



NO URBAN MYTH

City dwellers are finding the best of both worlds with life in the North Quarter

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Photography by Manuela Davies

The secret is out. The residents of the North Quarter are enjoying life in a perfectly formed urban bubble of bliss. Especially since many of them live in luxury properties where they can start their day off with a complimentary cup of coffee in the lobby, followed by free LYMMO service downtown. When it's time to play, the five-block area located along Orange Avenue, north of Colonial Drive, is lined with places to meet friends for happy hour cocktails at Citrus, farm-to-table burgers at the North Quarter Tavern, and chopstick-worthy trays filled with fresh sushi at Shin Japanese Cuisine.

Built to suit a variety of renters and condo owners from seasoned executives to singles, the North Quarter is our city's newest urban neighborhood. Known as the "upside of downtown," this mighty mecca is having no problem holding its own.

It wasn't until a few years ago that developers and business owners started setting their sights on the North Quarter and it didn't take long for the community to grow



A small downtown enclave, the pedestrian-friendly North Quarter has its own hip vibe.

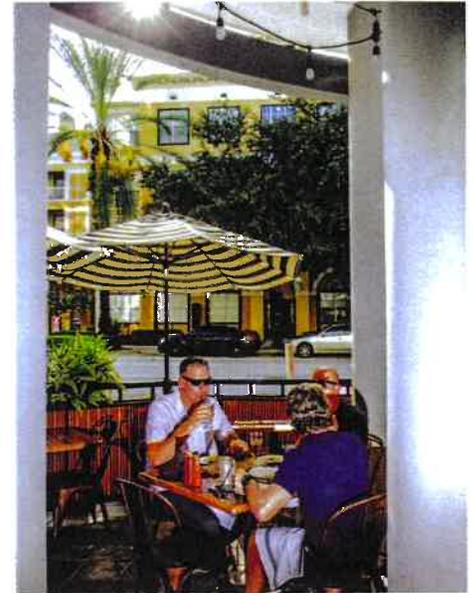
right along with it. According to John Russell, director of business development and Realtor at Mainframe Real Estate, the development isn't slowing down. With luxury rental residence options like the posh Nora, named for its position on North Orange, and the elegant Steelhouse with its penthouse-worthy installations, it seems this little neighborhood is at the top



The swanky rooftop pool at The Sevens, the newest apartment complex to open in the North Quarter.



Tree-lined Orange Avenue is a favorite path for urban dwellers and their poodles.



Alfresco dining draws residents and nearby business folks for lunch, cocktails and dinner.

of its game when it comes to keeping its residents happy.

One of the newest additions to the budding neighborhood is The Sevens. With a unit count of 333 and monthly rent rates starting at \$1,334, the nine floors stack up neatly into a sleek complex silhouetted against the downtown skyline.

From an architectural standpoint, every angle boasts clean lines complemented with soothing shades of deep browns and creams, while floor-to-ceiling windows offer up grand views of the city. But it's not just the millennials looking for close access to downtown who are calling the North Quarter home.

"We have residents that work at top positions downtown as well as a lot of law students," says Jeancarlo Alvarez, lead concierge with Kent Services at The Sevens. "The law students love it because of the location. They don't need a car, they can just go out at 6 a.m. and grab the free bus. Some of the people that built this building loved it so much they ended up living here too."



Grabbing a craft beer at the North Quarter Tavern, a friendly gathering spot any day of the week.

It's easy to see that Alvarez knows his residents, evident from spending some time with them from his perch at the front desk. "They have the best of both worlds," Alvarez says. "They have access to the lively downtown scene, the more private bars and restaurants near Lake Ivanhoe or the Orlando Urban Trail." That is, if they decide to leave the amenities found just outside their front door.

On the premises, residents at The Sevens can take advantage of the pool, sky lounge, bar, fitness center, dog park and two gardens including the Zen garden with a living

succulent wall, hanging lights and lounge chairs. But no matter which location North Quarter residents call home in this urban community, it's all about keeping it Zen.

With all of that action, it turns out one of their favorite parts about living here, according to the residents, is the silence.

"When you are in your apartment and the train is right next to you there is no noise because of the fiber optics in the walls," says Carlos Rivera, a resident of The Sevens.

And he's right. The surprisingly calming vibe is not only present in the residences



The North Quarter is anchored on its south end by the Steelhouse (left) and the brand-new The Sevens (right) luxury apartment complexes.

but also along the tree-lined street where people can be found walking their dogs on their lunch break, stretching it out at The Pilates Loft or getting a blowout at Dolce Vita Salon.

But with all the fun ways to play and be pampered, it's a well-made cup of coffee that is keeping these residents at peace. "It doesn't hurt that we never have to worry about making coffee because it's here in the lobby, and in Puerto Rico, we love our coffee," says Rivera, who came here from the Caribbean island.

For the nine-to-fivers who don't grab a cup of Joe at home, they make the easy walk to Pearson's Café. For the past six months, the husband-and-wife-team of Dan Shier and Kim Pearson have been taking pride in getting their neighborhood energized with breakfast and lunch options created by Pearson, an executive chef with an impressive resume and a Ritz-Carlton background. And while their business is still in its first year, the growth in the area promises to keep business in the black.

What's also in the black for these entrepreneurs is their locally roasted coffee from Downtown Credo and Chef Bob's Roasts, proving you can't go wrong with quality ingredients. Next on the agenda: getting their beer and wine license to serve up reasonably priced drinks to the after-



Condominium owners at Park North at Cheny Place enjoy cozy landscaped courtyard areas with fountains and two swimming pools, plus a billiards room and a fitness center.

work crowd. But that's not the only expansion planned for the North Quarter.

According to Russell, even more retail and restaurants are coming to town. Currently on the agenda for fall openings are: Credo Coffee shop; The Pharmacy, an

organic grocery store; and The Pop Parlour, selling an assortment of all-natural frozen pops. From a plethora of places to take in the downtown scene to a plentiful amount of spots to relax, this is one blissful bubble that we don't see bursting any time soon. ●