

# Shopping's a beach in Miami

It's a sunshine paradise and a retail hotbed. John Ryan visits Florida's ocean-side destination and takes a look at its shops

There are certain cities that conjure up images associated with retail. Paris, New York, Milan and Tokyo are among them. Miami, despite its self-proclaimed "Design District", does not. Think of this sub-tropical haven and perhaps Latin sounds and *CSI: Miami* are the clichés that immediately come to mind.

Yet there is a retail heart here, and it is thriving. And for those whose horizons are limited to Miami Beach, a somewhat different proposition from downtown Miami, look no further than the Lincoln Road Mall. This is a long, pedestrianised, open-air shopping

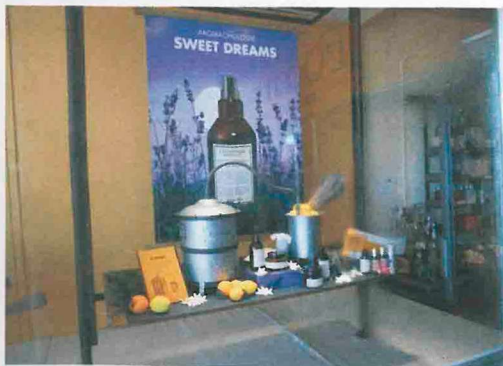
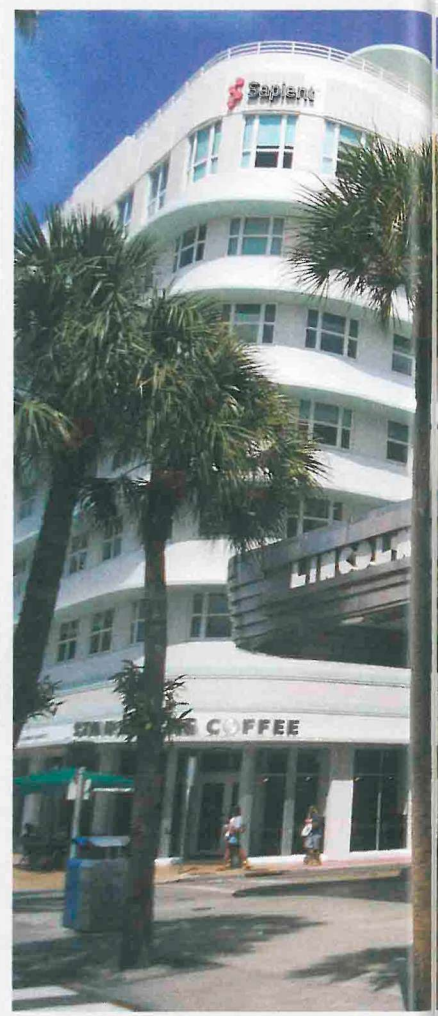
For more pictures of these shops and more store galleries go to [retail-week.com/stores](http://retail-week.com/stores)

**LINCOLN ROAD MALL, MIAMI BEACH**

**Status** Open-air pedestrianised mall  
**Anchor retailers** Gap, Urban Outfitters, H&M, Zara  
**Ambience** Cool modernist meets Art Deco

centre that starts not far from the celebrated Art Deco district on Miami's South Beach. Along its length there is everything from a fairly standard Apple Store to a gleaming former cinema and concert hall that is now a rather unique branch of H&M, to a Lacoste outpost that pays homage to the local fauna.

This is a high-gloss retail gathering with the shops either side of the main strip and cafes in the central area, offering a mix of Latin and North American food. At the height of the summer it's too hot for most to sit outside for long, however, so a visit to the shops is in order.



**L'Occitane**

The French beauty products retailer has outlets in big cities across the world. This shop (left) in particular manages to capture the feeling of Provence, the retailer's home stomping ground, thanks to a window filled with lavender in aged wooden crates and a bright yellow bicycle positioned in the arcade-style entrance.

Look beyond this and the remaining space in the window is taken up by a copper still of the kind used in southern French perfumeries to create scents. There is also a vignette that includes citrus fruits and brown medicinal-looking bottles, in which unguents for the skin are contained.

Collectively, the displays tell a distinctively Gallic story about what to expect if shoppers head inside.

By contrast the shop has a perfectly workmanlike interior, while the perimeter fixtures successfully imitate a 19th- or early 20th-century apothecary of the kind that might once have been found in every French town.

It is the windows that are the true draw, however.





**H&M**

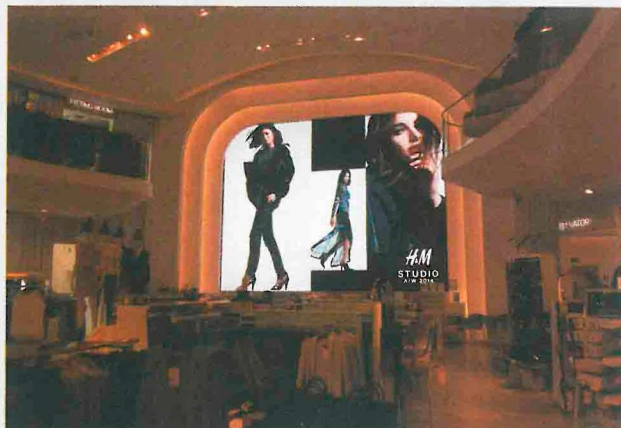
Most visitors to an H&M would be happy enough that the offer was up to scratch. The retailer does, though, have a number of branches where shoppers could be forgiven for looking at the building's shape as much as the stock. This branch sits firmly in that category.

This is a building that used to have pride of place on this long thoroughfare – in a previous life it was an Art Deco movie theatre. Now, the great bulk of the building is an H&M and it's very hard not to stop and admire the curves and straight lines of this gleaming white edifice with its chromed canopy. Indeed, the only bit of real colour on the front is the red H&M logo which,

in spite of its relatively small size, has real impact because of the contrast with its surrounds.

Step indoors and the Swedish fashion giant has taken advantage of the historic space, the focal point being where the cinema screen once stood. Now it is a massive digital screen showing content from H&M campaigns. And where the stalls seats would have been there are mid-shop display fixtures.

The store trades from two floors and while this may be a value fashion proposition, it is anchored firmly in the starry world of the silver screen. As an example of how to take a historic building and leverage its former existence, this shop takes some beating.



**Lacoste**

Head out about 20 miles west of downtown Miami and you arrive at Coopertown in the heart of the Everglades. Here you can board one of those air boats that you might have seen in a James Bond film and gape at the alligators – or, more precisely, watch them gape at you.

If you want to take a shortcut, make for the Lacoste shop on Lincoln Road. As well as a slick-looking interior that is an iteration of what has been done in several other locations, this store has a large crocodile as its showpiece. Everybody knows that a crocodile is the brand icon for Lacoste, and this white version has been created by local artists as a 3D mural along the back wall.

Not only has Lacoste succeeded in involving the community, but it has also combined something very similar to a local natural phenomenon with its own brand. This store was being heavily shopped, thanks also to a winsome fit-out.





## Urban Outfitters

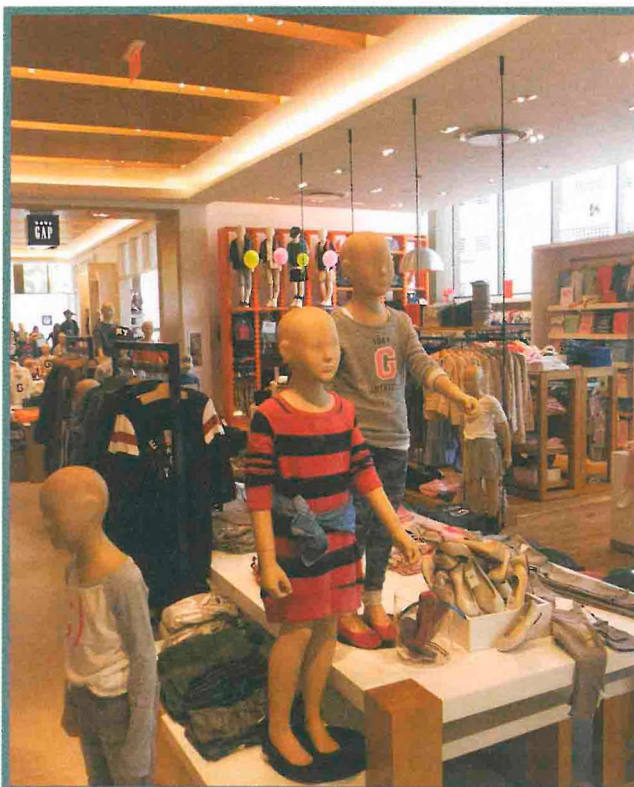
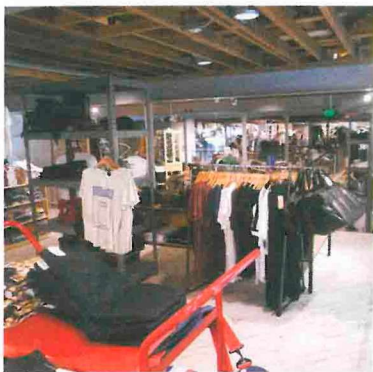
Creating a sense of place is one of the things that any self-respecting retailer strives to do these days, and the Urban Outfitters on Lincoln Road is no exception.

In this store, the effect is achieved thanks to the deployment of some retro arcade games, one of which is dubbed "NBA [National Basketball Association] Jam".

In many respects, this branch is much like some of the Urban Outfitters in Europe, but it is the use of props of the NBA kind that sets it apart as a country-specific, localised experience.

Also worth noting are the exposed wooden roof rafters. They create the usual Urban Outfitters ambience and are so effective that it would be easy to assume that they have always been in situ.

There is a lot of space in this store on both floors and, to an extent, this is reflected in the aspirational pricing of the merchandise.



## Gap

Open for just three months, the two-floor Gap on Lincoln Road is an architectural statement. The emphasis is on the curved glass and steel exterior at one corner of the store that leads to an atrium overlooking both storeys.

The combination of white and glass with neutral wooden fixtures inside makes this a fairly typical example of what Gap does in terms of highlighting its stock, rather than the shop itself. It is, however, an interesting

structure and one that is perfectly in keeping with its surroundings – right down to the fortuitous pair of palm trees that are located just outside (they predate the shop) and which help this cool modern building blend in with many of its Art Deco neighbours.

There is a lot to be said for modernism, and this is almost a 'white box' update, proving perhaps that sometimes the way forward is to look at what has been done before.

