

Naples Design District continues to evolve, as it awaits new master plan



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Jennifer Correa opens Muzyka Art Space in Naples Design District

Jennifer Correa, owner and director of Muzyka Art Space, explains why the Design District is perfect for a new art gallery. *Landon Bost, Naples Daily News*

The [Naples Design District](#) continues to evolve, as it awaits a new visionary plan by a world-renowned consultant.

Since the completion of a multi-day, in-person charette for a rethinking of the district in November, new businesses have continued to flock to it.

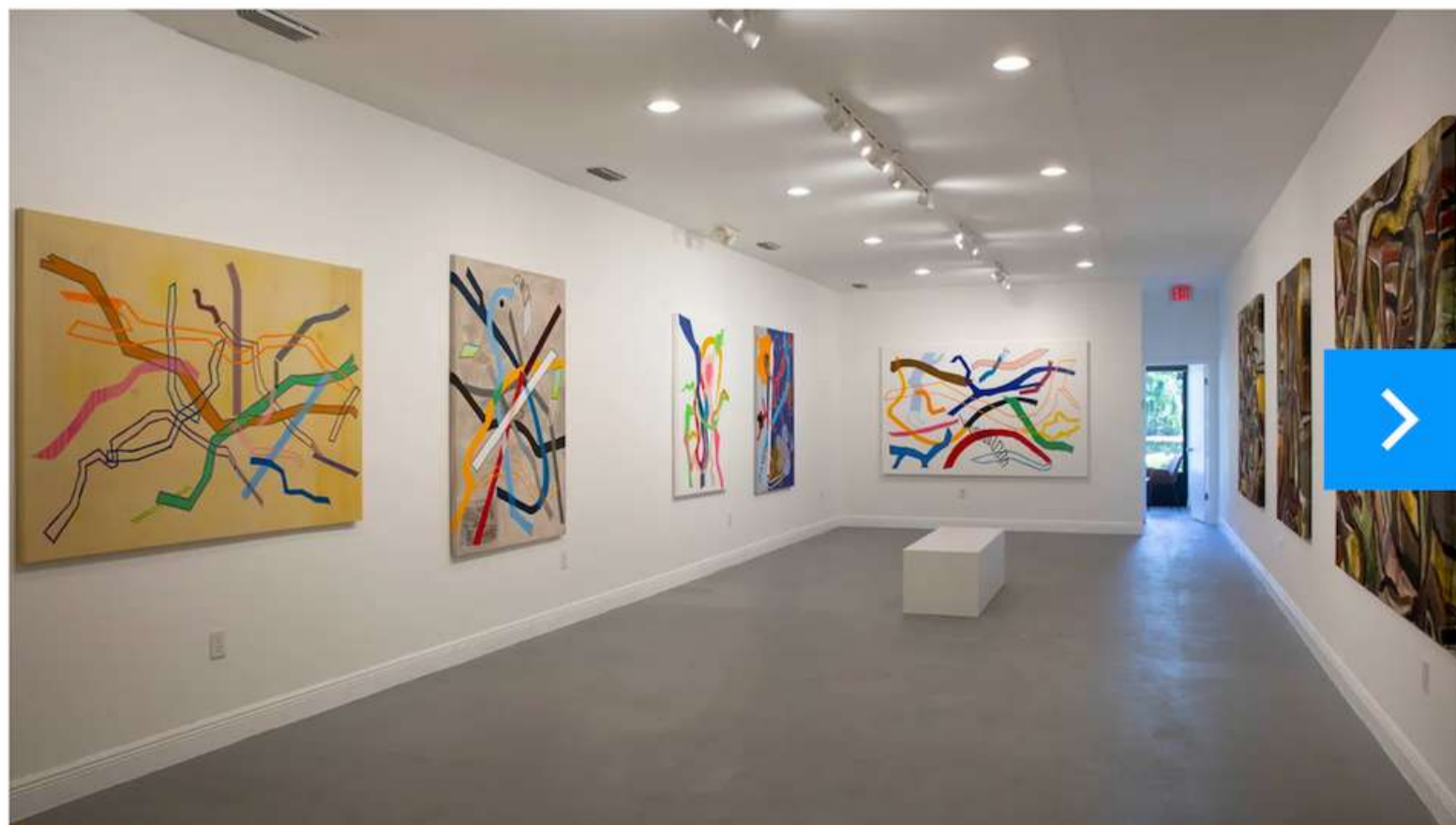
[The Collective](#), marketed as an inspirational design hub, has signed a handful of leases over the past few months. Those tenants include:

- The Earls Lappin Team, a team of top-producing Realtors in Naples
- Frank Ponterio Design, a full-service interior design firm based in Chicago
- Casanova Art & Fashion, a fashion retailer and seller of Murano glass based in Naples
- Saint Raphael Roofing, a commercial and residential roofer from Fort Myers
- Perennials and Sutherland, a retailer of fabrics, rugs and luxury outdoor furniture from Dallas
- Warren American Whiskey Kitchen, a scratch restaurant that opened its first location on Florida's east coast in Delray Beach

While some of the businesses have already moved in, others aren't ready to just yet.

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Muzyka Art Space in Naples Design District in photos

Photos from Muzyka Art Space in the Naples Design District.

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A new twist

With a world-class collection of whiskey, the Warren American bistro will become an anchor tenant later this year, offering creative cuisine and handcrafted cocktails.

The restaurant is expected to open by early November, adding a new twist to the district's dining experience. It's the brainchild of Jeff John, the CEO of Fort Lauderdale-based Damn Good Hospitality, which owns five restaurant concepts in all.

"Our company culture is about the arts in all of their forms. From starting our first concept, Revolution Live, where we offer a space for artists to take the stage, to working with amazing chefs to develop restaurants, to creating incredible cocktail programs with the best in the business, everything we do is to promote the arts," he said.



Warren - American Whiskey Kitchen, Delray. Submitted

He described the Design District as a special place, pointing out that it's in an area where the "arts are taken seriously."

"The growth that's already happening in the area is remarkable, with four new residential buildings, a new hotel, and the Gulfshore Playhouse. We are looking forward to doing our part to help make The Collective's vision for the area come to fruition," John said.

Perennials and Sutherland plans to open in May, while the Earls Lappin Team and Frank Ponteiro Interior Design expect to move in this summer.

Design inspiration



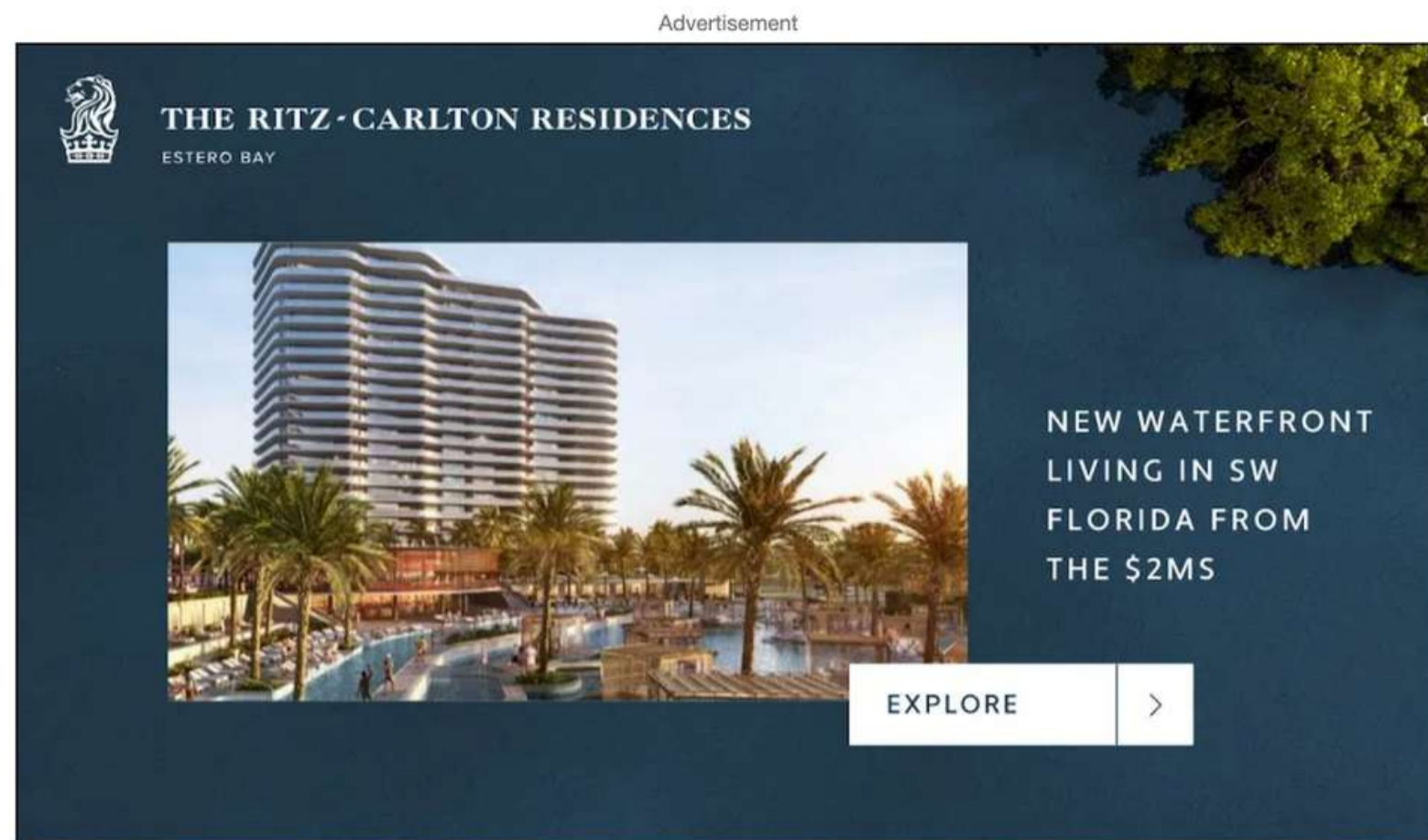
The Collective photographed, Monday, Feb. 14, 2022, in the Design District in Naples, Fla. Landon Bost/Naples Daily News/USA TODAY Network-Florida

The Collective's vision is to be a "catalyst for design inspiration," while redefining the shopping experience for home products and services. Founded by Randy Kurtz, a longtime Naples luxury homebuilder, the three-story commercial center spans 68,000 square feet, sitting at the corner of 10th Street South and First Avenue South.

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An advertisement for Genesis of Naples. At the top, it says "#1 LARGEST VOLUME DEALER IN THE WORLD FOR GENESIS IN 2021*". Below this is a photograph of several white Genesis cars parked in a row. Underneath the photo, it says "Based on 2021 retail sales". At the bottom of the ad, there is a "VIEW INVENTORY" button, the Genesis logo, and the text "GENESIS OF NAPLES".

The second floor is home to The Studio, with 30 mini-showrooms. With a reconfiguration, more space has recently been added to meet strong demand, said Elizabeth Kurtz, a business developer at Kurtz Homes and president of the Naples Design District's association.



There's a lot to like about the district already, she said, and it's only expected to get better.

"It is unique over here. It has more diversity. There are more services here, and we have residences here now," Kurtz said, comparing the Design District to the glitzier ones centered around Fifth Avenue South and Third Street South.

The Naples Design District is located to the east and the north of U.S. 41, to the west of Goodlette-Frank Road, and to the south of Seventh Avenue North.

Spanning more than 200 acres, the district includes homes at Naples Square and Eleven Eleven Central, and it will soon boast of a new state-of-the-art theater and education center for the Gulfshore Playhouse, which is expected to open in fall 2023.

"This area in the next five years is just going to be so much more rich and cultural," Kurtz said.

With the city taking more interest in the district, she said, it not only continues to attract new businesses — but more developer interest in vacant property.

Visionary plan



Scene from a final presentation given during a charette for the Naples Design District in November. *Submitted*

The charette brought stakeholders together, through a team approach, to help create a design — and a plan to implement that new design. DPZ CoDesign, the Miami-based firm that's leading the charge, is still working on the details.

Visionary ideas hatched during the public process include activating all of the alleys and other open spaces between buildings — by turning them into pedestrian-friendly gathering spots for food, art and fun.

Anita Jenkins, the community redevelopment administrator for Naples, said a draft of DPZ's plan should be in the city's hands by April 11.

She shared other steps and important dates:

- The first community meeting on the draft is slated for April 13 at Fleischmann Park, starting at 6 p.m.
- The city's Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board and City Council, sitting as the Community Redevelopment Agency, will hear presentations on the draft in May.
- DPZ will use the feedback it gets from City Council, the advisory board and the community to finesse the plan.
- A final plan is expected to come back to the Community Redevelopment Agency on June 9 for action before City Council breaks for summer.

Return to Naples



Galina Tachieva, a managing partner at DPZ CoDesign, loads a presentation during a public charette for the 41-10/Design District, Thursday, Nov. 11, 2021, at The Collective Naples in Naples, Fla. *Landon Bost/Naples Daily News/USA Today Network-Florida*

In 1993, DPZ, a world-renowned planning, urban design and architecture firm developed the plan that's credited with the rebirth of the once-sleepy, now bustling Fifth Avenue South in downtown Naples.

"Naples is very close to our hearts," said Galina Tachieva, a managing partner at DPZ.

Her team, she said, is eager to return to the city and to share its vision, born out of conversations with the community, including residents, as well as business and property owners.

"We are focused on creating a very unique and a very special place...It will be different than what's happening in other parts of Naples," Tachieva said.

One of the goals is to make sure it doesn't become "too touristy," she said, catering more to local residents.

Other objectives are to make the district more walkable, cohesive and eye-catching — while keeping away the big-box retailers and the glitz — and maintaining affordable housing for the district's residents and workers, Tachieva said.


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The plan isn't just about the vision. It will spell out in detail how the vision can be implemented, through regulatory and structural changes, funding and cooperation between the city and private property owners.

"It will be about collaboration," Tachieva said. "We have multiple property owners. We have smaller property owners that are actually the backbone of this small scale and really unique urban fabric."

The implementation must be a "fast and not painful process" for property owners, she said, and incentives may be necessary to bring them on board and offset their costs.

Having a visionary plan in place will open up more avenues for state and federal funding to help pay for district improvements, such as operational and strategic changes to roads that make it safer and more pedestrian- and business-friendly, Tachieva said.

Identity of its own



Jennifer Correa, owner and director of Muzyka Art Space, poses for a portrait, Monday, Feb. 14, 2022, in the Design District in Naples, Fla. *Landon Bost/Naples Daily News/USA TODAY Network-Florida*

While it awaits a new master plan, the Design District, known more formally as 41-10, continues to hone its identity.

The district recently adopted a new tagline: Art, Dine, Shop, Design. Its leadership is working to create a much more "vibrant destination of taste and style," with the help of the city and residents, as well as the businesses themselves, Kurtz said.

The district's association now has dozens of members, reflecting the area's growth and evolution.

Here are some of the businesses that have moved in since last summer, outside of The Collective:

- Jennifer Deane — an award-winning photographer and writer
- iN'Dulge — a cut and color hair bar, using organic and cruelty-free products
- Muzyca Art Space — a gallery specializing in modern and contemporary art
- Art Point — a seller of coastal and tropical paintings and custom frames
- Honor Yoga — an eco-friendly beginner yoga and meditation studio
- Bennett Interiors — an interior design firm
- Naples Studio — an award-winning video production company
- Dr. Kyle Nevius — a longtime chiropractor and physician educator and distributor of hemp and CBD oil
- High Tide Studio & Gallery — a fine art gallery featuring Florida coastal art

Dream comes true



The intersection of 5th Ave. N. and 10th St. N. photographed, Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022, in the Naples Design District in Naples, Fla. *Landon Bost/Naples Daily News/USA TODAY Network-Florida*

Margie White, owner of High Tide Studio & Gallery, said she's been "a serious artist for 10 years now."

With the opening of her business off Central Avenue, near 10th Street, she fulfilled a long-time dream. It's a place where she can paint and not only sell her own art, but the creative work of others.

"It just really felt like home. Because one of my favorite art supply shops used to be there," White said of her locale.

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Her chosen spot comes with an "entertaining view" of a roundabout on Central, then there's the hip, creative vibe of the district that can't be found elsewhere in the city, she said.

"It's getting to be almost a go-to neighborhood, or just something different," White said.

She has high hopes for her new business, which opened earlier this month.

"I hear gallery sales in the district are fabulous," White said. "So I'm hoping to see the same kind of positive results at my gallery."

Besides selling the work of other artists, she's opened her studio up to them, giving them a place to create.

"It's almost an artists' gathering place," White said.

As for her own art, she's focused on oil paintings of landscapes and seascapes.

As a newbie to the Design District, she said, neighboring businesses have been warm and welcoming, and she's already discussed the potential to have collaborative events with a few of them in the near future.

Expanding horizons



Muzyka Art Space on 5th Ave. N. photographed, Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2022, in the Naples Design District in Naples, Fla. Landon Bost/Naples Daily News/USA TODAY Network-Florida

Like Margie White, Jennifer Correa has realized a long-time dream with the opening of her own gallery in the district. She founded her gallery, known as Muzyca Art Space, to feature the work of modern and contemporary artists, including her husband Arturo Correa, an accomplished painter.

The couple became full-time residents of Naples at the end of 2010, relocating from Venezuela, where he got his start as a young painter. They met at a gym, while attending the University of Central Florida in Orlando, and it's been a whirlwind since then.

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For Jennifer, the gallery is an extension of her role as a manager of her husband's artistic career for decades — and of her own identity. Muzyca is her maiden name.

She said a friend convinced her to locate and invest in the Design District. That friend is Norma Long, owner of the adjacent iN'Dulge salon.

Together, they purchased what looked like one large warehouse, then divided it in two for their new businesses.

Jennifer admits she hesitated to make the investment at first, in part because her husband had already committed to buying a studio in Bonita Springs, where he could paint whenever the mood strikes him.

She finally gave in to a persistent Long, who kept pitching the location and the offer to share in the cost. In December 2019 they closed on the property, which sits on Fifth Avenue North, close to The Collection.

"It's up and coming. We're so happy. It's such a great location," she said.