



[More to Love at Bal Harbour Shops](#)

With more than 100 of the world's top brands already at Bal Harbour Shops, the iconic shopping center at the northernmost portion of Miami Beach operates at 100 percent occupancy with a waiting list of internationally recognized luxury brands that want to open a store at this premier retail destination.

"Our biggest problem at Bal Harbour Shops is demand in excess of supply," said Matthew Whitman Lazenby, President and Chief Executive officer of Whitman Family Development, LLC, which owns the all-luxury fashion shopping center.

Although its clients are exclusive - "We are tenanted by the world's finest names in luxury and fashion, and, indeed, we accept only the world's finest names in luxury and fashion," Lazenby said - the renowned shopping center requires more space to accommodate their demands.

"We have a prodigious list of tenants who would be here today if we had the space to accommodate them," he said.

Founded in 1965 by legendary Miami Beach real estate developer Stanley Whitman – who is Lazenby’s grandfather and also Chairman Emeritus of Whitman Family Development, LLC – Bal Harbour Shops was expanded to its current dimensions in 1983, when a second level was added and leased under the direction of Stanley’s son, Randall “Randy” Whitman, Chairman of Whitman Family Development, LLC.

The 200,000-square-foot expansion planned for the existing 450,000-square-foot shopping center would include growth to the west, towards Biscayne Bay, approximately 30 new stores, and a third department store. A cinema on a third level of the shopping center is also under consideration; it would be the first movie theater in Bal Harbour Village – the small community that Stanley Whitman helped to found in 1946.

“Ultimately, we aim to achieve the right mix of different uses, so as to create an enduring – and, ideally, a somewhat unpredictable – place in terms of its tenancies,” Lazenby said.

Following a period of public hearings in Bal Harbour Village in recent years, Miami-based architect Bernard Zyscovich revised his plan for the Bal Harbour Shops expansion. He is working with architects Mark Hampton and Maria Sellek, who initially designed Bal Harbour Shops and have continued to serve as consultants for all shop additions and renovations in the shopping center over the past several decades. Miami landscape architect Raymond Jungles is designing the outdoor environments for the expansion, to complement the existing design, as well as indoor aesthetics.

WHAT might the NEXT STEP be in the expansion project?

Meanwhile, the elaborately landscaped, open-air mall – with its fish ponds, fountains, palm trees, and fragrant orange trees - regularly hosts designer trunk shows, product launches, book signings, and cultural and philanthropic festivities. Bal Harbour Shops remains a favorite destination for affluent residents of South Florida and for visitors to Miami.

“Domestic and international tourism has always been essential to the success of the shops,” Lazenby said. “Shopping is ranked one of the top tourism attractions in South Florida,” he added.

He credits an increase in international tourism to Miami – especially from Latin America, Russia and Asia – for the expansion of Bal Harbour Shops’ busy season to include the summertime, as well as the traditional winter season.

“Miami is a true gateway city,” Lazenby said. “Bal Harbour Shops is fortunate to be in a location ideally suited to take advantage of that fact. We enjoy a real diversity of clientele. Our South American tourist season kicks into high gear in the summer while other tropical shopping destinations bide their time until the season picks up again in the fall, but we just keep on trucking,” he said.

Bal Harbour Shops has consistently ranked first in retail sales for shopping centers in the United States. In 2012, the International Council of Shopping Centers identified Bal

Harbour Shops as the world's most productive shopping center by far, based on annual retail sales per square foot. In 2013, Bal Harbour Shops broke its own record in retail sales.

Bal Harbour Shops first opened in 1965 with 30 New York tenants. By 1971, Stanley Whitman had enticed Stanley Marcus to open the first Neiman Marcus store outside of Texas. When Saks Fifth Avenue opened at Bal Harbour Shops in 1976, the innovative shopping center became the first to include both a Saks Fifth Avenue store and a Neiman Marcus store. In 1978, the fifth Gucci store in the United States opened at Bal Harbour Shops – the first in a shopping center. The world's most coveted fashion and jewelry brands have continued to follow, establishing Bal Harbour Shops as an international standard for luxury retail.

“While my family's 50 years of history and heritage on this site hopefully count for something,” Lazenby said, “the real differentiating factor is our location. Situated in the heart of the Greater Miami beaches, directly across from the ocean, the Bal Harbor Shops experience could simply never be replicated,” he said.