

Elegant by Design

International Design Center elevates shopping to an art



by Chelle Koster Walton

Soothing music flows out of a glossy grand piano. Marble and granite floors in circular patterns gleam under soaring skylights. Valets park your car for free, and a concierge greets you warmly at the front desk. Showroom windows beckon with swirling glass-art chandeliers, sleek white vases etched with human faces, mosaics of European tile samples, and kitchen fixtures certainly too beautiful to use. This is more than shopping; this is International Design Center (IDC), an elevated adventure in home décor decision-making.

The cornerstone of this spacious

Estero cathedral of design is its Designer on Call service, whereby you can engage the services of a professional interior decorator for one hour without remuneration or obligation. I decided to try it out recently; I desperately needed guidance on a bathroom project that was going down the drain.

Connie Rethford to my rescue. First, a consultation on one of the chichi settees in the elegant atrium. We discussed price, colors, size, and we were off. Under her wing, I first idea-shopped at Walker Zanger, where bathroom vignettes gave us some direction



Located between Naples and Fort Myers, The International Design Center features glass, marble, and granite in swirling patterns to provide an elegant setting for home decor decision-making.

in the tile department. We gathered prices and samples, and Rethford told me when the quotes were good. At other stops she whispered advice on finding better prices. She also worked into her spiel pitches on the wisdom of using a designer to actually help save money on a project. After an hour, she affirmed that there was no obligation as she handed me her card and told me she would like to come see my sorry bathroom (my word, not hers). I took pictures of samples and gave her my number to call once I had discussed a plan with my husband.

IDC features 50 showrooms and is a one-stop shopping destination that can facilitate any decorating and renovation goals.



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The elegant entrance to Walker Zanger International Tile and Stone, where walls of tile samples and a number of bathroom vignettes inspire visitors.



The realm of decorating, as Rethford explained, has become entirely confusing. Good, it wasn't just me then. The infinite, mostly high-end choices at IDC are supposed to help. Owned by Miromar Development, who also developed Miromar Outlets just across the street, IDC is divided into the consumer ground level and the professional upper floors. (Consumers are welcome to browse the latter.) More than 50 showrooms carry everything from hardwood flooring to ceiling lighting and everything in between—outdoor furnishings, fabrics, storm protection systems, carpet, wallpaper, Oriental rugs, antiques, art, closets, and mattresses. There's even a bistro where you can drop when you've over-shopped.

Ask the design concierge or consult IDC's Web site for information on special educational programs and other events.

With its daring steel sculpture by Swiss artist Housi Knecht to greet you at the entrance and its own inspired interior design, IDC is a price-is-no-issue foray into artistically inclined interior space. For a poor writer such as I, it's an occasion to surround myself with beauty and to dream. 🌿

Travel Editor Chelle Koster Walton is the author of Sarasota, Sanibel Island & Naples Book and The Adventure Guide to Tampa Bay & Florida's West Coast.

If You Go

International Design Center,
10800 Corkscrew Rd., 239-390-5111,
www.idcfl.com.

Designer on Call program:
877-234-7400.