

Exclusive: First-of-its-kind Ritz-Carlton tower hits key construction milestone in The Woodlands

By **Marissa Luck**, Staff Writer
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An Oct. 2, 2025 aerial image showing the Ritz-Carlton Residences, The Woodlands, an 111-unit luxury condo tower under construction near Lake Woodlands north of Houston. Courtesy of Howard Hughes Communities'

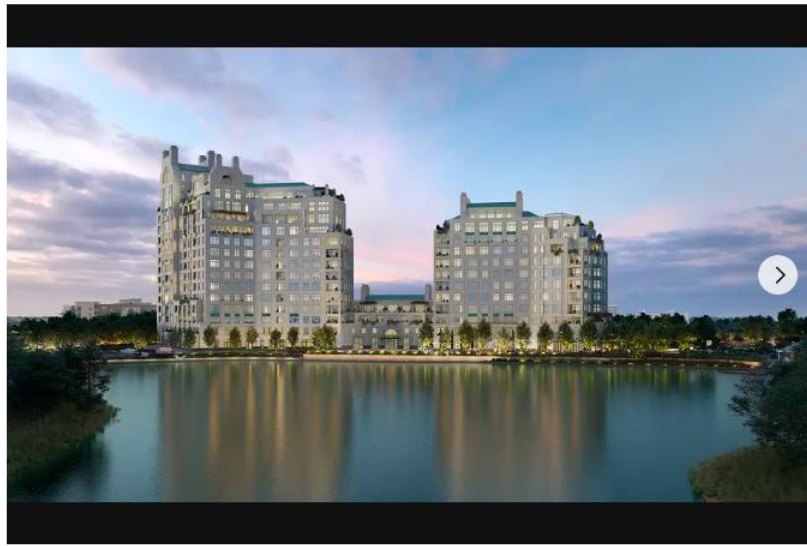
Perched above the shores of Lake Woodlands, a new luxury high-rise is quietly ushering in a new chapter in The Woodlands' real estate market.

The Ritz-Carlton Residences, The Woodlands hit a key construction milestone recently when it reached its highest level at 15 stories. Although far from an Inner Loop skyscraper, the tower still soars over its surroundings.

As the first luxury condominium project in the township, the Ritz-Carlton Residences is a case study in whether homebuyers will pay a premium for high-rise luxury living beyond Houston's urban core.

So far, buyers have paid from about \$3 million to \$18 million to secure a Ritz-Carlton Woodlands address. That's expensive even for The Woodlands, where median prices were \$690,000 in August, nearly double the metro median of \$355,000, according to the Houston Association of Realtors.

Despite those costs, Howard Hughes hasn't had trouble selling. Even though the company raised prices several times, about 70% of the 111-unit project sold by the time the developer broke ground a year ago. Eventually, Howard Hughes pulled most units off the market, with plans to re-release units around when the project opens in 2027.



A rendering of the future Ritz-Carlton Residences, The Woodlands, which is planned on the shores of Lake Woodlands. The project would have a 15-story tower connected to an 11-story tower with a parking garage in the back. RAMSA (Robert A.M. Stern Architects) designed the project.
Howard Hughes

Once prospective buyers can see the quality of the architecture and amenities in person, CEO David O'Reilly thinks his company can get even higher pricing.

O'Reilly was so convinced about the quality of the product that he decided to buy a unit in the project himself.

With one adult child in college and another a senior in high school, O'Reilly will soon be among the cohort of individuals the project likely appeals to most: well-heeled empty nesters who already live in the Houston area and want to establish a simplified, "lock and leave" lifestyle.



Howard Hughes CEO David O'Reilly is among the group of homebuyers moving from elsewhere in The Woodlands into the new Ritz-Carlton Residences condominium tower near Lake Woodlands. O'Reilly is seen at the company's headquarters, Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2024, in The Woodlands.
Jason Fochtman/Staff photographer

More than half the buyers are from Houston area or The Woodlands, while the rest are from elsewhere in Texas or out of state, he said.

The appeal of living in a safe master-planned community with access to restaurants, amenities, trails and natural beauty is a major draw for buyers, he said.

But so is the appeal of the Ritz-Carlton brand itself. Residents will get white-glove treatment from Ritz Carlton staff managing the property. It's the first Ritz-Carlton-branded condominium tower in the Houston region and the first in Texas that doesn't include a hotel, Howard Hughes officials previously have said.

Recently, another developer, Houston-based Deiso Moss, announced a separate Ritz-Carlton-branded project in the Uptown/Galleria area, although that 44-story project combines condominiums with hotel rooms, restaurants and lounges.

Yet O'Reilly isn't concerned about competition. Living among the glossy skyscrapers of Post Oak promises a far different lifestyle than living among the forested suburban streets of The Woodlands.

In either case, the Ritz-Carlton's residential brand is expanding across the Houston metro at a time when sales of luxury condos have climbed nearly 23% so far this year compared to 2024, according to Houston Association of Realtors. Condos priced above \$1 million are also sitting on the market 44 days on average compared to 51 days last year.



Howard Hughes Houston Region President Jim Carman refers to a scale architectural model Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2024, as he points out various features of the new The Ritz-Carlton Residences, The Woodlands development in The Woodlands.
Kirk Sides/Staff photographer

Building on this momentum, sales so far for Ritz-Carlton Residences The Woodlands have been eye-opening.

"I think that we've seen so much demand for this building that we could do another and, you know, we may see deeper pockets of demand at different price points," O'Reilly said.

Several residents have told O'Reilly that they'd love to live in a project like the Ritz-Carlton — but at a more moderate price point.

"There may be a product that we can build that isn't a (Robert Stern) design, but still very luxurious with maybe more efficient unit sizes," he said. "We evaluate that every single day."

For now, the Ritz is showing that The Woodlands' luxury market, long defined by large, leafy estates, may be ready to embrace a new, higher level of living.