

# MORRIS LAPIDUS

## Architect of the American Dream



Represented by:  
Product Lounge  
Jason Rubinstein  
212.253.8680  
[jr@productlounge.com](mailto:jr@productlounge.com)

# Morris Lapidus is the grandfather of post modernism.

We invite you to join us in the development of a merchandising program based on the designs of Morris Lapidus, one of the most important architects of the mid 20th century.

Product development is derived from an enormous archive of photo images and drawings of his designs; including his buildings and their interiors; and ranging from furnishings to lighting to graphics.

We hope you will join us in this historical endeavor. Product categories available for licensing are:

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“Morris, you were  
the father of us all.”  
- Philip Johnson

MORRIS LAPIDUS, (1902-2001), is best known as the designer of glamorous postwar resort hotels in Florida, such as the Fontainebleau (1954) and the Eden Roc (1955) in Miami Beach. Yet in a remarkable sixty-year career that began in 1926, he designed more than 500 retail stores, hotels, apartment complexes, and stage sets that captured the popular spirit and changing face of Main Street America in the 20th century.

The Biltmore Terrace Hotel, Miami Beach, 1951

His signature forms - chevrons, "bearpoles," "woggles," or amoeba shapes, and curving walls and ceilings punctuated by "cheese holes," or cutouts - have become treasured icons of American postwar vernacular architecture. Lapidus has described his work as a banquet of delight and joy.



Fontainebleau famous "floating staircase", Miami Beach, 1954

"Why be exotic in private?"  
- Morris Lapidus

“Morris Lapidus is a fearless manipulator of colors and materials who dares to juxtapose them in a way that would make poor, timid Mother Nature blanch.”

- The New Yorker



International Inn, Tampa, 1959

Behind the program is Deborah Desilets, the last architect to work with Mr. Lapidus as his assistant. Deborah now holds the intellectual property rights to his designs and writing. Ms. Desilets is the author of the new biography, *Morris Lapidus*, and has another book scheduled for 2006 release on the tumultuous and controversial feud between the Fontainebleau and Eden Roc owners in the 1950's.

## Key Projects

Americana Hotel (New York), 1962  
Americana Hotel (San Juan), 1967  
Aruba Hotel (now Radisson Aruba Caribbean Resort), 1955  
Aventura (Miami), 1971  
Bedford-Stuyvesant Swimming Pool & Park (Brooklyn), 1970  
Boatel (New Port Richey, Fl.), 1959  
Cadman Plaza Urban Redevelopment (Brooklyn) 1961  
Chicopee Hotel (Chicopee, Ma.), 1958  
Churchill Hotel, Grandview Apartment Complex (London), 1980  
Citizens Federal Bank Building (Miami), 1975  
Concord Hotel, Kiamesha Lake, New York, 1958  
Crystal House Apartments, Miami Beach, 1962  
Daniel Tower Hotel (Herzlea, Israel), 1983  
DiLido Ritz Carlton (Miami Beach), 1953  
Eden Roc Hotel (Miami Beach), 1955  
El Conquistador (Puerto, Rico), 1965  
El San Juan, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1965  
Fairfield Towers (Brooklyn, NY), 1966  
Fontainebleau Hotel (Miami Beach), 1954  
Greater Miami Jewish Federation Headquarters, (Miami), 1970  
Grossingers Hotel, Grossinger, New York, 1963  
Hertz Skycenter Hotel (Jacksonville, FL), 1971  
Interkontinentaler Flughafen Hotel (Zurich)  
International Inn (now Washington Plaza Hotel) (Washington), 1964

Jabita Hotel (Nigeria), 1984  
Junior Chambers Int'l. Headquarters (Coral Gables, FL), 1968  
Keys Community College (Key West, FL), 1977  
Lincoln Road Mall (Miami Beach), 1960  
Miami Beach Theater of Performing Arts (Miami Beach), 1976  
Miami International Airport, 1969-1974  
Mount Sinai Hospital, Out-Patient & Rehab. Ctr, Continuing Care (Miami Beach), 1967  
Mount Sinai Hospital Research Building (Miami Beach, FL), 1981  
Ogun State Hotel (Nigeria), 1977  
Paradise Island Hotel & Casino (Nassau), 1967 & 1968  
Penn-Wortman Housing Project (Brooklyn, NY), 1971  
Ponce De Leon Hotel (San Juan), 1960  
Seacoast Towers East and South Apartments (Miami Beach), 1961  
Sheraton (Bal Harbour, Fl), 1956  
Sheraton Motor Inn (New York), 1960  
Sterling Forest Hotel (Tuxedo Park, NY)  
Summit Hotel (New York), 1961  
Swiss Air Hotel (Zurich)  
Tampa International Inn (Tampa)  
Temple Share Zion (Brooklyn, NY)  
Temple Beth-El (St. Petersburg, FL), 1965  
Temple Beth Tfiloh (Pikesville, MD), 1967  
Trelawney Beach Hotel (Jamaica), 1973  
Trump Village (Brooklyn, NY), 1952  
University of Miami and Gusman Cultural Center Concert Hall, 1972  
University of Miami, Law Library (Miami), 1975

## Honors / Awards / Recognition

Recipient, Justin P. Allman Award Wallcovering Wholesaler's Assn., 1963

Member, Miami Beach Development Commission, 1966-1967

Winner, National Competition S.W. Urban Renewal Program, Washington

International Competition for Trade Center on the Portal Site in Washington

Outstanding Specifications Award, Gypsum Drywall Contractors International, 1968

Certificate Merit N.Y. Society Architects, 1971

Honored by the Society of Architectural Historians, 1998

Smithsonian, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, National Design Award, 2000

American Original

AIA Miami, Hall of Fame Awards, Hall of Fame Award for Design, 2000

## Books / Articles / Publications

Architecture: A Profession and a Business, Reinhold Publishing Company, 1967

An Architect of Joy, E A Seemann, 1979

Man's Three Million Year Odyssey, 1988

A Pyramid in Brooklyn, 1989

Morris Lapidus: The Architect of the American Dream, Birkhauser, 1992

Too Much Is Never Enough, Rizzoli, 1996

## Exhibitions

Forty Years of Art and Architecture; Lowe Gallery, University of Miami, 1967

An Architecture of Joy, Federation of Art and Architectural League, New York, 1970

Weiner Galleries, 1972

Designers Forum Design (Linz, Austria), 1980

"Lapidus showed that you don't have to be grim to be modern. He mixed Busby Berkeley with Le Corbusier and came up with something hot."

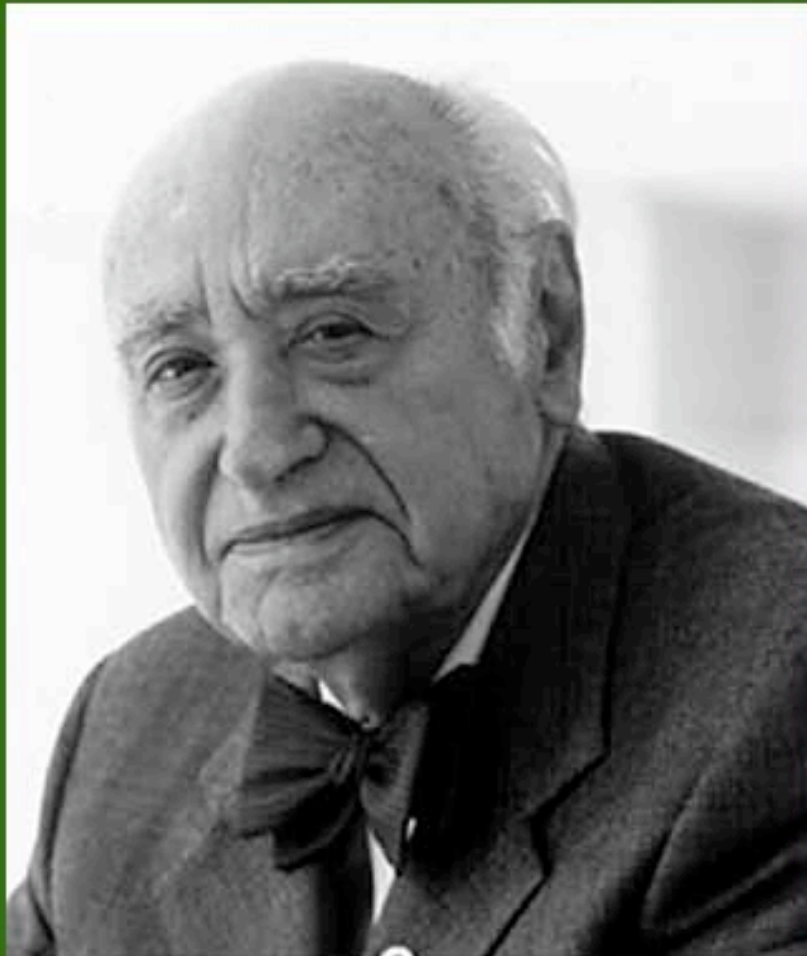
- Robert A. M. Stern



## 2001 American Original

Morris Lapidus, 1902-2001

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Morris Lapidus studied acting at New York University and architecture at Columbia University before embarking on one of the most dramatic careers in the history of American architecture. Today he is best known for two of the most glamorous postwar resort hotels in Miami Beach, the Fontainebleau (1954) and the Eden Roc (1955); for inventing the modern storefront; and for a large body of work that includes office buildings, apartment complexes, stores, hotels, and stage sets. Once dismissed for his stylistic excesses, today Lapidus is revered for his joyful subversion of European modernism through a uniquely American vernacular of entertainment, spectacle, and whimsy. Lapidus turned Vitruvius's trinity of classical architectural principles—commodity, firmness, and delight—on its head, putting delight at the apex of the experience of architecture.

**The father of 'woggles' and 'cheese holes'**

## **Playful architect Morris Lapidus dies at 98**

(CNN) -- Morris Lapidus, the architect whose colorful, grandiose style helped transform Miami Beach into an opulent winter playground, has died of heart failure. He was 98.

Lapidus, who died Thursday at his Miami Beach, Florida, apartment, designed 1,200 buildings over a long career, including the flamboyant Fontainebleau and Eden Roc hotels on Miami Beach. The two buildings became magnets for snowbirds, places where Elizabeth Taylor and Jayne Mansfield stayed the night.

Many were captivated by Lapidus' unorthodox style -- marked by curves, amoebae-like shapes he called "woggles" and cutouts known as "cheese holes." But critics and colleagues weren't as impressed with Lapidus, a child of Russian immigrants who grew up poor in a New York City ghetto.

The New York Times once called his work "superschlock," while Art in America deemed it "pornography of architecture." "They couldn't think of enough bad things to say about me," Lapidus told CNN last summer. He was so distressed by the criticism, Lapidus recalled, that he almost quit.

### **Renewed attention**

But in recent years, Lapidus' style came back in vogue. He helped design a stylish restaurant on Miami Beach, and the Lincoln Road Mall, a pedestrian shopping area he designed in 1960, was renovated into a popular South Beach hot spot.

He was honored in June by the Society of Architectural Historians at a convention held at the Eden Roc hotel, and in November, the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum honored Lapidus as an American Original for his lifetime of work.

"I never thought I would live to see the day when, suddenly, magazines are writing about me, newspapers are writing about me," he said.

### **Architecture over acting**

Lapidus was born in Odessa, Russia, on November 25, 1902. His family, Orthodox Jews, moved to New York when he was an infant because his mother feared Czar Nicholas II's campaign against Jews.

As a young man, Lapidus toyed with the idea of becoming an actor, but decided he would rather design sets than perform on them. He studied architecture at Columbia University. He is survived by his two sons, Alan, an architect who once worked as his father's partner; and Richard, an attorney. Lapidus' wife of 63 years, Beatrice, died in 1992.