

**MARKET NEWS**  
What's happening in Fort  
Myers real estate. B2 ▶

# REAL ESTATE

WEEK OF AUGUST 2-8, 2007

A GUIDE TO THE GREATER FORT MYERS REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY

## International Design Center: top end interiors

### Elegant facility caters to designers and the public

BY JEFF CULL  
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Looking for the elegant, unique, or state-of-the-art to furnish that new home — or need some help with the interior design? The International Design Center in Estero has it all.

On-call designers will give you an hour of their time — at no cost, or you can browse the more than 45 showrooms featuring contemporary Italian leather, walnut dining rooms, teak plantation furnishings or crystal chandeliers.

And more showrooms are on the way said Deborah Hamilton, the Design Center's marketing manager.

When complete, the center will house 70 stores in the nearly six-acre, three-story building.

The Center caters primarily to the interior design trade.

"It's like a huge library for interior designers," said Hamilton.

Designers shop with or for their customers. In fact, all the showrooms above the first floor cater only to professionals such as architects or interior designers. But that doesn't mean the public's not welcome to browse Ralph Lauren (the only other Ralph Lauren "to the trade" shops are in Boston, New York and Chicago) or Kravet fabrics or Campaniello Imports.

"We want the public to come in and work with our vendors," Hamilton said.

First floor merchants such as James Ross' Rumah Saya — plantation-style furniture and accessories — sell directly to the public.

Ross' shop is chockfull of interesting, handmade teak cabinets and tables and benches and even a rocking horse.

Ann Sacks, another first floor tenant, boasts innovative tile and stone for walls or floors or whatever. An oversized copper bath tub is a prominent fixture in the bath area showroom.

Hamilton expects the center to draw customers from as far away as Orlando, Tampa and Sarasota, as well as Fort Myers and Naples. And some designers make the trek to the Estero Center as often as weekly.

And it's easy to see why. Valet parking is the norm, while the exquisitely appointed atrium fosters the right mood.

The Center is the brainchild of developer Margaret Miller, president of Miro-mar Development Corporation. Hamilton said Miller just couldn't find the things she needed to decorate her developments so she built the Center.

Today, the closest similar facility is in Miami or Tampa.

And if you want to use the center for that new home or remodel, Hamilton suggests you start early.

"The best time is to work at the beginning of the project, when you're doing your research," she said. "Just bring in your plans and tell the designer, 'I'm doing a room or a home or whatever. What do you suggest?'"

The Center also runs a sale or two with "very reduced prices — up to 70 percent," Hamilton said. The next sale is Friday and Saturday, Aug. 10 and 11. For a \$10 admission fee — all the proceeds go to the Senior Friendship Center — you can buy many discontinued or floor items from all of the vendors.

We call it a "sample sale," Hamilton said. ■



The spacious atrium at the International Design Center in Estero. The Center has 45 showrooms and will have 70 in the nearly six-acre building when at capacity.



The International Design Center is located on the south side of Corkscrew Road just east of Interstate 75 in Estero.



COURTESY PHOTO



FLORIDA WEEKLY PHOTO

Plantation-style furniture and accessories are packed into the first-floor showroom of Rumah Saya in the International Design Center. Rumah sells directly to the public while showrooms on the second and third floor cater only to design professionals.

☰ If you go ☰

>>What: International Design Center sample sale

>>Where: The Center is located on the south side of Corkscrew Road just east of Interstate 75 in Estero.

>>When: Friday and Saturday, Aug. 10 and 11

>>Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

>>Cost: \$10 admission with all the proceeds going to the Senior Friendship Center