

La Perla Ocean Residence



Construction Updates at La Perla

1. Patience Pays: With dust, trucks and restricted areas all around lately, you probably feel like you're living in the middle of a construction zone instead of one of the shining jewels of Sunny Isles. Fear not. According to the City and Calvin, Giordano & Associates, Inc. (the Project Management company working on the pier), we are right on schedule for a mid-April completion of the work on the beach.

2. Good news: When the construction team is finished installing the columns on the beach, the fence will be moved further south allowing La Perla residents to reclaim at least half of the beach area.

The City has also given us permission to use the empty lot north of Sandspoint (starting April 1st). And the Newport has agreed to provide umbrellas to our residents free of charge for the time being.



Courtesy of the City : Our current ocean view!!!!

3. In case you've been worried...
To ensure that the pile driving is

not affecting the structural soundness of the building, seismic testing reports will be viewed by our structural engineer, Dean Carlson (Thanks again Dean). And we've issued a pool leak test that will be completed this week.

4. Painting a building does not happen over night:

Capital Paint started pressure cleaning on March 21st. They will then spend between 20-40 days on every side of the building. Once the north side is completed, they will move to the east (but not until after the Easter and Passover). The entire process should take about four months, give or take. When they are painting your side of the building, we ask if you would take in all of your belongings from your balcony to avoid problems. However, you *may* leave out those items that could use a little paint. Property Management is not liable for lost or damaged outdoor items if they are left outside while the contractors are working around your unit.

5. The pool area will be closed for about a month : (There is just no way around this unfortunate fact. When they are paint-

ing the east side (likely during May), we will have to close off the entire pool area to accommodate the process. We understand this is upsetting and Capital Paint has promised to work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

6. Your chance to get your leaky windows and sliders fixed for FREE!

Do not miss out on this once-every-seven years offer! Capital Paint will be caulking all sliding doors and windows so please notify us right away if you have water intrusion in your unit. Just email the manager at swalshe@akam.com

7. Sincere and heartfelt thanks to Board Secretary Ron Isriel.

Everyone who serves on the Board volunteers their time and knowledge for the good of all La Perla residents without compensation of any kind. Each Board member deserves our thanks and gratitude, but in this issue of our newsletter we'd especially like to give a special shout out to Ron Isriel. Ron's experience as an attorney with expertise in building defects has greatly served the community on this paint project. For more than a year now, he has been analyzing proposals, spec reviews and contracts, and has been advising the Association on all fronts. Be sure to say thanks when you see him around!

Special Points of Interest:

The Association is selling Valet Parking Spaces, please contact the office for more information

- Advertisement Rates in the Newsletter are :
- ◆ \$75 for 1/4 page
- ◆ \$125 for 1/2 page
- ◆ \$175 for 3/4 page
- ◆ \$200 for full page
- There will be a \$10.00 charge on all advertisements on our classifieds section (web-page) with a minimum 3 month advertisement.

Parking rentals have increased from \$150 a month to \$180 in March 2012.

Interested in Pest Control?- Contact the office!

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Realtor's Corner: La Perla Market Stats

La Perla is one of the best beachfront buildings in SE Florida to call home, even when just a second home. Accurately described as "affordable luxury", this newer building offers ocean views and style at a modest price tag, and unbelievably low maintenance fee. When working with Buyers I mention three reasons, why I consider La Perla the most desirable building to consider:

1. Superb product at superb location;
2. Sensible maintenance fees, condo rules and policies;
3. Highly efficient Management and Condo Board.

Trend: La Perla continues to be in demand; the prices continue to climb.

Interesting Real Estate Facts/ Trends:

Top 10 turnaround towns- Miami and Ft. Lauderdale, made the list: GO FLORIDA!!!

CNNMoney finally caught up on the news we have been confirming for the last 8 months. As they wrote in the latest market report : "Florida's cities were some of the hardest hit by the housing bust, but now they are leading the charge back. Of Realtor.com's top 10 turnaround towns, eight are in the Sunshine State. "Not only that Florida has been making a remarkable and quick come-back, but certain segments of the market even show shortage of inventory.

Sunny Isles for example, shows a shortage in newer oceanfront condos that are priced below \$800,000, which creates a strong seller's market. The sellers are firm on their prices, yet, the appraised values for this specific area and product are at \$550,000 median. As financing continues to be very restrictive for condominiums, with tight loan limits, these properties are only available to cash buyers.

Now, that CNNMoney has caught up with the REAL reality, hopefully the banks will follow suit.

Top 20 Most Romantic Cities in the U.S: Florida nabbed five spots – more than any other state.

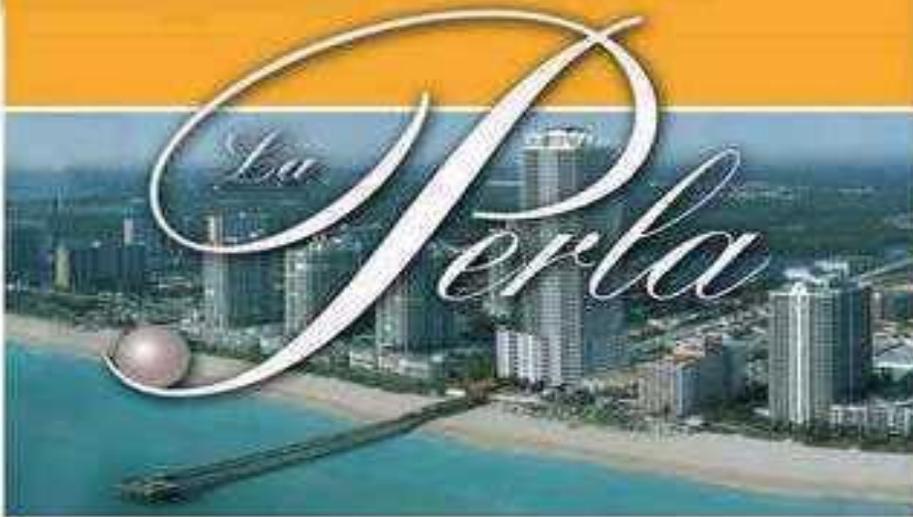
Amazon listed the U.S.'s top 20 romantic cities, and Florida has more than any other state. Miami, came in number 7!

To get the most up-to date stats, speak with a real estate professional, who really knows the market. Real estate is a serious business, get a PRO!

Kate Smith, Realtor®, ABR, CRS, E-Pro, TRC, LHM, CDPE, SFR

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Updates

SO, HOW ARE WE PAYING FOR THE PAINTING CONTRACT?

Glad you asked! Our goal, as always, is to keep members costs down while maintaining high standards of maintenance and aesthetics. Due to smart planning and creating some new revenue sources (including the sale of parking and storage spaces), our Association has a healthy Operating account and has over \$100,000 in reserves set aside for such updates. We've also budgeted for 3,000 square feet of stucco repairs. In the off chance we need more stucco repairs than anticipated, we have a few options: However one of these options is a Special Assessment.

ONE OF LA PERLA'S BIGGEST EXPENSES:

No it is not property management, the new sign out front or our holiday decorations. It's actually Wind/Property insurance— which just speculatively increased by \$70,000 this year. QBE, our windstorm insurance carrier, reported that the increase is due to a very busy

2011 hurricane season (?). Did I miss something last year? (US busiest season in 3 years) Unfortunately, condos do not have many options for insurance and QBE is the primary provider for a building like La Perla. Although we've already received our renewal through QBE, we've been discussing this with our agent Brown & Brown to help us reduce the renewal amount. In the meantime, one of our Board members Mrs. Focaro has been working overtime and we hope for an 11th hour alternative. Stay tuned... and let it be noted that we are working day and night to save you money.

POOL AREA

The Board have not forgotten about their goal to **extend the patio** and **replace/relocate the gas heaters** around the pool. We apologize for the delay, but the process is taking longer than expected. As soon as we get the drawings back from our engineer we will present to the City and move things along as quickly as possible.

TOWELS: Help us help you save money.

Question of the day: How much do you think towel service for the average unit costs our Association? Drum roll please.... In the last 18 months: approximately \$90 per unit!!!. Towels have been stolen, never returned, lost and destroyed. Plus, the cost of cleaning them adds up. So we ask if you would please be mindful about returning your towels (and that of your guests) on the same day you use them. On behalf of all residents, *thank you!* *Meanwhile; The Board has approved to turn a 7th floor storage room in the garage into a Towel laundry room.* The project is due to begin in early April and be completed by May. We will begin to see a return on this investment within 3 or 4 years.

OUR APOLOGIES! Due to a major leak, we were forced to shut the water off on March 6 and 7 without any notice at all. We had no choice and could not have otherwise fixed the leak. It was a rare emergency repair and we will do whatever is possible to prevent such inconveniences in the future. You have our sincere apologies; especially those enjoying a nice hot shower at the time!!!!



THE BUZZ



Hello La Perla residents

It's been a little over 3 months since I was introduced to La Perla and I am sincerely grateful for the warm welcome everyone has given me. It has truly been a pleasure to come in to work and serve all of you. Your kind words and acts of appreciation have made me smile. Thank you.

Starting March 1st, the Association now charge residents \$25 for opening residential units with our Emergency Key

I have just been assigned a section in this newsletter that is intended to be upbeat and lighthearted. With that being said *I want to hear from you...*

If you have any news, questions, thoughts, opinions, complaints, feedback, photos of your dog, stories, compliments, jokes (good ones) or any other noteworthy

items that you would like to see printed in the newsletter, send them to me! I would be happy to review your submissions and consider them for future newsletters. Please e-mail your submission to aurena@akam.com

NEXT BOARD MEETING:

04/10/12 AT 6PM IN THE PARTY ROOM

Ask Ana...

Q: The filter for my air conditioning unit is getting kind of nasty. In fact, I don't think I've ever replaced it. Heaven knows what's growing in there. Where can I purchase a replacement filter, I can't find my filter size anywhere?

A: You're in luck, because finding a replacement A/C filter couldn't be easier! You can come down to the management office with the size information and we can provide you with a filter for \$8. If you will like us to do the installation it will cost \$10. The most important maintenance task that will ensure the efficiency of your air conditioner is to routinely replace or clean its filters. Clogged, dirty filters block normal air flow and reduce a system's efficiency significantly



Points to Ponder...

"Life is not so short but that there is always time for courtesy."
~ *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Clearly, exhibiting courtesy and consideration for others is the most desirable trait of residents in a condominium. We are so busy with our own lives that it becomes easy to forget that we live

in a community with many neighbors in close proximity. Living in close quarters requires extra sensitivity and consideration. Courtesy can be turning down the volume on your car stereo as you pull to the property, maintaining a reasonable speed limit within the

development, returning the beach towel your guest used, picking up after yourself in common areas or holding the door open for someone behind you. It can be as simple as saying "Good morning!" Ultimately, it is placing yourself in the shoes of your neighbor and doing what you would want them to do for you. Isn't that the golden rule of life? Let us take a moment now and again to remember our neighbors and reflect upon how we can make La Perla the most positive place on the planet. If we each do this, we cannot fail to cultivate the most wonderful place to live.

Home Owners :We are constantly asked about renting units, if you'd like to advertise on our website, please contact the office



WHAT IF... EVERY RESIDENT WAS MORE MINDFUL OF WATER USE?

Recently, we've noticed a high jump in our water/sewer costs. In 2010, The Association's annual cost was \$157,142. In 2011, the Association spent \$173,657. That is a \$16,425 increase when the price of water has not increased in years! The Association does our best to control water use, including putting our irrigation system on a timer with a rain sensor. During the summer months, we reduce the amount of times per week the irrigation turns on. Our water treatment company has recently increased the cycles to reduce bleed and feeds of water from our cooling towers; we hope this will save up to \$4,000 per year. And we are also working on recycling the water waste from 3 AC units back into our pool system (when we relocate the heaters). So, the question becomes, *what can the homeowner do to reduce water use?*

The sports lounge on the 11th floor now has Wi-Fi.

Remember, all owners pay the water bill so it is our collective responsibility. Here's what each of us can do to lower costs:

- Properly maintain your toilets and faucets (the biggest culprits of water waste). If they are old and dripping or

leaking, get them fixed. FACT: Leaky toilets account for 45 percent of all indoor water use in a typical residence. (A seri-

The Beach Service will resume April 1st at the plot north of Sandspoint until further notice

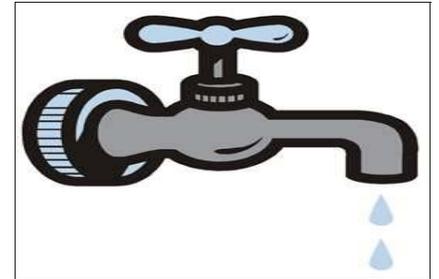
ous toilet leak left undetected and uncorrected can result in a huge loss of water).

Detecting the problem:

- If you hear the sound of water coming from your toilet long after flushing, you could have a leak. Prompt action may result in big savings for all of us.
- To discover a silent leak, put dye tablets or food coloring in the tank. Do not flush. If, after a half hour, colored water appears in the bowl, you have a leak.
- Another easy detection test is to note the water level in the tank after flushing by making a pencil mark at the water line. After a few minutes, check the level. If it has dropped, you have a leak.
- If the water stops running when the float ball rod is gently lifted, there may be a problem. Float balls occa-

sionally need to be adjusted or replaced. They can also be easily fixed with replacement parts from your local hardware store.

And when it comes to faucets, *a pinhole leak can waste as much as 70 gallons of water in one day* - 20% of a typical home's daily water use. The most common cause of a faucet leak is a worn out washer which is so simple to repair!

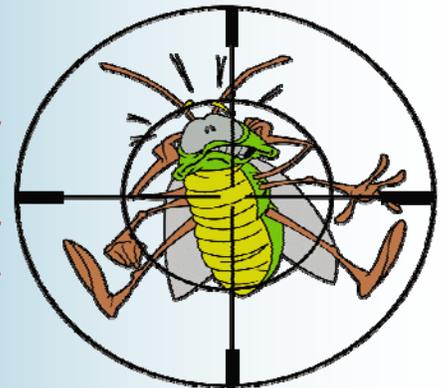


Wonderful water-saving link: <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/sc4.html>

The link calculates water waste on a single drip. For example, if you have a faucet that leaks 10 drips per minute. That works out at 3 liters per day or 347 gallons per year. Let us know if you think you have a leak and we'll find the most efficient and cost effective way to fix it. Just call the office at 786-364-4900 or email us at swalshe@akam.com with subject line "Possible Leak." We are committed to saving you money and aggravation.



La Perla and Power Exterminators, are offering pest control to residents for \$125 a year. Please contact the office to get this service



The paint project has begun on the Northside of the building. Currently they are pressure cleaning

Meet the Staff:



Ramiro Valdes has worked in our maintenance department at La Perla since 2008. He was born & raised in Cuba and has resided in the USA since 2007. He has been happily married for 14 years and has an 11 year old daughter. Thanks to his hard work & dedication he was chosen to be our employee of the month for February.

Q. What do you like best about working at La Perla?

A: The magnificent ocean view.

Q. What is your least favorite thing about La Perla

A: Emergency repairs with the sprinklers system , plumbing leaks and cleaning the trash chutes.

Q. What's the last Album you purchased?

A. My Beatles Heart by Willy Chirino

Q. What has been your favorite movie in the past year?

A: Fast Five

Q. What do you like to do on your spare time ?

A. Take my daughter to the park.

Q. Where is your favorite place to go on vacation?

A: Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Q. What is your favorite meal

A: It's a very popular Cuban dish. Yuca, roasted pig w/ rice & beans.

Q. If a Lion fought a Tiger: who would win?

A: The Tiger for his keen hunting abilities.

Q. What is your favorite TV Show

A: I enjoy watching HGTV shows like my 1st place & Holmes on Home

Q. What was the last book you read

A. The Secrets of Life

Q. You can invite four famous (dead/alive) people from history/or Celebrities to your dinner party. Who would you pick?

A: Michael Jackson, Madonna , Jennifer Lopez & Nicolas Cage.

Q. In 5 years time, what would you like to be doing?

Have my own business flipping homes

Thanks Ramiro!!!!

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- Assistance with real estate services;
- Entertainment and Travel Coordination;
- Party and Events Planning.



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ALFA Management Group will stand up for your interests and will:

- ⇒ Conduct the correspondence in your absence;
- ⇒ Care for your accounts releasing you from the issues;
- ⇒ Manage your bills with sensitivity and respect, relieving you of tedious management problems;
- ⇒ Contact all your creditors or vendors on your behalf;
- ⇒ Keep you informed on the daily /weekly /monthly basis.

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IS BUYING A CONDO RIGHT FOR YOU?

We all dream about owning a piece of America, but if that dream doesn't include mowing the lawn or spending the weekend on home repairs, consider buying a unit here at La Perla. A condo can be ideal for homebuyers who want independent living with manageable maintenance. Condos are also a good option for those who have limited time or desire to manage the maintenance associated with a single family home. La Perla includes attractive amenities such as beach services, a gym, covered parking space, 24-hour patrol, and a swimming pool. Plus, they have a superior Board in place dedicated to your satisfaction and security.

With fewer worries, many people believe they are better off buying a condo than owning their home. Still, owning a condo means owning an interest in the common areas such as the roofs, lobby, grounds and build-

ing exterior— all of which require money to maintain (i.e. maintenance fees that you can't fully control). So before you jump into the condo market with both feet, make sure that the condominium lifestyle is right for you.

Advantages of Condo Living:

- more affordable.
- conveniently located to shopping and entertainment.
- Amenities include 24-hour patrol, fitness facilities, party room
- Exterior maintenance is the responsibility of the condominium association.
- More opportunities to be social.

Disadvantages of Condo living:

- Limited parking

- Condo owners may pay for amenities that they may not use.
- Owners could be hit with unexpected Special Assessments.
- Noise levels sometimes higher because of close proximity to others
- You have to live by by the Condominium Declaration and Rules and Regulations.
- There is less privacy in a condo than in a detached home.
- Renters may not take care of a property the same way an owner would.

So before you jump into the condo market with both feet, make sure that the condominium lifestyle is right for you.

Alma P. Rivera

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