

Sun-Sentinel

{ Business }

March 7, 2005

SAFE ROOM COULD HELP SELL TOWNHOUSES

Does the upcoming hurricane season have you worried? Are you already making evacuation plans even though it's only March? If so, you're not alone, and at least one local developer feels your pain.

Boca Raton-based **Bentley Realty Group LLC** has announced plans to build townhouses in Fort Lauderdale's Victoria Park that will feature a safe room in each unit. The room will include not only impact-resistant windows and doors, but also a generator capable of powering a refrigerator and air conditioner, gas appliances and a dedicated phone line designed for use in hurricanes and other home emergencies.

"We're using solid concrete construction for all three floors, including the roof," said Sam S. Caliendo, Bentley's president. "During the 1960s, people talked about building bomb shelters, and I've converted that same theory into building a hurricane-proof home."

Caliendo's project is called Bentley at Victoria Park. It will feature 13 townhouses and will rise at 901 NE 17th Way, on a lot that's just shy of one acre. Groundbreaking is expected for May, with completion slated for about a year later, Caliendo said. The townhouses will take the place of some aging apartment units.

"We will take that tract tene-



ROBYN A. FRIEDMAN
REAL ESTATE

ment housing that has a high-density look and bring it down to a more warm and friendly type of look and atmosphere," Caliendo said. "It will not only give the neighborhood a more pleasant look, but it will be more pleasant for the people living there."

The townhouses at Bentley at Victoria Park will have granite countertops, wood cabinets, stainless steel appliances, gas barbecues and ovens and Jacuzzi tubs. Optional amenities include elevators, private pools, home theater systems and gas fireplaces. Units range from 3,877 to 4,677 square feet and are priced from \$600,000 to \$700,000.

Caliendo said that sales started about three months ago. To date, eight units have been sold, he said.

Albert Molina of Plantation purchased a townhouse at Bentley that he plans to use as a weekend home. After looking at lots of condominium projects in eastern Fort Lauderdale, Molina chose to buy at Bentley because he liked the

townhouse concept. "We had a hard time with people living above us and underneath us," he said.

At least one local real estate agent thinks the project will do well because it's distinctive.

"I don't know of any other developer offering the safe room," said Rob Rose, broker/owner of **R.L. Rose & Co.**, Realtors in Fort Lauderdale. "I am often asked by out-of-town buyers about what a hurricane is like and what they should look for in homes that make them less susceptible to hurricane damage."

Rose said most hurricane evacuation shelters don't allow pets, so the safe room should appeal to buyers with pets as well.

Bentley Realty Group is also developing Bentley at Riverside Park, a nine-unit townhouse project in Riverside Park, the area east of Interstate 95 that borders the Sailboat Bend neighborhood between Broward and Davie boulevards. Prices at that project, which will break ground later this year, will start in the \$500,000s.



Kim Winters
Remax Partners
2810 E. Oakland Park Blvd
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33306

Business: (954) 396-5955
Fax: (954) 396-5737
Cell: (954) 695-2416
Toll Free: (800) 545-2010
E-Mail: Kim@kimwinters.com