



Our Eiffel Tower

SkyRise Miami, the massive signature structure that will forever redefine the Magic City's skyline, is about as subtle as the city it aims to represent.

BY MARIO QUIRCE

When I first heard about plans for SkyRise Miami, I didn't pay any of it much mind. After all, another high-rise under construction in South Florida is not exactly newsworthy. But SkyRise Miami, I quickly learned, is something entirely different. Architecturally, it's

a phenomenon—a jaw-dropping, asymmetrical tower that will soar 1,000 feet above the indigo Biscayne Bay. The building's observation deck will feature stunning, 40-mile views west to the Everglades and east halfway to the Bahamas. And that's just the outside.

Within, SkyRise Miami, designed by the legendary local firm Arquitectonica and slated to open in 2019, aspires to offer a veritable mecca of entertainment. On its topmost floors, the tower will house an exclusive nightclub, a high-end restaurant, an events hall and much more. For thrill-seekers, there's Sky Plunge, an indoor bungee jump that plummets daredevils through the building's interior at nearly 55 mph. If that doesn't get your adrenaline kicking, SkyRise Drop might. A free-fall ride likened to parachuting from a plane, it plunges riders 650 whopping feet from the sky to the bay at a dizzying 95 mph, and will be the single longest dive-ride of its kind anywhere in the world (though not a selling point for this Miami-based writer, who needs Dramamine just to ride in the backseat of a car).

If developer Jeff Berkowitz has his way, SkyRise Miami will instantly become a 21st-century global icon (not to mention a much-needed beacon here, since the demise of the famous Coppertone sign just down the street). Sure, some detractors say it won't be profitable, or that it looks like a giant bobby pin in Miami's coif; but I'm willing to bet that plenty of Parisians pooh-poohed the Eiffel Tower in 1889, back when this sun-drenched city was still mostly but a dream in Miami founder Julia Tuttle's eye. **11**

AND... KICK! The upward swoop at the bottom of Skyrise Miami's facade will shelter a host of retail and amusement zones.