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# Re-Living History



As The Fontainebleau and Eden Roc Resorts Prepare to Re-Open, Morris Lapidus is Remembered for his Contribution to the Hospitality Industry

— BD

**F**ather of Miami Modern, Morris Lapidus (1902-2001), is recognized today as the original master of shape and color. Yet 50 years ago, when he created two of the most influential hotel designs in hospitality history — The Fontainebleau and Eden Roc — his 'hospitality as theatre' approach was new and not well received.

Lapidus revolutionized the hotel industry by taking the principles he learned in the retail design world into hotels. He anticipated an audience of Hollywood stars for both hotels and aimed to design a movie set.

"My whole success is I've always been designing for people, first because I wanted to sell them merchandise. Then when I got into hotels, I had to rethink, 'what am I selling now?' You're selling a good time," Lapidus famously said.

Now, just seven years after his death, a resurgence in attention is being paid to Lapidus as the Eden Roc and the Fontainebleau have received major renovations, which will debut this fall.

The Eden Roc will receive a new tower built by architect John Nicols. Meanwhile, the Fontainebleau will undergo a massive, \$1 billion rebirth that will put the Miami Beach property on par with Las Vegas hotels. Architecture and design firms such as SFA design, Jeffrey Beers International, Richardson Sadeki and David Collins are all involved in the project.

These efforts will no doubt spark a rivalry between these beach-side neighbors. Interestingly, the rivalry goes back more than 50 years.

Ben Novack, the original owner of the Fontainebleau, built a tower of suites on his property — a 14-story wall with no windows save one, where

Novack could watch the shadow encroach on the pool of the Eden Roc — just for spite. The case went as far as the Supreme Court where the judge told Novack and his former partner, Harry Mufson, "We cannot legislate spite!" Novack and Mufson were partners and owners of the Sans Souci hotel, also designed by Lapidus.

As Lapidus was caught up in the rivalry, Novack told him that if he went through with his plans to design the Eden Roc for Mufson, he could never set his foot back into the Fontainebleau.

In 2009, Miami Beach will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Lincoln Road. Lapidus closed the street with the expression that a car never bought anything. BD

**SFA Design's lobby design for The Fontainebleau Sorrento, a new-build tower; Inset: Lapidus' original interior of Fontainebleau.**