

Bruno Carnesella, Inc. Makes its Mark in Miami

Elena Kenny  
El Nuevo Herald

He may have been 14 years of age, but since then, Bruno Carnesella tried to modify parts for mechanical systems for boats which he drew during training rehearsals in naval design which he received in his native Genoa.

At that time, without the help of a computer, the first thing he learned, was to use a pencil to trace lines of the same thickness for his projects in study in accordance to the rules of naval design.

It was such training that eventually awakened his great interest in design as well as in perfecting his “tridimensional perception”, which years later became two effective tools in building a future in his adoptive land.

With a degree from the San Giorgio Naval Institute in Genoa, Italy, he worked for some time in the naval industry in his country and was later contracted as project manager for tourism projects in Latin America in the hotel and entertainment division for Braniff Airlines before migrating to the United States.

During the year 1971, Carnesella arrived in Miami, and, from the first moment, Coconut Grove captivated him with its “natural beauty,” and it became his new home.

After getting a job with an architectural firm, whose name he prefers to store in his memory chest, he obtained his Florida General Contractor’s license and dared to venture further. He founded his own company under the name of Bruno Carnesella, Inc. in 1974.

“I constructed Coconut Grove’s first *townhouses*,” said Carnesella, who presides over the company, but appears as an employee in his business cards.

According to the list of the most important projects, which includes a project in Marathon in 1972, the construction company was dedicated almost entirely to *townhomes* in Coconut Grove from 1974 until 1978, except for 1975 when the company developed a luxury home in Miami.

In those four years, he built the *townhouse* developments known as Gemini I, Gemini II, Gemini IV, Gemini V, Gemini VI. It was only in 1977 that he combined work on one of those projects with the construction of a luxury home, also in Coconut Grove.

In the following years, Carnesella left his mark in other parts of Miami-Dade County. In 1979, in addition to a luxury home and the Gemini VII *townhouse* complex, in Coconut Grove, Gemini in Brickell was born. A year later, he had Coconut Grove Shops in the Grove in his portfolio, followed by Gemini in Bayshore Views and Mediterranean Mansion in addition to Gemini Villas in Dadeland, Miami.

From 1986 to 1989, the firm was responsible for coordinating the World Trade Center in Miami. In 1988 it was also at the forefront of remodeling apartments or *townhomes* in Miami Beach, also in the presentation of a luxury hotel project in Genoa. In 1990, it presented another hotel project in the Turks and Caicos Islands and carried out a housing project in Costa Rica.

But in 1991, it concentrated again in Coconut Grove and added Royal Poinciana Villages and Townhouses to its list of projects, and Farmer’s Market was added in 1995, followed by the remodeling of the

Mayfair House hotel (1997); Florida Avenue Homes (1999); Don Quixote Restaurant and Let Me Tell You a Story (1999-2000); a luxury residence (2001); and the Pavoni, Fiore and Sole villas (2004).

A large part of his trajectory can be followed in his office at 3380 MacDonald St. On the walls of his personal office there are pictures of him along with celebrities, a view of Genoa, blueprints of many of his projects, many letters of recognition which he received in Coconut Grove or in Miami for his track as an entrepreneur in construction and the prize as Businessman of the Year which he received in 2003 from the Republican Party's Congressional Committee in Business Recognition.

The 2006 Best Loft Project in the United States prize stands out among all these distinctions, which was awarded by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHH) to Bruno Carnesella, Inc. This is how the Absolut Lofts in South Beach became one of the pillars of international industry. The work took place in 2005 at South Pointe, the new upcoming area in Miami Beach.

For this project selected by the NAHH, which is based in Washington, D.C., Carnesella joined forces with the firm Miami Lodge Realty (MLR) and the well-known architect Kobi Karp, who has made his mark in Loft designs in South Beach.

2005 was a very important year for Carnesella, because he was able to finish his project CocoStyle at 3250 Grand Avenue in Coconut Grove.

“When I started acquiring land in this zone years ago, many believed that I was crazy,” Carnesella told while signaling with his finger to several buildings which have been erected on both sides of the avenue in the last three decades, after rezonification.

It is just at that place that he believes he'll develop his CocoStyle II project at 3280 Grand Avenue a hotel comprised only of residential suites made from hypoallergenic materials, “the new lifestyle”. Another work in progress is a condominium in the City of (Illegible).

Carnesella credits his “tridimensional perception” in great part for the success he has had in 33 years in his business, where he presently employs eight persons whose incomes he prefers not mentioning. He does not deny his desire to innovate, although it earned him various reprimands from his naval design professor, which has been fundamental in order to succeed.

“I can visualize my projects, and clearly convey my ideas to the architects,” this businessman and father of five children assured.

Aside from construction, Carnesella devotes a good portion of his time to history. He is the president of the Christopher Columbus Discovery Foundation and headed the celebration of the 500 years discovery of America in Miami.

“It's my favorite pastime,” He said.