



## MIAMI BEACH WITH BISCAYNE BAY VIEW

The brief was to track down a unique condominium in Miami Beach, beside the water and preferably near Lincoln Road. Rana Florida, Huffington Post contributor and author of *Upgrade, Taking Your Work and Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary*, and her husband called in New York architectural designer Chris Benfield to assist them in their search. They were looking for a spacious, light home in Miami with a large terrace and sufficient room for their emerging art collection. They found it, a modern, light condominium in a walkable urban neighborhood with a spectacular view of Biscayne Bay.

**Above:** the large terrace at the condominium belonging to Rana Florida and her husband at Miami Beach with Dedon Slim Line outdoor sofas designed by Jean-Marie Massaud. The outdoor loungers and beds are by Gandia Blasco. **Right:** Rana Florida. She is an author, editor and cultural curator, and is CEO of the Creative Class Group, managing new business developments, marketing, consulting, research and global operations. The firm's clients include BMW, Starwood, IBM, Philips, Pinewood Studios, Zappos and Johnson & Johnson. She recently launched her new book *Upgrade, Taking Your Work and Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary*.

text: Raphaëlle de Stanislas  
photos: Moris Moreno  
portrait photo: Gabor Jurina



Right: architectural designer Chris Benfield who designed the interior in collaboration with the owners.

Below: the living space forms the hub of the interior of the Miami apartment belonging to Rana Florida and her husband. The interior design is by Chris Benfield.

The sofa was designed by Piero Lissoni for Living Divani. The Yale low table in the foreground was designed by Jean-Marie Massaud for MDF Italia.

The large painting is by Polly Apfelbaum (D'Amelio Terras gallery in Chelsea, NY). The 'Charcoal Flags' are by Paul Jacobsen (2012, from Klemens Gasser & Tanja Grunert gallery in New York).

Right, on the wall: 'The Beatles were Witches (Silver Beatles)' by Blair Thurman, 2011 (Triple V gallery, Paris) – it depicts 4 neon revolvers on wood and canvas, and combined with silver paint.



The apartment is at the Biscayne Bay side of Miami Beach with a view towards the dynamic city itself. The setting is a spectacular mix of urban and natural, with rooms that flow through to the large outdoor terraces. The floor area is 300 m2, plus the same for the terrace space (described by the architect as the 'lanai').

The property comprises a large living area, kitchen and dining room, as well as two bedrooms and three bathrooms. When it was renovated, the second bedroom was converted into guest accommodation.

The complex, with the elegant lobby designed by Sam Robin, in which the apartment is a favourite retreat for art lovers and creative people. Undoubtedly because it is a short walk from Lincoln Road and in the evening there are views of the city lights across the bay.

The architectural designer Chris Benfield was asked to revamp the interior in keeping with the part-time owners' wishes. "In view of the clients' minimalist tastes, the first intervention was to create plenty of natural light in the interior. An additional effect was to guarantee an unimpeded view of the bay. Then, to further enhance the feeling of space, the third bedroom had to go – it has been turned into a dining room plus space for entertaining. A wet bar was also built there. The result is that the living area, kitchen and dining area-cum-wet bar now form one large space with 3-metre high window walls all round. When the furniture was chosen, we went for low sofas and armchairs to keep a clear view. The idea is to enjoy the view, wherever you sit, in either the living room or the dining area."

Chris Benfield has created a contrast between this considerable openness and the privacy of the hallway and bedrooms. The entrance



Above: looking from the kitchen to the living area with a DFC bull's head from Mexico City. Above the Vermelha chair designed by Fernando and Umberto Campagna: a Fawn by the Russian artist, Oleg Dou (Galeria Senda, Barcelona). The kitchen is by Poggenpohl with Wolf ovens and Sub Zero fridges and wine coolers. A Puck 7 lamp designed by Jordi Vilardell for Vibia is installed in the ceiling.

Below: the outdoor terrace with Dedon furniture and Gandia Blasco loungers.





lobby is now highly elegant thanks to several structural interventions. Wherever possible, the bedrooms have been enlarged and the master suite has acquired two walk-in closets. Whatever the intervention, the architect has taken into account that the artworks of emerging artist collected by the couple had to be well placed in the apartment.

When asked what makes this apartment special, Benfield replied: "The large bay-side terrace gives you the feeling of being afloat on the water. It is one vast living space with various seating areas, an outdoor kitchen, sun decks and an outdoor dining area."

He has given the entire apartment a consistent, sophisticated look by applying a pale colour palette indoors and outdoors. In the bar and the kitchen bar he used Jerusalem stone. The floors are tiled in beige marble. The furniture upholstery is in similar colours, as are the transparent fabrics of the window treatments.

Rana Florida and her husband live here for part of the year. She is an author, and editor on business, design and creativity. As CEO of the Creative Class Group, she manages new business developments, marketing, consulting, research and global operations. The firm's clients include BMW, United Nations, Starwood, IBM, Philips, Pinewood Studios, Zappos and Johnson & Johnson. Prior to that she was responsible for the global strategy communications of HMSHost, one of the world's major airport developers. She writes columns for various leading publications and recently published her book *Upgrade, Taking Your Work and Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary*.

And as if that isn't enough, she has lent her expertise to several boards, including Airports Council International in Washington, DC, the Council for International Visitors and the Founders Junior Council, Detroit Institute of Arts. She is a board member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra as well as supporting several charitable organisations. She is currently an advisory board member of the online retailer Shop.ca.

**Top left:** the master bedroom which also abuts the large outdoor terrace overlooking the bay. The Talamo bed was designed for Zanotta by Damian Williamson. **Below left:** the central corridor linking the living area with the rooms beyond is also used to display art. At the very back of the corridor: 'Pink Lady' by LA artist Sonia Luc at Pulse Fair Art Basel in Miami.

**Next:** detail of the living room with a round table designed by Eero Saarinen for Knoll.

**Below:** detail of the dining room with a Brand van Egmond lamp.

**Beside that:** a view of the other bedroom with an aluminium bed designed by Bruno Fattorini for MDF Italia. The Dada bedside table is from B&B Italia designed by Studio Kairos. The wall closets in both bedrooms are by Ligne Roset.

The two DAR chairs are a Charles and Ray Eames design. The design dates from 1948 and was produced for Herman Miller. Today the DAR chairs are included in the Vitra collection. The 'Two Bloom' lamp was designed by Hiroshi Kawano for Ligne Roset.

#### Overleaf

The living room with terraces on two sides. The sofa was designed by Piero Lissoni for Living Divani. The Synopsis dining table is a Jean-Marie Massaud design for Porro. The H-chairs around the table were designed by Chrisophe Pillet, also for Porro. The artwork on the wall by Jacin Jiardano (Richard Levy Gallery in Miami Design District) was acquired originally by friends of Rana's – Mera and Don Rubell – who later sold it on to the Floridas as a token of friendship.

The Vermelha chair in the foreground is a Campana brothers design. The Flower Power lamp above the table is by Brand van Egmond (Lightology, Chicago).



