THE ISLAND

A LETTER TO OWNERS

Understanding the Palm Beach Market — September 2026

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If you own a home on the Island of Palm Beach, you hold one of the most coveted residential assets in America — and it is likely worth more today than at nearly any point in its history. In seven years your island has repriced more dramatically than in the previous two decades combined: the median sold price per square foot has climbed from $1,225 in 2019 to roughly $3,165 today — a gain of about 158 percent — and the median sale now stands at $12.5 million, among the highest figures in the island's modern record. In 2019, roughly one sale in six closed above $10 million; over the past eighteen months, nearly two in three did, and close to one in four closed above $20 million. Few major American markets can point to a comparable run.

And yet even this market does not sell everything at any price — in fact, it is ruthlessly selective. Roughly forty-eight percent of listing attempts concluded since 2024 expired, were canceled, or were withdrawn without a sale. Among the homes that did sell, about forty-three percent required at least one price reduction, and the typical successful listing took roughly 101 days to find a buyer. Those figures describe listing outcomes — not a rule for valuing or negotiating a particular property. Palm Beach pays exceptional prices for the correctly priced, impeccably presented home — and quietly declines most others. What follows is both sides of that story, told through every recorded sale across the island's principal single-family quarters.

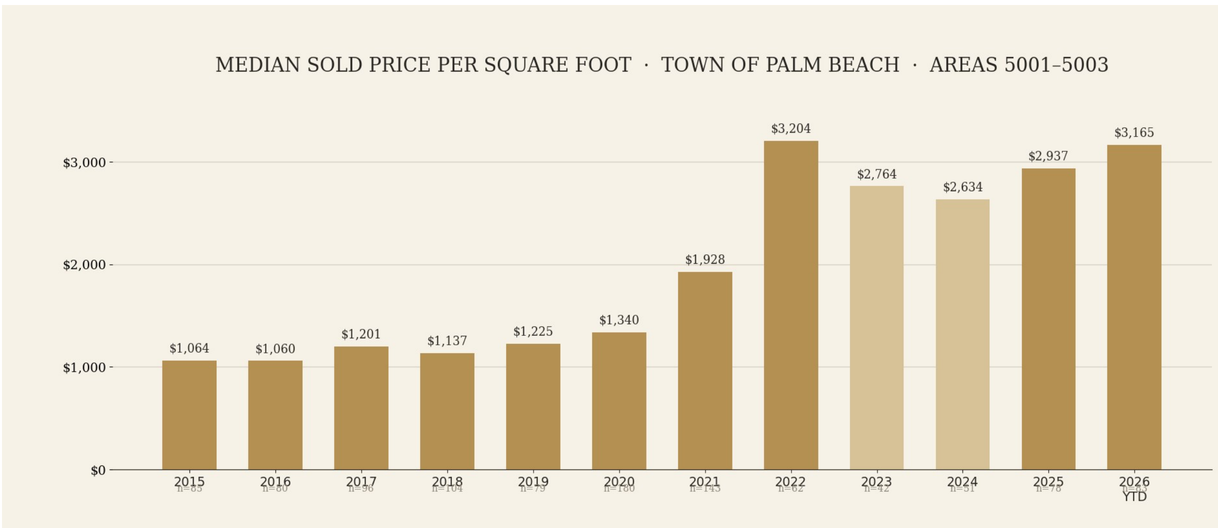
+158%	**~5.4 mos.**	**43%**	**101 days**
price per square foot since 2019	*of supply at the current pace*	*of completed sales reduced at least once*	*median time to contract*

A DECADE, YEAR BY YEAR

The figures below comprise every closed single-family and townhouse sale recorded in MLS areas 5001–5003 — the North End, Midtown, and the Estate Section — and they describe what may be the strongest decade in the island's modern history. Note what happened after the 2020–2021 surge: values consolidated for two years, then recovered to within roughly one percent of the 2022 peak.

SOLD YEAR	SALES	MEDIAN SALE PRICE	MEDIAN SOLD $/SF
2015	85	$4,350,000	$1,064
2016	80	$3,912,500	$1,060
2017	96	$4,450,000	$1,201
2018	104	$4,311,500	$1,137

2019	79	$4,900,000	$1,225
2020	180	$5,325,000	$1,340
2021	143	$7,630,000	$1,928
2022	62	$12,706,288	$3,204
2023	42	$8,855,000	$2,764
2024	51	$10,750,000	$2,634
2025	78	$12,062,500	$2,937
2026 YTD	83	$12,500,000	$3,165



Lighter bars denote thinner sample years (fewer than 60 closings); sale counts shown beneath each year. Through September 18, 2026.

Three observations. The repricing held — even the slower years of 2023–2024 cleared at more than double pre-pandemic levels, and 2025–2026 have returned to near-record territory. Volume fell sharply from the frenzy not because demand vanished but because owners, knowing what they hold, stopped selling. And the mix has moved decisively upmarket: the eight-figure sale is now simply how the island trades.

WHY VALUES HAVE HELD

THERE IS ALMOST NOTHING FOR SALE. Forty-six homes are publicly offered against about 2,200 unique residential parcels across these three areas — roughly 2.1 percent of the island. At the past year's pace of 102 closings, that is about 5.4 months of supply, and far less in the most coveted segments.

THE DEMAND IS STRUCTURAL. Palm Beach County leads every county in America in net income gained through migration — some $22.7 billion between 2019 and 2023, led by arrivals from New York, California, New Jersey, Illinois, and Connecticut — and the buyers now come to stay, not to winter.

CASH INSULATES THE ISLAND. Most purchases at these prices close without financing, which is why Palm Beach long ago parted company with the national interest-rate story.

SUPPLY CAN SCARCELY GROW. The island is built out; landmark and zoning protections see to the rest. Every arriving family removes a property from circulation, often for a generation.

A CANDID READING OF THE MARKET

Strong markets still discriminate — and this one does so politely but firmly. Of every listing concluded across these areas since the start of 2024, 212 closed while 195 expired, were canceled, or were withdrawn: roughly forty-eight percent of attempts did not end in a sale. About fifteen percent of completed sales achieved 95 percent or more of their original ask, and about forty-three percent reduced their price at least once before finding a buyer. The buyers at ten, twenty, and forty million dollars are sophisticated, well advised, and unhurried; they will pay a record for the right property, and they will simply outwait the wrong price.

WHAT COMMANDS A PREMIUM (SALES SINCE 2022)	SALES	MEDIAN SOLD $/SF
Built 2015 or later	59	$3,359
Built before 1950 — historic & landmarked	68	$2,936
Built 1950–2014	189	$2,817
Residences of 6,000–9,999 SF	42	$3,753
Residences of 10,000 SF and above	8	$3,848
Sales of $25M and above	49	$4,930

New and like-new construction is the clearest premium on the island — roughly nineteen percent above the 1950–2014 stock — while the restored pre-1950 estates of Midtown and the Estate Section continue to outearn the intervening decades. Scale is rewarded rather than discounted: larger homes on larger grounds command a higher price per foot, because land is the island's scarcest commodity. And the very top is the deepest part of the market — since 2022 there have been forty-nine sales above $25 million, compared with seventeen between $20 and $25 million.

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING SELLING

THE MARKET SPEAKS IN SIX-MONTH INCREMENTS. Two streets here can mean a thousand dollars per foot of difference, and the most reliable guide to value is the most recent closings — segmented by vintage, size, grounds, and waterfront, never a market average.

CONDITION IS CURRENCY. Buyers here pay a documented premium for the turnkey home; presentation and selective pre-sale refinement translate directly into the achieved price per foot.

TIMING IS A POSITION OF STRENGTH. Few owners on this island sell out of necessity, and the data rewards that posture: those able to wait for the right buyer, at the right number, consistently achieve the strongest results — while certainty on a short horizon is simply a different pricing strategy, deliberately chosen.

THE QUIET MARKET. A meaningful share of island transactions never appear publicly. Many owners prefer a discreet placement before a small circle of qualified buyers — the result achieved without a single photograph leaving the property.

ON ASSESSED VALUES. The tax roll trails this market considerably; in most cases it sits well below what a buyer would pay today — a pleasant note for the property-tax bill, and an irrelevant one for pricing.

The island has rarely, if ever, been worth more — or demanded more precision to sell well. The gap between a record result and a year of quiet expiration is, in nearly every case, strategy: the comparables chosen, the number set on day one, the way the property meets its first buyers. That is where I come in.

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Sources & methodology: figures compiled from MLS closed-sale and listing records, areas 5001–5003 (Town of Palm Beach — the North End, Midtown, and the Estate Section), through September 18, 2026, cross-referenced to county tax-roll data. Tax parcel counts are deduplicated by property-control number to avoid multiple building-card records. Migration figures are from IRS county migration data as analyzed by the Miami Association of Realtors (March 2026). Annual medians reflect modest sample sizes and sales mix; this letter is illustrative of trend and is not a valuation, appraisal, or tax or legal advice.