

## Meet the Broker Who Made Messi Magic in Miami: Why soccer's "Greatest of All Time" is driving fresh interest in luxury South Florida real estate, *The Real Deal*, Aug. 8, 2023



Lionel Messi mania has taken over Miami. But the arrival of the Argentine pro soccer sensation as the new captain of David Beckham's Inter Miami team is not only a coup for Major League Soccer, it's a win for the city itself. Just ask Gustavo Strallnikoff, the man who introduced Messi to his first Miami home.

It was years and years in the making," says Strallnikoff of Dezer Platinum Realty with The Strallnikoff Group (and a fellow Argentinian) who sold Messi a unit at the Porsche Design Tower in Sunny Isles Beach in 2019, the star's first South Florida property. "They were looking with lots of different people. Brokers had been showing them properties all over town. It was a slow search. He's a very educated buyer. He knows all the areas, all of the neighborhoods." But it was Strallnikoff who ultimately inked a \$5 million deal, handling both sides of the transaction, for a 4,400-square-foot unit in the 47th floor of the 60-story, luxury oceanfront tower at [18555 Collins Avenue](#). Developed by Gil Dezer, the branded condo project is known for its cutting-edge, robotic car elevator, which lifts your vehicle directly into your unit so that it can be displayed like a work of art.

"We did a tour of the building where they saw the whole process of how the car elevator works," he says. "But it came down to privacy and the security of dealing directly with the developer. You can live in this building without anyone laying eyes on you because you can take your car directly into your unit and because the condos have private swimming pools on the balconies. It's why so many celebrities have bought there."

In the years since, Messi has invested heavily in Miami — no wonder considering his two-and-half year contract with Inter is reportedly worth \$125 million to \$150 million. Strallnikoff repped Messi on the purchase of three \$1 million units on the 40th, 41st and 43rd floors of the nearby Trump Royale tower. Messi's family also paid \$7.3 million for the ninth-floor condo at Regalia, another oceanfront condo tower in Sunny Isles. Now, rumor has it that the GOAT and seven-time Ballon d'Or winner is shopping for a house, possibly in Palm Beach County and areas close to the stadium.

"Porsche could possibly be his beach house," says Strallnikoff. "That's how a lot of people who own homes in Miami use it, as a second or third home on the beach. The 'Messi effect' has driven a lot of interest in luxury real estate here."



With more than 20 years of experience in the Miami market, Strallnikoff should know. After all, he's the No. 1 producer at both the Armani Residences and Trump developments in Sunny Isles, with more than \$100 million in sales between the two. He's also a top broker

at the Baccarat Brickell with more than \$25 million in sales.

He says not only has Messi led to a surge of interest and sales at the Porsche Design Tower, but also at Dezer's latest car-branded ocean-front project, the Bentley Residences Miami in Sunny Isles. The project is upping the ante with a host of celebrity-friendly, ultra-private perks, including a resident-only restaurant by celebrity chef Todd English, a Macallan whisky bar, a private cinema and, of course, a car elevator.

"It has four-car garages," he says of the in-unit car displays in the 749 feet tall skyscraper, which is currently set to be the tallest ocean-front building in the US. "The pools are larger. Everything is designed by Bentley."

So far Strallnikoff has done over \$20 million in pre-sales in the building, which is currently under-construction.

"Everyone is talking about Messi," he says. "Where will Messi buy next? Where will Messi live? But what Messi did was to turn the spotlight on all of these exciting new developments in Miami. He showed how much Miami real estate has to offer."