

TERRA ARCHITECTURE

REDEFINING THE MIAMI SKYLINE

By Jan Wilson

What does it take to be selected as the architect for the most prominent new building in the Southeast? The answer for Terra Architecture, the architects behind One Bayfront Plaza, is one word: "Teamwork".

"The culture that we try to emphasize at our firm is teamwork," says Ignacio Permy, President of Terra Architecture. "We have charettes in the early stages of the projects to brainstorm and we see the results of that collaboration in every project."

Now designing One Bayfront Plaza for famed Miami developer Tibor Hollo's Florida East Coast Realty, the two-and-a-half-year-old firm is becoming well known as the architect of choice for developers who are bringing some of the most exciting projects to the market.

"Our culture and everything we do is based on teamwork."

Ignacio Permy, President of Terra Architecture

AN EXPERIENCED TEAM

Terra's management team reflects knowledge of design and architecture as practiced in Florida as well as the rest of the country and abroad. Permy, its president, worked in New York as well as with Arquitectonica in Miami. Principal Jose Feito, FAIA, practiced architecture in Cuba and Spain before coming to Miami, and became a fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1987. Principal Michael Wilbur has over 16 years experience in both New York and Miami. "We are a young firm with lots of varied experience," says Wilbur. "We have created a strong, award-winning team that has clicked very well."

The firm specializes in Hospitality, Condominium, Retail, Mixed-Use, Office, Commercial, Industrial, Urban Planning, Facility Planning, and Institutional projects. "Our firm likes to work with developers to create designs that are a response to site conditions and programmatic requirements," says Wilbur. "We are not locked into a strict ideology and we understand that a building must be constructed under tight fiscal controls and time constraints."

AN ICONIC PROJECT

Terra Architecture came to Tibor Hollo's attention when he met Permy at a political function. "He asked me to come to his office and show him some of our work," says Permy. At the first meeting, Hollo was interested in getting the firm to work on the interior of his newest project, **One Bayfront Plaza**. A few weeks later, the Terra team presented him their design concepts, and the architects realized that the project was still in its early planning stages and that the opportunity to become design architect for the shell & core was still open. "He knew that while our expertise and dedication on small and mid-sized projects was unsurpassed, it was also our goal to work on large projects, and One Bayfront was clearly a project on a grand



ABOVE: Terra Architecture Principals: (SEATED) President, Ignacio Permy (STANDING) Principals, Jose Feito and Michael Wilbur.; BELOW: Tropicana; OPPOSITE PAGE: One Bayfront Plaza



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TERRA ARCHITECTURE



scale," says Feito. "All along, he kept asking us what we would feel comfortable doing and we told him this would be an ideal fit for our capabilities."

"Nearly the entire staff at Terra Architecture worked on One Bayfront Plaza from concept to design development to construction drawings in order to create this quintessential global landmark in Miami."

***Philip Dahan, Senior Vice President,
Florida East Coast Realty***

After several meetings the Terra principals won the job. "He saw that we were up to the challenge of this signature project," says Permuy. One Bayfront Plaza, which will be applying for LEED Silver certification, is located at the center of Miami's downtown commercial core and will encompass approximately four million square feet. The project will include more than two million square feet of Class A office space in the main tower, and an 850-room hotel in a second tower. Additionally there will be 112,000 SF of retail space and a parking garage with 2,500 spaces in the pedestal base that takes in two full city blocks.

Due to its size, the project had to receive a Major Use Special Permit (MUSP). Terra's submission was impressive. "The commission told us it was the best MUSP submission they had ever seen in the history of the City," says Feito. "Of all the 33 city departments that reviewed it, there were naturally a few minor comments, which were instantly resolved, and it moved forward with overwhelming support throughout the entire process. This is a very rare occurrence."

The building will feature a strong nautical theme to reflect the City's history and culture. "We came up with the idea of sails; sailing is a major form of transportation in a place like Miami," says Wilbur. "So we designed concave and convex sail shapes into the exterior. On the podium we have a large parking structure and the bottom of the building is a retail arcade, echoing the water line of a boat." This unique curved façade also helps deflect the wind and therefore reduces structural drag and the cost/weight ratio, making it more economical for the developer. He adds that the firm is working on conceptual designs in the interior to see how much further the sailing analogy will be taken.

Some of the green design features that will help the building become LEED certified include electrical outlets for cars in the parking lot, and rainwater holding tanks for irrigating landscaping.

THE NEW HEART OF ST. PETERSBURG

Terra is designing **Tropicana Center**, located at the crossroads of St. Petersburg's commercial and retail core. "This will provide a new, mixed-use landmark for the city," says Wilbur. Overlooking Tampa Bay, the waterfront promenades and the historic yacht basin, the project features a signature tower conceived as a modern lighthouse, complete with a curved illuminated crown. At night, the tower will shimmer and add a major new visible element to the St. Petersburg skyline. The Tropicana Center is comprised



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): Old Spanish Village model; Palermo Park; Galiano

of 1.3 million square feet of development, including approximately 585 residential condominiums located in two separate towers, a 150-room hotel, 109,000 square feet of premier retail space and a parking garage. Pre-leasing activity scheduled to begin in 2009 with occupancy scheduled for 2013.

The project will create the central anchor for retail development for the downtown area—linking an existing retail corridor on Central Avenue to the yacht basin and downtown core. “This offers an unparalleled redevelopment opportunity while maintaining and enhancing street life in St. Petersburg,” says Permuy.

OLD SPANISH VILLAGE

Old Spanish Village is located in the heart of historic Coral Gables. Detailed with cobblestone lanes and plazas, as well as vine-clad pergolas and fountains, this mixed use project is being developed by Ralph Sanchez and the Mas family who together formed Ponce Circle Developers. Terra Architecture is the architect-of-record for the 38 townhomes that are located across two city blocks. With tall windows and open balconies looking over quiet courtyards these Spanish-styled townhomes are well integrated in the language of the city’s historic character.

OTHER PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE

Terra has also designed a number of other signature projects around Florida and beyond:

- **Sea Breeze**, a resort condominium/hotel featuring 350 rooms, is located in Hollywood Beach, FL and is scheduled to open in 2009.
- **Gibraltar Office Building**, a low-rise office building the planning stage in Coral Gables, FL, and will be completed by 2012.
- **Lake Harbor**, an active adult community of 400 units, is in design and is scheduled for occupancy in 2012. The project is located in Silver Spring, MD.

A RISING FUTURE

The architects at Terra note that Miami has long set the pace for condominium and hospitality development and is now poised to do so again in the office sector.

“One Bayfront Plaza, because of its unique scale, will drive development of other office projects,” says Permuy. As for Terra itself, Feito says that they are looking for challenging projects. “We want projects that are beautiful, functional, energy saving—everything a modern building should have,” he says. The firm will continue to diversify with a mix of public and private work, and international expansion. “Developers need architects to help them recognize their vision,” says Wilbur, “as our name implies, we can help them do that from the ground up.” ■

“I am very proud to have selected Ignacio and his team to work on our project. Besides being great architects, the quality of the people at Terra is incredible. They listen to us and collaborate well with our team.”

Ralph Sanchez, President, Ponce Circle Developers LLC

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