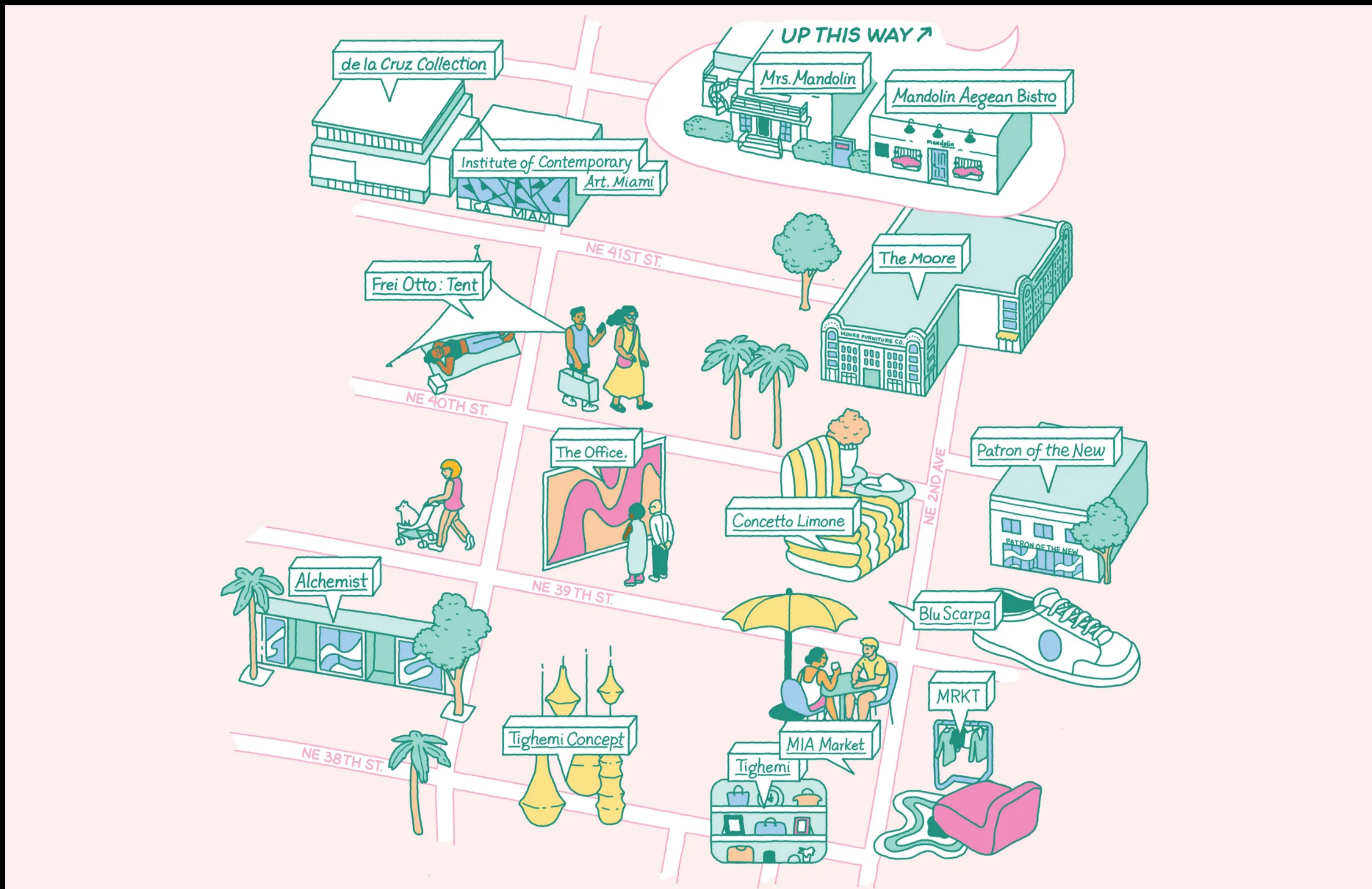




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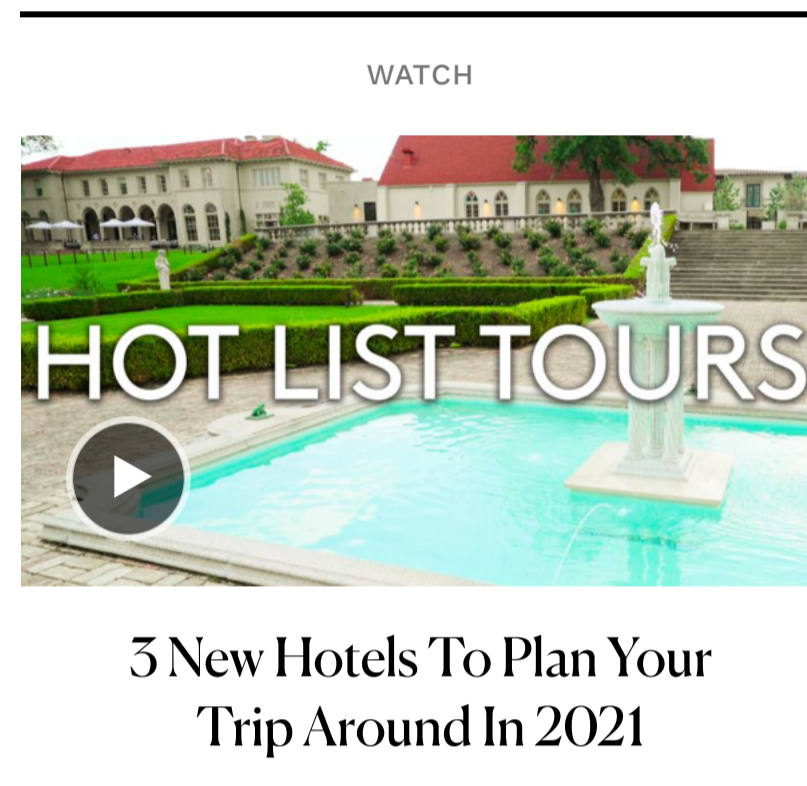
DESTINATIONS

From World-Class Art Collections to Cool-Kid Concept Shops, Miami's Design District Is an Aesthete's Paradise

Once a backwater, the neighborhood continues to solidify its place as the Magic City's cultural nexus.

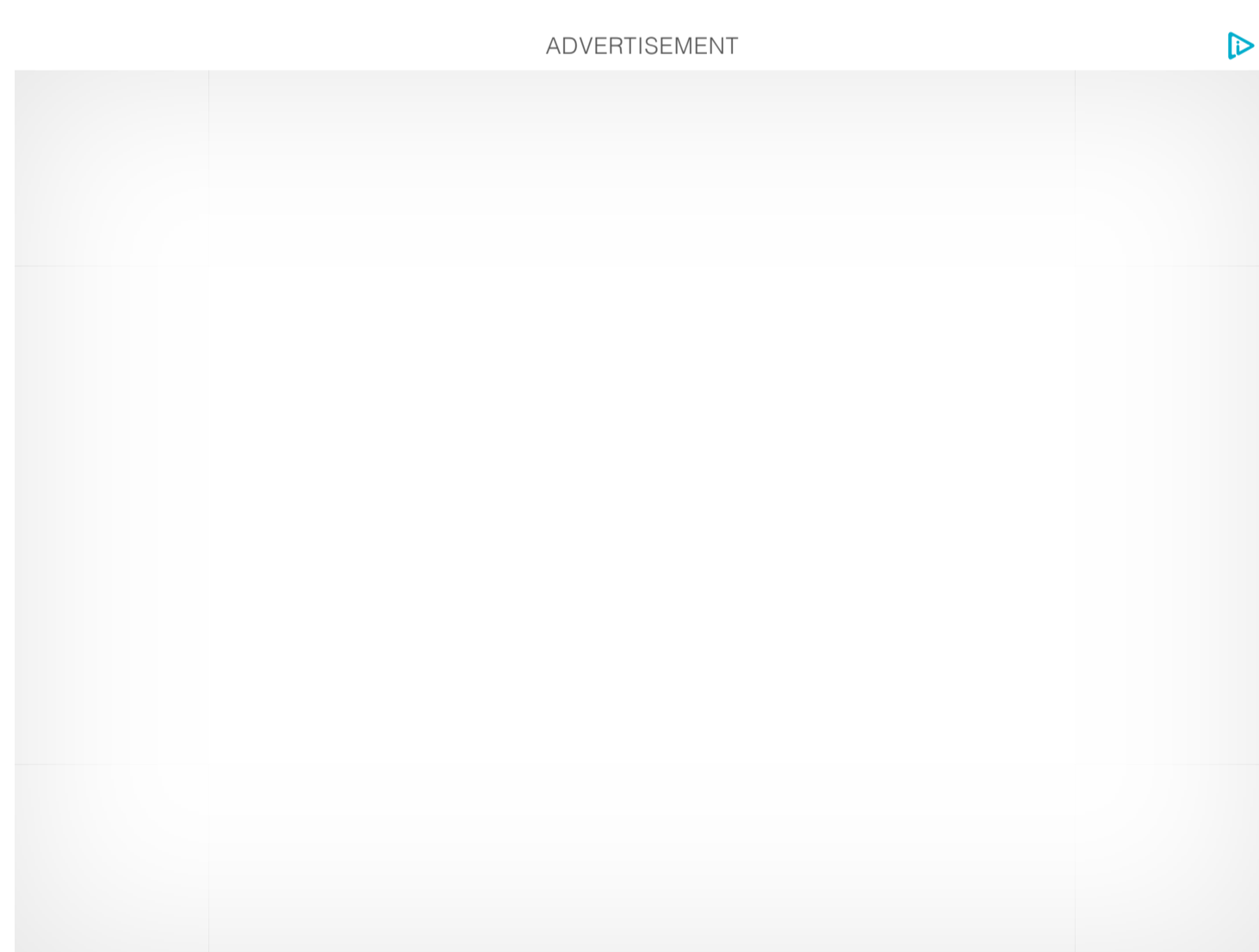
BY RACHEL FELDER
August 24, 2023

It seems hard to believe now, but not so long ago most visitors to Miami bypassed the showrooms and studios of the Design District for South Beach or downtown. The roots of the neighborhood's current cachet lie in the 1990s, when local developer Craig Robins, seeing potential in the area—a former pineapple plantation—began buying up its rundown storefronts and leasing them to top-tier designers. Eventually he partnered with L Catterton Real Estate to shape it into what it is today: an inviting and eclectic hub of cutting-edge art, scenery restaurants, and high-end shops, all presented in a distinctively vibrant South Florida style. True to form, the Design District continues to evolve: Opening soon is a major renovation of The Moore, a landmark building sure to become a neighborhood anchor. Come for the colorful people-watching, which is always guaranteed—and stick around for everything else.



The culture kick

The city's explosion of annual art fairs since the turn of the century (Art Basel, Scope, NADA, and more) hasn't just put Miami on the global cultural map—it has also upped the level of work shown year-round. Case in point: the **de la Cruz Collection**. The clean-lined, 30,000-square-foot museum, which opened in 2009, houses the extensive contemporary holdings of local couple Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz. Félix Gonzáles-Torres, Hernan Bas, and Glenn Ligon are among the artists whose work is spread across its three floors. Nearby, the **Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami**, showcases pieces from the likes of Hervé Télémaque and Rashid Johnson and hosts a rotating slate of exhibitions (a Charles Gaines show kicks off in November). There's also powerful public art scattered throughout the district—pencil in a stroll to see works by Sol LeWitt, Xavier Veilhan, and Frei Otto.



Grab some global bites

Greek spot **Mandolin Aegean Bistro**, a beloved district hangout since 2009, remains perpetually packed. While waiting for your table, pop next door to its retail arm, Mrs. Mandolin, for straight-from-the-Aegean goods like green oregano and honey, plus housewares like hand-painted wine glasses and chunky wooden cutting boards. Also popular is MIA Market, a high-end but low-key food court; hit Jaffa for Israeli dishes like roasted turmeric cauliflower and Sushi Yasu Tanaka for perfectly executed nigiri.

Stay, play, and work

Built in 1921 by farm owner T.V. Moore as a furniture showroom, the cavernous Moore building is as beloved for its gorgeous Art Deco bones as for **Elastika**, the commanding Zaha Hadid–designed sculpture that has stretched across its soaring atrium since 2005. Previously used as an event space, it has recently undergone a dramatic transformation thanks to the Dallas-based hospitality company WoodHouse; opening later this year are a restaurant, a members' club, and a coworking space, with 15 well-appointed hotel rooms to follow in 2024.

The cool threads in town

Miami's idiosyncratic style—bold and exuberant yet relaxed—is reflected in its own line of stores throughout the district; Alchemist, which sells its several clothing unisex tees, hoodies, and baggy trousers, is one of them. A few blocks away, there's MRKT, where the specialty is colorful, casual men's attire with swagger, like RRR-123's graphics-adorned sweats. Nearby, Patron of the New, a second outpost of a store with roots in Manhattan's Tribeca neighborhood, is a source of fashionable designerwear from au courant brands like Marni, Rhude, and Casablanca. Its locally focused selection includes street-smart pieces rendered in bright colors that are perfect for the sunshine.

Design shop drop-ins

Miami native Lisa Walsh's passion for Moroccan artisanship drives Tighemi and Tighemi Concept, a pair of adjacent stores (the latter of which she opened with her daughter, Lauren). The former stocks clothing and accessories, like fluid cashmere tunics and suede babouche slides; the latter, home goods, including handmade vases and handwoven Berber rugs. Nearby are three stylish shops from local boy Matthew Chevallard: Concetto Limone, which has the area's largest selection of Memphis Milano furniture; Blu Scarpa, with jewelry and shoes designed by Chevallard himself; and The Office, a showroom for works by emerging artists.

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