Restaurant Makoto by India Mahdavi

Sunset hues and floral daydreams.

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There is an archetype for upscale Japanese restaurants: light wood, moody diffused lighting, and black accents. But when acclaimed designer India Mahdavi was tapped for the relocation of chef Makoto Okuwa's Miami restaurant, she had something else in mind. "I wanted to redefine the Japanese restaurant typology at the crossroads of cultures that were relevant to this location," she says. "This is a more feminine experience of Japanese dining, one where the ephemeral memory of the atmosphere is as delicate as the experience of taste."

Makoto, on the newly opened third floor of Bal Harbour Shops, is awash in sunset hues and floral motifs, a playful but elegant reimagining of Japanese fine dining. Wood is still prominent, used for the wainscotting, tabletops, and parquet flooring, but the shade is a warm sandalwood. Peach-coloured walls are adorned with black line drawings of cattails and irises, and mirrors of various sizes echo the floral motif.

The Paris-based designer used a bright saffron yellow for the curved booths that hug each seating area, making the expansive space feel more intimate. Globe Murano glass pendants with clover-shaped collars hang above each table, with clustered chandeliers over the larger tables, and diffused lighting along the wainscotting gives the illusion of a just-set sun.

The tabletops have scalloped edges, either at the corners or all the way around, and a matching petal-rimmed rattan bar abuts the back wall. With seating for 244, Makoto's retro-style chairs and barstools are upholstered in a blue and mustard '60s-inspired floral print. Mahdavi's Makoto, which opened last year after two years of planning, reflects a soft and subtle femininity, one that welcomes all. ◗