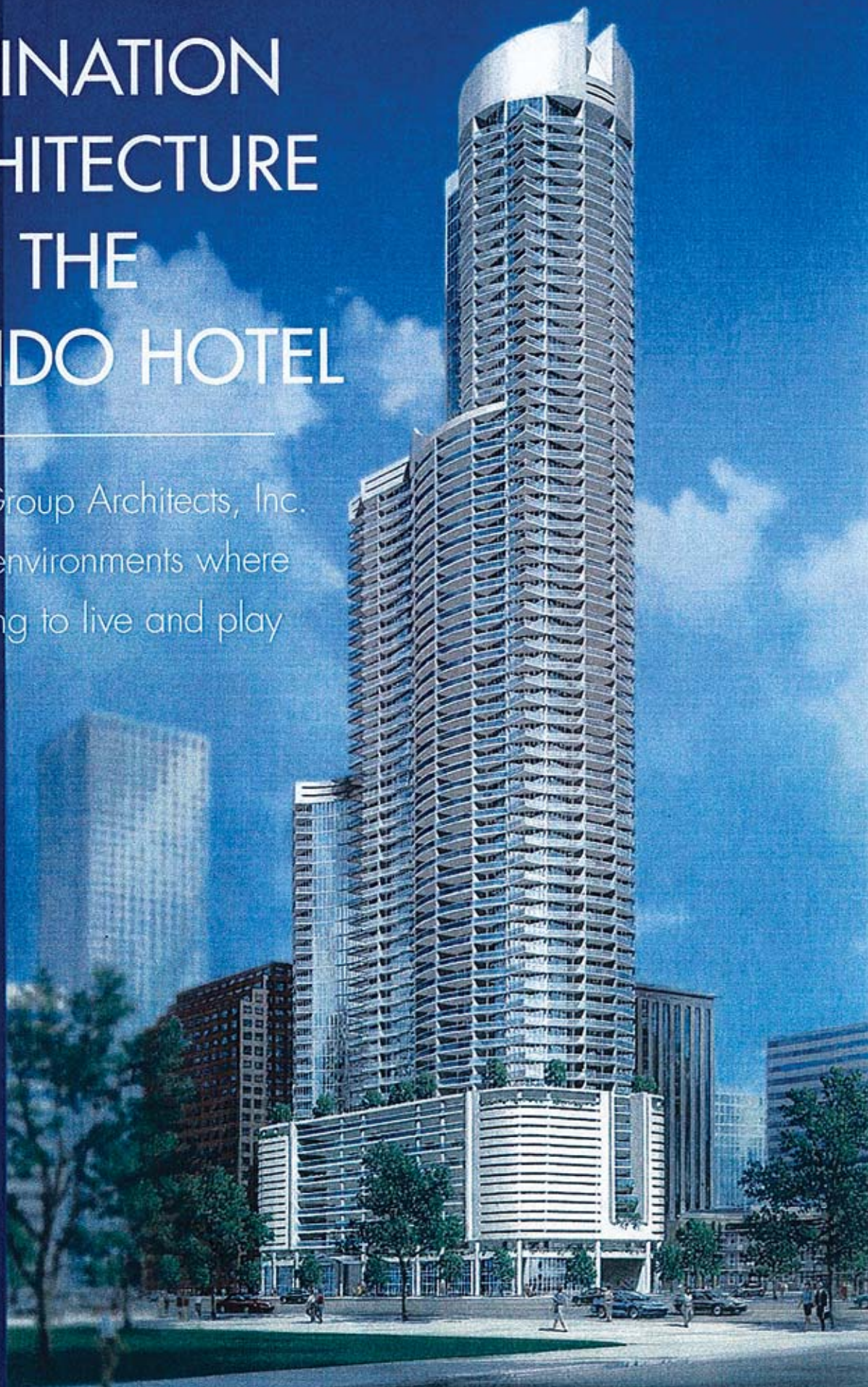


DESTINATION ARCHITECTURE AND THE CONDO HOTEL

Adache Group Architects, Inc.
Creating environments where
people long to live and play

BY LESLIE MCKERNS



Celebrating almost four decades in business, Adache Group Architects, Inc. has designed, and at times developed, over 150 hotels and resorts and over 30,000 condominium units in 45 countries. Dan Adache, Chairman of the Board, shares his exciting new projects.

CitySmart: There seems to be much excitement about hospitality projects. Can you share how your firm became responsive to the needs of these projects?

Dan Adache: Our firm specialized in hospitality projects for over thirty years. After 9/11, hospitality went from being at its peak to being non-existent. We took our considerable experience in designing and developing condos and reinvented ourselves in the hotel condo market, which now is the hotel/condo/spa/resort. Rather than designing a stand-alone hotel, which as a new project would have to be competitive in rates with one built ten years ago, we are designing a vacation destination serving as an investment vehicle or second home.

CS: Do you see the popularity of the hospitality industry as a result of the global marketplace and a resurgence of travel?

DA: There is confidence in travel again, certainly. But the Baby Boomers are the single biggest factor in destination architecture and the condo hotel. There is a transfer of 23 trillion dollars in inheritance happening now and in the next decade. Combine that with the fact that in 2005 between 30-40 percent of homes sold were second homes and the condo hotel market makes perfect sense—vacation with an income stream.

CS: Travelers now want an indigenous local culture experience but within a pampered setting. How do you factor in all these cultural influences?

DA: Designing indigenous architecture has always been our philosophy. I agree, people want an authentic experience—no stereotypes—and we have recently created authentic destination architecture in Malta, Ecuador, India and the South of France. In France, the indigenous style is a jurisdictional requirement.

CS: Hospitality destinations are competitive, continually providing the Wow factor and a distinctive level of pampering. What are some of the trends?

DA: Spa is the big word in the last five years. A spa is a distinction, and any resort that doesn't have one is planning one now.

CS: What makes your W Hotel on Ft. Lauderdale Beach a super chic boutique hotel?

DA: W appeals to mid 30's to late 50's-style conscious travelers and professionals. The mandate for W is "cutting edge." They want left-of-center design, and they have that at the W on Ft. Lauderdale Beach.

CS: So it is about the experiential nature of the project? Can you tell me some of the outstanding things that residents and guests experience in this project?

DA: Food and beverage is essential to this brand. To extend the high energy throughout, we designed a glass stair connecting through the swimming pool to the lower level bar on the floor beneath. The project interiors are a big part of the experience. We joint ventured with Clodaugh on the innovative interior spaces, working well together to bring the freshest ideas to the table. To allow hotel guests to take the experience home, there is an extensive line of W shop merchandise for sale—fragrances, home accessories, bedding, furnishings.

CS: W has many pampering aspects; is it spa-like?

DA: It used to be that a spa was a separate destination, but at W, there is a 10,000 square foot Spa and Fitness Facility onsite, providing strength

and aerobic equipment, personal training, free weights, yoga and Pilates. In-home spa services include personal styling, nutritionists, custom meal programs and diet plans.

CS: The architectural design for the towers is distinctive. They appear to be cascading waves?

DA: That is one interpretation. An artist allows many interpretations but comments on none.

CS: Do environmentally friendly materials enter into the design?

DA: As a firm, we think "Green" and believe we have a moral obligation to be environmentally thoughtful. Our environmental design extends to the building systems. For example, in Palazzo del Lago, the Intercontinental Resort and Residence in Orlando, we'll remove the laundry soap and suds from the water, reclaim the clean water and use it for irrigation. We also want to capture the heat exchange that is a byproduct of air conditioning and use it to heat the hot water. There is a role for growth and redevelopment because without it, you are promoting the deterioration of a city. There really is a life span of a building. You cannot just designate something historic because it is old. This is not Europe where buildings can and do last hundreds of years. Here, where buildings are exposed to wind, water and salt, you have life spans of mechanical and electrical systems. Newer systems in newer buildings make better environmental sense.

CS: Staying on the theme of re-development, recently, Trump stated that the Trump Tower, at 70 stories and slated to be the tallest structure in New Orleans, would move forward. Is that still the plan?

DA: Yes. We are very much in an active design phase now.

CS: How involved is the city in this design and has this project been positively received in light of the destructive events?

DA: We are working with Sr., with Donald, Jr. and Ivanka. The building has been received very positively both by residents and by the city.

CS: What could be done differently to bring amenities to this area that might not have been considered before?

DA: The building is downtown in the central business district. In my opinion, if you are asking what New Orleans could do to bring amenities to the area, it would be to add gaming. The Trump Tower is one of the first new high-rises constructed in the city in more than 25 years. It will encompass condominiums, a hotel, a five-star restaurant and retail space. It could reach 750 feet and at that height, it will not only be the amenities; we will certainly revisit the structural engineering aspect of the building.

CS: Although it may have been designed before the events of last year, it looks very "forward thinking." Do you think it makes a statement for the future?

DA: It was conceived before and is being designed now. Its very nature is forward thinking.

CS: And other projects?

DA: In Mississippi, we are also moving ahead - the Windjammer in Biloxi and Ocean Pointe in Ocean Springs, MS.

In Florida, we have the InterContinental Resort & Residence project in Orlando on Lake Bryan and in the Gulf Coast area, Pensacola Beach Resort and Portofino Resort & Spa. Internationally, we are doing One Woodbrook Place in Trinidad—that country's largest development project. Trinidad and Tobago used to be somewhat Third World but they have oil reserves, petrochemicals and gas that now makes them the third wealthiest country in the hemisphere—second only to the US and Canada.

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