

38-story, 497-unit tower beside Arsht Center opens in May

By JOHN CHARLES ROBBINS

Hungry patrons of the theater won't have far to go to make it a full evening of food and fanfare this spring in Miami.

The Melo Group plans a May opening for its mixed-use residential project, Melody Tower, at 245 NE 14th St., right next door to the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts.

Melody is a residential tower anchored by ground floor retail and dining that will be compatible with the arts center.

Along with providing 497 high-end rental apartments, Melody will have about 8,500 square feet of ground floor commercial area, including some outdoor dining in a landscaped plaza.

The developer announced this week that the project has topped off construction at 38 stories and will open in about five months.

The planned dining and retail at Melody are vital to helping bring new life to a long-dormant section of the city, the company said.

Today, patrons of the arts center typically head for their cars and then home. There's nothing in the neighborhood to keep them there.

Melody will help meet that need.

"That's what we see, create a plaza and restaurant so after shows people can enjoy a dinner or refreshments – they do not have to leave, and can stay a bit longer," said Martin Melo,



Melody Tower soars high above the two Arsht Center buildings. The rental building will offer dining, retail.

a principal with Melo Group,

Melo Group has signed two restaurant leases with Brazil's Parmegiana Factory and New York Miami Pizza, which will occupy Melody's ground-floor retail space across the street from the performing arts center.

With plans to open in the second quarter of 2016, Melody's restaurants will offer outdoor plaza seating designed to enhance the area's walkability and provide new dining options for performing arts center patrons before and after a show.

Melo Group says the opening of Melody Tower will infuse life into an area of the urban core that has been residentially underserved for years.

The opening comes as demand for affordable rental apartments in Miami is at an all-time high, being fueled by young professionals and millennials in search of an urban lifestyle where they can live, work and play.

"With downtown Miami's Arts & Entertainment District building momentum as a world-class cultural epicenter in the

Southeast, one thing is still lacking – a luxury residential community that caters to young professionals who work in the area," said Carlos Melo, principal of the Melo Group.

"Melody will help fill a much-needed void by providing high-quality rental units in a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood within walking distance to arts and culture, entertainment, retail, restaurants and public transportation options," he added.

Rental rates at Melody Tower are to start at about \$1,600 for

a one-bedroom apartment, \$1,850 for a two-bedroom unit and \$2,300 for a three-bedroom unit.

Floor plans will measure from about 750 to 1,300 square feet. Pre-leasing is to begin in the first quarter of 2016.

Melody will be ready for occupancy in May, the company said.

The Melo Group is also touting Melody as a transit-oriented development. Public transit options within walking distance include the Miami-Dade Omni Metromover Station less than two blocks away. The Miami Trolley and Metrorail system are also close by.

Approximately 2,900 square feet of retail/restaurant space remains available for lease at Melody.

Melody Tower is one of the several projects Melo Group has planned for the growing arts and entertainment district. Aria on the Bay, the company's newest 648-unit condominium project, is rising about five blocks east of Melody along Biscayne Bay.

Melo also owns several parcels of land in the area surrounding the Miami-Dade Schoolboard Metromover Station, with plans to develop a mix of transit-oriented market-rate rental projects as well as luxury condominiums.

In total, Melo plans about 3,000 residential condo and rental units throughout the downtown area over the next few years.