

1111 Lincoln Road

## Beacons along the Atlantic

RIDE THE NEW ARCHITECTURAL WAVE THAT'S HITTING SOUTH FLORIDA

Miami Beach, the Deco darling of the world, is synonymous with show-stopping, unique architecture. In fact, the town's two most famous streets, Ocean drive and Lincoln road, owe much of their renown to their surroundings: dream fantasies of colorful, curvaceous buildings hankering back to an era of pure hedonistic delight. Nearly 100 years after the Art Deco explosion that came to define Miami's architectural glamour, a new breed of architects are creating buildings that look to the future while capturing the essence of this oceanside metropolis.

"I felt Miami was in a moment that would be looked back on as a turning point in terms of becoming a world power," says real estate developer Robert Wennett, who commissioned prestigious architects Herzog & de Meuron to design his 1111 Lincoln Road building in Miami Beach. "Every decision we made was about the overall experience of the place, and we saw this parcel of land as important because it is the piazza for Lincoln road."

Wennett is adamant that 1111, at the westward edge of Morris Lapidus' famed walking mall, is not a development. "I don't consider myself a developer," he adds. "I'm the curator of this site-specific installation."

For his latest landmark, Wennett also enlisted the help of landscape architect Raymond Jungles, asking him to create grand gestures *à la* Lapidus, whose Lincoln road turns 50 this



Montclair



year. "I studied Morris Lapidus' work in order to create a like-minded whimsical design to what he was wanting to accomplish originally," says Jungles, whose early communications with Herzog & de Meuron explored the geometry between the new and old buildings, and between the buildings and their surroundings.

"Lapidus had some great boomerang shapes along Lincoln road that I used for inspiration," Jungles adds. "I also drew on Burle Marx's organic geometry to create the forms I saw as vantage points where people would be inspired to gather. It's as Lawrence Halprin said, 'People make their own theater,' and we wanted to give them a stage!"

A stage-set was also central to another project being planned simultaneously a few blocks away, and the architect tapped to bring the New World Symphony (NWS) building to life was Frank Gehry. Michael Tilson Thomas, the founder and artistic director of NWS, has been a lifelong friend of Gehry's, so when it came time to search for an architect, asking his friend if he would be interested in making his vision manifest was as easy as placing a phone call.

Howard Herring, the president and CEO of NWS, remembers Gehry's response: "He said he'd always wanted to design a building to represent the future of music and that if he trusted anyone with the future of music it would be Michael Tilson Thomas." Like 1111 Lincoln Road, the NWS building was years in the making, and it was the philosophy behind the building that made the process of designing it so rich. "We talked to Frank about invitation and transparency," Herring says, adding that the greatest depth of detailing is in the interiors of this building rather than on the exterior, as is the norm with Gehry's wrapping and morphing architecture. In fact, the spare number of his undulant signature has been a surprise to many who have watched the building rise.

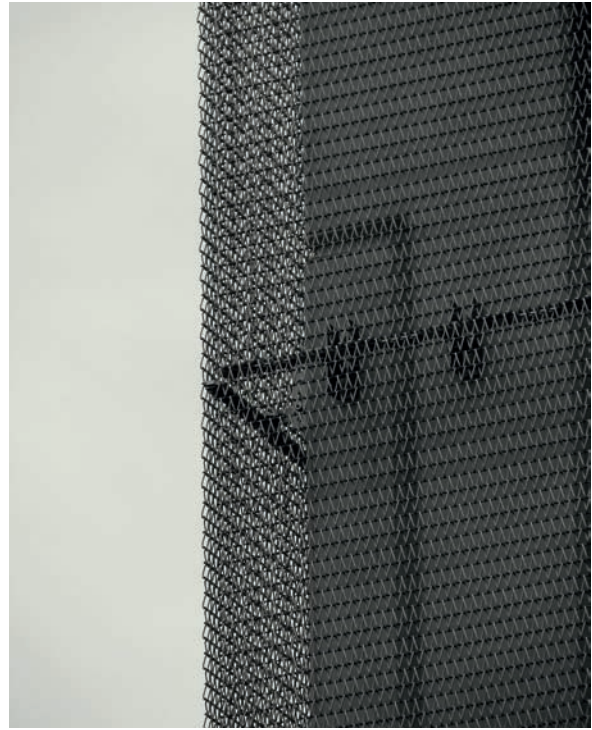
It's the flexibility Gehry achieved in the remarkably agile performance spaces that Herring says will set this building apart. "Everything we've achieved reveals the genius of Frank Gehry," he says. "He understood



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*New World Symphony*



the relationship between the musicians and the audience, the composer and the musicians, and the composer and the audience perfectly.”

Just down the street, the design of the Montclair – a residential condominium complex by Miami-based architect Chad Oppenheim – also had musicality as an underpinning. Oppenheim calls the site he inherited charged: “It was a crossroads of complexity because we were surrounded by civic, commercial and residential architecture.” Though the Lapidus building across 17th street was a key inspiration, the program Oppenheim employed had its roots in hip-hop. “One of the things I love about the genre is how the musicians sample other beats and turn them into abstracted riffs,” he says. “We surgically and sensitively sampled the neighborhood to come up with our design – the Lapidus bank building with its metal screens, for instance, became the metal sheath in which we wrapped the Montclair.” The screens define the outdoor spaces attached to the condominiums, providing privacy without blocking views and the balmy breezes that blow in from the beach.

While climate is a major factor in any architectural program in South Florida, it is but one consideration in the new dialogues flowing forth in Miami, which sound surprisingly like modernist melodies praising the arts and humanity. “The exploration, as we saw it,” says Wennett, “was how commerce and culture could come together, and how a sense of place would develop from the fusion of these.”

**Saxon Henry**