

The New York Times

SOUTH FLORIDA ISSUE

Miami's Skyline Is Getting Super Tall

At least 10 new skyscrapers, five of them supertalls, will be built in the next five years.

Is that such a good idea?

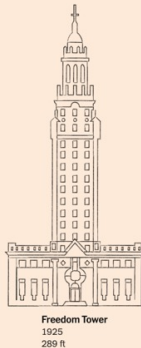
By Daniela Gorney

Visuals by Scott McIntyre

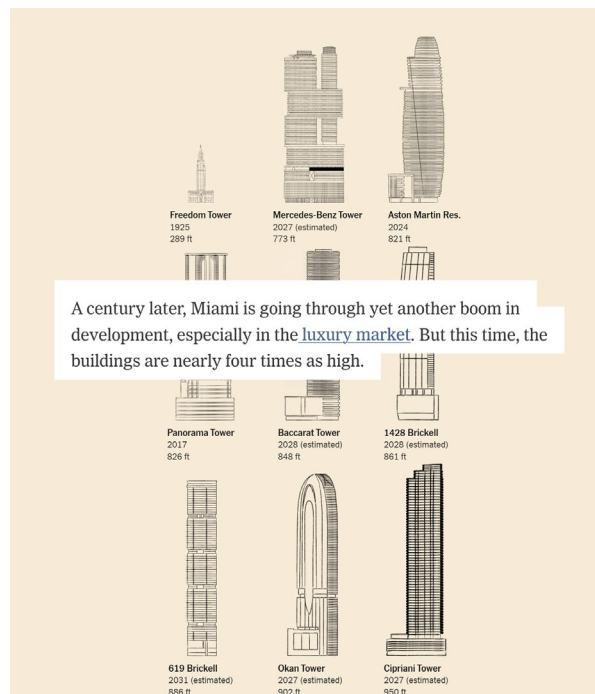
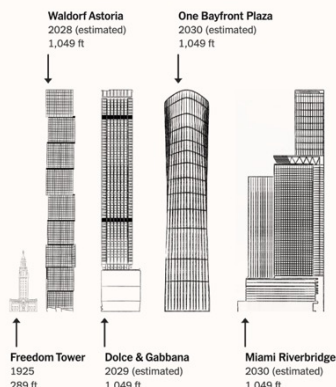
For this article, Daniela Gorney spoke with three engineers, a geophysicist, a geologist, an architect and five high-rise developers.

Aug. 11 2026 Updated 12: 42 pm ET

Miami's first skyscraper, the Freedom Tower, was built downtown in 1925 during a development surge. At 289 feet and 17 stories tall, it was briefly the tallest building in the South.



By 2030, Miami will have 4 new buildings taller than 1000 feet, transforming the skyline.



In July, Cipriani Residences, in the Brickell neighborhood, became the tallest building in Miami and the tallest residential building south of New York City. At 950 feet, it edged out the previous titleholder, the nine-year-old Panorama Tower, by 82 feet.



The Cipriani Residences, developed by Mast Capital and designed by Arquitectonica, became the tallest building in Florida in July. The project is set to be completed in 2027.

The Cipriani will be surpassed by the Waldorf Astoria Residences in 2028. By 2030, the Waldorf will be matched by Miami Riverbridge, Dolce & Gabbana and One Bayfront, all expected to top out at around 1,049 feet, the current height limit set by the Federal Aviation Administration to allow for safe flight paths in and out of Miami International Airport.



Looking north from the recently completed top floor of the Cipriani Residences in Brickell. The Panorama Tower, far right, was previously Florida's tallest skyscraper.

Supertalls (skyscrapers over 984 feet) and megatalls (buildings taller than 1,968 feet) are still relatively rare engineering anomalies. Currently, megatalls exist only in Asia and the Middle East.

Miami's entry into this elite tier signals a new era for the city. "I used to say that Miami was having a moment, but I don't know that you can have a 'moment' for five years," said Ryan Shear, a managing partner at the development firm PMG, which is building the Waldorf Astoria Residences, the city's first supertall. "I think Miami is having a revolution."

Other skyscrapers in the works include the Delano Residences (985 feet), the new headquarters of the Citadel hedge fund firm (958 feet), the Okan Tower (902 feet), the Residences at 1428 Brickell (861 feet), 619 Brickell (886 feet), Baccarat Residences (848 feet) and the Mercedes-Benz Residences (773 feet). The Aston Martin Residences in Brickell was completed in 2024 and stands at 821 feet. A video rendering of President Trump's proposed presidential library in downtown Miami shows a building towering over the city's skyline, but the exact height has not been revealed.

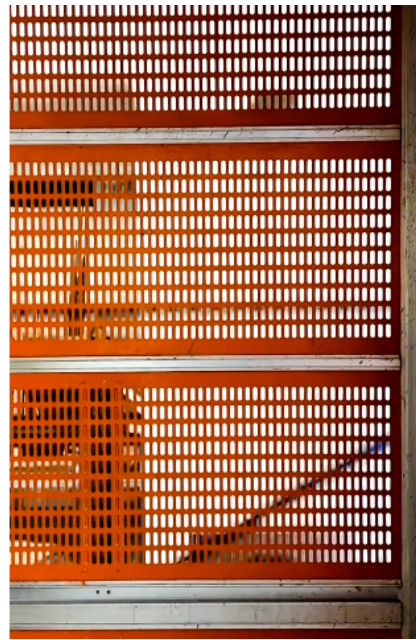


The view looking south from the Cipriani in the Brickell neighborhood is significantly less built up than the view looking north from the Waldorf Astoria, which shows the under-construction Okan Tower in downtown Miami.

Miami's rapid development can sometimes feel at odds with the geographic and geological realities of the area. Florida is a largely flat, low-lying subtropical land mass threatened by rising sea levels, warming waters and hurricanes that continue to get stronger.

But as demand for real estate in Miami has skyrocketed, available land has become harder to find. Luis Ramirez, a structural engineer and managing principal at DeSimone Consulting Engineering, the structural engineering firm behind the Aston Martin Residences, explained that 20 years ago developers could easily find full blocks to build on, but today, he said, "project sites have gotten a whole lot smaller." To make a profit and maximize space, he added, developers have no choice but to build vertically.

Mr. Ramirez also pointed out that South Florida was "developer friendly," and that permitting could take months rather than the years it might in places like California



The construction elevator on the Waldorf Astoria currently goes up to the 83rd floor. The skyscraper will reach 100 stories by the end of this year, making it Miami's first skyscraper over 1,000 feet.

Gil Dezer, the president of Dezer Development, and a partner in the upcoming Baccarat Residences in downtown Miami, said that going taller allows his company to “squeeze the last piece of utility” out of a site and create premium units with unobstructed ocean views that clear neighboring buildings.

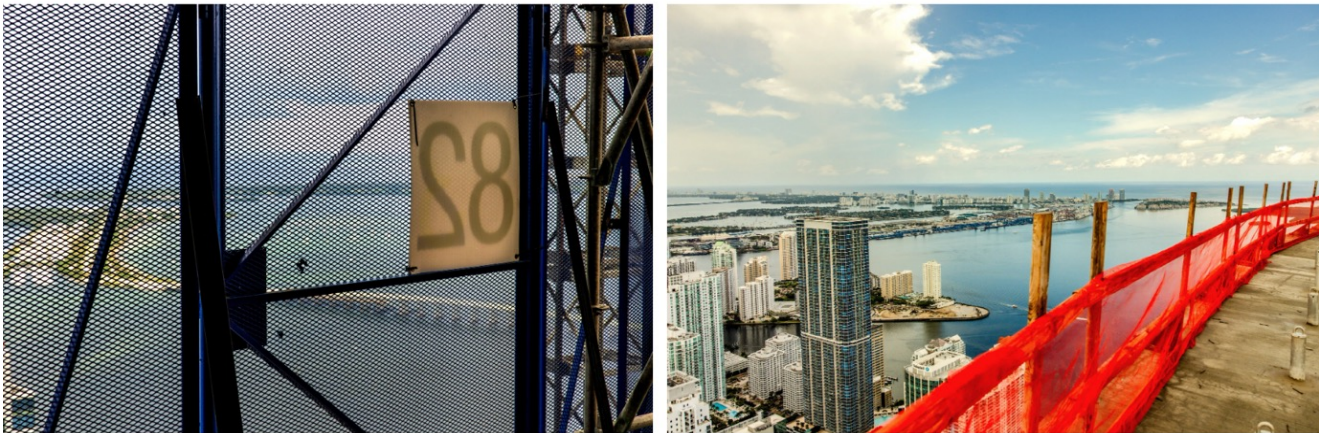
There is also an aesthetic and ego-driven appeal to reshaping the city. “I love watching TV shows where they show Miami and they flash by my buildings,” said Mr. Dezer, who has also developed buildings in nearby Sunny Isles Beach. Similarly, developer Camilo Miguel of Mast Capital views his Cipriani building as an opportunity to “make an impact on Miami's skyline.”



The Waldorf Astoria, designed by Carlos Ott and Sieger Suarez Architects, will be Miami's first supertall when it's completed in 2028

The rush in development has some experts worried. South Florida, like much of the state, sits on a bed of porous limestone and sand that requires a good deal of engineering to stabilize. The foundations for skyscrapers, especially very tall ones, must be much deeper and wider than usual. “Constructing these foundations requires powerful, specialized equipment and is very expensive,” said Jean-Pierre Bardet, the former dean of the University of Miami College of Engineering. “The technology and engineering capability exist, but design assumptions must be verified and construction quality must be carefully controlled.”

In 2024, the University of Miami published a study about how high-rise towers on Miami’s barrier islands, specifically in Sunny Isles Beach, were settling, or sinking, more than expected, many years after construction had been finished.



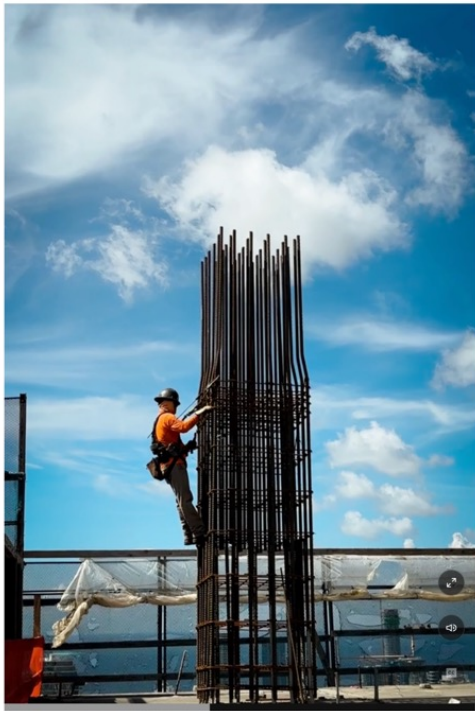
Construction on the 85-floor Cipriani Residences will be finalized next summer in 2027. The 950-foot building looks onto Miami’s previous tallest skyscraper, the Panorama Tower, which stands at 868 feet.

The study hypothesized that one of the primary reasons for this excessive settlement was that the vibrations of nearby construction, combined with Florida’s unique geology of limestone and sand, could cause the sand to rearrange itself and get more compact.

Falk Amelung, a professor of geophysics at the University of Miami, and one of the main authors in the study, noted that in Europe routine monitoring of building settlement via satellite is common, but that’s not the case in the United States, where “it’s difficult to get funding.”

“Engineers monitor the ground to some extent during construction, but not so much in the years after — which is when we found this settlement is still occurring,” he said.

In San Francisco, the Millennium Tower needed to be stabilized many years after construction because of excessive sinking and tilting caused by nearby construction and a deficient foundation system. Several years later the tower is still leaning significantly.



Hurricane winds also represent an untested variable for Miami's new wave of tall skyscrapers. Although these buildings are designed according to building codes, advanced structural analysis and wind-tunnel testing, many have never experienced a direct strike in real-world conditions.

"Maximum sustained winds in a major hurricane affecting South Florida could exceed 175 miles per hour," said Dr. Bardet. "Wind effects become increasingly significant as buildings grow taller." Miami has not been directly hit by a major hurricane since Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

But high-rise construction in Miami is showing no signs of slowing down, and developers continue to push forward. "If you stand on a street corner in New York and close your eyes, it's going to feel and look very similar in five years," said Erik Rutter, one of the founders of the development firm Oak Row Equities, which has rights to develop several supertalls in Brickell. "In Miami, that's not the case. It's going to be radically different."

(VIDEO) A construction worker on one of the top floors of the Waldorf Astoria in downtown Miami finalizing the rebar reinforcement for a concrete column pour.



The Waldorf Astoria, seen in the background on the right, is at about 80 percent of its total height — it will top off at 1,049 feet by the end of this year.



Construction workers on one of the highest levels of the currently under construction Waldorf Astoria Residences in downtown Miami

And the skyline might not be close to being tapped out. Mr. Ramirez, the structural engineer, noted that when he began his career, the height limit for skyscrapers was 650 feet. “As time went along, developers wanted to push higher, and they lobbied to find areas of the city where you could go taller,” he said. “I’m sure that developers will try to push on that, too.”

Produced by Leo Dominguez

Daniela Gorny is an editor for Wirecutter who also contributes to The Times’s Real Estate section.