

MODERN LUXURY

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Clockwise from top left: Boasting 22-foot ceilings and a sleek reeded-glass facade, the 6,000-square-foot lobby of Arabella in River Oaks is certainly luxe; Jeffrey Brown; the elevated pool deck at Marlowe; Arabella's view is one of its many amenities; John Cadenhead; Arabella contains 34 floors, 99 residences, 14 penthouses and 75 unique floor plans.

HIGH PROFILE

Powers Brown Architecture's Jeffrey Brown and John Cadenhead make their mark on the Houston skyline with the Arabella and Marlowe luxury condo towers.

By Tate Gunnerson

"Yesterday and tomorrow cross and mix on the skyline," three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and poet Carl Sandburg famously said. Indeed, the ever-evolving Houston skyline's future is coming into focus with the addition of Marlowe and Arabella residential towers, both of which were designed by Jeffrey Brown, FAIA, and John Cadenhead, AIA, of Powers Brown Architecture (powersbrown.com). While the two have overseen hundreds of projects during their 16-year collaboration, 34-story Arabella is Powers Brown Architecture's tallest venture to date. In fact, none of their past projects have been higher than six stories. "We've done a number of firsts, so we weren't intimidated," Brown says. "Our goal was to do the most inventive building possible while meeting the market demands." Inventive is an understatement. Inspired by an engine camshaft and composed of a pattern of glass cubes, terraces and niches, Arabella's form is far more dynamic than the standard ribbon of windows found on most skyscrapers. A resident can easily pinpoint his unit from the ground, Brown points out, just as they could do with a single-family dwelling on a traditional city street. Although the building is about 502,400 square feet, "we would argue over inches," says Cadenhead, the firm's design director. "Managing the complexity was tricky but also a lot of fun." The units sold so quickly that during construction, Randall Davis Company + DC Partners added two floors to include four additional penthouses. All have luxe finishes, and each penthouse has its own private swimming pool—a first for Houston. More traditional in form, 20-story Marlowe boasts a buzzy lobby with luxe finishes and a rhythm of intimate and vaulted spaces. A nod to the House of Blues directly across the street, its lower facade is clad with vertical bands of black aluminum with an exterior insulation finish system to give the appearance of piano keys, an edgy look that suits the urban locale. Energized by the positive buzz around Arabella and Marlowe, Brown, Cadenhead and Powers Brown Architecture have several other innovative high-rises on the horizon. "We're really keen on architecture not becoming reduced to a business," Brown says. "We don't want to lose sight of the poetry." *Arabella units from \$1 million, arabellahouston.com; Marlowe units from \$565,000, meetmarlowe.com*

ARABELLA LOBBY AND EXTERIOR PHOTOS BY DIOR BALDINGER FAIA; JEFFREY BROWN AND JOHN CADENHEAD PORTRAITS BY NATHAN LINDSTROM PHOTOGRAPHY; MARLOWE POOL AND ARABELLA VIEW PHOTOS BY PARR JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY