



The SunPost 2008 Best Of South Florida

Editors' Choice / BEST OF OUR ADVERTISERS

There was a time when shopping meant taking a trip down to the local feed store. Now, it involves pushing through large crowds in metropolitan shopping malls, shelling out wads of cash in swanky fashion boutiques or sipping cosmopolitans while getting pampered in ritzy spas. We won't even mention the corporate big-box mega-stores taking over our cities and suburbs. What we will do, though, is guide you to the best shops, products, services — and, yes, even some bargains — in South Florida, so you can continue trying on clothes that are never going to fit while waxing lyrical about the halcyon days when purchasing gas just to get there didn't require a bank loan.



**BEST
WOMEN'S
FASHION
TREND**

READERS' CHOICE WINNERS

BEST FASHION FOR MEN, WOMEN & CHILDREN
Bolufe (Dadeland Mall)

Demureness
Modesty is a virtue not limited to clothing, but in an age where image is everything, it's a treat to see a stunningly dressed lady rather than a lady ready to stun. This does not mean that you have to start wearing Hillary's pantsuits. It's all about channeling

BEST SHOES
Gables Shoe

BEST SPA
Feel the Heal

BEST MASSAGE AND STONE THERAPY
Angela's Healing Hands

BEST TALENTED HUSTLERS
Funktional Interiors

BEST DESIGN SHOWROOM SHOWCASE IN THE MIAMI DESIGN DISTRICT
MRA, Michael Rosenthal Associates

BEST BIKE SHOP
Miami Beach Bicycle Center

BEST VIDEO STORE
Lion Video

BEST CIGAR SHOP
Puros Cigar on Coral Way and 107th

your inner fashion provocateur instead of a Bratz doll. Get some retro tan lines with a 1950s-inspired Jantzen swimsuit, envelop your cleavage in an elegant Von Furstenberg wrap dress and tame those thong-flashing urges under some glamorous high-waisted slacks. To find these and other glamorous wears, visit www.jantzen.com or www.dvf.com.

Runner-Up: Not matching your purse to your shoes

If anything good came out of the thousand-dollar purse trend, it's that chicks no longer have to match their purses to their shoes. Matchy-matchy is finally out of style, in lieu of fresh, funky fashions, and we couldn't be more thrilled.

BEST MEN'S FASHION TREND

Neon Sneakers

In the tradition of all things '80s, day-glo sneakers are everywhere now, and not a moment too soon. Neon sneakers have stolen the show this year for both work and weekend menswear. So, if you like your fashion trends to have the lifespan of a month or you just want your kicks to glow in the daytime, you might be trotting along the right path with any of the new rave-ready sneakers in stores right now. But move fast. As with so many other trends resurrected like *Thriller* video cast members, this one might be as short-lived as the white glove fad. So, good luck — and happy moonwalking.

BEST FASHION TREND WE'RE HAPPY TO SEE GO AWAY

Print Message T-Shirts

Next time you see someone wearing a shirt that says Darfur on it, stop and ask him/her where Darfur is located. Nine times out of 10 he/she will answer back with a blank stare. Caring for a cause and wearing a T-shirt to prove it is fine, but doing it as a fashion statement is like smearing buttercream frosting on a crab cake — and it certainly doesn't make you Angelina Jolie. If you don't know where it is, would never do it in the drunkest of stupors or can't pronounce it, then don't wear it. By the way, Darfur is in western Sudan.

BEST LOCAL WOMENSWEAR DESIGNER

Marjanne Kalf

www.marjannekalf.com

Although Marjanne Kalf studied fashion design at home in Amsterdam, she made her professional debut in the world of interior design. Although she came back to the world of glamour, she held on to her unique vision and a love of interesting fabrics — which she eventually translated into a signature fabric cut that emphasized the unique qualities in each that she used. Think scarves, silks and flowy feminine cuts that are equally as pleasing to the eye and the touch. Some of our favorites are her beaded silk velvet peacock top, which is so very South Beach with jeans and heels, and her new silk peony mini dress. Besides winning the 2008 Miami Fashion Week's New Designer Competition, her summer 2008 collection is fun, sexy and creative, and most pieces are perfect for both chic South Beach pool sides and the opening night of the next super-exclusive nightclub, making us proud that Kalf calls Miami Beach home.

BEST LOCAL MENSWEAR DESIGNER

Julian Chang

6667 Biscayne Blvd., Miami

305-751-8900

www.julianchang.com

Julian Chang knows menswear. In fact, the notoriously hard-to-craft looks seem sickeningly easy for him to perfect. With stunning prints and fabrics, interesting trims and perfect fits, Chang's looks are accessible to the most fashion-forward and fashion-phobic men we know. Forget the gaudy cliché men's trends of last year. Chang knew we deserved better. So, when he launched his own line in 2001, he launched something we could be proud of. Hand tailoring, simple clean designs and affordable prices make Chang the menswear designer that South Florida so desperately needed. Completely unique, wearable and chic, his showing at this year's Miami Fashion Week proved that Chang and his staff not only know how to do South Florida fashion well, but best.

BEST RECESSION-PROOF CLOTHING STORE

Steve & Barry's

1381 N.E. 163rd St., North Miami Beach

877-762-9444

www.steveandbarrys.com

Steve & Barry's cheap and chic pieces ranging from \$2 to \$20 make H&M look like Fendi. Overpriced clothing has become so socially acceptable that you might be skeptical about a store that charges \$7.89 for a pair of stylish trousers. The company keeps its prices low by skimping on elements such as advertising and by getting the stores into low-rent locations, such as this nondescript strip mall in North Miami Beach. If you go, check out the store's star-powered fashion lines, including Bitten, designed by fashion icon Sarah Jessica Parker, and Wonderwall, a skate and surf line for men designed by aquatic hottie Laird Hamilton.

BEST VINTAGE STORE

C. Madeleine's

13702 Biscayne Blvd., North Miami

305-945-7770

Hands down, C. Madeleine's is the bee's knees of vintage stores. Its 10,000-square-foot showroom is stocked with such famous stylemakers as Galanos, Pucci, Halston, Cassini and Balenciaga, to name a few. Drooling yet? Store owner and curator Madeleine Kirsh has created a veritable wonderland of the best the fashion world has created in the past two centuries. If you don't believe us, just ask *Sex and the City* head stylist Patricia Fields, who regularly scours the store for one-of-a-kind pieces. Store prices democratically range from \$15 all the way to quadruple-digit figures, and you will not be frowned upon if you are bold enough to barter with Ms. Kirsh.

BEST SWIMSUITS

Rosa Cha

830 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach

305-673-3665

Brazilians live in their swimwear, so there's no one better to go to for quality beachwear. Rosa Cha delivers high-end swimwear with intricate designs, artsy details and durable fabrics that will hold everything in place. Although the pieces are mostly meant for glamorous loitering around pools and island resorts, their meticulous construction could withstand numerous cannonball attempts. And while many of the pieces are intended for the dare-to-wear group, the shop does

offer some one-piece and modest two-piece options.

BEST CHILDREN'S SWIMWEAR

Beach Bug Swimwear

www.beachbugswimwear.com

Sounds like a classic business tale: Young mother frustrated by her kids' droopy, dull and ill-fitting swimsuits starts her own online company. Miami Beach's Tanya Bhatt, the entrepreneur behind beachbugswimwear.com, turned to Brazil (where swimwear rocks) to put an artful spin on colorful, plain and printed bikinis, sun shirts, skirts and shorts for girls and boys of all ages. What sets this gear apart is the fact that tops, bottoms and accessories are sold as separates in mix-and-match sizes, patterns and colors. The bright prints and solids in quick-drying Lycra fabric are treated to give a minimum of SPF 45 sun protection. And in the sooo cute category are teeny-weeny bikinis for babies, with matching two-pieces for their mothers. Even though you'll have to order online from this "local shop," its swimwear is perfect for the South Florida lifestyle!

BEST SNEAKERS

Culture Kings

4300 N.E. Second Ave., Miami

305-573-2399

www.culturekings.com

Chris Oh sits on a bike casually welcoming customers while they peruse a variety of clothing and shoes at his store Culture Kings. Art lines the walls and Vans slip-ons, which were painted and designed by various artists, make up a display near the entrance. Culture Kings carries T-shirts, hats, art and skateboards, but the draw is definitely the kicks. A sneaker head, Oh left a career in corporate drudgery to open Culture Kings, where he drew inspiration from his earlier days as a graffiti artist to create the store's street aesthetic. The store has a wall of colorful one-of-a-kind shoes and carries limited edition sneakers. (Currently, he has a \$500 pair of brand-new retro Nike Air Jordan II.) The Vans slip-ons, which were part of a Vans-sponsored art show at the store, feature painted images of decapitated figures, mixed-media creations and designs that utilize papier-mâché.

BEST MALL

Aventura Mall

19501 Biscayne Blvd., Aventura

305-935-1110

www.aventuramall.com

What's new at Aventura? Not just a fresh crop of teeny-boppers scouring the shops for the latest trends. What's new is, like, everything. Take the new Adriano Goldschmied store, where you can be served coffee while trying on jeans and finish your cup of joe while a staff tailor hems your new duds on an 18-karat gold sewing machine. If trends are more your speed, there's a new Bebe Sport, a new Juicy Couture, a Lilly Pulitzer, a Calvin Klein, a Michael Kors, a Damiani for the gents, the Intimacy lingerie shop and a posh, semi-tailored menswear shop called Cut & Sew by Marc Ecko. With nearly 30 new stores opening in recent months and 20 worthy shops due to debut in the next few, Aventura Mall is fast becoming a fashion connoisseur's paradise — even if your budget only allows for window shopping.

BEST NEW MALL

The Shops at Midtown

3401 N. Miami Ave., Miami

305-573-3371

If you're sick of the crowds at most local malls, the Shops at Midtown is the place to go. Granted, there aren't really any upscale stores except West Elm, but there is a Target and Five Guys Burgers and Fries, which in themselves make the trip totally worth it. A couple of years ago, the mall and the condo towers on the same property were a huge empty lot used to store shipping containers, until developers built a city on top of it. Located just south of the Design District, it's a blessing for people living on the Beach and the Upper Eastside who used to have to drive all the way up to North Miami and lands beyond to access similar stores. The huge indoor parking garage always has spaces, and stores such as Marshalls and Loehmann's shockingly never seem crowded.

BEST PLACE TO BLOW YOUR PAYCHECK

Bal Harbour Shops

Bal Harbour Shops, 9700 Collins Ave., Bal Harbour

305-866-0311

www.balharbourshops.com

If you're looking for a place to blow some cash, head to Bal Harbour Shops and check out its high-end boutiques, including Graff, Bulgari Chanel, Dior, Gucci, Tiffany & Co., Dolce & Gabbana, Cartier, Louis Vuitton, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue and Armani. Where else would you find the hottest new name in lingerie, Agent Provocateur, along with Coco Chanel's ultra chic and exotic jewelry and the best trunk shows in beautiful surroundings that include exquisite fountains and a koi pond? Account balance be damned, you won't find it anywhere but Bal Harbour Shops.

BEST RECORD STORE

Uncle Sam's Music

1141 Washington Ave., Miami Beach

305-532-0973

4476 N. University Drive, Lauderhill

954-742-2466

www.unclesamsmusic.com

We were told that the Internet would put record stores out of their archaic misery. But music culture epicenters like Uncle Sam's have found ways to keep people coming in. CD and vinyl record players let customers listen to nearly any disc in the store for free. DVDs, T-shirts and nearly anything else of interest to music fans have diversified the store's selections, but cheap used CDs and vinyl records remain its base. As a member of the Coalition of Independent Music Stores, Uncle Sam's also gives out free CD samplers to buyers so that they too can get on the right track of shunning mainstream music.

BEST GEEK MECCA

Tate's Comics

4566 N. University Drive, Lauderhill

954-748-0181

www.tatescomics.com

Any geek worth their collection of *Absolute Sandman* volumes is more than willing to make the pilgrimage to the legendary Tate's Comics. Celebrating its 15th year of glorious existence, Tate's still has all of the comics, cult horror films, *Star Wars* figures, obscure Japanese anime, pricey statues and niche magazines that it's known for. In recent years, it added the intensely classy and chic Bear and Bird Boutique and Gallery on the main store's second floor loft and Tate's Gaming Satellite two doors down for tabletop games. For the store that's been described by its fans as having everything, Tate's is still finding ways to broaden its horizons and stature.

BEST COMIC BOOK STORE

Avalon Manga Shop

20231 Old Cutler Road, Cutler Bay

305-255-6900

www.avalonmangashop.com

Avalon Manga Shop offers free subscriptions to monthly titles, stocks plenty of import toys and figures, and orders out for a title if you request it, just like every comic book shop should. What Avalon won't do is jack up the price of the latest Marvel crossover event issue just because it's supposedly a hard-to-find collector's item already. The staff's inviting nature and the store's clean look are also greatly preferred to the run-down, "buy-something-or-get-out" vibe oozing from some other comic book shops. With LAN gaming computers in the back and regular Dungeons & Dragons and card game sessions, you'd almost think the store was trying to include people instead of drive them away.

BEST TOY STORE THAT'S NOT A TOY STORE

Kidrobot

638 Collins Ave., Miami Beach

305-673-5807

www.kidrobot.com

"This is a work of art, not a toy," or at least that's what the bottom of some packages at Kidrobot claim. The commercial Pop art retailer opened its fourth store-gallery on South Beach last November, and while its vinyl toys may not have spring-loaded missiles, they can at least say that they're part of the Museum of Modern Art's collection. Toys themselves range from \$1 boxes with a randomly assorted figure to more than \$200 for some 20-inch-tall cute behemoths. The Munny series are blank, super-deformed little men out of the box, but owners are encouraged to go to town with crayons and markers to make their own design. If you still feel more comfortable spending obscene amounts of cash on designer clothing, the store stocks that too.

BEST PLACE TO RENT FOREIGN FILMS

Lion Video

1524 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables

305-442-6080

921 N.E. 79th St., Shorecrest

305-756-9196

www.lionvideo.com

An international city like Miami deserves a place to find international films, and anyone looking for that one Jean-Luc Godard film will tell you that Blockbuster just doesn't cut it. Thank Kurosawa that Lion Video is around with its diverse selection of foreign, classic and rare films. Instead of lumping everything together by genre, the store prefers to organize the bulk of its films by country of origin, with the appropriate tiny flag sticking out of the top of a section for good

measure. The notable exceptions are the gay cinema selections and a few sections dedicated entirely to prominent directors such as Alfred Hitchcock and Pedro Almodóvar. A trip to the back away from the DVD-populated storefront reveals an impressive amount of VHS tapes, undoubtedly left over from the format switch, but still just as valuable to those hoping to discover an old film never released in the U.S.

BEST BOOK STORE

Books & Books

265 Aragon Ave., Coral Gables

305-442-4408

933 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach

305-532-3222

9700 Collins Ave., Bal Harbour

305-864-4241

www.booksandbooks.com

Book reading has always had its own particular culture, one that is cripplingly absent in book superstores' endless glut of mass-market titles. The independent, locally owned Books & Books, however, wears this vaguely high-class culture on its sleeve. Its eclectic but abundant selections feature titles usually not found in average book chains, including gargantuan coffee table books and underappreciated graphic novels. Your average Borders may be bigger than the primary Coral Gables location in terms of area, but that's compensated by the towering rows of shelves right out of a library, down to the sliding ladders needed to reach higher levels. Apart from the book supply, the outdoor cafés at the Coral Gables and Lincoln Road stores serve authentic cuisine and wine (yes, wine) instead of the conventional coffee and pastries. But what's undoubtedly the best thing Books & Books has going for it is the visiting authors who come in almost every day of the month for book discussions or just book signings if they're too famous to talk to regular people like us. Barnes & Noble wishes it were this classy.

BEST TATTOO PARLOR

Tattoos by Lou

241 14th St., Miami Beach

305-532-7300

456 NE 167th St., North Miami Beach

305-944-0888

9820 S. Dixie Highway, Kendall

305-670-6694

www.tattoosbylou.com

Regardless of what out-of-towners might assume after watching *Miami Ink*, South Florida natives know that Miami's tattoo mainstay has always been Tattoos by Lou. Although the stores' namesake passed away in 1996, Lou's daughter Michelle Sciberras-Cameron has taken over, along with her husband Ken Cameron, a 32-year tattoo veteran who brought his own South Beach Tattoo Company shop into the fold. Former artists, whose designs cover the walls, occasionally come back for guest stints along with some of the best tattoo artists on the planet looking to lay down some ink while taking in the Florida sun.

BEST SPA

Agua Spa at the Delano

1685 Collins Ave., Miami Beach

305-674-6100

www.delano-hotel.com

Walk through the door of the Agua Spa on the roof level of the Delano Hotel, and pressures begin to fall away. Peacefully quiet, and with a hint of aromatherapy in the air, the spa offers an extensive menu of treatments that will leave you in a state of nirvana — vitamin-infused facials, deep-tissue massage, stone therapy, reflexology and white cloud algae body masks are sure to rejuvenate even the most stressed. They also offer manicures and pedicures, waxing, paraffin treatments and more. If you're really hedonistic, or simply can't make up your mind, Agua Spa offers a variety of packages that combine the best of the à la carte selections. It ain't cheap, but anyone in search of a heaven on South Beach needs to spend an afternoon at the Delano Hotel's Agua Spa.

BEST HAIR SALON

Muse in the Gables

1420 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables

305-446-9696

www.museinthegables.com

There's no shortage of great hair salons in South Florida — after all, the world's most beautiful people wouldn't come here in droves if there weren't plenty of professionals around to keep them looking good. Yet, few provide impeccable cuts, vivacious color and a full menu of spa services in a stress-free, relaxing atmosphere. Three highly sought-after stylists, with nearly 70 years of experience between them, thought they could provide better service than the large,

chaotic salons they once worked in — and since opening the salon in November 2006, co-owners Maybellines Alvarez, Mike Blanco and Ogy Del Rio have done just that. The best part is that it doesn't matter whose chair you sit in — these three are wizards at what they do, and you're guaranteed to leave there looking and feeling like Miss Universe. Oh, and if your pores are so big you could plant trees in them, make an appointment for a facial with Marylaine Valvanis-Pelier — she'll leave no blackhead unsqueezed and she's so good at what she does that you can probably take a nap while she does it.

BEST MEN'S HAIR SALON

Sport Clips

3401 N. Miami Ave., Miami

305-576-2532

www.sportclips.com

Girls are used to getting great service when getting their hair done, but boys, not so much. Conveniently located right next to Five Guys Burgers and Fries, the best burger joint in town, Sport Clips takes manly men who like sports and other ever-so-heterosexual pursuits to the next level in metrosexuality. The salon, dressed to look like a locker room, is decorated with sports memorabilia and flat-screen TVs showing basketball and other games while you wait. Choose the MVP package and relax in a massage chair, where you will get a hair wash, a hot towel for your face, a facial massage, a haircut, styling and a shoulder massage — all for about half the price that the average SoBe stylist charges.

BEST SHAVE

Art of Shaving

Aventura Mall, 19501 Biscayne Blvd., Aventura

305-937-1877

www.theartofshaving.com

Coming from a bunch of smelly, sleep-deprived, newspaper folk of questionable levels of sobriety who wouldn't know the sharp end of a plastic Bic razor if it was found at the bottom of a pint glass, it shouldn't be taken flippantly that we've discovered the Art of Shaving. Did you know that a clean shave makes you look better? Neither did we, but it does. Did you know that a proper razor gives you a better shave? Neither did we, but it does. Did you know that the people at the Art of Shaving can help you get a better shave? Neither did we, but they can. Trust us, we know.

BEST GYM

Porky's Gym

10000 S.W. 56th St., Miami

305-279-0610

11865 S.W. 26th St., Miami

305-222-1992

10201 Hammocks Blvd., Kendall

305-387-3770

5348 W. 16th Ave., Hialeah

305-362-2155

There are gyms in Miami that offer valet parking and celebrity sightings while adding back-handed charges to your already expensive membership. Then there are gyms like Porky's, where you can pay \$209 for a year, \$35 for a month or just \$5 for a day with no contract. While the vast number of free weights is the main perk, membership includes everything from yoga to cardio kickboxing classes (except for the \$20-per-year day care). They're also open 24 hours, so no more excuses about not having the time to get six-pack abs.

BEST PLACE TO TAN WITH TECHNO

Tan V

844 Alton Road, Miami Beach

305-672-0767

1824 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables

305-476-8909

www.tan-v.com

To many, the idea of lying on the tubes of a tanning bed, no matter how clean they may be, is pretty gross, which is why Tan V is such a great alternative. Tan standing up in the vertical machines and, while you do, listen to banging dance music through the speakers. Basically, it's like dancing naked and alone in a really hot, upright coffin. Which, believe it or not, is a lot more fun than it sounds. The staff will supply you with eye protection and various potions to either protect your skin or help it achieve that natural-looking bronze that all your out-of-town friends expect you to permanently have. Fake it till you make it, baby. Yeah!

BEST DOG GROOMER

The Dog From Ipanema

7230 S.W. 57th St., South Miami

305-442-1060

www.thedogfromipanema.com

For our money, Jarbas and his gang down at Ipanema are the best place to drop off your best friend for a day of pampering and anal gland releasing (dogs only). But if you're a protective parent, the staff welcomes you to stick around and watch the appointment firsthand. The shop's lobby is loaded with tons of toys and treats for you to drop cash on while your pooch gets his or her hair done.

BEST CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE STORE

Artefacto

Village of Merrick Park, 4440 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 1600, Coral Gables

305-774-0004

www.artefacto.com

If you plan to redecorate, you need to stop by Artefacto. This 30-year-old interior design source has bought itself something over the years: a great reputation. Best known for an overarching vision and unique interior aesthetic, Artefacto offers contemporary and timeless furnishings. It now has outlets in Coral Gables, Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale, and plans to expand to Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

BEST MODERN FURNITURE STORE

Details at Home

1711 Alton Road, Miami Beach

305-531-1325

A Miami Beach home deserves more than what can be found at conventional furniture stores. Details features the loud, inventive chairs, tables and accessories that give SoBe homes the flair they should have. The colors are bright and the shapes are weird, but they scream individuality, along with the other odd curios you might buy to hang on your walls. So, if you want to make your house *your* house, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better place to shop.

BEST CLASSIC FURNITURE STORE

Robb & Stucky

4119 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables

305-774-1818

www.robbstucky.com

Don't have a clue on where a new bed should go, or what color the wood should be? Robb & Stucky has custom interior designers to help you with all of your furniture placement, and even more, down to drapes and flooring. Its Coral Gables location features stylish furnishings for every part of your home in a vignette format so you can preview how the pieces will look together, rather than picking out pieces separately.

BEST FLOWERS FOR A LOVED ONE

Jenny's Flowers

6807 Biscayne Blvd., Miami

305-758-5555

www.jennysflowersmiami.com

When was the last time you gave your honey flowers just because? Well, go do it. Right now. And since we're telling you what to do, we're going to tell you to buy them at Jenny's. The plants are grown in local greenhouses, so there's a year-round selection of beautiful buds, baskets, crates, chocolates and gifts. You don't even have to be a whiz at romanticism. You can just call up these folks and tell them what kind of a concept you want, be it something modern, patriotic, for your boss, whatever, and they'll give you something fabulous. So, now that you're out of excuses, you'd better place your order. Oh yeah, and don't forget to tell your loved one it was our idea.

BEST FLORIST

Reggi & Michael Designs

2130 N.E. 123rd St., North Miami

305-895-4555

www.flowers-reggi-michael.com

Few things mark a special occasion like flowers. Reggi & Michael Designs offers every style including modern, traditional and elegant arrangements and will try to work within your budget (something we can all appreciate these days). Its \$99.95 "wedding special" includes a bridal bouquet, flowers for the maid of honor, boutonnieres for the groom and best man and a ceremony arrangement, all made to order in colors and styles to match your event. Here, you don't have to skimp on the pretty stuff.

BEST WEDDING DRESS DESIGNER

Yoly Muñoz

Yoly Muñoz Couture Showroom

2920 S.W. 27th Ave., Miami

305-448-4414

Yoly Muñoz was discovering new fabrics as a little girl in Cuba. Now, the international sensation has parlayed her discoveries into amazing bridal gowns, crafting some of the most unique formal dresses ever to grace the runways and the aisles. With exquisite detailing and a penchant for floral inspiration, her dresses are so stunning you won't want to pack them away.

BEST WEDDING CAKES

Ana Paz

2714 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables

305-444-3202

www.anapazcakes.com

Ana Paz's cakes are works of art. In fact, they're so beautiful that you won't actually want to cut into them. Hailing from Puerto Rico, Paz started her business in Miami in 1978, designing spectacular cakes for area hotels. After word of her exquisite cake designs got out, she enlisted the assistance of her three daughters and her husband. With design themes ranging from Middle Eastern to under-the-sea to classic wedding white, anyone with an appreciation for aesthetics will enjoy these edible works of art.

BEST JEWELER

Marlene Stowe

Bal Harbour Shops, 9700 Collins Ave., Bal Harbour

Saks Fifth Avenue, 305-865-1100

Neiman Marcus, 305-865-6161

www.marlenestowe.com

Jewelry designer Marlene Stowe's reputation is one of quality. Her business and design philosophy applies to every one-of-a-kind piece she creates. Stowe grew up in the South of France and studied at the Sorbonne, beginning her jewelry-making career on the Riviera. Now, she brings her experience to life in every sparkling piece she designs. Her precious gems and stones are unique with cabochon cuts, quality pearls and breathtaking diamonds, which uniquely adorn creations in 18-karat gold and platinum. Hint: Keep an eye out for a design aesthetic inspired by nature, gilded butterflies and leaves which seem to have just fallen within your reach.

BEST TIMEPIECES

Piaget

Bal Harbour Shops, 9700 Collins Ave., Bal Harbour

305-861-5475

www.piaget.com

Along with Rolex, Cartier, Omega and Patek Philippe, Piaget is considered one of the finest watchmakers in the world, and is, perhaps, the most unique. International watch collectors know the name Piaget is synonymous with elegance and distinction, making this brand of valuable timepieces absolutely timeless. With a line of designer jewelry so beautiful that it has heads spinning, the Piaget boutique store in Bal Harbour Shops is the place to select the timepiece you will treasure for the rest of your life and hand down for generations. If the price tags aren't in your budget, stop by anyway. It's a really nice place to just drool wistfully over glass cases.