

# PRODUCT • LOUNGE

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## PRODUCT LOUNGE SIGNS LEGACY OF PROMINENT MID-CENTURY ARCHITECT, MORRIS LAPIDUS FOR LICENSING REPRESENTATION

**NEW YORK, N.Y., MIAMI, FL.** - December 9, 2004 - Morris Lapidus partner and protégé, Miami architect Deborah Desilets has entered into a representation agreement with Product Lounge to develop a merchandising program based on authentic reproductions of Morris Lapidus' designs. Focusing on product categories that include furniture, lighting, rugs, tabletop, and gifts; the goal of the program is to keep the extensive legacy of Morris Lapidus alive. Product design will be based upon an enormous archive of thousands of photo images and drawings of his designs; including both his buildings and their interiors; ranging from furnishings to lighting to graphics.

Known for his theatrical style and his over the top showmanship, Morris described himself as the "architect of the American Dream". During his lifetime, he designed 1,200 buildings, including 250 hotels worldwide. His superglam mid-century imprint on the Miami skyline is unmistakable, having designed some of its most flamboyant landmarks, including the Fountainebleau (1954), the Eden Roc (1955), the Americana, which is now the Sheraton Bal Harbour (1956) and the Lincoln Road Mall (1961).

The public loved Morris Lapidus' fanciful work, but in an era when most architects favored the clean lines of modern style, he

did not gain acceptance in the design community. "The critics hated my work -- but the people loved it," Lapidus said.

Critics called his Miami Beach hotels "boarding house baroque," "emblems of tail-fin chic," and "the nation's grossest national product." The New York Times called it "superschlock." "Pornography of architecture," sniffed Art in America.

It was not until late in life, that his flamboyant, style earned the respect it deserved. When he published his autobiography, "Too Much is Not Enough," in 1996, a new generation of architects began to re-examine his style. He was honored by the Society of Architectural Historians in June, 1998 at a convention held at the Eden Roc hotel.

On his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday, Lapidus was named an American Original by the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in its first national design awards, and he visited the White House in September to acknowledge the honor. "My theories seem to be what the twenty-first century will be like," Lapidus predicted.

Jason Rubinstein, Product Lounge partner says, "How often does one get the opportunity of a lifetime to represent one of the true leaders of American architecture. Morris' architectural directive was to "give the people what they want", which is a mandate in today's retail environment." The collection will be built on the design elements for which his architectural work is known; the unusual use of graphics, color, new materials and light.

Deborah Desilets who has just released the book "Morris Lapidus" with Assouline, says, "Product Lounge is very aware of Lapidus' design legacy, and

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their expertise in both marketing and licensing made Product Lounge the perfect choice for the Lapidus line of luxury products."

## **About Product Lounge**

Product Lounge is a New York based licensing firm that specializes in helping companies increase their brand equity and market penetration worldwide through licensing and project development. More information is available at [www.productlounge.com](http://www.productlounge.com).