

OUR EXPERT

Architecture and design specialist Saxon Henry is a contributing editor to *Interiors* and *MIAMI* magazine, and is the author of *Four Florida Moderns*.

'A South Beacher for seven years, I'm continually amazed at the diversity of Miami's sensibilities – not simply in terms of its interior design and architecture, but in the mélange of people that converge on the city from all points around the globe.'



MIAMI: BUILDING DREAMS

In Miami, you not only get to admire the cutting-edge buildings, you even get to stay in one. Saxon Henry offers a guide to the city where design is king

While the northern hemisphere is steeped in winter, Miami enjoys dreamy weather, a fact that has made it famous for luring famous personalities to its shores. During the Rat Pack era, when the likes of Frank Sinatra and Elvis strolled through the gleaming lobbies of Miami Beach's opulent resorts, the city gained its reputation for larger-than-life exuberance. The foundation of that notoriety was its architecture.

Miami's architectural uniqueness began with the Art Deco era, when Lawrence Murray Dixon, one of the vernacular's most prolific stars, created hotels such as the Victor, the first to advertise 'every room with a view', and the Raleigh, where Esther Williams splashed about in the fanciful pool.

The next wave of architectural improvisation was Miami

Modern, or MiMo. Among the hybrid style's masterpieces is the Ritz-Carlton South Beach, but the real fun didn't begin until the king of kitsch, Morris Lapidus, introduced his brash take on the International Style, with stage-set lobbies and cantilevered stairways to nowhere. Two of his greatest accomplishments – the Fontainebleau and the Eden Roc hotels – remain hot properties that draw A-list members of the see-and-be-seen crowd.

Jump forward to modern times and no hotel has reached such a cult status as the Delano, originally designed by Robert Swartburg and given a new lease of life when Philippe Starck treated it to a whimsical makeover in 1995. The drama he created includes a café table and chairs set in the shallow end



of the pool, where only the bravest guests dare to tread, their frosted Mojitos in hand.

Starck wasn't the last architect to see the city as the perfect place for experimentation. Many of Miami's current practitioners cite the freedom to create unique architecture as a reason they set up shop in the tropical city. Even architects who don't call Miami home enjoy the opportunity to improvise within the city's lively milieu. Dallas-based RKTL Associates, the firm that designed the Mandarin Oriental at Brickell Key, used the brand's fan logo and nautical imagery as inspiration for a riff on the modern Miami hotel. Miami architect Chad Oppenheim calls this trend of melding modernism with romanticism 'tropical modernism'.

FLIGHT TIME

9 hours, 10 minutes

BONUS BA MILES

5,000 - 10,000 (see page 5)

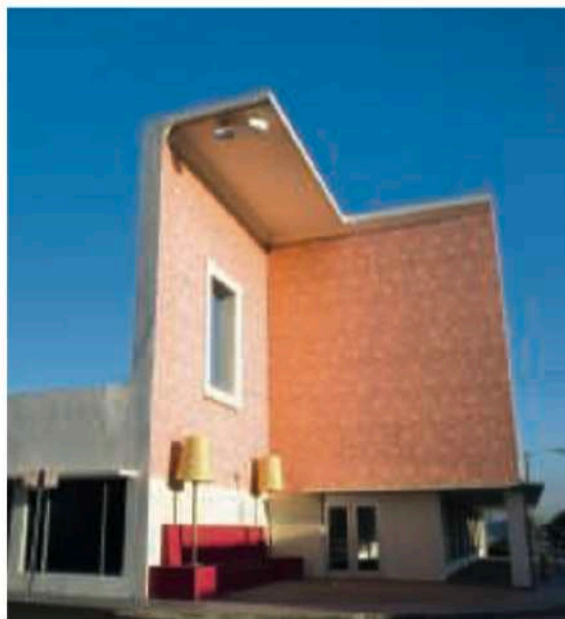


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Grand designs

Clockwise from left: the pool at the Delano, Lapidus 'cheese wall' at the Fontainebleau; 'Living Room' in the Design District

5 OF THE BEST MIAMI BUILDINGS

The Bacardi Building, Biscayne Boulevard

Actually two buildings connected by a plaza. The MiMo structures are overlayed with ceramic tile murals by Francisco Brennand.

Vizcaya, South Miami Avenue

An Italianate-inspired villa built by agricultural industrialist James Deering in 1916 that is now a museum and gardens.

The Freedom Tower, Biscayne Boulevard

Designed by George A Fuller of Schultze & Weaver, this 1925 landmark building in a Mediterranean Revival style is now a memorial to Cuban immigration.

The Setai, Collins Avenue

An Art Deco landmark building that was built between 1936 and 1938 as the Dempsey Vanderbilt Hotel. A modern tower has been added to the historic property.

Concourse J, Miami International Airport

One of Miami's newest modernist structures. The building's vaulted roof is finished with an aluminium standing seam that wraps towards the ground, lending the building a space-age quality.



From top: Venini Esprit chandelier, from Avant Gallery; Philippe Starck chair and Xavier Lust light, both from Driade; Boca Do Lobo Diamond sideboard, from Avant Gallery



Miami is not a city to rest on its architectural laurels. Just across Biscayne Bay from Miami Beach, the new Design District has become a popular destination. The streets are peppered with contemporary furniture showrooms, art galleries, eateries and some of the globe's top fashion houses, including Marni and Christian Louboutin.

During the first week in December each year, when Art Basel Miami Beach entices the world to the barrier island, Design Miami brings a frenetic schedule of events to the District including exhibitions by some of the world's top design galleries. One of the greatest inventions to spin off from it is Limited Edition Experiences, which brings notable retailers to town to stage pop-up stores. So far, a handful of luxe brands have set up shop for three-month stints, including Maison Martin Margiela and Duncan Quinn.

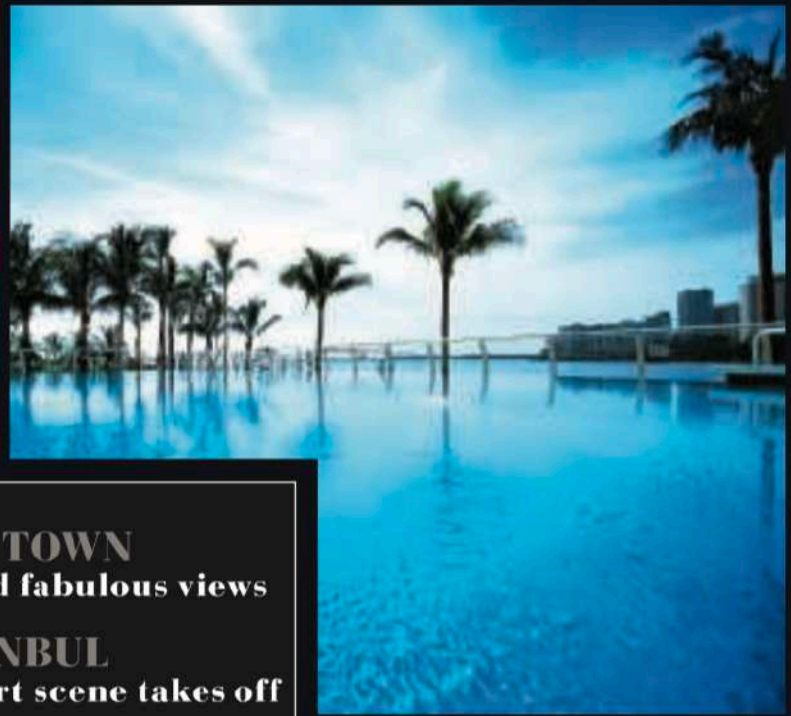
Any fan of Italian furniture and accessories will swoon at the number of high-end showrooms packed into the District. Driade, Vitra, Poltrona Frau and Cappellini bring cutting-edge design to the neighbourhood. Glottman Antepima is a must see for its mix of edgy design lines that includes Moooi, and Gaia & Gino. Avant Gallery gets high marks for mixing limited edition furniture and contemporary art. Visitors to Miami during the second Saturday of any given month are in for an extra dose of electricity with Art + Design night, when galleries and shops stay open late to stage special exhibitions.

Back on the beach, a not-to-miss monthly design experience is the Lincoln Road Antiques Market. It sprawls along the Lincoln Road Mall, an alfresco dining/shopping corridor designed by Morris Lapidus, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The market takes place on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, from October to May, from ten in the morning until five in the afternoon. With so much to do, Miami definitely has designs on you.

The Collection

THE LUXURY HOLIDAY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2010



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