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From top: Francis Toumbakaris (francisinteriors.com) showed his work at Design on a Dime in New York; a room by Greg Dyer (elementdesignnyc.com).

MIAMI & NEW YORK

THRIFT GOES FABULOUS

Complementary Design on a Dime events in Miami and New York demonstrate chic synergy.

By John Newton

In April, Miami-based designer Andre Swindell (adredesign.com) packed up a truck full of furniture and accessories and hit the road for Design on a Dime New York. The first Design on a Dime took place in 2005 and consisted of six vignettes by interior designers in a Housing Works thrift shop, with all the items for sale. It has since become an annual event in both New York and—as of 2016—Miami, popular with mavens looking for design inspiration, to buy unique pieces at a discount, and to support a worthy cause. The proceeds from the sale of all the items on display in the vignettes are donated to Housing Works' support programs for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Swindell attended the inaugural Design on a Dime Miami, and in 2017 he worked with Anil Kakar to design the House of **CONTINUED...**



Miami's Kakar House of Design (kakarhouseofdesign.com), with help from designer Andre Swindell, took it on the road to create an installation for Design on a Dime in New York.



...CONTINUED Kakar vignette for the second Design on a Dime. So when Kakar was invited to participate in Design on a Dime in New York, he asked Swindell to help him execute his Versailles Deco Dreams vision. "It was loosely based on the boudoir of Marie Antoinette," explains Swindell, "but with a contemporary feel."

Every year, Housing Works enlists designers such as Kakar and Swindell to install pieces donated by local New York showrooms. "Their production staff is incredible," says Swindell. "I've been doing Art Basel Miami Beach for 15 years, and the Housing Works team makes the process as smooth as at that event." However, getting nearly half of the items in their booth to the Metropolitan Pavilion in New York—all those provided by House of Kakar and other Miami businesses—fell to Swindell. Creating the vignette for New York while being based in Miami presented some challenges. "It's often easier to get businesses to donate items for a local event, but we ended up with a mix of pieces from Miami and New York companies and showrooms," he says. "One of the central elements in the vignette was a credenza from White on White, a midcentury furniture store in Brooklyn."

He says the road trip became an opportunity to see what is happening along the East Coast, with a stop in Savannah a highlight along the way. But for Swindell, the best part of participating in Design on a Dime was meeting other people in the design community, including the staff from media sponsor *Elle Décor*, especially its editor, Michael Boodro, as well as James Huniford, the founding chair of Design on a Dime. "Ford is a truly great person, who is giving back to his community," Swindell says.

Huniford explains that the event, since its inception in 2005,

has provided a way for the design community to give back: "It brings together the big personalities of designers in a collaborative way, working in harmony toward a shared goal." The expansion to Miami was an obvious move for Huniford. "Both communities in Miami and New York understand the impact of HIV/AIDS," he says. "They see it on their streets every day, so Design on a Dime gives them an opportunity to step up and support in one of the best ways they know how—through design. The designers really put their heart, time and energy into creating top-notch room vignettes to raise funds for the organization."

Andrew Greene, Housing Works' senior VP for development, marketing and entrepreneurial businesses, has been struck by the outpouring of support for the organization in Miami. "The city has become a home to both Housing Works and Design on a Dime just as New York is," he says. "The communities in both cities have shown there are no borders in spreading our mission and growing support."

This year the New York event boasted more than 60 vignettes by designers including Greg Dyer, Cathy Hobbs and HGTV's Francis Toumbakaris (as well as House of Kakar). The evening raised \$1.1 million. The Miami event, which took place in February at the Moore Building, featured 25 vignettes by designers including b+g design, Brown Davis Interiors and Oskar Torres. That event brought in \$330,000. Since its founding, Design on a Dime has earned more than \$11 million for Housing Works programs.

Swindell is already looking forward to the third Design on a Dime Miami. "I have some ideas rattling around in my head for the next vignette," Swindell says. "It's at the top of my summer to-do list." housingworks.org ■