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in Architecture**

July/August 2006
\$4.99 U.S. / \$6.99 Canada

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Miami Advice

Beginning the tour in North Miami, at the recently opened permanent space of the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (opposite), Cathy Leff (far right) readies her tourists for a long day of cycling and sight-seeing. A pier at the private Hochberg residence (below) typifies Miami's complete embrace of the outdoors during the warm spring months. In Miami, even the supermarkets have flair (below right).

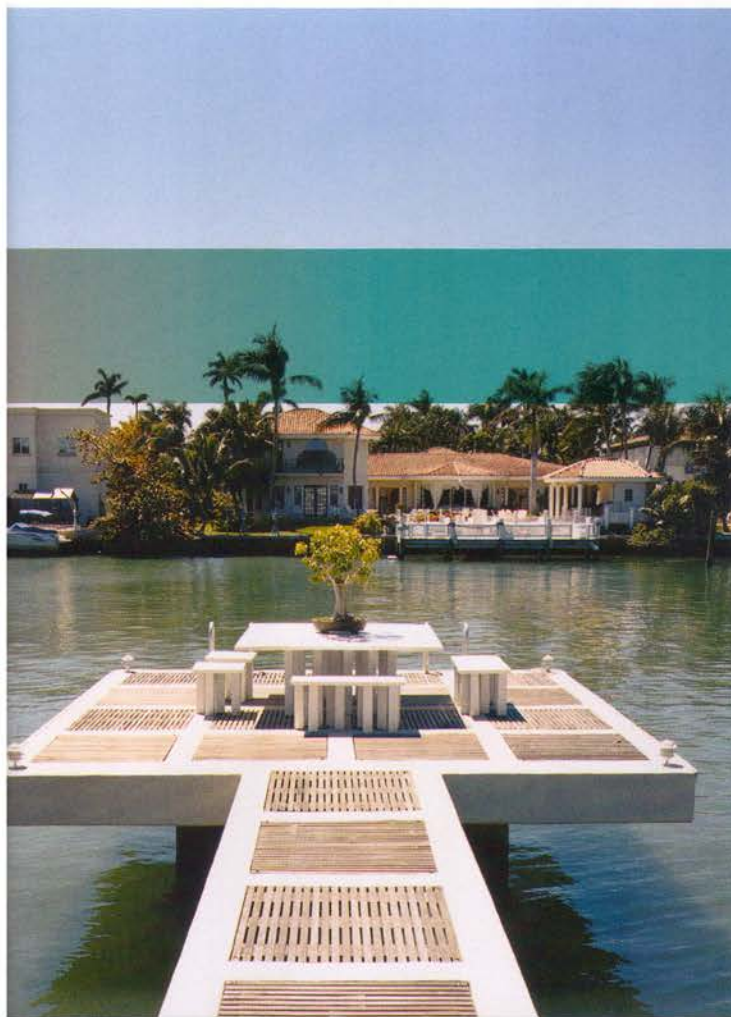
Miami is a matrix of man-made islands, causeways, and paved-over Everglades that has gotten by on a desirable climate, a thriving pan-Caribbean culture, and some of our nation's finest hucksterism. Born as a high-class playground—the original polo fields are now golf courses—Miami first boomed at the beginning of the 20th century. Wondering how to attract vacationers and residents to a place without a history, Miami's developers lit upon a grand idea: Build the place like it had one. Mediterranean revival abounds, Spanish colonial holds court, and swimming pools are cut to look more like Pompeii than Palm Beach. Even the oranges were imports, cultivated to convince railroad baron Henry Flagler to extend the rails all the way to Florida's tip.

Cathy Leff, director of Miami Beach's Wolfsonian—Florida International University Museum, loves Miami in part for all its flashy invention. But she says that big bucks and big construction are adding some serious

substance to her subtropical city. Miami was, and for some still is, a winter destination, but this current boom is about more than just another faux-Deco hotel.

The city of Miami, located on the Florida mainland, sprawls inland from its downtown waterfront as city neighborhoods eventually bleed into the first ring of suburbs. The more urban Miami Beach is actually a separate city. Just one of the many islands in Biscayne Bay, it is connected to the mainland by a web of causeways and is home to some of Miami's most fabulous hotels, Art Deco architecture, and beaches.

Defying conventional Miami wisdom, and its prestige-loving car culture, Leff convinced us to join her on a two-day bike tour exploring the city streets, galleries, delicious dives, one-stop Haitian voodoo shops, and even a night club still bumping at nearly noon (we're 99 percent sure we spotted Vanilla Ice). We covered 40 miles and 11 islands, and used up an entire tube of sunblock. ▶



Detour

The Bacardi Building (below) is one of Leff's favorite buildings in Miami. Designed by Enrique Gutierrez of the Puerto Rican firm Sacmag International, with ceramic murals by the Brazilian artist Francisco Brennand, the Bacardi Building, built in 1963, houses offices, a restaurant, and a museum open to the public. Behind the tower is a 1973 addition designed by Ignacio Carrera-Justiz, with glass tapestries by Frenchmen Gabriel and Jacques Loire.

Miami isn't really a cycling city—half the time the streets had no bike lanes. Why did you have us risk life and limb to see it this way?

While there are pockets of the greater Miami area that are urban and very walkable (i.e., South Beach), it is a city that is mostly experienced in an automobile with the windows up and air-conditioning on. The cultural tourist or curious resident knows how to access the great cultural and natural resources we have to offer—museums, gardens, parks, beaches—but there is so much more to discover [and bikes are an ideal way to do so].

Tell us about the Wolfsonian Museum.

The Wolfsonian's collection mirrors the period during which Miami developed. We're interested in the multiple stories that architecture, decorative, design, and propaganda arts tell us about social, cultural, political, and technological history. We try to see what objects can tell us about cultural change and the times in which they were created. One current exhibit tackles 20th-century propaganda posters; another is the hotel designs of Schultze & Weaver. The Miami Biltmore and the Waldorf-Astoria are just two of their contributions to the luxury-hotel industry. ►

Miami, Florida

Detour

The Raleigh Hotel (below) was originally designed and built in 1940 by Lawrence Murray Dixon. It is renowned for its Art Deco elegance and its pool just a short walk from the beach. André Balazs recently completed a thorough renovation, and the Raleigh is now a sister hotel to the Chateau Marmont in Hollywood and the Mercer in New York.

The Wolfsonian Museum (below right) in Miami Beach was founded in 1986 to display Mitchell Wolfson Jr.'s huge collection of decorative and propaganda arts—including furniture, paintings, prints, books, and other decorative and industrial objects. In 1997 it became part of the Florida International University and is now a full-blown research center as well.

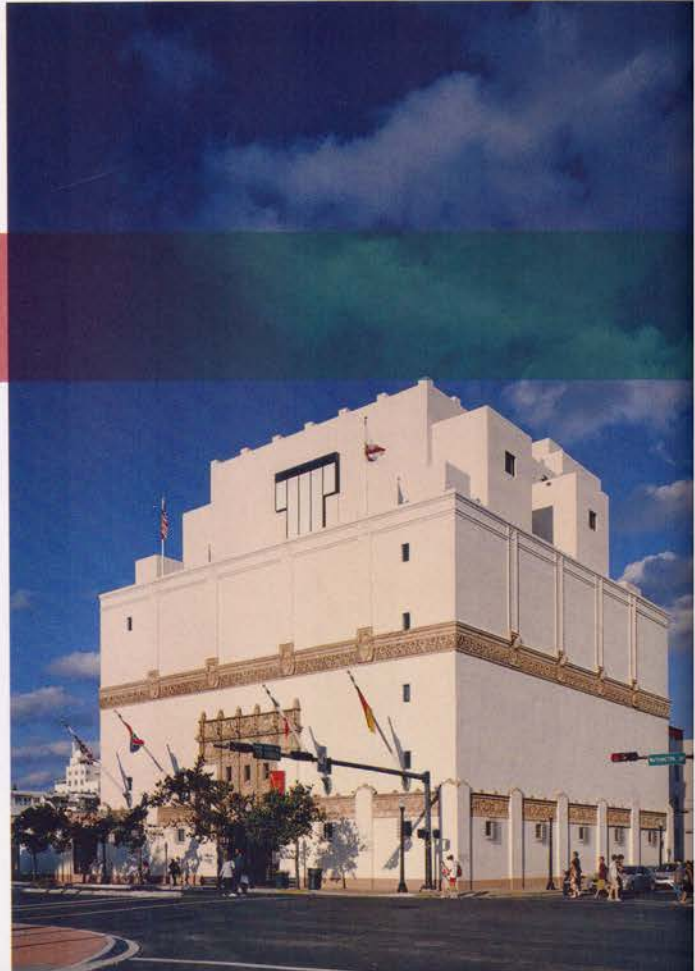
What are your favorite buildings here?

One of my favorites is the Bacardi Building north of downtown Miami, at Biscayne and Northeast 21st. Bacardi has always realized the power of architecture in branding both a product and a company. They have built great buildings in Havana and Santiago also. The Bacardi Building is the best example of the International Style meets the tropics.

And the famous Art Deco hotels?

The "famous" buildings are the authentic Art Deco buildings, the Art Deco historic district, and what we call MiMo (Miami Modern). I'm a modernist and a preservationist, and

I believe we should protect the buildings of the past, but new architecture should reflect our own times and aspirations. The good is that the change we are now starting to see is the recognition that contemporary architecture really can be compatible within a historic district. I think architecture has been (and will continue to be) less successful when we have tried to emulate or reinvent the past, and Miami definitely has its fair share of faux Art Deco and Mediterranean revival architecture. But I do love the real deal like the Fontainebleau and Eden Roc hotels on Collins Avenue in South Beach, both by Morris Lapidus. ►



The three-story outdoor cut-away living room by Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt (below) announces the entrance to South Beach's design district.

Miami has some funny moving architecture—the cruise ships that come into town.

My apartment overlooks the Port of Miami, and I love getting up early on Saturday and Sunday to watch the cruise ships—or horizontal skyscrapers—as they arrive, completely dominating the downtown landscape. They are great visual additions to the skyline and contribute to the excitement of this growing urban activity.

The sandwich I had at Enriqueta's was great. I'd love to eat my way through Miami.

Enriqueta's is a delicious little Cuban spot just north of downtown, and just one of hun-

dreds of small, fun, and mostly family-run restaurants. A great way to experience Miami's cultural diversity is through its culinary culture. We have incredible Cuban, Nicaraguan, Peruvian, Brazilian, and Argentine food.

The Cuban influence on Miami is well documented, but the Little Haiti neighborhood struck me as pretty vibrant itself.

Miami is such an extraordinary confluence of cultures, but sometimes you have to get out of South Beach to see it. By exploring the neighborhoods and the specialty shops within them, you learn so much ►

Miami, Florida

Detour

The Aqua development on Allison Island (below and below right) is the brainchild of South Beach's development impresario Craig Robins. A kind of modernist, New Urbanist experiment, the eight-

and-a-half acre island features structures by Emanuela Frattini Magnusson, Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company, Hariri and Hariri, Alison Spear, Alexander Gorlin, and Walter F. Chatham, among others.

about the cultures that populate the city. The botanicas in Little Haiti, the heart of which is around Northeast Second and 54th Street, are just an example for getting a sense of the rich Haitian culture here. I've collected religious objects, so I love shops where you get the saints right alongside the Haitian voodoo.

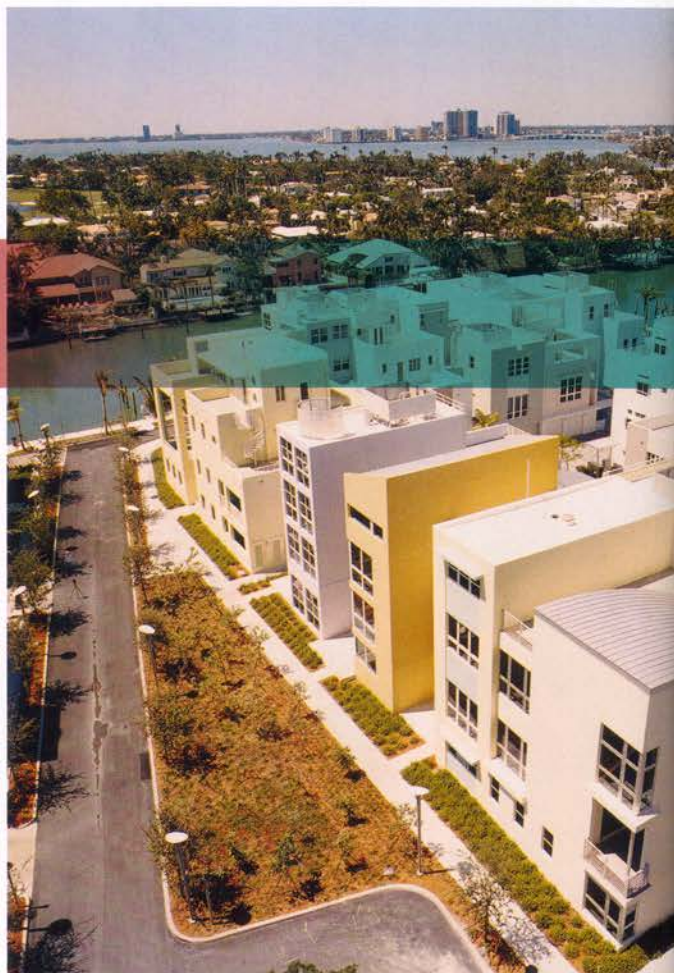
The Wynwood neighborhood and the Design District in Miami are hot spots for contemporary art. What should we see?

The Rubell and Margulies collections are great in Wynwood, as is the Bakehouse Art Complex, Emmanuel Perrotin Gallery, Rocket

Projects, and MOCA at Goldman Warehouse. Try Placemaker and the Moore Space in the Design District. I also like the Fred Snitzer and Bernice Steinbaum galleries.

It seemed like everywhere we went we ran into some type of event or festival. The massive Winter Music Conference throughout Miami and Miami Beach and the many street fairs in Little Haiti come to mind. Is Miami always so bustling?

There is always a party or festival going on—we just happened to run into those two, but I would bet there were others we missed. It seems like there's a lot starting to ►



Detour

The soon-to-be-completed Performing Arts Center designed by Cesar Pelli in downtown Miami provides a fitting end to Leff's tour and a perfect beginning for a re-energized business district.

happen downtown too. For the first time, there is massive residential development in the downtown area that will transform what was once a dark working center into a great downtown. In addition to Museum Park (the new Miami Art Museum/Museum of Science complex) and the Performing Arts Center, over the next several years we will see a new Frank Gehry Soundspace for the New World Symphony and new Herzog & de Meuron and Enrique Norten buildings here in Miami Beach. And our own architects—Arquitectonica, Chad Oppenheim, and Rene Gonzalez, to name just a few—continue to add to the skyline.

Miami is a pretty young city. It didn't really take off until the 20th century.

Though we have the oldest European settlements in the U.S., the state only took form when Henry Flagler extended the railroad to Miami in 1896. Florida understood the need to promote the state's image to lure tourists and investors. This can be seen in the invention of new architectural styles that communicated centuries-old appeal in then-new cities like Coral Gables or Palm Beach, or through the images the state exported at the 1933 and 1939 World's Fairs. They came, they built, and they are still coming. But this time there is substance behind the images. ■



Miami, Florida