

ACQUA LINA

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Christian Louboutin was the first Design District pioneer. Then Tom Ford and Hermès opened a first Miami store and third U.S. flagship store, respectively, in the neighborhood. Much of the LVMH family followed suit, including Louis Vuitton, Marc Jacobs, Givenchy and Fendi. The buzz was on. Now British haute couture fashion house Ralph & Russo is opening its first U.S. boutique in the Design District. Gucci, Prada and Rag & Bone are joining Thom Browne, JOSEPH and Eres. There seems to be no end to the appeal of this carefully curated destination, which now – thanks to art tours, private collections and a spectacular new Institute of Contemporary Art – warrants an entire day trip.

What started as a mecca for design showrooms (numbering more than 70, including Fendi Casa and Holly Hunt) morphed into the Rodeo Drive of the south, thanks to visionary developer Craig Robins, who revitalized South Beach in the '90s before turning his eye on a relatively sleepy swath of land along the historic Buena Vista neighborhood. The area soon became a luxury shopping, dining and art destination.

Swiss beauty Orianne Collins (ex-wife/current girlfriend of Phil Collins) relocated her luxury jewelry brand, OC Jewellery,

to the Design District's lively Palm Court, where Valentino and Bvlgari are neighbors. Working with diamonds and precious stones, Collins' luxury collections reflect nature and global travels that appeal to her celebrity and international clientele.

"This is the place to be in Miami," says Collins. "All the world-known brands are here, and I truly believe it will become a destination where you will have fun and shop until you drop," she says.

Robins strongly agrees. "There are now more than 60 flagship stores by the world's most significant luxury brands," he says. "These renowned fashion houses share our vision and are constantly looking to push the envelope."

One of those is Yara Bashoor, a Colombian-American fashion designer who launched an eponymous brand of exotic handbags and accessories she describes as a reflection of Miami's heritage, boundless energy and Art Deco architecture. Her 2018 collection is called Higher Vibrations, in celebration of strong, female expression. The textured elements, curved silhouettes and rainbow of colors are "about the most feminine part of a woman's wardrobe," she explains. "We endeavor to achieve an awesome 'look at me' attitude with refinement and the use of especially bright beautiful colors."