

## Chanel Unveils Newly Redesigned Boutique in Bal Harbour



Text by Maria Tettamanti Photo by Tomas Loewy 3/21/2013

Forget diamonds. A girl's best friend is a **Chanel** classic bag. You can quote this self-professed fashionista on that score. And luckily for South Floridians, the iconic label unveiled a newly redesigned boutique in **Bal Harbour Shops** last night — replete with more space, inventory and Parisian savoir-faire.

While luxury houses such as **Louis Vuitton, Dior, Hermès, Céline and Emilio Pucci** caused quite the kerfuffle by relocating their former Bal Harbour-based boutiques to the **Design District and Aventura Mall**, Chanel remains loyal to its Bal Harbour Shops heritage. **Chanel Fashion Division President Barbara Cirkva** says, "We've had a long relationship in Bal Harbour and opened our store in 1994. Even before that, Chanel was a part of a women's specialty retailer, Martha's, in both Palm Beach and Bal Harbour. So Chanel has a history in Bal Harbour." Cirkva adds, "We think Bal Harbour draws a unique clientele and has always been a home for Chanel and will continue to be."

And moving to the Design District is not on the radar, either. Cirkva says, "There are three or four new **Downtown Miami** projects on the scene and people are constantly coming to us to pitch new ideas and that's something we always evaluate because markets change and populations change."

As for the boutique's noteworthy expansion, Cirkva says, "We've been in discussion to renovate for years." The new store now boasts 8,000 square feet brimming with ready-to-wear, handbags, costume jewelry, shoes, watches, fragrances and beauty. Chanel enlisted celebrated architect Peter Marino for the massive makeover and when conceptualizing the new boutique, Marino says, "The starting point is always the brand's DNA: The black and white graphicism of Chanel, referencing the feel of Coco Chanel's Paris apartment and reflecting the clothes in the architecture of the boutique." These nuances come in the shape of a Marc Swanson Swarovski-

covered buck sculpture, faux fireplace lined with raw crystals rocks, tweed- covered furnishings and quilted leather pillows.

The new store boasts a different configuration as well. Before, there were two separate entrances, and now there is one main entryway. Watches and fine jewelry have been integrated into the heart of the fashion boutique. “There’s now an easier, open flow between product categories — we’ve learned that customers enjoy shopping this way,” Cirkva says.

The Bal Harbour store ranks among Chanel’s top-10 grossing stores and while the brand’s classic bags are the number one recruiter of new customers, the new store is dripping in dazzling diamonds, too — just in case *that’s* still her or his kind of best friend.