

BAL HARBOUR

Bal Harbour's Secret Is Out

Bal Harbour Shops, The American Home of Upscale Fashion

BAL HARBOUR, FLORIDA, February 25, 2010 – Here's a test for all you shopping aficionados. Where in the world can you find 100 of the leading international designer boutiques all in one convenient place? A clue: it's not Madison Avenue in New York, Causeway Bay in Hong Kong or the Champs-Élysées in Paris. Second question: where did Lanvin recently open its first freestanding boutique in the U.S.? The answer to both questions might come as a surprise to even the most committed fashionista – Bal Harbour Shops in Bal Harbour, Florida.

Conveniently located a block from the beach at the northern tip of Miami Beach, Bal Harbour Shops has been Florida's most exclusive shopping destination for over 40 years. Its collection of 100 boutique stores include the crème de la crème of international brands from Chanel, Dior to Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci and Bottega Veneta. Celebrities like Jennifer Lopez, Beyoncé, Jay-Z, Shakira, Justin Timberlake and Lenny Kravitz have become regular visitors and the reputation, along with the rest of Bal Harbour, is growing.

The story starts back in 1965 when a local developer, Stanley Whitman, decided to transform a former army barracks into the country's greatest upscale retail center. His peers thought he was crazy, especially when he shunned the conventional design of shopping centers (enclosed air-conditioned malls with free parking) and built a beautiful, open-air space with lush landscaping, Zen-like tranquility (and paid parking). But Whitman proved to be a visionary and, from the outset, Bal Harbour Shops was a magnet for the big brands. "From the first day we were a howling success," says Stanley, who at 92 is still involved in the family-owned business.

In 1971 Neiman Marcus chose Bal Harbour Shops as its first location outside of Texas, then in 1976 Saks Fifth Avenue arrived, making Bal Harbour Shops the first mall to have both. The word spread and the international brands poured in. Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Hermès, Valentino, Van Cleef & Arpels, Giorgio Armani, Yves St. Laurent, Prada, Audemars Piguet, and most recently Roger Vivier, chose Bal Harbour Shops for their premier U.S. store outside of New York City.

Today, nobody can doubt the Shops' runaway success. Since the day it opened, it has produced the highest average sales per square foot of any mall in the U.S. Even in 2009, when national retail sales were languishing, stores like Hermès reported sales in its Bal Harbour store were up more than 17 percent. In fact, Bal Harbour Shops' 2009 sales figures were four times the national average. And in January 2010, they showed a 23 percent increase over January 2009 sales. In the best of times and worst of times, it remains the most productive shopping mall in the country.

But Bal Harbour Shops owes its remarkable success to more than its unmatched lineup of top brands. Thanks to Whitman's vision and the resulting design, it's also unmatched as a shopping experience. Visitors stroll the shaded lanes, past fountains and palms, stopping to recharge in the six restaurants and coffee bars. Its eateries range from La Goulue, designed in the classic style of a 1900s Parisian bistro, to Carpaccio, an Italian eatery and favorite for celebrity sightings. The Shops also hosts many of Bal Harbour's monthly cultural events from live music to author appearances to art exhibits.

Then there are the surrounding attractions of Bal Harbour itself. The original resort, the European-style Sea View Hotel built in 1948, was joined last year by ONE Bal Harbour with its private art collection, stunning views and sophisticated spa. Opening in 2012, the St. Regis Bal Harbour will add St. Regis' famous white-gloved service and condominiums to the mix. The beach runs for 750 feet of uninterrupted white sand, scattered with cabanas for shade and lapped by clear water that is perfect for swimming. Further burnishing the destination's allure, there are exciting programs for guests and residents that range from the Beach Fitness Program to an innovative Kids Club, developed in partnership with the Miami Children's Museum. For more information about Bal Harbour visit www.balharbourflorida.com, or for more details on Bal Harbour Shops go to www.balharbourshops.com.

Media Contact:

Meghna Patel

Laura Davidson Public Relations

(212) 696-0660

E-mail: [Download this press release PDF](#)