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BEACH PATROL



PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY JAMES
MAKEUP BY MEREDITH DUPREE

KATIE BARON *Ensures Your Boating Experience Is Smooth Sailing*

Who says the best two days in a boat owner's life are the day he buys it and the day he sells it? Not Katie Baron, the 27-year-old director of sales at Aqua Marine Partners. She oversees the Vertical Yacht Club Thunder Alley project, a state-of-the-art dry-storage marina and yacht club in Aventura that will remove every nautical nuisance that could possibly take the wind out of your sails. "We're taking all the hassles out of boating, so it's just a wonderful, enjoyable experience for you and your family," says the Miami Beach native, who studied neuropsychology at Indiana University before moving home to capitalize on the booming real-estate market. She was a top sales producer at Bimini Bay Resort and Casino before she felt the condo market turn and sought out a still-hot real-estate niche—what she calls "rack-ominiums." Since launching sales at Vertical Yacht Club Thunder Alley last February, nearly half of the 211 units—which house 33- to 43-foot boats and start at \$130,000—have sold.

Once the facility opens in December 2008, buyers will store their boats in a hurricane-resistant structure that uses overhead bridge cranes to retrieve them, thus eliminating damage often caused by forklifts, and will have access to an on-site maintenance department. They will also become members of the club itself, which features a business center, café, living-room area, massage room, Jacuzzi and more.

"It's a one-stop shop, literally," explains Baron, whose firm will begin selling space at a second vertical-yacht-club facility in Fort Lauderdale next year for vessels up to 85 feet. "Clients can call in the morning, speak to the concierge and arrange for their boat to be fueled up and in the water, stocked with ice, beer and sandwiches and whatever else they need for the afternoon. They'll leave their car with the valet, walk through the facility, get on the boat, have a lovely day on the water and never worry about a thing." —S.B.

JUST THE FACTS

Favorite way to spend a Friday night: "Miss Yip Chinese Cafe and a movie."

Hottest new Miami real-estate trend: "Dock-ominiums."

Dream boat: "Formula 400 SS."

Pets: "Julian, a 17-year-old tabby cat."

Signature scent: "Mimosa by Calypso."

Now playing on your iPod: "Earth, Wind & Fire, Notorious B.I.G., Gym Class Heroes, Gwen Stefani."

You never leave home without your: "BlackBerry Curve."

Next city you would love to visit: "Napa, California."

Frequent labels in your closet: "Theory and Missoni."

Spurge food: "Taco Bell tacos."

Astrological sign: "Gemini. It fits me, because I totally have two personalities."

You have never been but are dying to visit: "Asia."

Last book you read: "Deception Point by Dan Brown."

Best place to boat: "The Amafi Coast."

Greatest inspiration: "My parents."