

# The Miami Herald

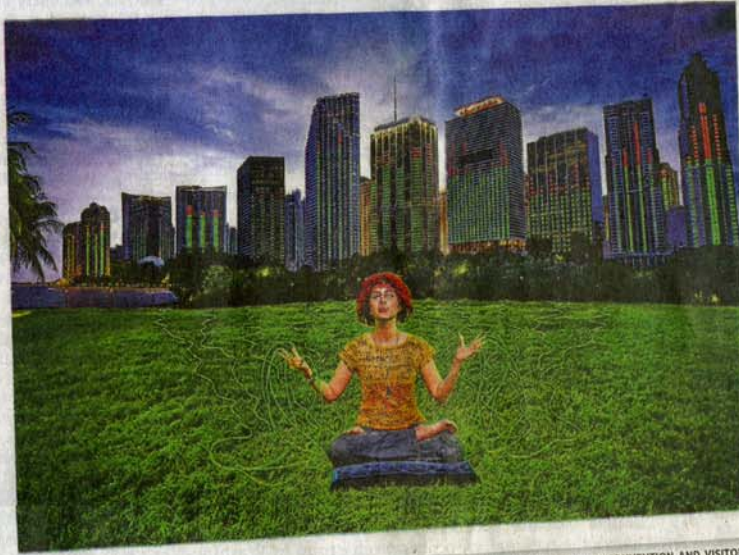
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BROWARD FINAL

## TOURISM

SO LONG, CHISELED CHESTS AND ENDLESS LEGS. LOOKING FOR WEALTHY AND MATURE TRAVELERS, MIAMI'S TOURISM CAMPAIGN TURNS TO ART



COURTESY OF GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

**A NEW BEAT:** Seeking to replace sexy images with high-brow art, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau features DJ Lauren Reskin 'controlling the beat.'

# FROM ABS TO ABSTRACT

BY DOUGLAS HANKS  
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Art replaces skin in Miami's new tourism campaign, part of the destination's push for more affluent and sophisticated travelers.

Centered around the catchphrase "Miami: Express Yourself," the ads feature local artists in surreal interpretations of Miami-Dade locales.

The aim is to move away from the sculpted and slinky young models who have starred in Miami's tourism ads for the last five years and reintroduce the area as a refined destination awash in culture.

"We've created a more sophisticated image of Miami," said Rolando Aedo, marketing director for the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, which commissioned the new campaign. "We're shifting from style to more substance."

The bureau collects about \$19 million a year in hotel and restaurant taxes to pitch Miami-Dade as a travel destination, and its ad campaigns reach a larger audience than any other promotions for the county's \$17 billion tourism industry.



## TOURISM



GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

**MEN WITH CIGARS:** Mannequins, outfitted by designer Rene Ruiz, are part of a new Miami chic ad.

## Miami: See it like a sophisticate

\*AD CAMPAIGN, FROM 1A

Its new strategy hopes to build on the popularity of Miami's new performing arts center and the annual Art Basel week, built around the country's biggest contemporary arts show. Overall, the campaign picks up on the notion that Miami is shedding its pop culture image of *Miami Vice* and hip-hop videos and emerging as a mature city holding its own in the area of high art.

"If I had said to you five years ago, Miami was going to be a center for art and culture, you'd have thought I was nuts," said Bruce Turkel, a partner in the Coconut Grove ad agency Turkel, which created the campaign.

But Alan Lieberman, who owns a chain of trendy South Beach hotels that targets young vacationers, questioned distancing Miami from sexiness.

"You're not bringing down the 20- and 30-year-olds with art," said Lieberman, an art collector and owner of the South Beach Group. "Art is nice, and it adds to our culture and it sells condos. But it doesn't sell hotel rooms. Sex sells."

In one of the new ads, DJ Lauren Reskin, a Miami native, sits cross-legged before the city's skyline, with the buildings doctored to look like a stereo's equalizer. Another shows elderly men playing dominoes in Little Havana, surrounded by gleaming metal mannequins wearing dresses by local designer Rene Ruiz.

Skin plays a minor role in these images, an abrupt switch from the "Fashion Forward" campaign the bureau launched in early 2003 for the umbrella "Miami" brand that was modeled after ads for Prada and Polo. Sultry looks and skimpy clothing were the common denominators in those spots, while the fleshiest of the new batch features a man in knee-length shorts

diving into an ocean of benches designed by Miamian Avner Zabari.

"A long time ago, I immersed myself in Miami," reads the quote from Zabari accompanying the ad. "I have yet to come up for air."

The high concept reflects a broader push throughout South Florida for wealthier travelers as hotel rates continue to climb. With many budget motels lost to condominium conversions and upgrades this decade, hotels are charging on average 40 to 60 percent more than they were five years ago, according to Smith Travel Research.

That has left tourism marketers to chase affluent travelers or risk losing business to competing destinations. Broward's tourism bureau is running television ads promoting Fort Lauderdale as luxury's new home and created a website promoting its priciest hotels: [sunny.org/luxe](http://sunny.org/luxe).

The Keys, which concentrates on travelers making more than \$100,000 a year, promotes itself as a low-key escape from a high-pressure lifestyle with its slogan: "Come as you are."

The new Greater Miami campaign, which launched this month and can be found at [miamiexpressions.com](http://miamiexpressions.com), embraces a broad definition of art and design.

Hedy Goldsmith, pastry chef at Michael's Genuine Food and Drink in Miami's Design District, inspired an ad showing a giant strawberry being dipped into a giant pink fondue at the pool of the Raleigh in South Beach. Another shows children playing in the Key Biscayne sand, around letters designed by local graffiti artist Tao Rey.

Highlighting the push for a more refined audience, the Greater Miami bureau has picked a new slate of high-end magazines for the ads, including *Architectural Digest*, *Gourmet* and the *New Yorker*.