

FLORIDA DESIGN'S

# PALM BEACH

THE ISLAND

## The Kennedys in Palm Beach

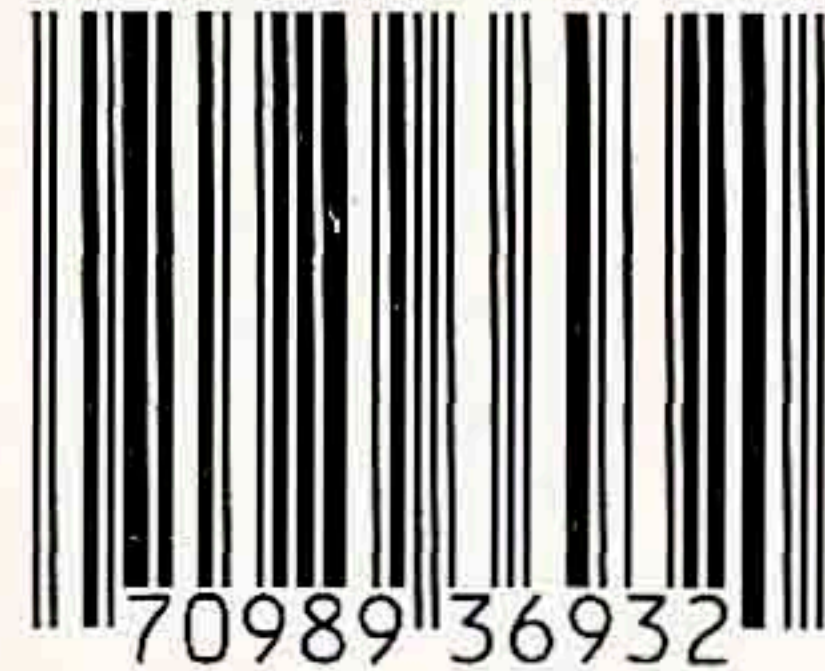
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Text by Marlene Sholod  
Photography courtesy of Mary Mahoney Palm Beach and J.A. Design Studio

# Mary Mahoney

Palm Beach Lifestyle Icon



When Mary Mahoney moved to Palm Beach from Minnesota, she had no idea that she would one day open a store on Worth Avenue that has been an international shopping destination for more than two decades. Mahoney is characteristically modest about her retail success story. In the '80s, Worth Avenue used to be so seasonal and she opened the store at the right time. It wasn't planned, "The store just evolved ... ignorance is bliss," she says.

Mary Mahoney Palm Beach enjoys a reputation as the place to go for home and entertaining. The store sources the finest crystal, china, silver and linens from all over the world, as well as custom-designed furniture, leather goods, jewelry and fabrics. Like its founder, this chic boutique is described as "unique, fun, creative and friendly." It reverberates a showroom aura — not perfect, constantly changing. Tables are set and beds made "like you'd do at home," mixing together the works of different designers such as Swedish designer Janet A. Fernandez, the artist behind J.A. Design Studio. The creator of one of the many designer textile lines to be found at Mary Mahoney Palm Beach, Fernandez specializes in hand-painted tablecloths, napkins, place mats and bedding fashions inspired by her Swedish heritage and Italian background as an artist's apprentice in Rome.

"The fun of it is how it's all put together, your own personal style," Mahoney says. "I love all the little items that make entertaining special — odd things like ice cream spoons. Maybe it's my history background that makes me appreciate the refinement of the past."

During the season, Mahoney hosts collections of jewelry, fashion, linens and lingerie. She doesn't need a public relations person to fill the room: loyal clients and word of mouth are sufficient. Her events have included the likes of couturier Sabbadini from Milan, and jewelers Elizabeth Gage from London and Marchak from Kiev.

As doyenne of a family store that comprises two levels and 10,000 square feet of goods, Mahoney has culled some of the most beautiful, interesting accessories from around the world, country by country, for more than two decades, to find the best. And she has thoroughly enjoyed doing so alongside her daughter and niece, Tara, who has a background in fashion design and is the store's manager. Other nieces and now granddaughters are waiting to make their own unique contributions ... and Mahoney welcomes their input as she looks to the future.

"Palm Beach, with its fantastic local and international customer base, is not like any other city," Mahoney rejoices. With all its sophistication and growth, her city retains a charming small town feel: "The more I travel, the easier I find it to be here!" ■



Born in Landskrona, Sweden, designer Janet A. Fernandez moved to Rome, where she lived for more than 20 years, studied design and started her career as an interior designer. Expanding her clientele, Fernandez moved to Miami in 1995, developed her own line of

designer hand-painted tablecloths and textiles, and opened her namesake firm, J.A. Design Studio. With one eye focused on the classics — the likes of Mariano Fortuny's luxurious fabrics and Renzo Mongiardino's architectural masterpieces — and the other on current trends and modern stylings, Fernandez blends her love of art and passion for design in every custom hand-painted creation carried in several stores around the country including Mary Mahoney Palm Beach on Worth Avenue. "Palm Beach is a very traditional and refined market for the best of the best," Fernandez says. "And my line of personalized luxury linens embraces that certain Palm Beach savior-faire."

