

STOP, THIEF! How to Protect Your Art Collection

Gulfshore Life

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Tastemakers' Choices

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THE *Next* NEW



THINGS

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BY ELIZABETH KELLAR

IT'S A QUESTION FOR THE ages: What's hot?

Actually, it's a question for the sages, especially when those sages are some of the most wise, worldly and influential members of the Southwest Florida community—true tastemakers in the arenas of fashion, dining, design, the arts and entertainment. If it's new, now or next, they'll know it. And better yet, they'll share it.

Fashion

With its clean lines and python pedigree, the R&Y Augousti-designed clutch Marissa Collections is showing this season is generating a lot of excitement. But Jay Hartington, co-owner of the Third Street South retailer, notes it is the clutch's \$405 price tag that's actually causing the clamor.

In one month, Marissa Collections sold 23 of the 24 little bags it had in stock.

So you're not familiar with the name R&Y Augousti? Hartington believes it's only a matter of time. Originally a furniture designer, R&Y Augousti has fashioned bags that feature high-quality materials, classic styling and intelligent pricing. For a customer seeking a sophisticated handbag that can be carried again and again, it's an ideal choice.

If bags aren't your bag, consider breaking out the baubles, bangles and beads. The more the merrier: One bracelet or chain may have worked well last season, but now get ready to stack on several, mixing a variety of styles and materials. Fortunately, there won't be



It's out of the bag: One of the hottest fashion items is R & Y Augousti's python clutch, right. Interior designer Kira Krümm, opposite, says today's homeowners are opting for a cleaner look.

OPPOSITE, PHOTOGRAPH BY VANESSA ROGERS; LEFT, COURTESY OF MARISSA COLLECTIONS



“We’re launching into an era of design responsibility that’s unlike anything we’ve seen in a long time.”

Smart design: Interior designer Dick Geary says recycled products, such as the bamboo used in this Naples home, are becoming increasingly popular.

Italian cuisine done right, *Gulfshore Life* food reporter Ivan Seligman recommends one of Naples’ newest spots, Ristorante Gaja.

True food lovers are smart to seek out a seat at this ultra-authentic Third Street South eatery, Seligman says: The ingredients are fresh, sometimes even harvested from the chef’s garden outside the restaurant, while the atmosphere is warm and low-key. The desserts are decadent, and the wine list—like the wait staff—is exclusively Italian.

Another hot seat is Dwyers Prime Steakhouse in Fort Myers, Seligman says. An established restaurant with a reinvented menu, Dwyers gets its style from new executive chef Bill Wavrin, also a noted chef, author and television personality. The new Dwyers features dry-aged steaks, Maine lobster and a variety of small plates, including the Seligman-recommended, pan-seared scallops on ciabatta bruchetta and ahi tuna tartar tower.

Design

Thinking of redecorating? Be sure to include a good amount of green. That’s green of the eco-conscious kind, of course. Sustainability is today’s buzzword—and the buzzword of tomorrow, says Dick Geary of Geary Design.

“We’re launching into an era of design responsibility that’s unlike anything we’ve seen in a long time,” Geary says. “I think we’re starting to rejoice in recycled materials.”

Interior designers and their clients are becoming increasingly aware of what a project’s effect can have on the planet, and taking clear steps to offset or minimize that effect. That includes using a variety of ecologically sensitive design products and alternative materials, Geary says; a few of his examples include smart plastics and recycled bamboo.

But using recycled products doesn’t mean you must sacrifice style. Geary is currently designing an 8,000-square-foot residence in style-saturated South Beach; when completed, it will be lit entirely in LED (light



Light source: Geary says LED lighting is one of the major innovations for today's home design.

emitting diode) lights. He describes LED lighting as one of the green movement's most promising design trends because of its flexibility and energy benefits.

"I can tell you right now," he says, "LED is going to be the light source of the future."

Being recycled doesn't mean forsaking comfort and luxury either, says interior designer Kira Krümm. Instead, as more clients go green, they are also looking for ways to pamper themselves intelligently and responsibly, while simultaneously choosing high-quality fabrics and patterns that better suit the Southwest Florida environment. The result is a home that is sleek and light, Krümm says, where less is more.

"Everyone's gravitating toward a much cleaner look," she says.

Nowhere is the move towards simple luxury more evident than in master bedrooms and baths, which Krümm says are acquiring a distinctly spa-like quality. Heavy tapestry-style fabrics and ornate furniture pieces are going or gone; the new must-have master suite bears a bed with super-soft, luxury bamboo linens, a few pillows and a light, natural color scheme throughout.

If a home that could double as an environmentally friendly, five-star spa sounds like the ultimate everyday hideaway, that's partially the point, Krümm explains.

Escapism is in, she says, with high-end candles and hand-blown wineglasses providing some of the most popular ways for homeowners to create residential romance. These details add sparkle to a home, while also revealing the homeowner's sense of individualism and creativity.

Entertainment

Will this be the year of family-friendly entertainment? For Steffanie Pearce, founding director of Opera Naples, the finger-painting is on the wall.

Southwest Florida has long been hailed as a winter haven for retirees. But it has been recognized recently that the area's demographics are shifting in favor of families. With that shift is coming a dramatic change in the area's

entertainment offerings, Pearce believes, as parents seek more activities that can be enjoyed with their young children and teens. "We need to recognize there's a much more diverse community," she says.

For its 2008 season, Opera Naples is performing three operas, one of which Pearce calls a "family opera"—Donizetti's

Elixir of Love, a light-romantic comedy. Pearce says Opera Naples will perform *Elixir of Love* in English to further court family audiences. The company will also begin an educational opera outreach program in local schools this year.

Outreach and education are part of a major child-oriented project set to break ground in 2008—the Children's Museum of Naples. The 25,000-square-foot, two-story building located in North Collier Regional Park will aim to serve Southwest Florida's youngest residents and their families. (Trend alert: The Children's Museum of Naples is being designed as a green building.)

Although many Southwest Florida residents have the resources to go elsewhere for family-oriented entertainment, museum executive director Joe Cox says he often hears families wonder why it should be necessary to leave the area to seek interesting and appropriate activities. This year may begin to mark a tipping point in their favor.

"To just focus on the retirement community is a narrow focus," Pearce explains. "We want to embrace the entire community."