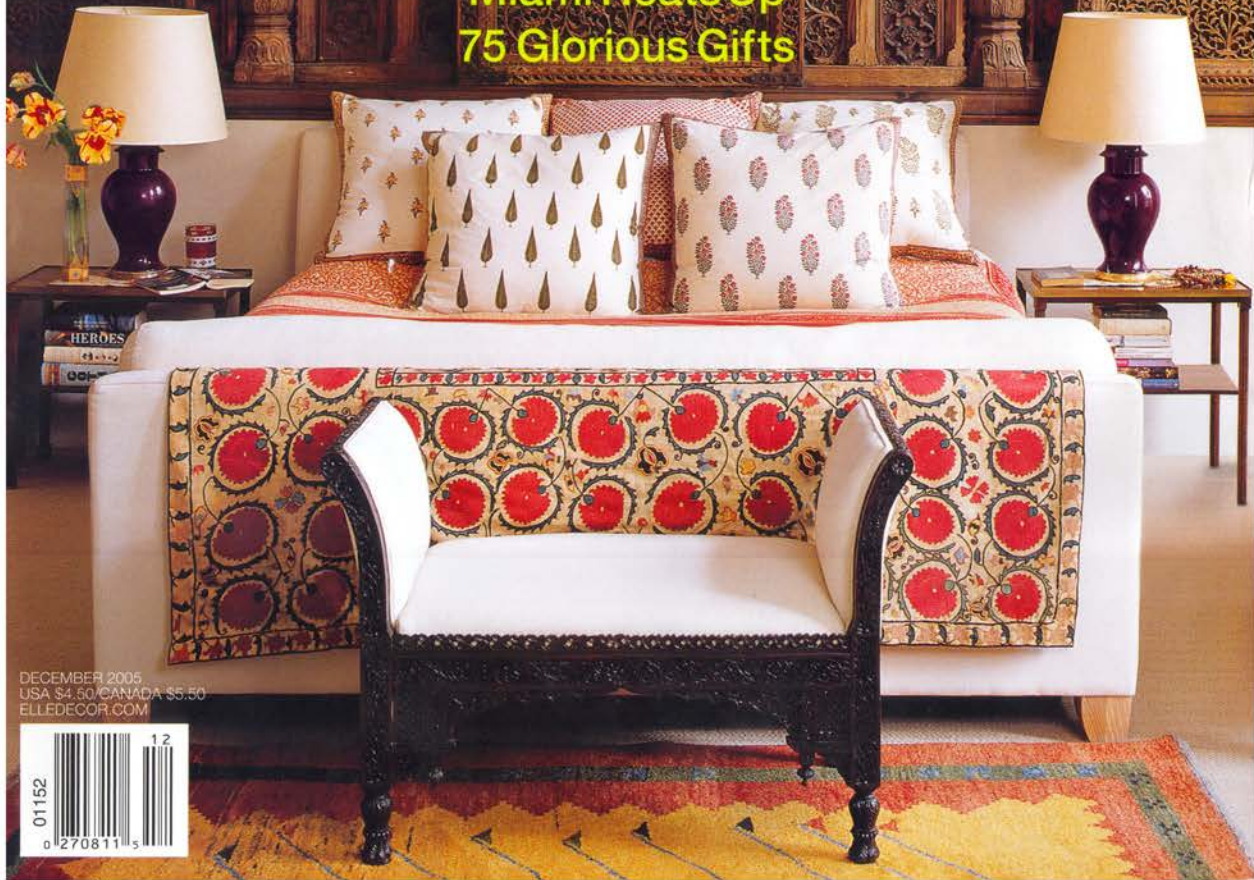


ELLEDECOR

getting
cozy

Cheers!

Blissful Bedrooms
The Ultimate Montana Ranch
Miami Heats Up
75 Glorious Gifts



DECEMBER 2005
USA \$4.50/CANADA \$5.50
ELLEDECOR.COM



miami

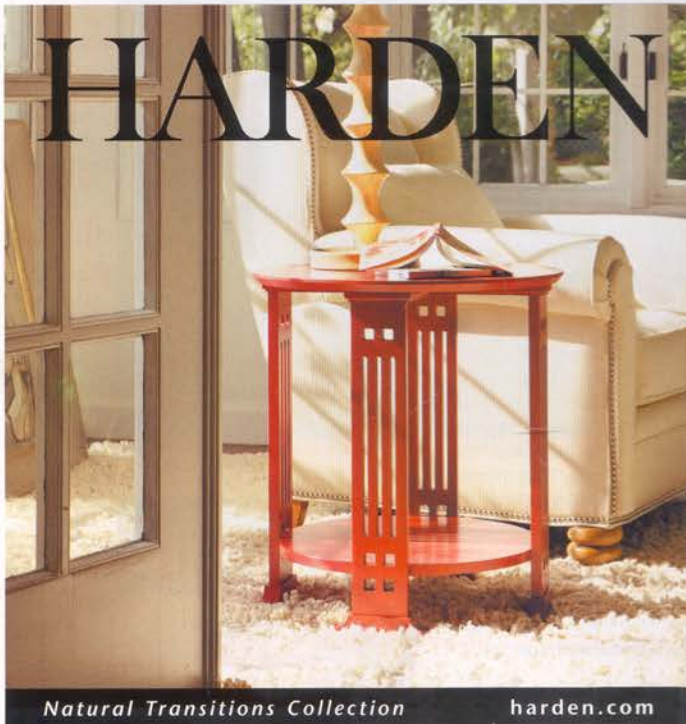


An international mix at the shop *Jalan Jalan*. Below: A view of Miami Beach looking south past the famed *Fontainebleau* hotel.

when Henry Flagler first extended his railroad down the East Coast and made Miami a booming port city. Coral Gables's elegant Biltmore hotel, designed by Schultze and Weaver in 1926, was a famous tropical stopover for the Duke and Duchess of Windsor (as well as the place Johnny Weissmuller taught swimming before he was discovered by Hollywood), but had been transformed into a hospital and then largely abandoned by the late 1960s. In 1983, Coral Gables awarded the structure landmark status and it was renovated as a resort. The current owners have spent another \$40 million, recently completing a ten-year refurbishment. *Miracle Mile*—actually only a half-mile stretch of Coral Way—has also been cleaned up, with trendy stores, antique shops, and galleries.

The heightened importance of art in the cultural life of the city has proved a particular boon for architect René González, whose minimalist, sculptural style has made him the darling of collectors, museums, and other aficionados of Miami's contemporary art scene. It has earned him commissions like the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation as well as the office-studio of Karla Dascal—events planner extraordinaire for Madonna, Ricky Martin, and this year's lavish Bulgari party for the Art Basel crowd—which could be mistaken for a gallery were it not for the walk-in refrigerators and the leaf-strewn worktables.

González, a Cuban émigré who was raised in Miami but left years ago because he found it so culturally vapid, returned in 1990 in part because the city was becoming such an international destination. "When I get my coffee in the morning," says González, "I hear people from all over the world. You always heard various Spanish accents, but now I hear German and French—and from people who *live* here, not just tourists." The busy architect leans back in his Design District office and smiles contentedly—dressed completely in art-world black. ■



Natural Transitions Collection

harden.com

