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DESIGN & REALTY
architecture

Architect Kobi Karp at
The Plymouth Hotel
in the Bass Museum
District, the historic area
of Miami Beach he's been
charged with revamping

NEIGHBORHOOD *Watch*

The reopening of The Bass museum heralds the revival of a vibrant slice of Miami Beach's past... and architect Kobi Karp is leading the charge.

By Rebecca Wallwork // Photography by Nick Garcia

Wynwood, Design District, Faena District... these are the Miami neighborhoods that have received the most international attention lately, but the recent reopening of The Bass (formerly The Bass Museum of Art) will see a small but mighty pocket of South Beach steal some of that limelight. The area between 17th and 23rd streets—the Bass Museum District—is undergoing a revival, with new hotels and restaurants rising out of the foundations of some of its historic residential buildings. What's interesting about the development, says the man responsible for much of it, architect Kobi Karp (kobikarp.com), is that it's a return to form.

"This is arguably where South Beach commenced from," says Karp. "In the '20s and '30s, it was the place to go to drink alcohol and enjoy blues and soul music into the wee hours of the morning."

The Plymouth Hotel, with its Blue Ribbon Sushi outpost in the basement, is a preview of what's to come. Karp is now working on the Collins Park Hotel—a collection of five historic buildings on the block between Washington and Park avenues that will be linked at rooftop level—and revamps of the Peter Miller Hotel (now known as the Lennox), Sadigo Court and Hotel 18.

The Collins Park Hotel project in particular presents a unique challenge in combining different styles into one cohesive new whole. "They were built by different architects and each building has its own character," explains Karp. "But they're like you and me. If you're healthy, you have two legs, two arms, one head, two eyes. We are similar in our composition, but we're substantially different in how we look. That is what we try to express architecturally and tie it all together."

Karp's passion for the Bass Museum District extends to the pedestrian and social lifestyle anyone staying here will enjoy. "It's completely different than Ocean Drive, Washington Avenue and the MiMo District," he says. "We're creating a unique destination that cannot be replicated. We're going back to the essence of South Beach."