

## **Watch Out Miami, Here Comes Generation Jones**

*By Karen Weiner Escalera*

Miami, the right place at the right time. Times led by the gestalt of the baby boomers, the “me” generation, driven by achievement, success and individuality. Miami is now famous for its love of conspicuous consumption, celebrated for its money and power and its philosophy of “viva yo” (cheers for me). More is more. However, is change in the wind?

If you follow prominent trend watchers from near and afar, the times are already changing. And change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not slow going, so hold onto your hats and look out for Generation Jones (ages 41 to 52, the largest generation in U.S. history [www.generationjones.com](http://www.generationjones.com)) who will be leaving their mark and setting the agenda.

Trend watchers, including Chris Sanderson of the Future Laboratory, cite a move to a “considered but conservative view of culture, values and social attributes”. Even Todd Cunningham, SVP of Brand Strategy and Planning at MTV, icon of the Diddy crazed generation and all that it stands for, said values are what will resonate with the young, who are reverting to the beliefs of their grandparents’ upbringing. Where Boomers were driven by individuality and self, the new generation will be more civic minded, embracing a sense of community. As Sanderson said, VIP will come to mean “Very Important Planet” where the environment and ecology will resonate as never before, along with the practices of fair trade and ethical brands. It’s happening. General Electric announced that they’re “going green”, Starbucks has touted their fair trade practices for some time, and even Wal-Mart just announced they’ll be selling organic foods.

The trend setters will not be the Paris Hiltons and Lindsay Lohans of the world, but celebrities who ally themselves with social issues. It’s no coincidence that George Clooney, who donated his five-figure Oscar goody bag to a charity auction and made a highly publicized trip to Darfur, is on the cover of Vanity Fair’s environmental issue and is profiled alongside other environmentalists, such as Julia Roberts and Ed Norton. “Brangelina” is hotter than ever – not only for their celebrity but for bringing Third World philanthropic issues to the forefront –education, land mines and refugees, to their high profile attendance at the World Economic Summit in Switzerland earlier this year.

Authenticity and essentialism will make a comeback across the board, from the food we eat to packaging and even architecture...doing good for our bodies and the environment. We’ve gone as far as we can go with dishes like parmesan infused snapper with foam of green peas and raspberry coulis. How about a piece of truly fresh grilled wild snapper caught that morning (as opposed to fresh frozen) with just harvested organic peas? Rather than another designer-branded condo or public area devoted to zen, Generation Jones will be looking for architecture that is green and luxe. Take Austria’s Solar Tube house which utilizes solar rays and deflects the damaging UV ones, or the “inverted umbrella” house in the Bahamas, whose roof pipes funnels scarce rainwater to cisterns. The National Building Museum in Washington just ran an exhibit based on the book “The Green House” whose message is “going green doesn’t mean going granola”.

With Generation Jones, time will be the biggest luxury. Technology was supposed to make us time rich, but we never seem to have enough time regardless of one’s wealth. Quality of life will be increasingly defined by what gives or takes away our time --- traffic probably being the greatest culprit of time deprivation, especially now as South Florida’s population continues to soar. Local consumers, dwellers, business owners and leaders, will need to take a greater part in decision-making on issues, such as traffic, by voting in ballots and with their pocketbooks.

What does all this mean for Miami? The UK's *Viewpoint* magazine dubbed the next era to be the one of "Reenlightenment." Leaders in business and government will need to start the debate and examine civic society, citizenship and rights versus responsibility and, following from that, taking action. It's interesting to note that the Democratic Party is considering the theme "For the Common Good" for their next election platform.

"Going green", having a sense of community and civic responsibility will no longer only be for the Birkenstock and backpacker crowd. Green spaces, environmentally sound architecture, a solid educational system, effective public transport, affordable housing and enlightened urban planning will not only make for good corporate citizens, it will become critical to the economic success and viability of Miami's future. As Graydon Carter, editor of Vanity Fair said, "If you're in business, ignore green at your peril." I'd advise our government to heed that warning.