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My Palm Beach: Carleton Varney

Topic: Voices

They call him, “Mr. Color.” One look at Carleton Varney’s eye-popping portfolio, which spans over the last six decades, and you realize the title is not hyperbole.

As one of America’s best-known interior designers and president/owner of Dorothy Draper & Co. Inc. (one of the oldest interior design firms in the country), Varney embraced Draper’s design philosophy, which stressed “the use of bright colors and the rejection of all that is impractical, uncomfortable and drab.” He even designed the Dorothy Draper Collection for Kindel Furniture. His calling cards — color, floral patterns and bold contrasts — continue to grace the world’s most breathtaking castles, celebrity homes, governor’s mansions and even the White House. He particularly made a mark in the resort market. In Palm Beach alone — where he spends more than half the year, he



has left his mark on three famous luxury hospitality retreats: The Colony Hotel, The Breakers, and The Brazilian Court. Palm Beach makes him happy. “It’s home,” he says.

We caught up with Mr. Color himself, fresh off the ceremonious re-opening of his eponymous restaurant, Café Carleton, inside the Museum of Style Icons in Kildare, Ireland. We asked the legendary designer to share a few of his favorite Palm Beach hotspots.



Island Company – 256 Worth Avenue, Palm Beach, FL 33480

“It has clothing that is easy to wear for men and women. I love the surf board interior design and the friendly casualness of the place.”

Greens Pharmacy – 151 N County Rd, Palm Beach, FL 33480

“I love to sit at the counter at Greens and read The Shiny Sheet. I order citrus fruit and fluffy omelette.”

**al Fresco at Palm Beach Par 3 – 2345 South Ocean Blvd,
Palm Beach, FL 33480**

“This restaurant is on the Palm Beach Par 3 golf course with great views of the ocean. Try the sangria — red or white — and the calamari or lobster salad as appetizers.”



**Belle & Maxwell's – 700 S Dixie Hwy, West Palm Beach,
FL 33405**

“Belle & Maxwell's is in West Palm Beach. It's special because of the owner's attention to detail and the mix matched interior with stained glass hanging windows. The owner is Ms. Taylor who plans the menus. The big jumbo meatball is a favorite of all! Belle & Maxwell's is on antique row and the ladies who lunch in Palm Beach all go there.”

**Polo Bar at The Colony Hotel – 155 Hammon Ave, Palm
Beach, FL 33480**

“We decorated the restaurant with the Harry Benson murals and the deep green walls and Brazilliance wallcovering. The place is the hangout for the polo and glam set. Try the Russian mule and the steaks are cooked to perfection.”

Ibis Isle

“I go wherever there is a changing scene of boats and yachts. It’s definitely my favorite place on the island — close to all the bridges, Southern and Lake Worth, and a ride past Mar el Lago. It is a visual, oceanside treat.”



The Colony Hotel – 155 Hammon Ave, Palm Beach, FL 33480

“It’s the truly iconic hotel where Palm Beach greats like Marjorie Merriweather Post lived and hosted the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Right off of Worth Avenue and on the ocean block, it’s the perfect Palm Beach destination.”

Norton Museum of Art – 1451 S Olive Ave, West Palm Beach, FL 33401

“Just across the bridge, this museum has an impressive collection. You should also visit the Ann Norton Sculpture Garden and enjoy viewing the art while surrounded by nature.”