

OCEAN DRIVE

NICOLE TRUNFIO



PUBLISHER'S LETTER



Courtland Lantaff, Susan Abrams and John Yanopoulos at the W Fort Lauderdale's grand opening; BELOW: J.P. Parlavacchio, Shareef Malnik, Jason Binn and Mickey Rourke.

Cue the fireworks and beach parties: Summer has officially arrived! While most of the country takes this time to relax and catch a breath of fresh air before September, here in Miami, the soirées are in full swing!

Starting July 8, *Ocean Drive* sponsors one of the biggest charity events of the year: Zo's Summer Groove, featuring NBA champions Alonzo Mourning and Dwyane Wade. With an extensive schedule that includes golf, concerts, an all-star basketball game and an array of after-party functions, this is truly one of summer's most anticipated events. And proceeds benefit two incredible organizations, Alonzo Mourning Charities and Wade's World Foundation.

The next week, Miami's streets will get even hotter. From July 15 to 19,



the fashion world flocks to Miami for Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Swim, a five-day roster of swimwear shows held at The Raleigh hotel. It's one of Miami's most buzzed-about summer events, where editors, retailers, socialites and celebrities brave the

heat to watch some of the world's sexiest models strut the runway. Miami Beach will also play host to the Swimwear Association of Florida. For the fourth year, *Ocean Drive* will partner with IMG as the official media sponsor of Swim Week. We'll kick everything off with a celebration of our cover star, Nicole Trunfio, at Nikki Beach, where guests will enjoy the magic Miami combination of music, models and cocktails.

Happy Fourth of July and welcome to summer in Miami, where the only way to stay cool is to be at the hottest events and parties! I look forward to seeing you out and about these next two months.

Courtland Lantaff

COURTLAND LANTAFF

PHOTOGRAPH BY SETH BROWNRINK (LANTAFF)



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to be diamonds?



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IN YOUR FACE



Whiskey Blue's interior, designed by New York-based Clodagh, evokes a beachy palette.

WHISKEY BLUE SENSATION

Rande Gerber brings his magic touch to the W Fort Lauderdale.

BY JACQUELYNN D. POWERS

Nightlife guru Rande Gerber is bringing his hip approach to lounging to Fort Lauderdale this summer with three venues at the nascent W Hotel. The husband of supermodel Cindy Crawford,

Gerber is something of a star himself, operating 30 bars all over the globe from New York City to Madrid. At this South Florida incarnation, expect to see Gerber's star-studded entourage (think George Clooney and Brad Pitt), as well as comely locals. And since Whiskey Blue, the lobby bar, spills out onto the street, you're likely to spot revelers in bikinis.

"The atmosphere is casual and sexy," says Gerber. "We want people to feel comfortable coming in from the beach." The cocktails are just as beach-inspired, with fruity mojitos and caipirinhas. Rande's company,

Gerber Group, also runs Living Room, on the third floor, as well as the pool deck, with its outdoor pool tables, cabanas, DJ station and fire pit.

While Fort Lauderdale may seem like a departure for this trendy bar owner, Gerber is pleased with the South Florida location. "Fort Lauderdale is an energetic place," he says. "I like going to South Beach and I have friends there, but I prefer to do places that aren't what people would expect. People would

"I like going to South Beach and I have friends there, but I prefer to do places that aren't what people would expect."

expect me to do South Beach." Actually, Rande once owned a bar on South Beach in the early '90s, called The Whiskey. One of his first ventures, the Ocean Drive location was also his cheapest experiment in nightlife. "I put \$100,000 into that place," he recalls. "I went to The Salvation Army, bought couches and

recovered them. I bought the sound system at Best Buy. We put that place together in 20 days. It was fun." Today, his budgets range from \$2 to \$10 million, and he works with world-renowned firms such as Clodagh, which designed the W Fort Lauderdale's interiors in a blue and amber palette to reflect the nearby beach.

While Gerber mainly resides in Los Angeles with his wife and their two children, he's constantly traveling the country visiting his portfolio of bars (most of which are in partnership with the W brand). "I love the road trips," he says. "I don't do them as often as I used to now that I have a family, but I definitely make the rounds. However, I'm a husband and dad first—always. The bar is my business and I love it, but my family comes first." To keep his empire running smoothly, Gerber has a staff of 40, as well as more than 2,000 employees at the various venues. "We have a concept that feels warm and comfortable," he says. "We don't force people to buy a bottle. You can sit at any table and order a Cosmo. We treat everyone with respect. We have a high-profile name, but once people experience my place, they understand what we're all about. I want Whiskey Blue in Fort Lauderdale to be a neighborhood bar." **OD**



Rande Gerber and Cindy Crawford